

# T↑MEOLOGY



GAINING PERSPECTIVE  
AND LIVING *YOUR* LIFE  
TO THE FULLEST

*MATT MUNSON*

Copyright © 2016 It's About Time – Matt Munson  
All rights reserved.  
ISBN-10: 0996709800  
ISBN-13: 978-0-9967098-0-4

*To my daughter Kaylee and sons Hunter and Christian –  
while it is not quite the bedtime reading you enjoy right now,  
know that this book was written with your lives in mind.*

*To my wife, Melanie –  
Thank you for encouraging me to live my life to the fullest.*



# CONTENTS

## **PREFACE:**

*“Why”*

## **INTRODUCTION:**

*“The Need for  
Perspective”*

1. Living Life to the Fullest
2. Timeology
3. A Seductive World
4. Gaining Perspective
5. Authenticity
6. Significance
7. A Call to Action

## **PART I: GAINING WORLDLY PERSPECTIVE**

*“What are you doing with  
your life now?”*

8. Life’s Invitations
9. Life’s Complicating Factors
10. Gaining Your Worldly  
Perspective

## **PART II: GAINING SELF PERSPECTIVE**

*“Who are you, really?”*

11. Agreements
12. Gaining Your Self Perspective
13. The Exposé and the Epitaph
14. Letters in the Safe

## **PART III: GAINING AUTHENTICITY**

*“Is what you do an  
authentic representation of  
who you are?”*

15. Authentic Living and the Tools  
to Get There
16. Lessons for Authentic Living
17. Then What?

## **PART IV: GAINING SIGNIFICANCE**

*“Will what you do last  
beyond you?”*

18. The Significance of Giving
19. No Matter the Size, It’s All  
Significant
20. The Paradox of Significance –  
It’s a Win-Win
21. A Life of Significance

## **CONCLUSION**

*“Living Your Life to the  
Fullest”*

22. Authentic Living + Significant Living = Full Living
23. Epic – The Legacy of Significance
24. The Power of Perspective
25. Is This It? Or Is There More?
26. Gaining Perspective to Live Your Life to the Fullest
27. Keeping Perspective
28. It’s Your Time

## **AFTERWORD**

*“The Gift of Perspective”*

Your First Opportunity for Significance

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

## **APPENDIX**

- a. Notes
- b. Glossary







# **PREFACE**

*“Why”*



I was done writing this book.

Truly.

I had gone through numerous iterations, revisions, edits, and rounds of external feedback. The book had reached a point where the feedback I was receiving confirmed that the message I wanted to convey was coming across. And more importantly, it represented the best work I could do. As a result, I was happy. And frankly, I felt relieved for it to be mostly behind me. All that was left was the final artwork, formatting, and hitting “print”.

But then a friend of mine said I should check out a TED talk by Simon Sinek relating to leadership. He said it had over 20 million views and might add a language I could reference or incorporate in my book to add value for you, my reader. So I checked it out and was blown away.

Frankly, his concepts of “WHY,” “HOW,” “WHAT” were not new to me. In fact, I had a boss and mentor who explained to me back in 2005 the importance of these questions. “Matt,” he would say, “you must always ask yourself ‘WHAT IT IS? HOW IT WORKS?’ And most importantly, ‘WHY?’ ” We even had departmental SOPs (Standard Operating Procedures) that answered the “WHAT, HOW, WHY” questions for each process.

Yet Sinek revolutionized it by changing the order of the questions. And in so doing, his concept of “Start with Why” — which is also the name of his book — gave new meaning to asking that fundamental question about core beliefs.

The power of it was impossible to ignore. Through the examples of his TED talk and his subsequent book, Sinek utilized corporations and leaders to illustrate the importance of understanding why we do things. One of the paramount takeaways from the work is that we, as consumers, buy the “why” of companies, not the “how” or “what”. Translation, why a company does the things it does matters as much or perhaps even more than the final product and service or its price.

The implications for business were obvious and immediate. Yet I saw an opportunity as it related to the book I was about to release which was more focused on us as individuals. If a corporation clarifying their “why” made such a big difference in what we as people consumed, imagine what the clarifying of our “why” as individuals could do in our own lives.

The linkage was instant in my mind. Sinek’s expansion on the meaning of the simple word “why” in the business context provided a succinct vocabulary I could offer you, my reader, as a potential destination for the framework I had already built. Said differently, if I could encourage you to pursue your “why” through gaining perspective in the framework I was offering, you would have the clarity from which to live your life to the fullest. After all, by the pure virtue of reading a book like this in the first place, you are probably pre-disposed to having heard or finding value in Sinek’s work. And so, in the true spirit of trying to build upon the collective knowledge that is out there, I had no choice but to go back and incorporate the “why” language into the book.

So, while I was not excited about reopening what was once a finished product in my mind, I felt it was the right decision. And it is funny how life can sometimes offer us confirmations or exclamation points on such decisions. On the specific morning I started the effort of going back and incorporating the why language, having recently signed up for a daily quote from his site, the one I received that day was particularly relevant:

*"It's OK if others take our ideas as long as they build upon them. It's called progress." — Simon Sinek*

Specifically, *TIMEOLOGY* focuses on the bigger context into which Sinek's and other leadership experts and thought leaders are contributing — trading our time in an effort to live life to the fullest. Ultimately, that is what life is all about — living it fully. And time is of the essence.

But like so many others, I struggled to have a clear “why” for many years. And in the journey to do something about it, I discovered a framework — one that can be used to live life to the fullest — that leads to answering your “why” (though I didn't know at the time that “why” would be that name given to such. Thank you, Simon!)

### **Gaining Perspective**

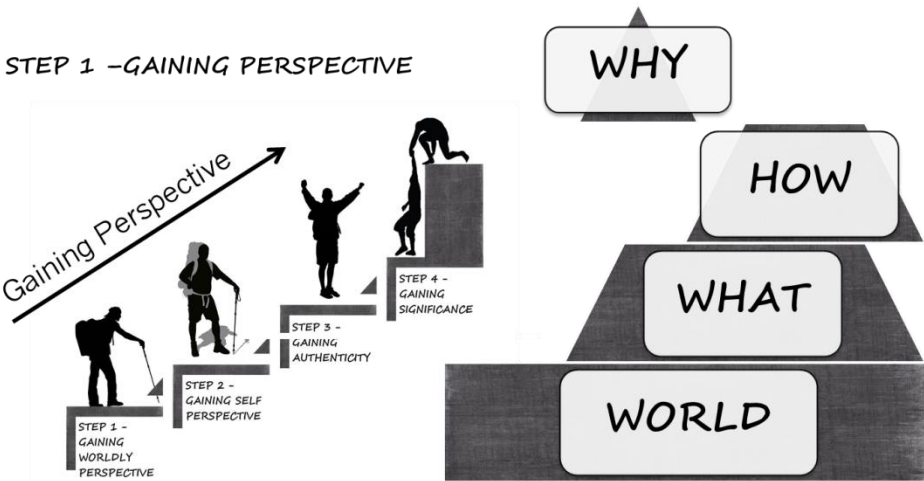
Through gaining perspective, I have realized a framework for approaching and making decisions in life. This perspective has been further confirmed for me in recent years by simultaneously serving in capacities as both an industry practitioner (CFO) and in academia (as a college professor) where I have received feedback and affirmation of its value from mentors, colleagues, employees, and students. It has been sharpened and refined through these experiences and is ready to be shared with you.

Perspective has come in the recognition that:

1. Time is of the essence. Life is fundamentally about how we trade our time. We need to make sure we are trading it wisely.
2. Our field of play is the world. We need to know what we are dealing with, recognize it for what it is, good and bad, and be able to make good decisions in the face of countless alternatives.

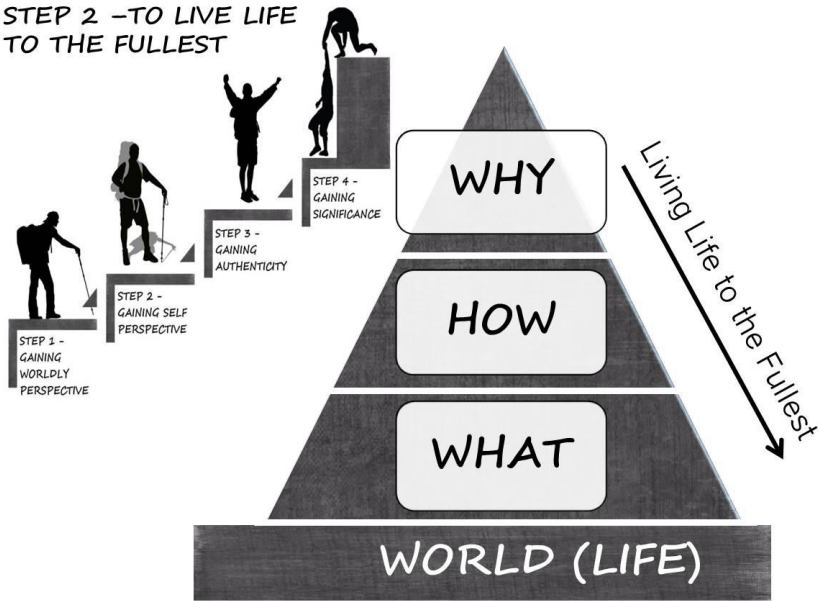
3. We need to know who we really are so we can have an authentic interaction with the world, rather than the other way around.
4. While we often give it different names, what we are actually chasing in life is not just success (what we get) but also significance (what we give) because it is what provides for meaning in our lives. And it starts with incorporating the needs of others into the things we do.

In fact, *TIMEOLOGY* lines up nicely with the “megaphone” metaphor in Sinek’s “Start with Why” which I would draw as follows:



In essence, *TIMEOLOGY* is a climb that gives us the altitude needed to gain clarity on our life. Just as we can see much farther from the top of the mountain than at the base, obtaining altitude in our lives allows for a similar clarity of view. By gaining perspective, we can align our lives to live authentically to who we are and significantly for others. Simply stated, by gaining perspective, we can live our lives to the fullest.

STEP 2 -TO LIVE LIFE  
TO THE FULLEST



Using this framework, my life makes sense in a way it didn't for years. I have been able to discern what to say yes to and what to say no to. I have gained clarity on the meaning tied to the things I do every day in the various roles I play as husband, dad, son, manager, professor, and so on. I have been able to focus on the things that matter, and eliminate the things that don't. And while my schedule is more filled than ever, the by-product has been both happiness as well as a sense of sustained clarity, empowerment, peace, joy, contentment, and meaning from knowing I am living my life in the fullest way I know how.

That is the essence of this book. It is one of the "what's" inspired by my "why" which is to seek and share knowledge and encouragement so that others can live their life to the fullest.

In so doing, I am living my life to the fullest. By so doing, my hope is you can do the same.





# **INTRODUCTION**

*“The Need for Perspective”*



# 1 LIVING LIFE TO THE FULLEST

If I could hear your thoughts, or make your internal dialogue audible somehow, would I hear you asking any of these questions?

“Why are there so many expectations placed on me? How do I know how to respond? Why do I often resent all the demands on my time? School? Work? Family? Friends? After all, didn’t I sign up for them? And really, what would I do instead anyway? Is there more to life than just going through these motions? At times it seems so empty. I’m having fun. I’m achieving things. But there has to be more right? Why is it I am so busy all the time and yet feel unfulfilled? Am I wrong for feeling like my time is being taken away from me? Why do I feel like I am wasting days, weeks, months, or even years, worrying about things I cannot control? Why do I trade my time for the highest economic gain? Is that the right way to find the success and happiness I seek in life? Why, when I work so hard on some fronts, do I feel like I am failing on other fronts? For example, the harder I work on the school or career front, the less time I have with family and friends. Or for myself. This seems to create a mutually exclusive relationship where success in one means failure in another. Is that right or is there another way? How

do I address it? What is the right path for me to take in life? How do I know? The possibilities seem endless yet I have fear and anxiety about having to focus on one path which means letting go of all others? Yet it's exhausting to keep the doors of opportunity perpetually propped open. What do I do? When I was a kid, life seemed so easy. So simple. Things just fell into place. It seemed natural. Why is it so different now?"

These questions were part of an internal dialogue I had been having for years. One that I struggled to give a name until I read the below quote which summarized it perfectly:

*"I believe that it is not dying that people are afraid of. Something else. Something more unsettling and more tragic than dying frightens us. We're afraid of never having lived. Of coming to the end of our days with the sense that we were never really alive. That we never figured out what life was for."*

— Harold Kushner

That was it! I was afraid of never having lived. I wanted to soak up life. To experience all of it. To squeeze every ounce of emotion, opportunity, impact, meaning, friendship, achievement, and so forth out of the time that I had on this Earth. I was all in. I was excited. I was motivated and ready to go. It was my time.

Yet there was simply too much of everything. Too many possibilities of things to do or pursue. Too many opinions on what living life should look like. Too many decisions that seemingly required immediate answers. Too many experts saying that the secret to life is this or that. Simply stated, there was just too much noise. And I was overwhelmed.

If you can relate to any of this, you are not alone. Many of us desire a clear direction to pursue in life — a direction that will lead to making fulfilling decisions. Decisions that result in sustained happiness, peace, joy, contentment, meaning, accomplishment,

achievement, and so on. Decisions that result in success in life, including the realization of our hopes and dreams.

In short, we desire clarity on how to live life to the fullest.



## 2 TIMEOLOGY

The struggle to live life to the fullest is bound by time. Time is of the essence, which is to say, that it is really important. Harvey MacKay, a businessman and New York Times best-selling author, says it this way:

*“Time is free, but it's priceless. You can't own it, but you can use it. You can't keep it, but you can spend it. Once you've lost it you can never get it back.”*

In other words, we trade our time to live our lives. Our lives are the cumulative representation of what we have traded our time for. Thus, it follows that we must make good decisions when trading our time. In the game of living life to the fullest, it's about time.

Sports offer a great example of the concept of “trading time”. Being a huge football fan, allow me to use one of the best games I have ever seen, to illustrate my point.

It was December 1998 and the Denver Broncos were 12-0 and defending Super Bowl champions. No NFL team had gone undefeated since the 1972 Miami Dolphins and as the Broncos

approached the final quarter of their season with a perfect record, discussion started to swirl about whether they could pull it off.

While the Broncos enjoyed future Hall-of-Famer John Elway at quarterback, they had a fourth-year running back in Terrell Davis who was the main catalyst for their success. In fact, he was racing toward becoming only the fourth running back to gain 2000 yards in a single season in the history of the NFL. Thus, the Broncos had become a “run first” team that did not have to rely on the 38-year-old John Elway nearly as much as they had in years gone by.

For the Broncos to pull off the undefeated season, they would have to win four more regular season games starting with their arch rival, the Kansas City Chiefs, who were in Denver for that weekend’s game.

The Chiefs, despite being outmatched on paper, wanted nothing more than to be the team to spoil their arch-rivals opportunity at history. And midway through the fourth quarter, the Chiefs had the Broncos on the ropes. In fact, with just about half of the fourth quarter already gone, the Broncos were down 31–21 and time was running out on their bid for the perfect season.

What makes sports interesting is the element of time. If there was not a fixed amount of time, then the teams would continue to exchange the lead, back and forth, without consequence. But what makes the game meaningful is that players are given 60 minutes and the team with the most points at the end, wins.

Thus, there is a lot of planning and strategy that goes into the game, especially as the amount of time remaining in the game starts to diminish. When a team is trailing by 10 points in the fourth quarter as the Broncos were, they have to try to conserve as much time as possible. They use their timeouts so they can stop the clock. They change their offensive strategy to try to pass the ball since it gives them the chance to pick up more yardage with the usage of less time (and incomplete passes stop the clock altogether).



In other words, despite having the best running back in the league that year, because the Broncos found themselves down by 10 points in the fourth quarter, they had to change their strategy to deal with the circumstances they were facing at that moment. As there was time left on the clock, the outcome of the game could be changed. And in this case, it was.

The Broncos came back to score two fourth-quarter touchdowns and win the game by a final score of 35–31 to continue their undefeated season and improve their record to 13–0. (They lost the following week to the New York Giants to end their chance at the perfect season.)

My point is this — if a simple game of football treats time with such value as to use timeouts and change their strategy to deal with it, what does that say about how we might want to treat time in our own lives?

Here are the facts on time:

Fact #1 — Time is limited to 24 hours in a day. Whether you are rich or poor, old or young, girl or boy, smart or not, tall or short, you only get 24 hours in a day.

Fact #2 — You don't know how many days you will have in your lifetime.

Fact #3 — Time is the currency you trade for living life. Your ability to live life is limited by one un-renewable resource — time.

Fact #4 — The choices you make with the trading of your time define how you experience your life — what you achieve, who you develop friendships with, what impact you make, and so forth.

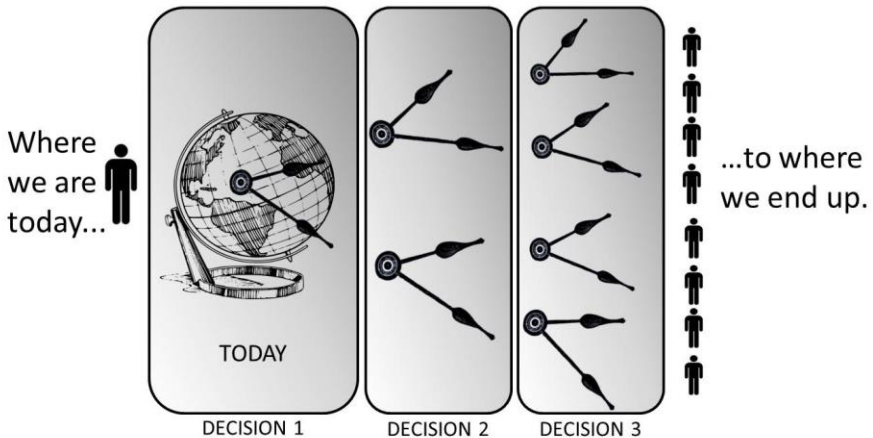
Perhaps Henry David Thoreau said it best: *“The price of anything is the amount of life you exchange for it.”*

Since time is so valuable, it follows that the choices we make with trading time determine whether we experience life to the fullest. Unfortunately, many of us do not know what to trade our time for that will lead to living life to the fullest. After all, living life to the fullest is such an abstract thing that it's hard to relate it to specific day-to-day decision making.

In a nutshell, *TIMEOLOGY* is the key to bridging this gap.

If the suffix “-ology” refers to “the study of”, it would be appropriate for us to call the endeavor of exploring how we trade our time *TIMEOLOGY*. But *TIMEOLOGY* is much more than simply taking inventory of what we spend our time on.

*TIMEOLOGY* is a framework by which we can link the inventory of “how we spend our time” with the seemingly abstract “living our life to the fullest.” In this way, *TIMEOLOGY* is the perspective that relates how we trade our time, in the day to day decisions we make, with living our lives fully as an outcome. It offers us insight into what takes us from where we are today to where we end up.



Even more succinctly, *TIMEOLOGY* is taking action to trade our time to intentionally live our lives to the fullest. And each of us is always on the clock.