



# MARCH 2018

## TIMING IS EVERYTHING

I lost it Monday morning. I was trying to knock something off of my integrated work/life list before getting to the office. I was attempting to return five very awkwardly-sized planters by dropping them off at the UPS store. I usually do really well at this particular UPS store. They open early, the clerks are efficient and friendly. I have never had a bad experience, until today. Apparently my return labels required FedEx and they could not accept FedEx. So they sold me some very expensive boxes and I hauled the five-awkwardly-sized planters back to the car and proceeded to FedEx. At FedEx, the shipping clerk informed me that they could not use UPS boxes nor did they have the appropriate packaging for my awkwardly-sized planters. And in case I was wondering, FedEx has very strict regulations about how they pack their cargo and they simply couldn't pack my items securely and therefore refused to ship them. I am now in a full sweat as I haul the five awkwardly-sized planters back to my car. At this point, I am ready to drop the whole mess at Goodwill and go back to bed. As I am leaving the parking lot, I notice a second UPS store where I plan to return the very expensive boxes and then proceed to Goodwill. I explain my predicament to the clerk who pleads that this whole thing is above her pay grade and she has to call her manager. She waits on several customers and then calls her manager again. She gets the permission she needs, looks at the awkwardly-sized planters, the expensive boxes, and my sweaty grimace and goes into "can do" mode. She swaps out the two expensive boxes for three boxes that will actually work, packages up the planters, slaps on the FedEx labels and tells me to have a nice day. I offer to pay her for her trouble and the additional box and she tells me I am all set. I am so delighted I hug her, drop off the boxes at FedEx and proceed to work an hour late but with one thing crossed off of my list. That is when I realize that as frustrating as my gritty return experience was, I am now angry at myself because I have committed a serious violation of timing. I have done a mindless task during valuable production time. As a morning person or lark, I should've been writing and researching not hauling and sweating. So much for quick wins.

It is tempting to try to build up momentum with quick wins. And understandable when you are making the transition from the weekend to the workweek. But quick wins are generally mundane tasks and according to Daniel Pink's latest book, *When, The Scientific Secrets of Perfect Timing*, the first rule of perfect timing is:

*"Whatever you do, do not let mundane tasks creep into your peak period."*

We all have a daily peak period which is determined by our chronotype. Our chronotype is the pattern of circadian rhythms that determines our energy levels and mood at various times of day. You are probably familiar with the morning lark and the night owl chronotypes. Regardless of chronotype, we all follow a peak-trough-rebound pattern. The trick to perfect timing is to match the task to the appropriate time of day. Pink provides a chart to simplify assigning time to various tasks.

TASK	LARK	THIRD BIRD	OWL
Analytical tasks	Early morning	Early to midmorning	Late afternoon & evening
Insight tasks	Late afternoon/early evening	Late afternoon/	Morning
Making an impression	Morning	Morning	Morning
Making a decision	Early morning	Early to midmorning	Late afternoon and evening



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By timing your tasks properly you will increase productivity and creativity and reduce stress and frustration. I should have returned the planters in the early afternoon during a trough period. Lesson learned.

Pink also offers a formula for determining your chronotype. In the process he introduces a third chronotype, sometimes called a hummingbird. These are the folks who do not fit squarely into the lark or owl category and actually make up approximately 65% of the population. To determine your chronotype, answer the following questions and look on the chart below.

- 1 What time do you usually go to sleep?  
Without regard for the time I have to get up the next day, I would usually go to sleep at 10:30PM.
- 2 What time do you usually wake up?  
Allowed to wake up without an alarm, I would wake at 7:30AM.
- 3 What is the midpoint of those two times?  
The midpoint between those times is 3AM.
- 4 Based on your sleep midpoint, what is your chronotype?  
I am a lark.



MIDPOINT OF SLEEP	CHRONOTYPE	PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION
Midnight to 3am	Lark	14%
3:30am - 5am	Third Bird	65%
5:30am - Noon	Owls	21%

I found Pink's book to be fascinating and life altering. Obviously, I am still a work in process.



**PATRICIA M. FULLER, PhD,**  
Director, Wellness Engineering

Patricia M. Fuller has dedicated the last 20 years to designing and delivering wellness programs. Her events earn consistently excellent ratings for her holistic approach and her real world application.

Prior to concentrating in wellness, Pat taught accounting and auditing as an adjunct professor at the University of Tampa. She earned her CPA designation in 1992 as a senior associate for Coopers & Lybrand. She has a Masters in Business Administration from the University of Utah.

Pat has a PhD in holistic nutrition. In 2010, she was board certified by the Holistic Nutrition Credentialing Board. Her areas of research include stress management and eating habits. She is a Certified Wellcoach and a member of the Institute of Coaching. She is an annual attendee to The Harvard Medical School Conference, Coaching In Leadership & Healthcare.

[pfuller@bks-partners.com](mailto:pfuller@bks-partners.com) | **Have a Question? Email it to Dr. Pat!**

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