

Sacred Space, Sacred Time

by Craig Allan Bond

All my life I'd been arriving "just a little late," feeling rushed, and too often working "down to the wire." It's a frustration I'd been working hard on these last few years, and I knew I'd gotten much, much better. So I felt a stab of anguish

when my son, Cory, made his comment: "Why are you so surprised that you're running behind schedule? We've learned to expect that from you."

The timing of this episode would have provided a good laugh if it hadn't hurt so much. I was on my way to a monastery (of all places) to write an article on leadership (of all things). I spent the two-hour drive wrestling with my problem and had an incredibly sweet revelation along the way.

I realized I'd been approaching life all wrong! I'd always thought the goal was to pack as much into each day as possible. On that drive, I saw the power of a different way. *What if the goal were to create as much SPACE in each day as possible? To be busy less and available more?*

This concept has evolved into my personal grail. I call it "Creating Sacred Space." It has changed the way I look at myself, life, and most assuredly, time.

Creating Sacred Space

When I set aside time every day to listen to and

respect myself, I am creating Sacred Space. When I intentionally plan extra "flex time" in my day, I am creating a Sacred Space that makes me available for the surprises and opportunities that each new day may bring.

Before, I never had enough time. Now, I'm better able to find the right time to do the right things. Important things. Things I've wanted to do my entire life.

Sacred Time

I used to experience occasional snatches of what seemed like eternity—a sort of sacred time. In these moments, the world seemed to stop around me. I felt like I could see forever. I found such moments when I would go for a walk late at night, alone under the street lights and the shadows. At those times I felt deeply in touch with

myself and my own eternal truths about the world.

And at work? I reached for sacred moments by intentionally taking a few minutes out of my daily routine to breathe deeply or take a walk to reacquaint myself with this person inside me. Doing this helped me approach the rest of my day with new resilience and a clear perspective—and a clear perspective about myself and my place in the workplace. As a result, I more deeply appreciated the personal and professional value of my colleagues.

Have you ever experienced a snatch of "eternity"? Have you noticed how your attitude and your performance change during these special times? Don't you feel more in charge and more in touch with the real you?

Such an experience may



seem to last forever while it is happening, but upon reflection, you often discover it lasted only briefly. Or the opposite may occur, and the sweet intensity of the moment seems to race by when, in fact, it really lasted for hours. Contrast these snatches of eternity with your experience and performance when you are watching the clock, cramming too much into too little time.

How Does This Work?

How can we predictably recreate these eternal moments? When I began creating Sacred Space, I discovered it could quite reliably create sacred, eternal time. It's fun to postulate how this works.

Physicists and science fiction fans talk about the space-time continuum. I don't understand the science behind this, but I believe Sacred Space and Sacred Time are somehow related to it. Logic tells us that, if we take time away from our work for non-work-related activities, we will get less work done. Ironically, the opposite happens. When I create Sacred Space in my day, I

How Long Will This Take?

I always underestimate how long something will take, mostly because I want to get it done as quickly as possible. But that's missing the point, isn't it? If something is worth doing, then it makes sense to allow enough time to do it well and to respect my personhood in the process. If I'm more realistic about how long a job will take, then I will be able to make more responsible choices to adjust my other commitments accordingly, thus taking charge of my life.

accomplish everything more efficiently and effectively. The "set-aside" for Sacred Space seems to add another dimension to time—one that allows me to focus keenly on my interior concerns and, thus, be more effective with external concerns. I become more available to myself and to what the world wants to do through me. This works at home and at work.

Spiritual Voice Mail

Availability and reliability go hand in hand. It's important that people know you're available when you say you will be. If they know they can count on you, they will use you and value you—even plan their life around your availability. Good friendships and productive work relationships depend on this.

Imagine a basketball team without that. The point-guard executes a play, expecting a teammate to be slashing to the basket. She throws the ball, but the teammate isn't there—unavailable and out of luck—likely to lose the game!

Creating Sacred Space is

about being reliably available for yourself, your loved ones, and for whatever way you've found to listen to the voice of the universe.

Part of my Sacred Space is scheduled at the end of the day. I set aside time to do the things that help me nurture my understanding of who I am. I always end this time with an open, receptive form of prayer. It doesn't have to take very long. The important thing is to create a regular, reliable opening for both your inner psyche and that larger psyche of the universe.

When I do this consistently, I find that I need less time in prayer to get so much more. Now that the communication line is reliably available, the universe seems to have leased me a spiritual voice mail machine. It queues up all kinds of meaningful messages, just waiting for me to push the button when I go to prayer time.

Many artists set aside a special place and a specific time in their day to make room for their creativity.

Why not do the same with

your personal life? The inner workings of your psyche and the creativity of your spirit will spill ideas, insights, and beauty onto the canvas of your conscience.

Counting Time

Time is a greatly abused concept in our society. We treat it like a form of currency. We try to "save time," and to "spend time wisely." We anguish when we "waste time." In the process, we often end up valuing time itself rather than the experiences that occur within it. We need to ask ourselves what it is we value: time for its own sake or the quality and performance we exhibit and experience within it?

If time is valued just for itself, how do we count it or assess its worth? It won't work to count time in linear increments because our thought processes, our evolving personalities, even our personal and professional achievements don't always occur in a neat, linear fashion. There are so many times when the answer I'm looking for doesn't come when I want it; it

comes when other parts of my personal or professional life have matured to the point where I can finally understand the answers to my questions. Placing too strict an emphasis on the linear expectations of time stifles my growth process and makes me feel inept and anxious because I am not producing according to some rigid, pre-defined timeline. I refuse to beat myself up for this anymore. I refuse to allow my mechanistic perceptions and linear timeframes to control how I approach life or how I perceive my accomplishments.

Changing Our Approach

What if we changed our rules about time? What if we made it our goal to create as much Sacred Space in a day as possible? Could our linear perspective of time be denying us the greater dimension of creativity and personal presence that comes from a more dynamic understanding of time and space?

Perform an experiment. Create some Sacred Space and Sacred Time in your day. Watch how time is transformed—and all of us with it! ●

Creating Sacred Space in the Workplace

By transforming our perspective on time, we can create the kind of work culture that will help employees and organizations to rediscover their identity, their purpose, their creativity and their productivity.

- As an organization, dedicate a regular time each month for employees to contemplate and communicate their visions and insights for the company. Provide a public and private sharing forum. Follow up on the ideas.
- Provide employees with a "quiet room" where they can meditate, rest, or simply collect themselves and their thoughts. You may begin to see them creatively solving many more challenges on their own, without intervention from management.
- Set aside time each day for creative/analytical work. Post these times in plain sight. As a manager, support others using this process. Show interest in the results.

Craig Allan Bond, a technical writer for 16 years, has worked for clients that include Intel, E.D.S., MCI and Perkin-Elmer. He authored the Instructor's Guide that accompanied the national best-seller and textbook, *How Computers Work*, published by PC Computing magazine. Bond is a freelance writer. He can be reached by phone (318) 481-8842, or by e-mail, craig7@ps.net.