



When

The Scientific Secrets of Perfect Timing

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"Brims with a surprising amount of insight and practical advice." --*The Wall Street Journal*

Daniel H. Pink, the #1 bestselling author of *Drive* and *To Sell Is Human*, unlocks the scientific secrets to good timing to help you flourish at work, at school, and at home.

Everyone knows that timing is everything. But we don't know much about timing itself. Our lives are a never-ending stream of "when" decisions: when to start a business, schedule a class, get serious about a person. Yet we make those decisions based on intuition and guesswork.

Timing, it's often assumed, is an art. In *When: The Scientific Secrets of Perfect Timing*, Pink shows that timing is really a science.

Drawing on a rich trove of research from psychology, biology, and economics, Pink reveals how best to live, work, and succeed. How can we use the hidden patterns of the day to build the ideal schedule? Why do certain breaks dramatically improve student test scores? How can we turn a stumbling beginning into a fresh start? Why should we avoid going to the hospital in the afternoon? Why is singing in time with other people as good for you as exercise? And what is the ideal time to quit a job, switch careers, or get married?

In *When*, Pink distills cutting-edge research and data on timing and synthesizes them into a fascinating, readable narrative packed with irresistible stories and practical takeaways that give readers compelling insights into how we can live richer, more engaged lives.

My Synopsis:

Very intriguing read that has lots of science, a lot of which I need to spend more time thinking on. One concept that has been reinforced by reading this is the importance of using my time to the best ability, which requires me to lead myself first. And that is something I need to continue to improve.

When The Scientific Secrets of Perfect Timing

- p. 1 **Introduction: Captain Turner's Decision**
- p. 4 We all know that timing is everything. Trouble is, we don't know much about timing itself.
- p. 5 Why does thinking about the past cause us to behave one way, but thinking about the future steer us in a different direction.
- p. 7 **Part One: The Day**
- p. 9 **The Hidden Pattern of Everyday Life**
- p. 10 Positive affect – language revealing that tweeters felt active, engaged, and hopeful – generally rose in the morning, plummeted in the afternoon, and climbed back up again in the early evening.
- p. 12 ...human beings metaphorically “gain” and “close” at regular times during each day.
- p. 17 Moods are an internal state, but they have external impact.
- p. 20 ...subsets can never be larger than the full set they're a part of.
- p.2 1 ...mental keenness, as shown by rationally evaluating evidence, was greater early in the day. And mental squishiness, as evidenced by resorting to stereotypes, increased as the day wore on.
- p. 22 First, your cognitive abilities do not remain static over the course of a day.
- p.22 Second, these daily fluctuations are more extreme than we realize.
- p. 22 Other research has shown that time-of-day effects can explain 20% of the variance in human performance on cognitive undertakings.
- p. 22 Third, how we do depends on what we're doing.
- p. 22 ...the best time to perform a particular task depends on the nature of that task.
- p. 25 For analytic problems, lack of inhibitory control is a bug. For insight problems, it's a feature.
- p. 25 ...the “inspiration paradox” – the idea that “innovation and creativity are greatest when we are not at our best, at least with respect to our circadian rhythms.”
- p. 26 Our capacities open and close according to a clock we don't control.
- p. 27 Human beings don't all experience a day in precisely the same way.
- p. 32 The fit between a person's chronotype and the time of day offers a more complete predictor of that person's ethicality than does time of day alone.
- p. 34 Figure out your type, understand your task, and then select the appropriate time.
- p. 49 Whatever you do, do not let mundane tasks creep into your peak period.

- p. 49 **Afternoons and Coffee Spoons: The Power of Breaks, the Promise of Lunch, and the Case for a Modern Siesta**
- p. 49 The afternoon knows what the morning never suspected. – Robert Frost
- p. 52 Vigilance break – a brief pause before high-stakes encounters to review instructions and guard against error.
- p. 53 Afternoons are the Bermuda Triangles of our days.
- p. 56 ...the afternoon can impair our professional and ethical judgment.
- p. 60 So if the trough is the poison and restorative breaks are the antidote, what should those breaks look like? ...Science offers five guiding principles:
1. Something beats nothing.
 2. Moving beats stationary.
 3. Social beats solo.
 4. Outside beats inside.
 5. Fully detached beats semi-detached.
- p. 60 ...if we stick with a task too long, we lose sight of the goal we're trying to achieve, process known as "habituation." Sort breaks from a task can present habituation.
- p. 61 ...simply standing up and walking around for five minutes every hour during the work day can be potent.
- p. 61 Regular short walking breaks in the workplace also increase motivation and concentration and enhance creativity.
- p. 62 Nature breaks may replenish us the most.
- p. 63 Psychological detachment from work, in addition to physical detachment, is crucial, as continuing to think about job demands during breaks may result in strain.
- p. 64 ...it's time we paid more attention to lunch, because social scientists are discovering that it's far more important to our performance than we realize.
- p. 66 Done right, naps can be a shrewd response to the trough and a valuable break...they improve cognitive performance and they boost mental and physical health.
- p. 69 ...healthy adults "should ideally nap for approximately 10 to 20 minutes."
- p. 70 Vigilance breaks prevent deadly mistakes. Restorative breaks enhance performance.
- p. 71 ...treating breaks as an essential component of an organization's architecture – understanding breaks not as a softhearted concession but as a hardheaded solution.
- p. 85 **Part Two: Beginnings, Endings, and In Between**
- p. 87 **Beginnings: Starting Right, Starting Again, and Starting Together**
- p. 87 To be lucky at the beginning is everything. – Miguel de Cervantes, Don Quixote
- p. 89 Beginnings, in fact, can matter to the end.
- p. 89 ...the three principles of successful beginnings: Start right. Start again. Start together.
- p. 95 To establish a fresh start, people used two types of temporal landmarks – social and personal.
- p. 96 Temporal landmarks interrupt attention to day-to-day minutia, causing people to take a big picture view of their lives and thus focus on achieving their goals.

- p. 96 ...imbuing an otherwise ordinary day with personal meaning generates the power to activate new beginnings.
- p. 100 In any dynamic system, the initial conditions have a huge influence over what happens to the inhabitants of that system.
- p. 103 Instead of forcing vulnerable people to fend for themselves, everyone does better by starting together.
- p. 104 The goal here is to recognize that slow-moving *when* problems have all the gravity of fast-moving *what* calamities – and deserve the same collective response.
- P 115 **Midpoints: What Hanukkah Candles and Midlife Malaise Can Teach Us About Motivation**
- p. 115 When you are in the middle of a story it isn't a story at all, but only a confusion; a dark roaring, a blindness, a wreckage of shattered glass and splintered wood. – Margaret Atwood, *Alias Grace*
- p. 119 Happiness climbs high early in adulthood but begins to slide downward in the late thirties and early forties, dipping to a low in the fifties.
- p. 124 In the domain of performance standards, we thus found that participants were more likely to literally cut corners in the middle of the sequence rather than at the beginning and end.
- P 124 If the midlife droop is inevitable, just knowing that eases some of the pain, as does knowing that the state is not permanent.
- p. 128 Midpoints, as we're seeing, can have a dual effect. In some cases, they dissipate our motivation; in other cases, they activate it.
- p. 131 Merely telling people they were slightly behind an opponent led them to exert more effort.
- p. 132 The best hope for turning a slump into a spark involves three steps:
1. Be aware of midpoints. Don't let them remain invisible.
 2. Use them to wake up rather than roll over.
 3. At the midpoint, imagine that you're behind – but only by a little.
- p. 145 **Endings: Marathons, Chocolates, and the Power of Poignancy**
- p. 146 Reaching the end of a decade somehow rattled their thinking and redirected their actions. Endings have that effect.
- p. 146 ...endings of all kinds – of experiences, projects, semesters, negotiations, stages of life – shape our behavior in four predictable ways. They help us energize. They help us encode. They help us edit. And they help us elevate.
- p. 150 At the beginning of a pursuit, we're generally more motivated by how fun we've progressed; at the end, we're generally more energized by trying to lose the small gap that remains.
- p. 154 The encoding power of endings shapes many of our opinions and subsequent decisions.
- p. 158 ...our perspective on time shapes the orientation of our lives and therefore the goals we pursue.
- p. 161 Given a choice, human beings prefer endings that elevate.
- p. 164 ...at the core of meaningful endings is one of the most complex emotions humans experience: poignancy, a mix of happiness and sadness.
- p. 164 Adding a small component of sadness to an otherwise happy moment *elevates* that moment rather than diminishes it.

- p. 164 Closings, conclusions, and culminations reveal something essential about the human conditions: In the end, we seek meaning.
- p. 175 **Part Three: Synching and Thinking**
- p. 177 **Synching Fast and Slow: The Secrets of Group Timing**
- p. 180 Our ability to survive, even to live, depends on our capacity to coordinate with others in and across time.
- p. 181 ...groups must synchronize on three levels – to the boss, to the tribe, and to the heart.
- p. 183 ...he's discovered that efficiency in this realm demands firm direction and, occasionally, gentle despotism.
- p. 183 The first principle of synching fast and slow is that group timing requires a boss – someone or something above and apart from the group itself to set the pace, maintain the standards, and focus the collective mind.
- p. 189 After individuals' synch to the boss, the external standard that sets the pace of their work, they must synch to the tribe – to one another. That requires a deep sense of belonging.
- p. 189 The belonging hypothesis: a need to belong is a fundamental human motivation...and that much of what human beings do is done in the service of belongingness.
- p. 189 Belongingness profoundly shapes our thoughts and emotions. Its absence leads to ill effects, its presence to health and satisfaction.
- p. 191 Feelings of belonging boost job satisfaction and performance.
- p. 194 Touching is a form of synching, a primal way to indicate where you are and where you're going.
- p. 194 Synching to the heart is the third principle of group timing.
- p. 199 Working in harmony with others, science shows, makes it more likely we'll do good.
- p. 199 ...coordinating makes us better people...
- p. 211 **Thinking in Tenses: A Few Final Words**
- p. 213 Consider the past. It's something we're told not to dwell on, but research makes it clear that thinking in the past tense can lead to a greater understanding of ourselves.
- p. 216 ...research has shown we plan more effectively and behave more reasonably when the future feels more closely connected to the current moment and our current selves.
- p. 218 I used to believe that timing was everything. Now I believe that everything is timing.