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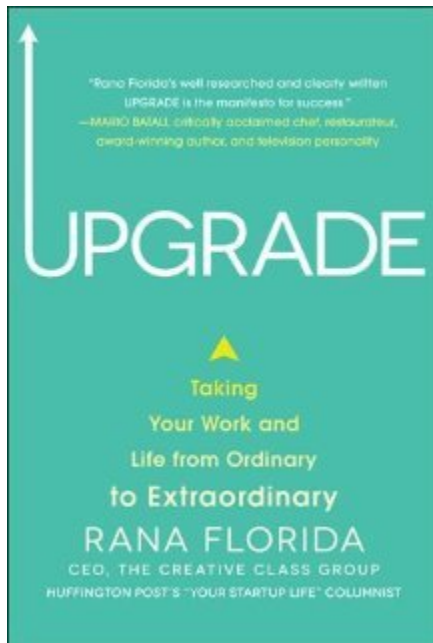
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Get Rich in Time

Adapted from

[*Upgrade, Taking Your Work and Life From Ordinary to Extraordinary*](#)



"People chase money and forget that time is our most precious resource."

--[Andre Agassi](#)

Time is more important than money and possessions. It's the one thing you can never get back and something you can't buy, barter, or borrow. Once it's gone, it's gone for good. Those who succeed protect their time fiercely and selfishly.

The Boston Globe [calls it](#) "a problem so common it may qualify as a new American epidemic: We've got no time. Too busy. Overwhelmed by work, family obligations, and the fast-paced nature of a run-ragged world, many Americans--especially working adults, parents of young

children, and those with college degrees, according to polls--feel strapped for time and are leading less happy lives as a result."

'Time famine' is how researchers a few decades ago referred to this dreadful, anxious feeling, whereas 'time affluence' was the term they used to coin the opposite, "that elusive feeling of being rich in time."

Time affluence, *The Boston Globe* went on to say, "has real benefits in our lives. If time famine can create a state of rolling personal crisis, studies have shown that feeling 'time affluent' can be powerfully uplifting, more so than material wealth, improving not only personal happiness, but even physical health and civic involvement."

Elizabeth Kolbert [writes](#) in *The New Yorker*, "NO TIME, How did we get so busy?" Arianna Huffington [calls it](#) "America's Real Deficit Crisis."

So how do we get back out time? Let me try to make this as simple as possible: there are only three things to do with your time:

- Have fun
- Be productive
- Give back

That's it; there's nothing else. Having fun is pretty straightforward. Take vacations, spend time with your friends, go to sporting events, indulge and pamper yourself at blissful spas. Whatever your definition of fun is, please indulge it.

Being productive can mean going to school, getting a job, starting a business, taking a class to learn a new skill, continuing your education, engaging in professional development, and working on your health and well-being--pretty much anything that moves you forward personally or professionally.

Giving back occurs when we channel our resources toward others: healing the sick, educating others, investing in the community, taking care of children and family, organizing our efforts for a charity or common good, and volunteering our time.

Those three things--having a blast, feeling a sense of accomplishment, and cultivating a sense of a larger purpose--are all that really matters in life. Anything that falls outside those three categories is clutter or filler and a waste of your time, and it's time to eliminate it from your life immediately. Not only is it a waste of time, it interferes with getting to the three buckets that do matter.

Balance is the key. If you are having fun living like a rock star, the constant flow of stimuli will be hard to maintain, and when it does slacken, your overall happiness will be reduced. Adding productivity to the mix will give you a sense of accomplishment. Giving back will give you a sense of higher purpose and with it the type of happiness that is achieved only when you are contributing to something that is bigger than yourself, something that has meaning to you. The

goal in life is to maximize these three key things while striking the right balance in your life to achieve maximum happiness.

Try to think about them routinely. When making tough life decisions or just contemplating everyday minutiae, think about how your choices affect each of the three buckets. If something falls outside of them, it's time to eliminate it from your life.

Rana Florida is the author of the best-selling book [Upgrade, Taking Your Work and Life from Ordinary to Extraordinary](#).



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