

# A Musing

## Podcast Transcript

### 008 ▸ Two Things

How much do we actually have control over in life? If we pause to think about that, there's very little that can't be taken from us, that won't wear down, or become obsolete. But... if there was something that we had control over... shouldn't we be wise about how we use it?

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00:00:00.280 - 00:00:03.140

Welcome to A Musing, I'm Diego.

00:00:11.065 - 00:00:14.205

Today's episode, Two Things.

00:00:23.092 - 00:00:31.052

If we're being completely honest with ourselves, there's nothing in life that we can hold on to or control for very long.

00:00:32.152 - 00:00:43.472

You can work your butt off to buy some material possession, like a car or some big ticket item, and it doesn't matter if you buy the best of brands, the highest of models.

00:00:43.472 - 00:00:52.192

Something will eventually run out, run slower, need maintenance, go out of fashion, or just become obsolete in some way.

00:00:55.152 - 00:01:01.492

Even the things that we hold dearest and the things we protect the most can be taken away or damaged by others.

00:01:01.492 - 00:01:07.552

Or in the case of experiences, the most lavish vacation, let's say, will eventually come to an end.

00:01:07.552 - 00:01:15.132

Even when we have the means to extend an experience, it loses its novelty and we can't hang on to that initial feeling.

00:01:15.132 - 00:01:18.032

It's like trying to grasp water in your hand.

00:01:21.552 - 00:01:29.852

But there are a couple of things that are about as close as we can possibly get to having control over something.

00:01:29.852 - 00:01:35.472

And how you use them can mean the difference between a more fulfilled life or an unhappy one.

00:01:38.672 - 00:01:43.372

These two things are your time and your attention.

00:01:48.252 - 00:01:49.952

Let me explain what I mean by each of these.

00:01:59.212 - 00:02:02.592

By time, I mean the immediate present.

00:02:02.592 - 00:02:05.712

I don't mean the idea of the past or the future.

00:02:05.712 - 00:02:11.612

After all, the past is nothing more than data, memory stored in the computer, that is our brain.

00:02:11.612 - 00:02:20.752

And the future is an abstract idea that we can make our best prediction about, but can never truly know it'll play out exactly as we've envisioned and planned.

00:02:20.752 - 00:02:23.932

You know, 2020, anyone?

00:02:23.932 - 00:02:30.572

By attention, I mean what you're focusing on in the present time.

00:02:30.572 - 00:02:35.552

What your mind is actually processing and computing right now.

00:02:36.872 - 00:02:44.172

Charles Caleb Colton, a writer, said, The present time has one advantage over every other.

00:02:44.172 - 00:02:45.052

It is our own.

00:02:50.593 - 00:02:56.593

As you can probably deduce by now, time and attention go hand in hand in most cases.

00:02:58.513 - 00:03:05.953

Although sometimes we trick ourselves into thinking we're actually focused on one thing that we're spending time on when we're actually not.

00:03:11.813 - 00:03:13.633

Have you ever driven distracted?

00:03:14.853 - 00:03:21.433

Distracted by your phone or the things you're listening to in your car, or maybe by the conversation you're having with someone in the car?

00:03:23.493 - 00:03:35.113

Have you noticed that you lose complete notion of the distance that you've traveled, and then when your attention finally returns to the actual act of driving, you realize how long you've gone without being truly aware of the road?

00:03:36.913 - 00:03:44.113

In those moments you might say you've been driving your vehicle, but is that what you were actually focused on?

00:03:44.113 - 00:03:51.273

If something unexpected crossed your path during that stretch of time that your mind was more focused on something else, what could have happened?

00:03:51.273 - 00:03:57.873

Those shifts in focus on the road have cost many people their lives or the lives of others.

00:03:57.873 - 00:04:04.093

So there's a story we tell ourselves about how we're using our time, and then there's the reality.

00:04:10.070 - 00:04:15.050

That reality is what I'd like you to think a little bit deeper about, right now.

00:04:18.550 - 00:04:25.450

Imagine for a second that your time and your attention are a type of currency that we each possess.

00:04:25.450 - 00:04:30.670

And we're actively giving those riches away to something or someone.

00:04:30.670 - 00:04:37.470

And once we give it, we can't take it back, no matter what Doc Brown and Marty McFly taught us back in the 80s.

00:04:38.850 - 00:04:48.090

Once your time and your attention have been given, they're gone, archived, like so many memories in our mind or the minds of others.

00:04:48.090 - 00:04:52.910

So how are you actively spending these two things?

00:04:52.910 - 00:05:01.170

Do the activities, things, and people you spend your time and attention on make you feel like you're making an investment?

00:05:01.170 - 00:05:14.030

And I don't mean that in a selfish way, like you need to get something in return for the time you've given to something or someone, but rather is it resulting in something positive and worthwhile for you or for someone else?

00:05:14.030 - 00:05:18.810

Even if it's some form of entertainment, is it adding to your existence or someone else's?

00:05:18.810 - 00:05:22.430

Are you learning something from the time and attention you've given away?

00:05:22.430 - 00:05:23.750

Did you grow as a result?

00:05:23.750 - 00:05:25.030

Are you happier?

00:05:26.330 - 00:05:29.410

Was a relationship strengthened or nurtured?

00:05:29.410 - 00:05:30.850

Was someone's need met?

00:05:30.850 - 00:05:31.810

Did anything come of it?

00:05:33.370 - 00:05:42.610

And, I want to be clear, I'm not advocating that you need to be consistently wired or doing something with a profound purpose in mind all the time.

00:05:42.610 - 00:05:50.810

But if the majority of what you surrender your time and attention to is giving you nothing in return, you may want to rethink that investment.

00:05:53.430 - 00:05:55.250

I mean, go have fun.

00:05:55.250 - 00:05:56.910

Enjoy yourself.

00:05:56.910 - 00:06:00.090

Time you enjoy wasting is not wasted time.

00:06:00.810 - 00:06:10.530

Enjoy this world and what it has to offer, but make sure to balance out the times of empty distraction and entertainment with something that feeds your mind and soul.

00:06:14.230 - 00:06:26.130

If you've got an ideal social life, but still feel a void when you lay your head down at night, make inventory of what you've been giving away your time and attention to, and maybe do some course correction.

00:06:27.470 - 00:06:41.910

Leisure can only take you so far when it comes to deep satisfaction, and you'll be surprised how much it can add to your sense of satisfaction in life to feed your inner self after long seasons of neglecting it.

00:06:41.910 - 00:06:44.830

Let's talk about things, objects, possessions.

00:06:44.830 - 00:06:54.550

I've embraced a more minimalistic take on the stuff that I own in recent years, and it was a relief to get rid of much of that stuff that I possessed but never really used.

00:06:55.510 - 00:07:03.450

It allowed me to only invest my money and effort in acquiring things that I actually use and that add value to my life.

00:07:05.690 - 00:07:19.290

So, you know, it's not a matter of not owning things, but the key thing here is that if any of those things we acquire ever start to dominate our time, it's time to reevaluate our investment in them.

00:07:32.285 - 00:07:38.205

There's this verse in the Christian Bible from the Apostle Paul that always spoke to me a lot.

00:07:39.865 - 00:07:43.705

It's in the book of 1st Corinthians, chapter 6, verse 12.

00:07:43.705 - 00:07:49.245

It says, All things are lawful to me, but not all things are helpful.

00:07:49.245 - 00:07:54.405

All things are lawful for me, but I will not be dominated by anything.

00:07:55.605 - 00:08:03.345

Now, there's a broader point that the Apostle Paul is trying to make in that chapter regarding Jewish law and the Christian faith.

00:08:03.345 - 00:08:08.045

But the spirit of that particular verse specifically is a very powerful one.

00:08:08.045 - 00:08:13.625

Do anything, but know that not all things are helping you or adding to your life.

00:08:13.625 - 00:08:17.885

You can do anything, but make sure that nothing that you're doing is dominating you.

00:08:17.885 - 00:08:20.845

Instead, have it be the other way around.

00:08:23.365 - 00:08:26.025

And then there's the people in our lives.

00:08:26.045 - 00:08:27.965

And this one's a bit tricky, right?

00:08:30.325 - 00:08:40.465

Many people live their lives with an almost subconscious idea that there are some people that they just have to give their time and attention to.

00:08:40.465 - 00:08:51.845

It could be because they're family, and if they're family, well, you've got to put up with them no matter how mentally numb and emotionally exhausted you walk away from each encounter with them.

00:08:53.125 - 00:08:58.245

But do you really have to give them your precious time and attention?

00:09:04.912 - 00:09:14.292

And even if circumstances don't allow you to be apart from that toxic individual, do you have to engage with them when they try to engage with you?

00:09:14.292 - 00:09:17.792

The answer to most of these scenarios is...

00:09:17.792 - 00:09:19.232

<v SPEAKER\_2>No.

00:09:19.232 - 00:09:25.352

The truth is that toxic family relationships are one of the biggest traps human beings fall into.

00:09:25.352 - 00:09:30.492

Blood ties seem to supersede individual well-being in some cases.

00:09:32.352 - 00:09:34.472

And that's simply not right.

00:09:38.232 - 00:09:41.492

Try these three steps when you can.

00:09:45.152 - 00:09:53.812

First, make a written or at the very least a mental inventory of what you spend your time and attention on any given day.

00:09:56.372 - 00:10:00.152

Break it down by the 24 hours in the day if you need to.

00:10:03.032 - 00:10:04.892

How much time is spent sleeping?

00:10:04.892 - 00:10:06.152

How much working?

00:10:06.152 - 00:10:07.472

How much being entertained?

00:10:07.472 - 00:10:08.452

How much learning?

00:10:08.452 - 00:10:10.092

How much feeding your soul?

00:10:10.092 - 00:10:13.012

How much on the people you care about?

00:10:13.012 - 00:10:15.252

How much on a hobby or pastime?

00:10:15.252 - 00:10:17.332

How much helping others?

00:10:19.432 - 00:10:30.052

Second, evaluate if when you're seemingly giving your time to that activity, thing or person, you're actually giving your attention as well.

00:10:32.772 - 00:10:37.972

You might be fooling yourself on this point and not getting the most out of that time.

00:10:39.952 - 00:10:45.412

Third, evaluate if you should cut back or cut out something from that list.

00:10:45.412 - 00:10:48.412

Think about any toxic activities or people.

00:10:48.412 - 00:10:50.832

These should be the first things to re-evaluate.

00:10:53.232 - 00:10:58.012

Think also of what you own that adds absolutely nothing to your life.

00:11:00.552 - 00:11:03.152

Re-evaluate.

00:11:03.152 - 00:11:07.452

<v SPEAKER\_2>Question.

00:11:07.452 - 00:11:18.572

You'd be surprised by the tremendous difference it can make to shed activities, things, and people that add nothing but negativity to your existence.

00:11:28.052 - 00:11:38.852

Make sure you're exchanging your time and attention for something that will result in growth, peace, joy, prosperity, happiness, better relationships.

00:11:41.232 - 00:11:45.532

Protect your time and attention, friends.

00:11:45.532 - 00:11:47.932

Value them.

00:11:47.932 - 00:11:52.192

Remember, once you give them, you can't take them back.

00:11:52.212 - 00:11:58.372

And, perhaps the most important thing, they are not infinite.

00:11:58.372 - 00:12:05.832

They're a finite resource, because our time on this earth is finite.

00:12:09.152 - 00:12:11.612

And that shouldn't be a depressing thought.

00:12:11.612 - 00:12:16.812

That should just make these two resources that much more valuable to you.

00:12:19.432 - 00:12:25.092

You can start with at least one change, then a second, then a third.

00:12:26.192 - 00:12:37.892

It'll be worth the effort, because your time and your attention are the only two things that are really, truly yours.

00:12:37.892 - 00:12:41.612

Let me know how that goes, and let me know what you think.

00:12:41.612 - 00:12:46.232

You can write me at [contactamusing at gmail.com](mailto:contactamusing@gmail.com).

00:12:47.432 - 00:12:50.332

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00:12:58.852 - 00:13:07.772

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00:13:09.952 - 00:13:11.392

I'll catch you in the next episode, friends.