

Chapter 7 (Defending time)

Schrödinger's cat walks into the bar and doesn't

Philosophy is an interesting cat. Speaking of cats, the scientist Schrödinger has a theory that formulates *all things are in a state of flux until we observe them*. In English it can be described this way. A cat is in a box. Poison is inside the box too. Yet, we cannot see inside it. What is really happening within the box? Is the cat dead or alive? We just don't know until we lift the box and see the cat. Schrödinger's hypothesis questions: how can we believe in what we can't see?

While in your teens, you were faced with choices. Choices like furthering your schooling, going to work, or doing whatever else comes to mind. You could travel and work all over the world. Many people do that. What if you married your high school sweet heart? Did you get pregnant or get hit by a car? What circumstances did you deal with as you left your teens? I want to take you back to those days. What did you plan to do outside of high school? Can you remember? You made plans in your dreams for a future you could not see yet.

Did you plan on getting married? What were your plans beyond the alter? Did you want kids or did you plan on travel the world over first? Was there a career path looming or are you a stay-at-home spouse? What did life's plans look like as your crossed into your twenties? You're the cat in the box. All the possibilities are there for the taking. In that moment, you could be anything and nothing. It's your choice. Of course, there are those who say that fate decides. Predestination decides. Someone told me that every alternative reality is the flip of a coin. What path did the coin flip alter? Schrödinger says (as the cat) that you can actually be an infinite possibility waiting to be discovered as we lift the box. Now, I don't want to lift your box just yet. Let's think about it for a bit.

Chapter 7 (Defending time)

Each decision you made was done for a reason. Were those decisions made at a cost? People use a bank or securities firm to protect what's theirs. Nobody will steal your gold if it's in Fort Knox. Your home is safe if you have a security system. Some people buy life insurance. We do a lot of things to protect our investment. I will ask you this? Would you protect these things if someone was trying to steal it? How far would you go to defend your prize possessions? In America I have read stories of a home owner shooting a burglar several times. It seems excessive, but is it. How valuable are the things in your home? What are your valuables worth to you?

Let's talk about a certain person in your home: you. Are you valuable? Is your time valuable? Yes, I know a business man says time is money. People have personal calendars to keep track of their lives. There are work schedules and coffee dates. We do try to manage our time. To make the best use of it. Yet, it's ascetic to me. Our dealings with time are just surface talk. The management of our personal time looks good on the outside. Yet, I'm not convinced that we defend it as we should. Is it that valuable to you? In our mind, we claim to own our life and time. Yet, people have demands. Work has demands. It's normal to have these so-called pressures placed on our time. Yet, it's still is ours isn't it? Would you defend it? Pay a cost to keep it safe?

What I'm getting at is how are you defending your time? On top of that, what is the value of your time? How precious is it to you? I'm not talking about entering a room and everything needs to stop because your there. Your time is not royalty to others. What I'm leaning towards is putting a heartfelt price on your time. I mentioned that the world average of life is seventy-one years. Let that sink in. Midlife is not fiftyish. No, it's about thirty-five years old! In all the stories

Chapter 7 (Defending time)

I recounted in chapter three, time was wasted in disfunction. Twenty plus years were used up trying to achieve the unachievable! Was their precious time used up, lived, or wasted?

It's your time! Let me repeat that again, it's your time now. When you die, your time is finished. Also, when you die, other people's time is not finished. Why on earth do we give our time to others to waste? You just don't have that much time to waste, do you? Half way, by average, is thirty-five! Are you really going to waste twenty to thirty years trying to make someone love you? Trying to win a lottery? There's nothing wrong with playing the lottery, but make sure the rest of your time is spent living. We invest time in a marriage but isn't your time worth investing in too? Do you always have to fulfill their dreams and do their things? Our focus seems to wander away from ourselves far too much. Suddenly, we realize twenty years have gone by and we've done nothing to make our personal lives better.

We need to see value in our time. I listen to crime podcasts that recount thousands of murders across the world. It's very disheartening. The biggest thing I noticed is fate. Normal people living normal lives, yet fate had other plans. Many of these people that were murdered were quite young. I mentioned in a pervious chapter that in one show they have a theme "*don't be an irony.*" The Darwin awards go to people who found stupid ways to die. In one of these murder stories, the mom did everything to please her evil husband. She even killed her first born just to keep the secret. In the end she went to jail for several crimes. Was it worth her time to live that way? Yes, it's hers to do with as she likes. What does this woman now do with her time in Jail? When she gets out, she will be far closer to seventy-one years old. It's a life wasted isn't it?

So many people are spending time with bad people while participating in unethical situations. It's all the "*in the moment*" stuff. How many murders have I listened to where the victim went to a late-night party instead of studying or sleeping! They never came home because

Chapter 7 (Defending time)

fate followed them there. Now, I'm not that big on fate or predestination but seriously, people seem to die more often while doing the wrong thing. I'm not blaming the victim half as much as blaming how they defend their time. In school, time says study. At work, time says show up today, on time! Time asks you to go buy flowers now. To love the best, you can now. Yet, it's your time to share. Would you give away gas for your car right after you bought it? Give it away even if you needed it? No! So, why do we frivolously give away our precious time to fate, laziness, distraction, and "*in the moment*" anarchy? Isn't our time worth more than just frivolously giving it away? Spend it wisely now!

It's not about being boring. Oh, but we say that, don't we? We think partying, life in the fast lane, and gambling on risky ventures is time well spent. Yet, time is spent focusing on the things we're doing (in the moment). Instead, maybe we should be looking at the amount of "time" we're spending. A party is fun, but at the cost of studying? Gambling is exciting, yet at the cost of food or rent? It's about perspective. When we start giving time away to the things that hinder important ventures, that's when the trouble starts. It's not just about focusing on work or relationships. It's easy to say we are "trying" to use time for our benefit. Trying to love an abuser is time well spent isn't it? Trying to win the big haul gambling all the time is productive isn't it? Partying is good for the soul so we spend time doing it. People could twist this around and call it an investment. I believe we abuse much of the time we are given doing things that really don't accomplish much.

We tell a ton of personal lies. *They need me. I never get to just relax and just let loose.* There are a ton of these lies. Yet, other things like the ability to buy food and health seems to be pushed to the back of the line. A smoker will smoke because it's their life. Yes, it is. Will the sensation of smoking be worth cutting off twenty years of your life? I know a guy who always

Chapter 7 (Defending time)

said he shouldn't smoke but it's his only bad habit that he loves. He died at fifty. Honestly, his love for smoking trumped his love for living. Really? He was willing to give up twenty-one years (on avg) just to smoke. I know people put very little stock in the time they have. How do I know that? It's the lies that justify wasting time.

It's your life. I get that. I hate to inform you but death will win. You only have so much time before you meet him too. Yet, you will meet him! I suspect most people do not want to meet the grim reaper. We spend a ton of time trying to be as safe as we can directly because we don't want to meet our maker early. So, with that said, why screw around with your time? I was told point blank by several people not to marry my first wife. The "point blank" hints were there. Did I hate her cheating instances? Did I care that she loved to party too much? Yet, I did it. I married her. Clearly, those eleven-plus years were wasted waiting for the divorce. I stepped on that path intentionally. I knew it but I was willing to gamble with my time. To invest in a failed project.

In the mirror, I realized that (outside of marriage) I had no clue who I was. I gave her the better part of eleven years to torment. I did it. I focused on the personal lie. I lived and worked for her and the kids at the expense of the personal me. The lie: *I was the chivalry husband!* Could I have done both? Worked on them and me? Sure, I could have, but when the people close to you call you worthless, you don't work on worthless things. Instead, you deem your time worthless and give it away. It comes back to "indestructible" by Matthew Good. *we won't say a thing, as you give your life away.* They didn't say anything either. I let them take my time and call the shots. I did it.

What if it's not someone else's time or life that your living? It's just yours. Why live through their life? Why cater to their time more than yours? On a plane, they ask you to do one

Chapter 7 (Defending time)

very important thing first. If the air is sucked out of the cabin do you save your kids or yourself first? The plane gets it! They say your useless to your kids if you don't put on your mask first. It's nice to love first. To serve first. It's really nice and ethical. Yet, if your mask is not on first your dead and useless to anyone. This is what happens in a divorce scenario, you give your time away and "in time" they leave. It's over when your time becomes boring or a nuisance. Then you find yourself standing in front of the mirror. The image will show you a ton of time lost. The mirror sees no personal identity because your lost. How much time is then spent trying to learn how to put the mask on first? To know you first? Your no good to anyone if your mask is not on first. It took me another ten years on top of the marriage just to break even on who I am. That's twenty-one years trying to find me. Don't tell me it's not wasted time.

With that said, we need to lift the box now. Let's open your life. What has the public been seeing? What is real and what is a façade? It's your life. What does that look like? It's finding yourself 101. Knowing you for dummies. Look, you're not stupid or a dummy if you have wasted time. We all do. It's a human thing. Yet, we can become better at defending the time we have left. Yes, it does mean we need to say: *no more!* Yes, it does mean we need to take a personal inventory on how we share "our" personal time. How do you treat and value your time? What is in your box as you look inside?

Take me for instance. I do a lot with my wife. We love watching sports, movies, and TV shows together. There are a ton of church events and coffee dates on the agenda. Yet, I insist on writing time. Insist, on time unloading my work day. Just give me an hour after work to unload my brain. Usually, in that moment, I work out and read. Sometimes my wife asks me to do something during those times. I don't just drop my time but work with my time. I'll counter, can

Chapter 7 (Defending time)

we do it in an hour “dear?” Sometimes I would even say “not today.” It’s tough to do, but she does the same with me. We need to share and defend our personal time.

Defending time seems like an impenetrable wall or an impossible war. It’s not but it sure feels like it. Imagine being an abused wife? What kind of time does she get to keep? In one of my murder podcasts a woman met a man in university. They fell in love and moved in together way too quick. He seemed so nice. They did everything together. All of a sudden, her time was slowly becoming his time. She wanted to visit a friend and he pouted. She wanted to buy something and he winced. Amazingly, this woman was reduced to knitting her own socks while staying home all the time. She lost all her friends and family. Miraculously, she eventually left him. It’s amazing he didn’t kill her. This abuser did; however, stalked her. What a tug-o-war with her time.

You must, at all costs, defend your time. Yes, it’s affected me listening to those murder podcasts. So many people giving up their personal time and space to be owned by another. The crazy part in the story above is his past. This woman decided afterwards to investigate her stalker. He had done it before. I do believe that he had even killed the next girl he dated. This abused woman was stalked for sixteen years before he went to jail. How much time was wasted being afraid? Think about it: they dated, moved in together, and down the road she finally left. Then add in the sixteen years of torment. On top of that is the time spend recuperating. It takes time to get past a bad relationship. To get past someone stalking you. How much time is that in total? What if she had defended her time on day one?

It’s the fateful meeting of two totally different people. Do you really think these things happen by accident? Why should you defend your time? Most abusers did not start with you. They have history and plenty of signs. Very big billboard types signs that are screaming you’re

Chapter 7 (Defending time)

going the wrong way! Yet, they are the hunters. What works best for the abuser? Finding someone who will not defend their time or notice signs. Honestly, most abusive cases swirl around guys who are hunting for the passive girl who just wants to love and be loved. How do you reel in this type of girl? Love her, and show you care. It's not about the stupid boy or girl meets Jeckle and Hyde. No, it's about learning to defend your time. These types of predators won't stick around with time defenders plain and simple. They need passive prey.

How to avoid an abusive relationship 101? Defend your time! Make your time on this earth important. So important that you will guard it. The lies we tell ourselves appear to be selfish. That little voice inside will guilt you into believing your being rude and prideful in coveting your time. Yet, the stealers and abusers will take it if you give it "*we won't say a thing, as you give your life away.*" Never forget that verse. This has far less to do with character. However, abusers will tell you otherwise. This has to do with loving yourself and loving your own life. Do you really think a marriage or relationship is about giving up one's character, freedoms, and identity to belong to another?

Yes, the Bible says we should give ourselves to one another in love. That is true. It also says we should not cut our hair and that women should cover their head in prayer. Women should honor their husband! Yes, but least we forget husbands are to honor their wives too. The Bible is taken out of context a ton. People will take you out of context as well. They will say that defending your time is a lack of love. You're showing a lack of humility. So, women should not wear makeup and stay in the kitchen bare foot and pregnant to show humility? Men should work all the overtime they can, paint the house, shovel the snow, mow the lawn, and be a coach of the kids in sports? Do everything their spouse asks of them. Anything less is showing a lack of love and commitment to her and the family, right? Where is your time found in all that?

Chapter 7 (Defending time)

Yet, let's go back to Jenny. Why did she break her character and cheat? Why indeed? It's because she backed herself into a corner. It began with Jenny's vow to never divorce. Yet, in the same corner was a devotion to letting sin and abuse run amuck because we must "turn the other cheek" at all costs? All the sex, parties, and lackadaisical devotion to God was piled up in the corner too. What made her break from everything she stood for? It was not having an out to tell her parents they were right all along. Pride blocked that. It was not having an out to telling herself that she had wasted too many years in a bad relationship. The vows blocked that. Jenny has a pretty crowded corner! So, she explodes in anger, energy, frustration and passion on this unsuspecting man that was taking her home.

Now comes the kicker. Jenny tells the cheating husband that she is just like him. Jenny is slowly slipping away from herself and into something else. Time is slipping too. If Jenny had defended her character in the first place, she would have never let the cheating tiger out. Never fed it with frustration, humiliation, and undirected passion. It's because Jenny never learned to guard her time. Instead, she let him abuse it. In the end, Jenny is losing what little time she has left.

Defending time is like this from the Bible on love:

1 Corinthians 13 *"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails."*

You can't use love as an excuse. Love demands love back. You can't love abuse. You can't love excuses. I will also stare you straight in the face and say you must love yourself. Put

Chapter 7 (Defending time)

on the mask first! I can't believe how many people have said to me *you mean to say I have a right to be loved?* Absolutely you do! Yet, abusers will claim that it's arrogant and selfish. It comes back to the broken record repeating *they won't say a thing as you give your life away.* Conversely, abusers will most certainly comment on your character if you try and defend your time. They will play the guilt and shame card. In the end, Jenny had to stand in front of the mirror and play that card on herself. Was this all her fault? That's the rub on wasted time. Now she will spend enormous amounts of time doubting her character and actions.

How does defending time work exactly? Well, it begins in the mirror. To look yourself in the face and say *my time is important.* That *my time is worth gold.* What you don't say is *my time is more important than yours.* That *their time is more important than mine.* This has to be a mentality thing. Just take it slow. To defend your time, you must know the difference between using your time as a tool, weapon, and bargaining chip vs believing you have a responsibility to defend and value your time.

What I mean is this. Your time should not be used to manipulate others. It's not more important than others. On the flip side your time is worth just as much as others. We need to guard this thing called time because you need to. Giving it away without a thought or care is damaging to the life you have left. If you only had one hundred dollars to live on, would you give 30 dollars away without a care? Would you gamble away fifty? It comes back to the mask first thing. To give a bit of your time you must have time to give. You must be healthy and surviving before you can share your life with others.

The King James version of 1 Corinthians 13 exchanges the word love with the word charity. That took me by surprise. Yet, we are asked to be charitable with our time towards others. Charity feels like a sharing thing, good thing, and loving thing to do. For the first thirty-

Chapter 7 (Defending time)

three years of my life, I was charitable towards anything but me. Where did that get me? Missing on my divorce papers was the word charitable. No, she said I was never there. Honestly, in the mirror, I could have said the same thing. A listless man had left that marriage. When everything goes down at-least be loving or charitable towards yourself. Who else do you have when your alone?

I gave a talk to a bunch of ladies on challenging their spouse to be better. Better for them? Actually no, I was asking them to challenge their spouse to be all they can be. I pointed out that an (charitable) husband or wife comes from them excelling. Through this whole cancer thing, my wife can start to live now. People have noticed that a weight has been lifted off her shoulders. Her time was taken away by doctors and hospital visits. Not anymore, and you can tell. To a cancer survivor, time has become worth something. Now she wants to use her time more effectively, productively. I suspect she loves herself more than she did. We need to challenge our love ones to use their time to the best of their ability. Why wait for tragedy to bring that out? That goes for the person in the mirror too. Be charitable towards yourself now!

Cancer challenged my wife to live a better life. What did that mean to her? She decided to have fun, eat well, and live for life. It's interesting that she admitted that she was on cruise mode before. Just doing whatever life threw at her, trying not to rock the boat. Not anymore! Time has become precious. My wife has gone back to school. She wants to travel. Her time is defended now. There is now time to do puzzles, TV, and coffee dates. These things happened before, but now they are intentional. That's it really, to defend time, you have to be intentional.

There is a crime junkie rule that states *be rude and be safe*. The statement means it's paramount that a creepy stranger be ignored. So many young girls have died because they were not rude. They did not guard their safety over being rude. I would even say they did not defend

Chapter 7 (Defending time)

their time over being rude either. Don't give creepy dudes any of your time. It might cost you more than you thought. It's not rude to defend your time. That one single action could save you years of trouble and possibly avoid being called an irony. If defending your time means being rude then "be rude." You have to learn that their perception of rude does not matter. A lady asked me if I thought I was hot. I said yes. She then proclaimed I was arrogant and self-centered. What would you have me say "no, I'm a lowly mutt?" Defend your beliefs, space, time, and character. It's not rude!

You will know who accepts you pretty quick. Just say *no* and wait for the response. You will get one of three remarks. There is the slow hesitant response of *ah, ok?* There will be the fast response of *I don't think that's good enough*. The third is inquiring *why it's no*, in an honest loving way. The hesitant response is funny. They sheepishly give this type of response to fuel your guilt, *you won't do as I ask?* The second is just curt and to the point. *You will do what I want right now, chop, chop!* The last one is quite rare. Why can't someone ask if there is a better time or way to get the request done? People will respond to your time request. They always do.

At work they offer overtime. I generally never take it. Time with family overshadows money every time. Remember the list I mentioned in chapter 1? Family is above work. Yet, someone said that I was not being responsible to my family. I should put work over family. That my friend is their opinion. It's how they view their time, not mine. They want me to spend my time their way. I'm not going to be goaded (in the slightest way) by what they think of my time management. Why? It's my time and I'm defending it. The slow response of "no" wants to find a way to get me to do it in their time. The ignorant response needs me to respect them above my own person. The last one needs it done but is willing to work with me. People need to know my boundaries with my time, like not working overtime.

Chapter 7 (Defending time)

Why do people need depression pills? Why do they avoid people, and refuse to volunteer? It's because they refuse to defend their time. I have to ask you this? How did people survive one hundred years ago? I can't say for sure but I suspect that suicide is far greater today. We are told there is a pill for everything. That we are the victim of mental illness. People need to get in line and function according to society rules. You must talk, act, and live a certain way. Yet, as individuals, that's not how we roll in our hearts and minds. We want to be ourselves. To be accepted rather than assimilated. The pressure to conform to other people's pictures of the perfect society is killing us. We are first and foremost individuals.

On the job, I try and work to the maximum of my ability. Trust me, at a government job I have had my disagreements about that. As a union member I am not in great standing with them. I don't play the "my time is their time game." I don't work overtime. Years ago, I was casual worker. They would send us home if we ran out of work. You know the drill. The union says slow down and stretch it out. I never did that and it cost me friendships. Yet, who got hired first? It's me! Why? I defended my time and I defended the company's time. Sometimes you have to take the hit and do the honest thing to be noticed the right way. In 1924, Eric Liddell fought for the right to take Sunday off for the Lord. He refused to run in the Olympics on Sunday. Mr. Liddell fought for his time and won! Sometimes defending your time will be a blessing in the end. They even made a movie about it called Chariots of Fire!

It's the road less traveled that tends to succeed. The way everybody else goes is usually just good enough. What does society logic dictate? Work all the time and you will get rich and succeed. Party and have fun because those that did turned out all right. Worry about school, family, and life in the future. Borrow and buy now. Why wait? Yet, wasting time can be seen in several ways. We waste money paying interest. We waste time by scrambling to make a career

Chapter 7 (Defending time)

when we hit forty. I did! I do know a lady who decided to have children later in life and is now dying of cancer with a young baby. It's nuts how we waste time. We want to do the things like have a family, go on trips, and reading a book. So many people say they will do it later in life. Then in comes the doctors that say time has run out. Partying, overtime, and many other fun things suck up time. More often than not, the easy fun path is not doing the right thing.

But the right thing is boring? Bill Gates said that he was bullied because he was a nerd. Those bullies now work for the nerd. The one who took an extra hour studying probably got good grades. Their life path most likely had easier choices in the long run. They say statistically Christians live longer and have less stress. I don't know if it's true, yet if you hope in a powerful being to help you through the messes in life, you're probably stressed less. Getting an education first probably makes wealth easier to obtain. It's not rocket science. These types of people took time to make a path smoother. Why fight life trying to figure it out on your own. What do they say? Bring the right tool to do the job. That goes with time management too.

How to fix the time mess? For a while you will have to defend time more often. It will be the process of weeding out those who will not accept you. They want to control your time. Even you will fight the right to own your time. The lies will keep creeping in. We love to look good by giving ourselves away. This is an exercise in defiance of the norm. We must grow strong in defense. How do we do that? It begins with knowing who we are. Knowing what we like. Understanding your limits. Defend your time! I know I've used that word fifty times in the last few paragraphs alone. Yet, we must defend it. We must treasure it. We must admit that we have frivolously given away too much of our precious limited time. It's time to fight for the right to control our own time!