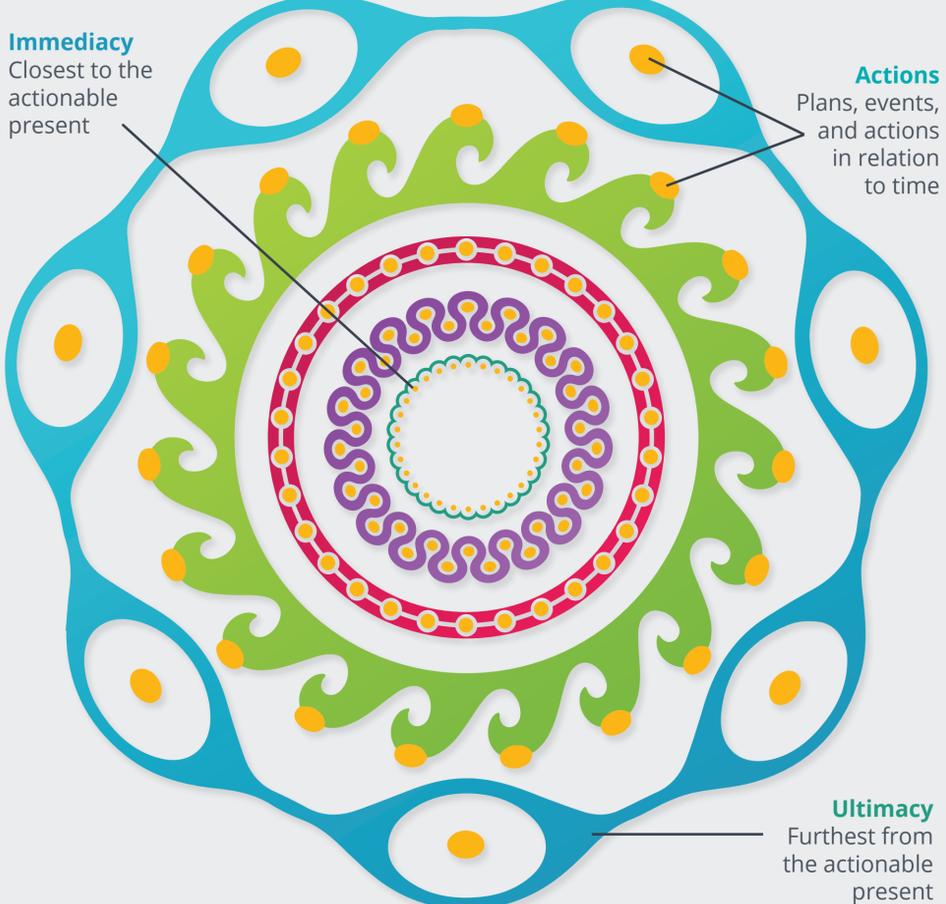


THE 5 PRIMAL FLOWS OF TIME

Mastering Time Management

By Justin McKinley

Although there are countless tools to track, record, and plan the minutia of time, if you can fully connect with your primal relationships with time, you'll find it easier to focus on the holistic big picture. To do so, you have to organize your thoughts, actions, and goals into the five primal flows (i.e., fundamental behaviors) we all use every day to manage the abstract of time and create change (action) in our lives. If you can start thinking of time in the terms of how -- as a behavior or a method of travel -- then you'll be more conscious of time and the means to master it.



Quantum Model

In the quantum model of the five primal flows of time, you can see the hierarchy of immediacy for each flow and the relative amount of thought needed for the actions (the yellow dots) within each flow. The spontaneous flow, being the most immediate and needing the least amount of thought for an action, is in the center. The envisioned flow, being the furthest in the future and needing the most amount of thought to achieve, encircles all of the other flows of time.

As you move further out from the center, the actions and events within each flow also become more dependent on the outcomes of actions and events in the levels (quantums) beneath it.

- Spontaneous
- Reactive
- Cyclical
- Proactive
- Envisioned

1 Spontaneous



For the spontaneous flow, imagine time sprouting out to spur-of-the-moment actions.

What can I do now?

As our most immediate interaction with time, the spontaneous flow requires no stimuli or force to react to. Our spontaneous behaviors can cause change to happen just because we can at the moment. It's our most free and independent relationship with time, the flow we have the most control over.



As an Individual
Often involves unplanned actions that don't necessarily consider potential outcomes or consequences.



As an Organization
Often involves innovation, brainstorming, and a focus on creativity not constrained by standard operations.

2 Reactive



For the reactive flow, imagine time navigating around events in order to make actions.

What must or should I do?

Perhaps our most challenging interaction with time, the reactive flow always requires a response. Our reactive behaviors cause change to happen because we have to or because we are compelled to by external or internal forces. It's our most entangled relationship with time, the flow we have the least control over.



As an Individual
Often involves responding to an external event, whether expected or unexpected, or to an internal need that must be satisfied.



As an Organization
Often involves contingencies for unexpected events and preparedness for events that are expected to happen inevitably but cannot be avoided.

3 Cyclical



For the cyclical flow, imagine time circling around or orbiting recurring actions.

What do I do again and again?

Arguably our most comfortable interaction with time, the cyclical flow always governs repetition and patterns. Our cyclical behaviors can cause change to repeat, whether in an identical fashion or in progressive iterations. It's our most reliable relationship with time, the flow we can control with a great deal of certainty and predictability.



As an Individual
Often involves your routines and circadian rhythms, as well as your attention to recurring patterns of behavior and stimuli.



As an Organization
Often involves routines, processes, and efficiencies, as well as an attention to feedback and iterative development.

4 Proactive



For the proactive flow, imagine time moving actions forward in waves.

What can I plan to do?

Definitely our most pragmatic interaction with time, the proactive flow encompasses our attainable short-term goals. Our proactive behaviors cause change to happen through planned actions that lead to accomplishments or future events. It's our most empowering relationship with time, the flow we have the most control over in affecting our near future.



As an Individual
Often involves voluntary plans for the near future, those that stand alone or build toward an envisioned goal.



As an Organization
Often involves short-term projects, including independent endeavors or those that might be part of greater, envisioned goals.

5 Envisioned



For the envisioned flow, imagine time moving bubbles of action into the far future.

What can I ultimately achieve?

Certainly our most elusive interaction with time, the envisioned flow carries our dreams and long-term goals forward. Our envisioned behaviors cause change to happen by directing actions within all the other flows toward a greater achievement or state of being. It's our most hopeful and passionate relationship with time, the flow we struggle the most to control and actualize.



As an Individual
Often involves long-term goals and aspirations to fulfill your greater purpose, meaning, and happiness in life.



As an Organization
Often involves fulfilling an organization's greater mission, vision, and long-term achievements.