

Is Your Time Worth Saving?

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Abstract

Do you ever doubt your calling? A majority of large animal veterinarians face days that are booked solid. It doesn't matter if they're in an ambulatory setting, truck-in setting, or referral setting; there simply is no shortage of work for large animal veterinarians. This fact is unlikely to change as the baby boomer veterinarians age out of practice and vet schools continue to see <5% of their students practicing large animal medicine at 1 year post-graduation.¹ Knowing this, how do practitioners avoid the feelings that are commonly associated with such demands upon their time; feelings of overwhelm, being overworked, and burned out? All of which are known to result in significant ill-being, a lack of prosperity, happiness and health.

The current state of the industry reminds the author of a quote from Philipp Stölzl's *The Physician* in which a young physician (Robert Cole) questions his mentor (Ibn Sina) after a particularly deadly outbreak of plague strikes their city, asking him; "Do you ever doubt your calling?" Ibn Sina then pauses in thought and responds; "Every Morning. Every Evening. In between, I work too hard to think about it."²⁹

This has become the default status within our realm of the veterinary industry. Practitioners can't question their calling, their career, because they don't have time to. They must keep plugging away day to day just to get the work done. However, this ignores several basic human needs, commonly referred to as "basic psychological needs" (BPN) which are necessary to craft motivation, create positive emotions and establish a state of flourishing. Basic psychological needs are governed by 3 unique entities; autonomy or a sense of control over our lives, competency or the ability to learn, interact and develop with our environment, and relatedness or the ability to build and foster meaningful relationships.² Ironically, if we force large animal practitioners to slow down enough to reflect upon their best moments in medicine they often describe times in which they had felt free to fulfill these 3 basic needs.

The question then becomes; how do we create more of these highly satisfying moments for practitioners? They will never be able to rid themselves of many of their less psychologically fulfilling duties. No matter what, things like rectal exams, foot work and routine surgery will always represent a primary avenue of revenue and time

26 commitment for them but could be considered mundane. Making the primary question; “How do practitioners find
27 more time in an already busy day?”

28 In order to do this veterinarians must begin to redefine time, reconsider its value, reflect upon just how efficaciously
29 it is used, and intensify its management.

30 Keywords: Time, Burnout, Money, Management, Efficacy

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32

33 Redefining time

34 Time is elastic

35 “Time is elastic. It stretches to accommodate what we need or want to do with it.” - Laura Vanderkam

36 Many people think of time as a finite measure, incapable of growth but seemingly always shrinking in
37 availability. This belief has created an entire generation of veterinarians that have struggled with a lack of enough
38 time. They don't have time to do the things they want to do. Yet when presented with opportunities that are of great
39 personal value, they can suddenly find time to engage in that activity.

40 Where does this “superhuman” ability to suddenly manipulate time come from?

41 The author would argue that these unique opportunities motivate us to action via their potential to satisfy BPN. That
42 potential then acts as their motivator to find time for the activity. Despite the commonality of this occurrence in
43 practice this idea is still a foreign concept to many veterinarians.

44 The idea being that if a practitioner concentrates less upon trying to save time for everything they need to do and
45 instead builds a life and career around satisficing these needs time would suddenly become more elastic for them.

46 This represents a concept that is often foreign and intimidating to many.

47 Ironically, this is a skill that most veterinarians already use, they just don't do it at a conscious, mindful level. Most
48 individuals can elicit similar personal experiences with the concept of time elasticity with a small amount of self-
49 reflection and awareness.

50 To elicit a relatable example the author encourages clients to use a reflection technique in which they attempt to
51 mindfully identify their prior use of time elasticity.³ Getting the practitioner to focus upon a time in their career when
52 they experienced their most effective, productive, and rewarding times in practice.

53 The goal of this exercise being to expose participants to the power of leveraging time elasticity to create basic
54 psychological need satisfaction (BPNS) or the achievement of autonomy, relatedness, and competency. Defined by
55 Laura Vanderkam in her now famous quote, "Time is elastic. It stretches to accommodate what we need or want to
56 do with it." Time elasticity refers to our ability to find time to do things when we autonomously deem them
57 important or need fulfilling.

58 Vanderkam uses the example of a busy mother, business owner and high performer in her 2016 TED Talk.³
59 Referencing a personal time log her client had created; she knew that this client had almost no free time in her
60 week. Yet, when presented with an emergency breakdown and subsequent flood in her house this client was able to
61 find 6 hours in her busy day to identify and coordinate contractors for cleanup and correction of the plumbing
62 problem, seemingly becoming able to manipulate and create additional time to rectify this problem.

63 Using this story as our reflective model, let's do a brief exercise. Think of a time when one of your biggest or best
64 clients required you to do a large project or consulting report that was of deep interest to you. Knowing that your
65 days are like every other practitioners, it is unlikely that you had open hours to work on this project. Yet invariably
66 you found time to get the job done. When you really consider the moment, it's likely that it represents one of the top
67 25% of positive experiences you've had in your career. Despite "not" having time to engage in the activity prior to
68 that client's request you found a way to complete the project.

69 After you complete this exercise take a moment to find a post-it note, write down how exactly you believe you were
70 able to create time for this project and then place it in a prominent location at work or home. By carefully
71 considering when you did the work, the resources you used, the skills you learned, and who helped you along the
72 way you will have crafted the foundation for your understanding and future manipulation of time elasticity.

73 For some experiences the motivation originates from the sense that the project is a personal choice and by it's very
74 doing you gain a feeling of control back. For others the powerful experience of learning and growing one's skillset to
75 meet the client's challenge was motivation enough. Still others find that the simple act of service to the client and
76 feeling more closely connected to them and their needs is enough motivation. But likely as you reflect it will be a
77 unique combination of each of these that motivated you to carve out and stretch your very limited resource of time
78 to meet the client's needs.²

79 This reflective exercise becomes a very teachable moment for budding professionals. Showing them how, when
80 presented with an opportunity to meet their BPN's, they were able to make time more elastic and to "find time" to
81 do the things that matter to them. The moment of realization being that when they are presented with a need to find
82 time for something that truly matters to them they can stretch and manipulate time and make "it" happen.

83 It is this redefinition of time's finitude that becomes their first step toward a deeper understanding as well as a
84 driving need for efficient time utilization as well as time management. Beginning to make practitioners consider what
85 is the true value of time and more deeply what is a just reward for it's expenditure?

86

87 Time's value

88 Is time money?

89 Humans are just one cog in the infinite evolutionary machine. We have been programmed, just like every biologic
90 iteration before us, to evaluate energy expenditure vs its end result. Every action therefore needs justification. Filtering
91 the time expenditure opportunities so that the ones we choose result in the most potential "value" to us.

92 Currently, the most accessible measure of time's value is money; it is easily comprehensible, tactile and readily
93 measurable. In fact, it is so common and universally used it has its own catch phrase, "Time is Money." However, if
94 considered from an evolutionary context money, as a measure, is a counterintuitive and paradoxical metric for
95 valuing energy expenditure; who's maximization often results in less than efficacious time utilization.

96 Yielding subpar returns as related to an individual's achievement of a state of flourishing or overall happiness.

97 Hsee et al (2010) showed that human beings have 2 paradoxical desires that can be manipulated when monetary
98 measures are utilized as a primary measure of time efficacy.⁴ First, humans dread being idle and want to be
99 busy. Second, humans also need a reason to be busy and will relinquish an idle state unless there is a sufficiently
100 valuable “reward” for rallying to action.

101 These 2 conditions of idleness and busyness cannot exist at the same time. However, in today’s economic
102 environment, with abundant examples of tangible measurable rewards such as money being dangled in front of
103 practitioners, it’s easy for us to feel driven to action aka busyness when presented with a reward of money. Money’s
104 nature of being very tangible and easily measurable again makes it an ideal reward for busyness. One that the brain
105 can quickly process and evaluate.

106 This “ideal reward” has quickly become the “go to” measure for effective busyness. Sadly, before most practitioners
107 are aware of it their associative memory, their ability to learn and remember the relationship between unrelated
108 things takes over and they become trapped in the thinking that more money means they’re using their time
109 efficiently. Surrendering a sense of autonomy and instead having every second of their time defined by the amount
110 of money made within it.

111 Fortunately, money is only one measure of reward that activities can yield. Other less tangible rewards such as
112 BPNS, are also psychologically important metrics for time efficiency. Although less utilized because they are more
113 difficult to quantify, BPNS are just as or more important to an individual’s overall motivation and ultimate
114 flourishing. However a fixation on the more neurologically accessible measure of money dominates, resulting in
115 behavior that Hsee et al refer to as “Futile Busyness” or the act of making oneself busy doing tasks that serve no
116 meaningful purpose other than to avoid idleness.⁴

117 The danger of this futile busyness behavior comes into focus when considering the practitioner’s naturally busy
118 schedule. When managers present them with the ability to earn more money (measurable reward) by taking on more
119 tasks for more acceptable rewards, it only adds fuel to their unconscious evolutionary mechanisms, encouraging
120 them to take on more and more tasks to avoid an idle state. This results in the feeling that time must be traded for
121 maximal money rather than BPNS or a balanced combination of the two. Creating an environment that risks being
122 basic psychological need thwarting (BPNT) or filled with activities that frustrate basic psychological needs in favor
123 of the associated measurable external (monetary) rewards.

124 Basic psychological need thwarting behavior leaves veterinarians feeling only slightly better after completing
125 tasks than if they had been idle because they lack meaning, frustrate BPNS, and ultimately reduce feelings of
126 flourishing. This over time builds up ill-being causing the practitioner to develop a cognitive dissonance around
127 whether the time spent being busy was truly well spent.

128 The commercialization of time

129 Following this futile business logic practitioners become indoctrinated into the “Time is Money” cult; evaluating
130 every choice between opportunities solely through a lens of its monetary measure alone vs considering the BPNS
131 impact as well that results from that choice. This complete commercialization of time is a by-product of our
132 capitalistic society in which individuals sacrifice time now for a “future” reward.⁵

133 In recent years the commercialization of time has become more endemic in the veterinary profession. Rising vet
134 school costs have inflicted significant financial pressures upon recent graduates. Seeking to create students who are
135 able to manage these obligations many schools have become significantly more involved in their students pertinent
136 pre-career financial discussions.⁶ When interviewing current veterinary students, it is not infrequent that they have
137 been told exactly what they should make as a starting salary by their institutions as well as having been told it would
138 be unwise to accept less than X salary. However, very few students end up being educated about how to define an
139 appropriate work to time exchange through the context of BPNS as well as monetary compensation.

140 As a matter of concern, most of these early conversations seem to revolve around techniques that limit the budding
141 veterinarian’s time at work so they can experience BPNS outside their job; rather than seeking to improve/find a
142 job’s intrinsic value. Therefore, failing to help the future practitioner craft a job that uses multiple measures to assess
143 its time worthiness.

144 Such pervasive conversations about money at the pre-career stage sets up another generation of veterinarians to
145 wholly measure their success simply by monetary metric. Risking ignorance of other, perhaps more important,
146 supplemental time efficiency metrics.

147 This is expressly concerning when Niemiec et al (2009), showed that college graduates who set life goals at
148 graduation based upon more extrinsic outcomes (such as monetary compensation, fame, and social recognition) in
149 their looming career and then achieve them failed to see improvements in their psychological health at 1 year into

150 their career. As a result they should a lack of improvement in subjective well-being as well as a greater feelings of
151 ill-being (the feeling of being deficient in health, happiness or prosperity).⁷

152 Conversely, their peers who focused more upon intrinsic life goals at graduation (such as learning, sense of
153 competence and enjoyment) and then achieved these, saw marked increases in their well-being and decreases in
154 perceived ill-being.⁷ Niemiec conveys the importance and impact these early career conversations have upon an
155 individual's appropriate perceptions surrounding the commercialization of time and expected future career well/ill-
156 being even before earning potential has begun.

157 Devoe et al (2012) looked even deeper at the effects of the commercialization of time mentality by interviewing
158 actively employed workers.⁸ They challenged workers to think about how much income they generated per minute
159 worked; forcing them to calculate this value based off their wages. Creating individuals who were mindful of their
160 current time to money conversion measures. The researchers then presented the participants with several different
161 activities meant to induce happiness which were then followed by subsequent idle states.

162 Regardless of the activity or idle state, individuals who had calculated their value in terms of money for time enjoyed
163 the activities less than their control counterparts who had simply reported their annual income and time worked. Not
164 only did they experience less enjoyment, the treatment group also displayed marked increases in overall impatience;
165 a key behavioral marker of burnout. This condition that is one of the most common psychological conditions
166 affecting today's veterinary practitioner. This impatience, as related to "time is money" metrics, has these individuals
167 back on the futile busyness track immediately tracking down the next reward in an effort to maximize their time for
168 money.

169 Interestingly, impatience has also been found to down regulate the centers of the mind responsible for reflection and
170 mindful savoring of activities. Reducing the ability of the veterinarian to enjoy their monetary reward as well as
171 critically consider it. This associated inability to savor is concerning as the hedonic treadmill, or the idea that an
172 individual's level of happiness increases or decreases in response to positive/negative life events and then moves
173 back toward where it was prior to the activity/reward, is a readily recognized psychological phenomenon in which
174 individuals experience diminished positive returns for external rewards over time, quickly returning to their baseline
175 well-being after their initial reward.⁹

176 This is particularly prevalent when we consider monetary compensation is governed by Weber's Law. Stating that a
177 doubling in quantitative income must occur for a meaningful and intrapersonal measurable change to occur. Within
178 an individual Weber's law shows just how frustrating business can be if its monetary reward (usually small in
179 comparison to total compensation) will really not be felt until an individual's income doubles.¹⁰ It is also important
180 to note that Weber's Law is not limited to monetary rewards and also exists within other extrinsic rewards as well
181 including new positions, fame, social recognition, or property acquisition.¹⁰ As or more concerning than the
182 implications of Weber's law, is the professional's ignorance to mindfully consider other more rewarding
183 qualitative returns from the act of trading time for the doing of an activity; these being their opportunity to BPNS.

184 Practicing veterinarians who suspect they may have become victims of time commercialization can test themselves
185 for this mentality with a quick and easy self-assessment. Begin by booking an appointment slot of 15-60 minutes and
186 then forcing yourself to do nothing in that slot. Personal reflection is encouraged in this time but no other work or
187 external activity is permissible. If during this period you experience extreme anxiety, anxiousness or even stress
188 about this idle state regarding loss of production/service then they may be under some degree of time
189 commercialization bias.

190 By this point the reader is probably wondering, "Does monetary compensation matter at all?" Should the industry
191 just focus upon situations where BPNS occurs if they want to efficiently trade my time? The answer to this question
192 appears to be yes on both accounts.

193 Does money matter at all?

194 Can a practitioner's income or specifically time traded for money improve happiness alone? Two conflicting camps
195 have existed regarding this question since 2010. Kahnmann struck first in 2010 finding (Figure 1) that increasing
196 income can have a positive impact to a point; which in his study was \$75,000 USD.¹⁰ After this point, participants
197 saw little to no improvement in happiness.

198 In the other camp was Killingsworth. Their landmark study in 2021 used continuous well-being measures to identify
199 that happiness increased up to and beyond Kahnmann's \$75,000 USD threshold, challenging his findings.¹¹ Showing
200 that as income increased positive feelings continued to increase well beyond \$75,000 (Figure 2) challenging the

201 predominant thinking about the relationship between income and well-being and therefore the time for money
202 reward paradigm.

203 However, in 2023 Kahnmann and Killingsworth showed that neither of their findings were completely correct by
204 proving that there is actually a unique interaction between income and both emotional and life satisfaction.¹²In their
205 landmark adversarial collaboration they showed that additional income does improve both emotional and cognitive
206 well-being; but only if the individuals happiness was already above the 20th percentile prior to the income
207 increase(Figure 3).¹²

208 This result indicates the potential for a limited effect of income if significant levels of ill-being or lack of happiness
209 exists prior to attainment of increasing income. Proving that trading time for money alone will not always bring
210 elevated well-being.If the individual feels their work environment contains a significant amount of BPNT and
211 subsequent ill-being no level of compensation will result in an increased positive well-being environment.

212 Does money matter at all?The end result would appear to be just as black and white as many other scientific
213 theories.Most likely it does play a role in our happiness and subjective well-being, therefore it does warrant some
214 attention and resources when considering time efficacy.But just as important is our current and future well-being
215 prior to that income being realized.Without an elevated level of well-being that money for time trade will yield little
216 to no positive well-being result.

217 Just as importantly, the researchers showed that this is a non-linear effect with prior emotional well-being (greater
218 than the 20th percentile) having increasingly accelerating affects upon happiness when monetary rewards are realized
219 and increased. Therefore, investments in BPNS prior to and during attempted time for money transactions should
220 have marked effects upon happiness after the reward is received.

221 The active pursuit of trading time for BPNS, a prerequisite for subjective well-being, must not be ignored as well,
222 and at the least must balance with the practitioners pursuit of monetary measures.¹³It is at this time that we must
223 begin to actively consider ways in which we can re-educate the individual about well-being measures as an
224 alternative or invaluable supplement to monetary only measures of time efficacy.

225 If not only money then what measure(s)?

226 Subjective well-being, our proposed supplemental measure of effective time use seems to be the most literary
227 appropriate primary measure of efficient time utilization. Characterized by the creation of individuals who are
228 healthy, fully integrated and flourishing, elevating subjective well-being creates individuals who flourish at both life
229 and in their careers. These individuals are also highly motivated and routinely perform at a high level.¹³

230 Slep et al (2024) expansive meta-analysis of over 800 independent research sample sets proves that interpersonal
231 settings, such as veterinary clinics, that routinely support expressions of autonomy, competency, and relatedness
232 (BPNS) produced significant effects upon subjective well-being, motivation and performance (the author encourages
233 owners and aspiring owners looking to improve this aspect of their clinic culture to review this paper for BPNS
234 intervention ideas as the discussion of exactly how to implement such protocols extends beyond the scope of this
235 paper).¹³

236 Accepting these results practitioners can safely infer that individuals who routinely seek experiences that are BPNS
237 and avoid experiences that are BPNT will experience greater perceived satisfaction from their time
238 exchanges. Encouraging them to identify situations in which the risk for a high BPNS:BPNT ratio and a subsequent
239 elevation of well-being exists and only then considering the monetary aspect of the time expenditure. Assuring they
240 will have the benefit of BPNS to bolster subjective well-being prior to a monetary reward. Allowing them to increase
241 the expected incidence of subjective well-being and depress the expected incidence of ill-being (negative emotions
242 or health).¹⁴

243 Defined as the individual's perception of their life satisfaction, happiness and overall fulfillment, subjective well-
244 being can be broken down into 2 unique intrapersonal experiences. First, is emotional well-being (or what
245 individuals define as happiness) or the emotional quality of an individual's life determined by the ratios of emotions
246 such as joy, stress, sadness, anger etc experienced over a period of time. The second part of subjective well-being is
247 cognitive well-being or what we will call life satisfaction. This refers to the individual's ability to evaluate life
248 overall and their satisfaction with each domain within it. Looking more deeply at what influences each aspect of
249 subjective well-being, effective well-being and life satisfaction, we find 2 distinct entities that can be influenced by
250 differing and sometimes confounding inputs.

251 Considering effective well-being, as defined by a practitioner's emotional experiences in life, researchers find that
252 this form of well-being is most affected by factors such as the individual's health, caregiving and feelings of

253 loneliness.¹⁰ Making it more distinctly governed by the BPN of autonomy and relatedness. Eluding to the importance
254 of the ability to control and develop meaningful relationships if individuals want to elevate their subjective well-
255 being.

256 Conversely, life satisfaction as defined by a practitioner's satisfaction within each of life's domains, is more closely
257 tied to factors such as income level and education.¹⁰ Making this aspect of subjective well-being more affected by
258 factors such as autonomy and competency. Showing professionals the importance of feeling in control of their
259 compensation level as well as professional learning and development.

260 These subgroupings of well-being suggest that income could have a significant impact on subjective well-being, or at
261 the least, the life satisfaction portion of it. This would seemingly bring back the validity of the "Time is Money"
262 statement. Again suggesting that some component of time, traded for money, could result in greater life satisfaction
263 and therefore its parent subjective well-being. Yet again we need to address Kahnmann and Killingsworth's 2023
264 masterpiece (Figure 3) because without a prior state of positive effective well-being there will be no subsequent
265 increase in its measure post-monetary reward resulting in marginal, if any, increases in well-being for that time-
266 money exchange making it an inefficient use of time.¹²

267 Well-being results from efficient time usage

268 Crafting time affluence via the art of creative neglect

269 Once individuals understand that time is finite but malleable and that trading it for only money will not necessarily
270 improve their overall feelings of subjective well-being then they can begin to evaluate their time utilization in new
271 and novel ways. These realizations often begin with the identification and reduction in futile business tasks through a
272 technique Olivia Burkemann describes in her book *Four Thousand Weeks* as "Creative Neglect."¹⁵

273 Creative neglect is derived from the fallacy that we have time for everything. If we truly accept that time is finite and
274 to find more of it we must manipulate our time efficiency by either eliminating the task, reducing the duration, or
275 improving the efficiency of the task. Only then can we embrace it as a finite resource.¹⁵ Using this concept
276 Burkemann (2021) proposes that individuals manage activities like futile business by re-evaluating how we "spend
277 it" so they can become more "Time Affluent."¹⁵

278 The irony of the time affluence model is that we actually need to consider time as its own currency, with its own
279 intrinsic potential and value.¹⁵ In this model the practitioner uses their daily time budget just as one would setup a
280 household budget. There are operating cost-type bills for things like sleep, eating, social time etc in this budget just as
281 a household has bills for heat, water and food. A time affluence budget also has bills for discretionary spending for
282 things like exercise, reading, or hobbies just like a household would have as well.

283 What creative neglect challenges practitioners to do is find a justification for every activity they're "paying" time
284 for. This justification is considered through the context that we do not always choose an action or condition that is
285 best for our well-being.⁴ In such a model practitioners are encouraged to pay themselves first. Much like successful
286 households pay into debts or retirement prior to discretionary expenditures. Practitioners are encouraged to budget
287 their time in ways that pay into their BPNS and ultimate well-being first, resulting in improved life satisfaction, high
288 performance and flourishing.

289 Determining what activities warrant a practitioner's time expenditure can be difficult. When presented with so many
290 opportunities to take on more cases, clients, challenges, projects, and business ventures, how does an individual
291 know what opportunities to settle into?

292 Investing time affluence for well-being returns

293 The prevailing uncertainty about what opportunity is the best balance between BPNS and monetary
294 compensation creates feelings of being unsettled and can paralyze a practitioner. Yet they must choose which
295 opportunity they wish to pursue because they cannot manage more than 6 substantial projects at once.¹⁶ Mindful
296 evaluation of the meaningful level of busyness each opportunity poses as defined by the balance of BPN created
297 well-being and monetary compensation, being used to filter each opportunity.

298 This evaluation will never be black or white. Rare is the opportunity to fulfill all 3 BPN in a manner weighted equally
299 between each need while also being able to maximize financial return. This requires practitioners to accept that they
300 will never necessarily be able to maximize their return on invested time since they do not have unlimited amounts of
301 time, resources, or energy to yield such an outcome.¹⁶ However, neither do they need to settle for the current
302 opportunities before them and be resigned to their current time expenses.

303 Individuals can use the time value of money, a basic economic principle that states that money now has more value
304 than future earnings given that it can be invested and begin earning returns immediately, and can be applied to time
305 in this context.¹⁷ Applied to time one can say that the opportunity cost of using your new found time affluence in an
306 inefficient way would be equivalent to socking away \$1,000 dollars in a sock drawer for a decade vs earning an
307 average 7% return on it in a market index fund.

308 Knowing this opportunity cost what does an efficient time investment look like? Professionals should be looking for
309 investments that will energize and activate them; crafting an environment of motivation for their organismic
310 development. Such activities can be grouped into 2 forms of reward which motivate or control the individual;
311 intrinsic or extrinsic. The implications of each having long lasting effects upon a practitioner's career motivation,
312 life satisfaction, and flourishing level.

313 Beginning with extrinsically motivated time investments, we find that these are often opportunities that seek to exert
314 more control over an individual by leading to a separate rewarding outcome of them from the task. Such as working
315 to avoid discipline. Achievement for recognition. Success for promotion. Alternatively, intrinsic motivated time
316 investments are opportunities that generally are felt as less controlling, more autonomously derived, and result in
317 greater internal interest or enjoyment than external rewards. Hard work for enjoyment. Learning to grow new skills.
318 Fulfilling one's values.¹⁸ When practitioners consider their discretionary time investment it's important that they look
319 at it through a lens that evaluates their ability to use time in a way that engenders greater intrinsic motivation rather
320 than extrinsic motivation.

321 When presented with a task it's likely that it exists somewhere between complete external control and complete
322 internal control; as subject to Organismic Integration Theory (OIT) which describes the scale (Figure 4) that defines
323 the continuum between these 2 points.² Describing the different forms of extrinsic motivation as well as describing
324 the behaviors of internalization and integration OIT seeks to define how practitioners can modify or adopt extrinsic
325 control to make the time invested in these tasks yield greater BPNS and subjective well-being.

326 Settle for improved time affluence

327 It would be naive to suggest that as much as practitioners would like their day to be filled with easily differentiable
328 intrinsic vs extrinsic time investment choices, this is often the case. Many tasks found within the veterinary job

329 description represent natural and unalterable time “commercialization” that look wholistically extrinsic in scope and
330 control. But this does not mean that there are not ways to trade the time spent doing these tasks for more intrinsic
331 rewards by harnessing the OIT continuum and BPNS at various levels to increase feelings of intrinsic motivaton.

332 Knowing the ultimate goal is to trade aspects of this newfound time affluence for the intrinsically rewarding
333 measure of well-being, what is the best way to do this? The author agrees with Reis and Sheldon (2000) who
334 showed that activities which fulfill BPNs resulted in greater subjective well-being in participants.¹⁹ Thus,
335 practitioners should consider BPNS as an “index fund” to invest time into.

336 However, just like any index fund, BPN investment must have a balanced portfolio. Milyavskaya (2009) showed that
337 individuals must look for opportunities across all of life’s domains that are equally satisfying of all 3 BPN to
338 maximize their subjective well-being. Satisfying only 1 or 2 of these needs in each of life’s realms will not result in a
339 marked increase in well-being as meeting all 3 in each of life’s realms.²⁰ This is where practitioners can begin to
340 create time elasticity within the context of their opportunities. They can select opportunities that currently are lacking
341 in one or more BPNS area and/or monetary compensation and consider ways they could add time, resources, or
342 learning opportunities to it to improve the time efficiency return. This technique of taking a current opportunity and
343 recreating it based upon maximizing ongoing available resources is known as satisficing.¹⁶ Resulting not in the ideal,
344 visionary or maximized return one might wish for but also not just accepting and living within the presented well-
345 being or monetary system.

346 One key aspect of satisficing that differentiates it from settling, allows us to say yes to all the opportunities before us
347 because each can be accomplished at a suboptimal level if settled upon (yielding suboptimal results), satisficing will
348 require individuals to say “No” to some of those opportunities. This “No” allows practitioners to recover the time
349 and resources that would be required for those other projects and apply them to the “Yes” projects; maximizing their
350 affect. Having a greater overall impact upon well-being as well as compensation, even though it doesn’t result in the
351 maximum potential, the opportunity would present in a world with unlimited time and resources.

352 This mindful choice focuses the practitioner on meaningful work by closing their mind off to the fantasy that they
353 can “do it all.” By embracing what Burkemann (2021) calls “the joy of missing out” they can make powerful choices
354 that result in time allocation toward only meaningful work that will be BPNS.¹⁵

355 This conscious choice to avoid settling on opportunities presented the practitioner and instead mindfully selecting the
356 work that is most meaningful forces the fulfillment of your BPN's while also providing appropriate levels of well-
357 being and monetary compensation. Empowering the individual and their sense of self-determination. Amabile and
358 Kramer (2011) showed that individuals making regular progress on this meaningful work are happier and are up to
359 50% more creative.²¹

360 A final side effect of satisficing is that even after its first implementation it begins to prime the reticular activating
361 system in the brain. This portion of the brain has many responsibilities but one of its primary functions is to act as a
362 filter for information and stimuli coming in.²² If individuals mindfully select for meaningful work that
363 satisfices BPN, well-being, and monetary rewards it is highly likely that the brain will continue to seek out and
364 present similar opportunities in the future. Assuring the practitioner that they successfully invest their time affluence
365 in time efficient areas.

366 Building lives that manage time itself

367 Exercises to improve time affluence

368 The key to finding success in meaningful time efficiency management is threefold.¹⁵ First, practitioners must pay
369 themselves in time first, before any other time commitment is written. The prioritization of time utilization toward
370 personal goals, self-care, and meaningful tasks is key. Practitioners who begin spending time in this way ensure that
371 they will provide a solid foundation of BPNS prior to any other commitments; meaning they will have greater
372 chances to experience life satisfaction, well-being and flourishing.

373 Second, practitioners must learn to limit their projects.¹⁵ In a world where time is defined as money, and more
374 projects (and/or clients) yield more income, this may seem counterintuitive to clinic owners. Every project or client
375 practitioners take on represents a potential increase in futile busyness as well as diluting out the professional's
376 ability to make progress with their existing projects or clients which results in a practitioner facing a myriad of time
377 efficiency challenges such as never really progressing their projects/clients in a meaningful way. In turn neglecting
378 more difficult or longer duration interactions in favor of working with shorter, less demanding or easier
379 projects/clients, only works on projects that have become "emergencies" in that moment, ignoring less

380 measurably rewarding projects in favor of projects whose progress is more easily assessed but has less impact upon
381 them personally.

382 Third, practitioners should be encouraged to avoid the trap of middling priorities. Perhaps the most cited example of
383 middling priorities management comes from the previously attributed but now disproven Warren Buffett quote about
384 the 25/5 rule.²³ This rule encouraged individuals to write a list of their top 25 career goals, circle the 5 most
385 important goals, and then cross off the other 20 goals you hold less important. This reflective exercise naturally
386 encouraged practitioners to consider high value intrinsically based goals over lesser goals which are likely to satisfy
387 BPN. Training them to become ok with saying “No” to opportunities posed to them.

388 Looking at the 25/5 rule through a lens of managing time efficiency specifically when practicing medicine we can
389 consider Michael Port’s middling priority exercise called “Dump Your Dud Clients.”²⁴ Every practitioner has them.
390 The clients you dread on the schedule, who drain your life’s energy, or frustrate. They deplete your motivation, strip
391 your sense of autonomy, make every interaction a quid pro quo, and fail to provide you any opportunity to learn or
392 grow your skills. As Port describes, there is nothing necessarily wrong with them, usually, but they’re just not right
393 for you. However, they may be right for someone else within your practice or another practitioner in the area.

394 The challenge of dumping your duds comes in the form of tactfully and lovingly identifying who they are and then
395 using that same mindset to help them move on. Practitioners can begin by defining who exactly is their ideal
396 client. The type they love to be around, interact with, and align with your values and personality. This is called
397 creating an “avatar” as defined by the practitioner. To begin with practitioners can look at their client list and identify
398 who on that list they love working with and identify 5 reasons why they love working with them.

399 Reviewing that list they then select qualities that are non-negotiable client qualities and must have in their opinion
400 and use them as a filter. This filter will help them create a 3-column list, “Ideal Clients”, “Duds”, and “Everyone
401 Else”. Practitioners can specify that all their ideal clients will have at least 75% of these qualities; qualifying as ideal
402 or everyone else. If neither apply they need to be moved on to another practitioner or practice who would value them
403 more, freeing up time.

404 The final and perhaps most powerful part of this exercise is reinvesting this newfound time affluence in clients who
405 are in the ideal and everyone else category by mindfully considering and creating a roadmap of progress and

406 growth. This roadmap should align with the practitioner's vision of an ideal client, their competency goals, and
407 vision for a growth relationship. This is a critical step for any practitioner, young or old, because as Tom Peters
408 says, "You are your clients."

409 Using any of these 3 techniques practitioners can increase their time affluence as well as their sense of control over
410 their time efficiency. Doing so also facilitates a fundamental shift away from a day-to-day practice featuring elevated
411 levels of futile busyness toward what Hsee defines as "Meaningful Busyness," or getting "people [to] search for
412 meaning in order to work" rather than "people work[ing] to search for meaning."⁴

413 This fundamental shift towards meaningful busyness or work that aligns with an individual's values, purpose, and
414 sense of impact upon the world is key to improving subjective well-being and life satisfaction in the veterinary
415 field. To understand its impact, as well as the impact of saying "No" to manifest creative neglect, practitioners will
416 need a rudimentary understanding of the motivational theories behind well-being.

417 Techniques in time management

418 The practical application of BPNS can be difficult without a structure to define its parameters. In our system we use
419 the mnemonic P.A.C.E (PACE) as a reminder to practitioners of the mindful selection of activities that satisfy these
420 needs. PACE stands for performance, appropriate boundaries, cup filling and expectations. The fulfillment of which
421 will assure the practitioner that they are participating in BPNS activities.

422 The first category being "performance" and last category "expectations" go hand in hand; providing the practitioner
423 with a sense of autonomy via planning. First, expectations refer to the practitioner's ability to set meaningful goals
424 that are related to intrinsic vs extrinsic motivators. These goals contain large encompassing objectives and are then
425 broken down into smaller weekly to monthly initiatives and finally into daily tasks. This facilitates progress on the
426 project as well as provides feedback for the individual so they can consider if the goal is still an appropriate
427 expectation or if it needs to be altered.

428 One key to this aspect of time management comes from Niemiec's (2008) pre-graduation research in that a
429 practitioner who is beginning to create expectations for themselves must be able to clearly identify if that
430 expectation or any of its initiatives are based in extrinsic or intrinsic rewards.⁷ Knowing that extrinsic rewards would

431 result in a less rewarding (no well-being increase and increased ill-being) experience a practitioner must critically
432 evaluate each goal and its motivation.

433 After the creation of these expectations it falls on the practitioner to critically evaluate their performance as they
434 attempt to complete their tasks, initiatives, and objectives. This reflective activity challenges the individual to
435 consider if their performance is resulting in an appropriate intrinsic reward and how does that relate to their
436 aspirations for fulfilling their expectations. This reflective aspect of PACE allows individuals to quickly ID and
437 adjust BPNS or BPNT and assure themselves they are truly sacrificing that expectation.

438 The next key aspect to appropriate time management involves managing the relatedness the practitioner
439 experiences. Standing for appropriate boundaries, the “A” refers to the ability to control who they build relationships
440 with and who they spend their time with. A key aspect to BPNS is the relatedness that is necessary for increasing
441 intrinsic motivation.

442 Not only is “time with others” a basic psychological need but it is also a main stressor when it comes to time
443 management. Perlow (1999) does an excellent job of describing how inefficient interpersonal time utilization can
444 create a “Time Famine.”²⁵ Described as a lack of time because of interpersonal dependence and detrimental patterns
445 of interaction, time famine portrays the negative effects of uncontrolled relatedness, sapping time, creativity and
446 autonomy from all involved.

447 Taking back this time involves establishing appropriate boundaries. Such boundaries can be as simple as not
448 responding to after-hours text messages or as complex as completely shutting down all communication during
449 specific hours of the day so focused work can occur on expectations or other meaningful work. This is how managers
450 and veterinarians can get to do more uninterrupted “Deep Work.”

451 Newport (2016) defines deep work as; “Professional activities performed in a state of distraction-free concentration
452 that push your cognitive capabilities to their limit. These efforts create new value, improve your skill, and are hard
453 to replicate.”²⁶ This is the ultimate BPNS; focused work that individuals choose, needs controlled interpersonal
454 feedback, and develops a new skill. However, it requires that interpersonal interaction be controlled or limited from
455 time to time so the focus on complex problems, skills or learning can occur.

456 No matter how these boundaries are constructed they must create “Quiet Time,” or time when interpersonal
457 interaction is strongly or completely discouraged. Creating a brief yet powerful deep working environment for a
458 desired amount of time which has been proven to improve productivity by up to 65%.²⁵ This does not necessitate
459 avoiding collaboration or productive relatedness but rather avoids activities that would disrupt BPNS during specific
460 times of the day. Later opening the window back up for interpersonal collaboration and relatedness development.

461 Finally, PACE demands that practitioners be accountable for their own “cup filling” or competency developing
462 activities. Competency refers to an organism's ability to interact effectively with its environment through prolonged
463 feats of learning.²⁶ Cup filling gets its power from the practitioner's autonomous selection of skills that are interesting
464 to them and then the subsequent commitment of time resources toward developing them meeting 2 of the 3 basic
465 psychological needs.

466 The commitment to cup filling daily forms the cornerstone to PACE and BPNS. It is a daily commitment to this
467 activity that helps it slowly build into an area of expertise that can be shared with the world. Another less appreciated
468 side effect of cup filling is its ability to free its practitioner from “constraints of the small” by forcing them to ignore
469 less pressing tasks for periods of time each day in favor of bigger more meaningful work, forcing them to say “No”
470 naturally.²⁷

471 Time management is complex yet simple

472 Time will stretch or shrink depending upon the practitioner's ability to control it. Those who fail to control it will
473 face a shortage of time and will always be “borrowing time” to make up for their lack of time affluence. However,
474 individuals who realize that time stretches to make room for things that matter and invest in mindfully choosing
475 those activities that are meaningful will rarely feel short on time. They will say “No” to activities that are not
476 efficient or fail to improve well-being.

477 It is important to remember that managing time is not a one-off event. It requires continual mindful monitoring,
478 reflection, and adjustment to assure that BPNS remains high while BPNT is eliminated as often as possible. The
479 result of all of this work is a high performing, happy, and flourishing veterinary professional.

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Figures

Figure 1¹⁰

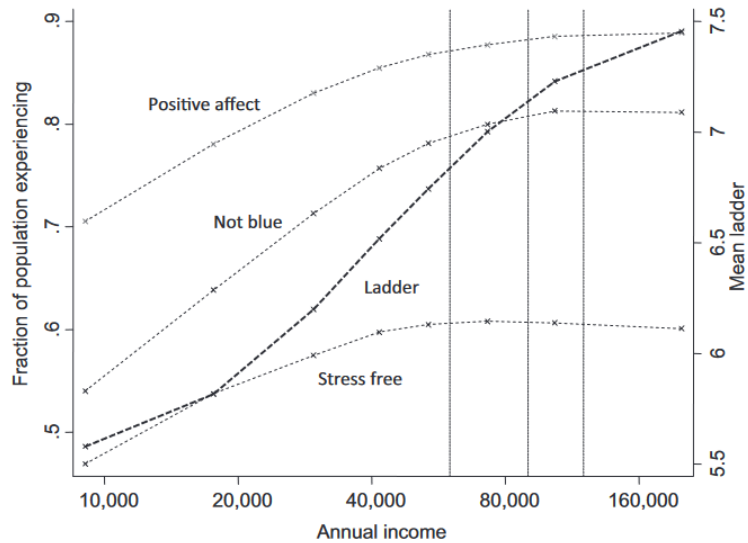


Fig. 1. Positive affect, blue affect, stress, and life evaluation in relation to household income. Positive affect is the average of the fractions of the population reporting happiness, smiling, and enjoyment. "Not blue" is 1 minus the average of the fractions of the population reporting worry and sadness. "Stress free" is the fraction of the population who did not report stress for the previous day. These three hedonic measures are marked on the left-hand scale. The ladder is the average reported number on a scale of 0–10, marked on the right-hand scale.

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Figure 2¹¹

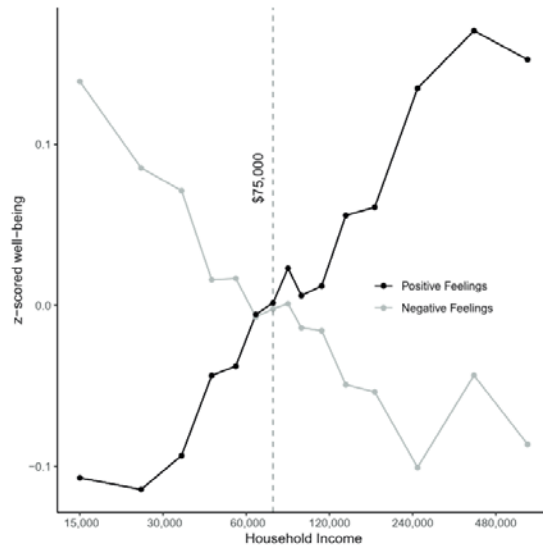


Fig. 2. Mean levels of positive feelings (Positive Feelings is the average of confident, good, inspired, interested, and proud) and negative feelings (Negative Feelings is the average of afraid, angry, bad, bored, sad, stressed, and upset) for each income band.

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583 Figure 3¹²

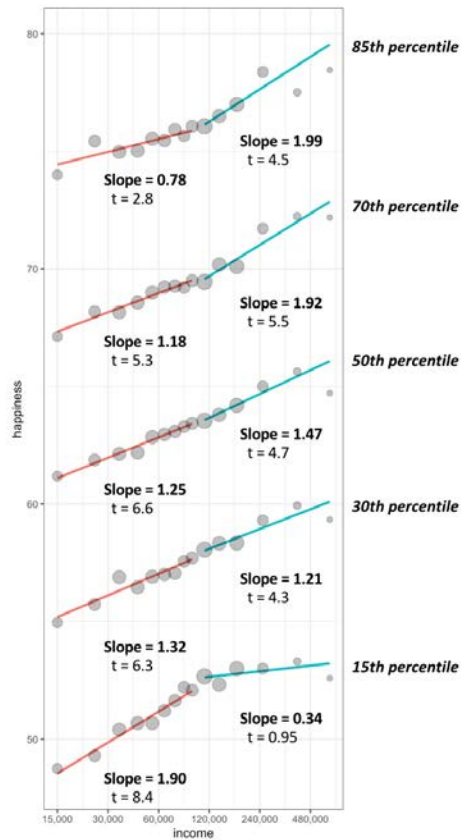


Fig. 2. Emotional well-being of the 15th, 30th, 50th, 70th, and 85th percentiles of the person-level happiness distribution in MK, calculated within each income category. Slopes were calculated below and above 100k, using quantile regression.

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