

THE WASTING OF TIME

I am now 15945 days old, 43.75 years - 382,680 hours spent on planet earth. Being at the midpoint of my life I've decided to take stock. Rather than looking at what I've accomplished to this point or determine what I still have left to do, I'm going to look at the time I've wasted and how it was wasted. Perspective is needed to evaluate the myriad of life's events so I have decided to see what didn't contribute to my evolution as my guide. The 23 hours I've wasted by being dropped on the cell phone has not contributed to my evolution. The 2 hours I spent viewing the Mona Lisa contributed immeasurably.

The purpose of life is to learn as much about yourself and your environment as you can through your interactions with what you encounter. Through this process we achieve awareness, then understanding and hopefully our experiences lead to knowingness about ourselves and the world. Yet life is filled with time wasters, experiences that don't seem to lead to anything in particular, let alone knowingness about who and what I am.

Of my 382,680 hours I'll subtract 127,560 hours off the top for sleep; leaving 255,120 hours spent doing everything from eating Mexican food, engaging in sex and being perfectly stupefied by the game of golf – activities that are clearly not a waste of time.

I consider the first two years of my life a total waste. Diapers, baby food, gurgling and baby talk from my parents add up to make this an obvious waste - that and I can't remember a thing about those two years. 17520 hours wasted.

School wasn't a comprehensive waste, but out of the 10 years spent in the care of the Unified School System I wasted time in detention, doing endless busywork and in an assortment of school spirit related ceremonies. 16,800 hours lost.

I've wasted a total of 240 hours waiting for repair people. I've wasted 120 hours deleting spam, another 408 hours waiting for websites to load and 600 hours dealing with some kind of computer or electronic related crisis. I've spent 75 hours learning how to operate appliances I no longer have.

For someone who rarely travels I have wasted 1560 hours waiting in airports, rail stations and bus stops. I have wasted 312 hours pumping gas. 12,984 hours (the biggest time killer of all) simply vanished while sitting in traffic, another 48 hours went while waiting for parking spaces. I've wasted 312 hours being lost in various scenarios. I've wasted 144 hours in Las Vegas and a half a day visiting the Trees of Mystery in Northern California.

I've spent 480 hours waiting for doctors, dentists, hair stylists and other professionals to see me. I've wasted 240 hours waiting for people to call at the agreed upon time and 408 hours procrastinating calling people back at all. I've wasted 168 hours waiting on "hold." I have wasted 980 hours waiting too long for fast food and another 486 hours waiting too long for the

check. I've wasted 1560 hours standing in line for various things - 72 hours waiting in the wrong line.

Nearly 1800 hours vanished while performing the governmental mandates: dmv, traffic court, filing tax forms, obtaining licenses and the like. I've wasted 46 hours killing various household bugs. I've spent 89 hours listening to door-to-door sales people – never bought a thing. I've spent 2380 hours of my life opening packages of various kinds, including junk mail, and 14 hours addressing wounds obtained while opening vacuum-sealed packaging. 26 hours disappeared while looking for things I accidentally threw away.

I've wasted 360 hours shopping for obligatory gifts, 120 returning obligatory gifts and 17 hours sending thank you cards for obligatory gifts. I've wasted 624 hours buying clothes I never actually wore and another 423 hours returning or exchanging defective items including some of the clothes I never wore.

I've squandered 1350 hours thinking about, being annoyed at, or longing for women I never dated. I've wasted 1157 hours procrastinating breaking up with someone and 1560 trying to get back together with someone who dumped me. I've wasted only 26 hours on truly regrettable dates – I've been lucky.

I burned through a whole lot of time watching TV – too much to count. I'll cop to the 1008 hours wasted watching numerous holiday specials, awards shows and all that local news coverage of the “tragedy of the day.” I lost 3960 hours to bad movies, bad plays, bad concerts and another 1680 hours sitting through unpleasant family gatherings. I've easily wasted 1080 hours on small talk at assorted get-togethers. I've wasted 90 hours at Super Bowl parties and 125 at the weddings of those now divorced.

I've frittered away 3025 hours on projects I started but never finished. I've wasted 736 hours arguing over things that happened in the past - things I wasn't even a part of. I've spent 67 hours in “which band is better” debates and 72 hours trying to convince numerous folks of the problems with supply-side economics. Embarrassingly I've exhausted 120 hours, spread out over 30 years, thinking about who really killed JFK. I've only spent 11 hours listening to political speeches – all wasted.

I've lost 360 hours oversleeping and 720 climbing the walls with insomnia. I've wasted 7023 hours being sick or recovering from being sick not including 372 hours paralyzed by hangovers. I've wasted at least 18 hours of my life removing a plethora of things from the bottoms of my shoes.

I found the examination process vexing as many of the time wasters actually housed something valuable. Many of the valuables were true evolutionary experiences intricately woven into the seemingly meaningless time wasters. At the most excruciating of the aforementioned weddings I met my wife. As such, I'd have to say I really wouldn't trade a single minute of the first 382,680

hours of my life. I do pledge that throughout the next 382,680 hours there's going to be less bad TV, no more JFK speculating and much less time spent waiting.

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