



# MISE EN PLACE

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## Tasks, Tasks, and More Tasks

By Ann Michael Henry

I always marvel how a comment or an observation can get someone going. While getting my hair done recently, I was chatting away with my stylist and one such moment occurred. Before I knew it, Michael was on a rant. "I don't know what's wrong with us. We are always busy. Going here, going there, always in motion. Busy, busy, busy, yet we never seem to get anything done. We're always complaining that we don't have enough time for family or friends or for projects around the house let alone time to get the groceries or do the laundry. Yet, we go, go, and go. Oh, and while we are on the go, we are chatting on the phone, often while driving without a hands-free device. And multitasking is like the national pastime...let's see how many things we can do at once! Yet, we never get things done. At the end of the day, we are kvetching about how little we were able to get done. Yet, we are exhausted from being on the go and busy, busy, busy all day long. It just doesn't make sense."

Sound like one of your days? Well you're not alone. In his book, *The Age of Speed – Learning to Thrive in a More-Faster-Now World*, Vince Poscente shares some incredible statistics:

- 91 percent of Americans watch television while they eat.
- 26 percent of Americans admit that they "often eat while driving."
- 35 percent of us eat lunch at our desks while reading, working on the computer, or making and receiving phone calls.
- Brain scan studies reveal that if we do two tasks at the same time, we have only half of our usual brainpower to devote to each.
- A study involving 36 office workers found that, on average, they spent only 11 minutes of a typical workday focused on a given task before being interrupted, and once they were interrupted, it took them nearly a half-hour to return to the task, if they did so at all.
- Another study of more than 11,000 office workers revealed that interruptions caused more than two hours of lost productivity per day – 25 percent of the workday wasted.

Vince goes on to challenge the reader to create a framework based on our values. Just what is important to you? He says, "When we implement a values-based time model in our lives, time becomes the *tool* we use to organize our priorities and values rather than our duties and location... It's not a question of how much you have to do or how fast you're going. It's a question of whether or not the way you spend your time is in line with your values and goals."

If you are feeling trampled by the speed of life, remember what Einstein said: "Problems can't be solved at the same level of consciousness that created them." Time is a tool. How can you use this valuable tool more effectively?

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