

Sociological laws of time management

Parkinson Law “Setting short deadlines”

Parkinson Law is a simple principle. Whether you have one hour or one day, you will have done the same amount of work at the end of the time given. It is a principle based on efficiency. The less time you have, the more you prioritize by setting a clear course of action in order to finish the work in the allotted time.

Pareto Principle “Focus on the essential”

The Pareto Principle, or Pareto Law, is also called the 80-20 principle, or 80-20 law. It is an empirical phenomenon noticed in certain areas: about 80% of the consequences are the product of 20 % of the causes. In a system, a few elements (20%) have a high influence because it impacts 80 % of the system. This relationship has often been observed. For example: 80 % of the benefits comes from 20 % of the clients.

Laborit Principle “Always start with the most difficult activity”

Our behavior often leads us to do:

- What we like before what we dislike
- What is easier before what is hard
- What is quick before what takes time
- What we know before what is new
- What is urgent before what is important
- What other ask us to do before what we have chosen to do

Always start with the most important task, even if it seems tedious.

Murphy principle “Evaluate risks and allow room for flexibility”

We often under-estimate the time needed to complete a task, which ends up in a race against time. What can go wrong will go wrong, which is why a task always takes us longer than what we had planned for. When you plan for a task, always include some extra time for the unexpected, and set limits.

Carlson Law “Limit interruptions”

Carlson law explains that if your work is interrupted, it will take longer to complete. Tackle interruptions: avoid interruptions as much as possible by finishing a task that you have started. Limit outside interruptions as much as you can.

Illich Law “Built-in breaks”

Illich law explains the principles of personal balance:

- Beyond a certain amount of time, stop and do something else
- Know how to persevere without overdoing it, refuse perfectionism
- Be aware of your own limitations

Fraisse Law “**Look at your watch...or don't**”

Paul Fraisse is the creator of what is called chrono-psychology. He wrote: “the main psychological aspect of time is that it connects to the interest given to the task”. Which means, the more you are interested in your current task, the more it seems short, the more you dislike it, the more time seems to go slowly.

Our own perception of time is never unbiased, which is why we need to switch from pleasing tasks to unpleasing ones and to give them specific durations so as to avoid imbalance.

Swoboda-Fliess-Teltscher Law: “**Respect your own biorhythm**”

Hermann Swoboda, Wilhem Fliess and Alfred Teltscher have discovered biological rhythms and their implication in our day to day life. Because we do have a rhythm. Or more accurately, we live according to our environment's rhythm, of the planet, of our bodies, of our brain.

It is essential to get to know them and to get to know yourself, to determine when your most efficient moment is: are you a morning, afternoon or evening person? How long does your ideal work cycle last? For how many work cycles can you remain focused? How does hunger and sleep affect your productivity?

Douglas Law “**Tidy up your desk**”

Douglas Law is to space what Parkinson Law is to time: nature abhors vacuum, so files and documents tend to pile up until it completely fills up the space.

So, sort through your documents, tidy up your desk, organize your emails and don't let piles of paper (or post-it notes!) overwhelm you. Prioritize the information and never hesitate to throw out whatever is unnecessary to you.