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IS THERE A MESSAGE TO BE LEARNED FROM THE MANY SAYINGS ABOUT TIME??¹

By Penelope J. Corfield
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'Time and tide wait for no man'. 'Time flies'. 'Lost time is never found again'. 'Time is of the essence'. 'Every second counts'. 'Do not put off to tomorrow what you can do today.' 'You may delay, but Time will not' ...

Wait a moment! Is there some message here? Sayings about Time abound; and they are mostly designed to make everyone aware that Time is fleeting by, moment by inexorable moment. Shakespeare (who else?) had a good phrase for it. Ever-speeding temporality is characterised as *'cormorant, devouring Time'*.

No use answering with rival dicta, such as *'Time drags'*; *'Time crawls'*; *'Time lasts for ever'*. Such alternative views don't cut the mustard in Time-conscious urbanised societies, where clocks, watches and digital time-pieces abound and where life is closely timetabled.

Over very many generations, human have worked at measuring the passage of Time - and at communicating the result to the surrounding population. Clocks chime; church-bells ring; alarms go off noisily.

Many are the wise pronouncements that also confirm the immense value of fleeting temporality. *'Time is the most valuable resource, given to everyone'*. It is simultaneously a *'grand Instructor'*; the *'greatest innovator'*; the *'greatest physician'*. No surprise that it is also *'precious'*. Moreover, it can also act as an *'avenger'* and a *'reaper'*. It has god-like powers.

Therefore there are numerous sayings that advise people to use their time well. *'Take Time by the forelock'*, runs one ancient adage. *'Better three hours too soon than a minute too late'* (Shakespeare again). *'Time is the coin of your life. It is the only coin you have - and only you can determine how it will be spent. Be careful lest you let other people spend it for you!'* Classically, too: *'Time is money'*. Manage it wisely. Indeed, *'until we can manage Time, we can manage nothing else'*. And some quotations are pessimistic. *'Time is what we want most but use worst!'*

So can we get a grip on this elusive, powerful and at times chameleon-like cosmic phenomenon? It's a great challenge, renewed daily. And the outcome? Well, another saying gives the best answer: *'Only Time will tell'*.

ENDNOTES:

¹ Another BLOG in my 2025 series, to mark publication of PJC, *Time-Space: We Are All in it Together* (Austin Macauley: London, 2025).