DEVELOP A TIME SENSE

By Bonnie Mincu, M.A., Adult ADD Coach

This document contains the **TIME SENSE EXERCISE©,** a tool I developed for my coaching clients to help them develop a "time sense." Lack of a time sense is an important factor in contributing to someone's chronic lateness with appointments and deadlines. Without a realistic time sense, you have great difficulty in planning a busy day and accomplishing what you set out to do.

Some people seem to be born with a good time sense. If you're not one of these lucky few, you can develop one by working with the attached exercise for just a few weeks. It's very simple, but can make profound changes in your life and habits!

HOW TO DO THE TIME SENSE EXERCISE

Use the attached template to fill in the seven columns for as many activities as you can throughout the day. You may use a notebook, spreadsheet, or any other piece of paper instead, but be sure to record all of the activities you measure in one place.

Choose <u>different types of activities</u>, such as traveling to a destination, getting ready to leave in the morning, making dinner, specific work activities, running errands, organizing the desk, etc. <u>Activities that are typical for you</u> are the most useful. For complex projects with many steps, break down each step into an <u>activity that you can be specific about</u>. For example, writing a long research paper might be better broken down into a) library research; b) Internet research; c) compiling notes; d) creating an outline; e) writing Section I; f) editing first draft.

COLUMN 1

Activity – Write a brief description and the date. You might also want to indicate what type of activity it is, such as "travel."

COLUMN 2

Start Time – Look at a clock and note the time you start.

COLUMN 3

Predicted Amount of Time it will Take – Take a guess how much time this activity will take you, if you were to work steadily at it. (Include short expected breaks that will be needed). Record the actual total number of minutes or hours.

COLUMN 4

At End, Estimate How Much Time Passed – When you are finished, without looking at a clock, guess how long the activity took you.

COLUMN 5

End Time; How Much Time It Took – Now look at the clock, record the time, and calculate the number of minutes or hours it actually took you. Record the actual time it took.

COLUMN 6

Gap in Predicting Time – Subtract the number of minutes in Column 3 (your guess) from the number of minutes in Column 5 (reality). This is the Gap – the difference between how long the activity took, and your own prediction. This difference represents your <u>accuracy in predicting time.</u>

COLUMN 7

Gap in Estimating Time – Subtract the number of minutes in Column 4 (your feeling of time passing) from the number of minutes in Column 5 (reality). This Gap is the difference between how long the activity took and your own estimate of what had passed. The difference represents your <u>accuracy in sensing time passing</u>.

CALCULATE

It is useful to calculate how much you are off by in terms of percentage. For example, were your estimates 20% off, 50% off, or 300% off? Or did things take you "3 times" or "5 times" as long as you expected?

NOTE YOUR PATTERNS

Notice whether your accuracy differs by <u>activity type</u>. Perhaps you have a different accuracy rate for estimating travel than for writing. Or you may notice an accuracy difference based on the <u>time of day</u>.

By doing this exercise for several days or weeks, you will start to see an improvement in your predictions (Column 3), because **you will gain a sense of reality about time simply from doing the exercise.**

TIME SENSE EXERCISE

Template

(1) Activity Description	(2) Start Time	(3) Predicted amount of time it will take	(4) At end, estimate how much time passed	(5) End Time; how much time it took	(6) Gap in predicting time *(Difference between 5 & 3)*	(7) Gap in estimating time *(Dfference between 5 & 4)*