

# Calendar

## I Scare People

*Creative Person Time Management*

**'A**s a creative person, I favor the right side of my brain, and the right side has no concept of time," says Lee Silber, author of *Time Management for the Creative Person*.

By his own account, Silber, who has written ten other motivational books, has personally conquered the worst habits of artists everywhere. Maybe that's why he often switches from first to third person when he talks about them.

"They can't judge how long it takes to get from point A to point B," he says. "Ten miles? That should take ten minutes. Sixty miles an hour, right? But everything takes twice as long as you think it will."

The 39-year-old Silber, who lives with his wife in Mission Beach, uses beepers, kitchen timers,

### LOCAL EVENTS

and clocks with large faces to keep him aware of time's passage. Does he micro-schedule himself, right down to things like flossing? "I do, even though that's atypical of a creative person. When I write my to-do list, I note how long I think each task will take. And if I add it all up and it's 88 hours, I have ask myself, 'What do I want to do? What do I really need to do? What do other people want me to do?' That way, I eliminate unnecessary actions and get a more realistic sense of what I can accomplish in a 12- or 14-hour day."

Is he typically on time for appointments — or early? (It's a given he's not late.) "I'm early. Often, others are late because they're afraid being early will waste their time. But you know me: I bring my sketch pad and I have my tapes."

Silber claims to sketch at long red lights: "I'll draw the car next to me or the person picking their nose, or try to create what I'm hearing on the radio. I always have a sketch pad on the passenger seat." As for the tapes: "I scare people because I can quote from certain well-known tapes. I've heard them so many times. I can even do the inflections of, say, Zig Ziglar [author of *The View from the Top Is Magnificent*] and Tony Robbins [whose best-known title is *Get the Edge*]."



Lee Silber

Besides lacking time awareness, creative people are easily distracted, Silber says. It's a trait of "divergent thinkers" — or people whose "minds go in a million different directions at once."

Divergent thought is what wakes creative people up at three a.m., "because divergent thinking is hard to turn off," says Silber. "Usually the

reason why you were awakened is because you had a great idea, and if you keep some paper by the bed and just write it down, you can go back to sleep. It's when you don't download it, so to speak, that your mind keeps thinking about it." If after making a note the thought persists, get up and run with it, he suggests. "I get my best work done in the middle of the night."

Easily distracted people should organize their work space carefully, says Silber. "Think of your office as the command center in *Star Trek* where you just swivel around and everything is there." If you have to get up to get something, be wary, creative thinkers. "You pass a magazine. 'Oh, that looks interesting.' The next thing you know, you've wasted an hour."

Some distractions are not of one's own making, of course. Think of house guests. "They're on vacation and you're not. You need to set up a resource center for them — maps, bus schedules, things to do. Make them self-sufficient, so it's not a burden on you."

What about party guests who stay too long? What a time waster that is! "Sometimes a subtle hint doesn't work, so you have to make it seem like it's their idea to leave. So you ask, 'What do you have going tomorrow? Oh, that sounds like a lot of work. You probably need to get some sleep.' And then they'll say, 'I gotta go.'"

How does a micro-scheduled guy deal with holidays, birthdays, and other schedule disrupters? "To those who have a large fan-base" — i.e., lots of friends and family — "instead of 'Divide and conquer,' I say, 'Combine and conquer.' Have everyone together and see them all at once. 'Love you, love you, love you.' Yes, you have the one party that everyone comes to, at your house. Although it sounds like a lot more work, in the long run it's a time saver."

Silber is a frequent public speaker, which is not to say lecturer. "I never do a lecture." Instead, this weekend, as always, he will give "an interactive demonstration," with audience participation. "They'll not only listen, but they'll talk, they'll touch, they'll play. They'll use all five senses to learn. That seems to get people the message, and it stays with them a lot longer."

— Jeanne Schinto

**Lee Silber, author of  
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Creative Person"  
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page 75

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page 88

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page 90

**Theater**  
page 93

**Pop Music**  
page 100

**Restaurants**  
page 123

**Movies**  
page 136