

Vital Speeches of the Day

REG. U.S. PAT. OFF.

VOL. LXVIII

NOVEMBER 15, 2001

No. 3

Relaxing At High Speed

YOU MUST TAKE TIME

Address by JEFF DAVIDSON, *Author and Professional Speaker*

Delivered at Eide Bailey's (CPAs) Annual Partner Conference, Sante Fe, New Mexico, September 28, 2001

I would like you to pull out a pen or pencil. If you don't have one, borrow one from your neighbor. I want you to write down the age to which you think you will live. The age to which you believe you will live. And when you're ready, please look up.

For most of you that is a two or three digit number, so I am hoping that you are done. By a show of hands please, how many put in at least age 70? Just about everyone in the room. How many put in at least age 80? How many put at least age 90? Still a healthy number isn't there? And how many put at least age 100? How about 105? Anybody at least 105?

What is the intriguing reality about living in this day and age in the US of A? The people who raised their hands for 90 or 100 are likely to be accurate. Today medical science all but guarantees that even if you smoke, even if you drink, even if you overeat, they will keep you alive. The odds are that you will not be victim to terrible acts of terrorism. Some of you are going to go 30, 40, or 50 more years.

But the paradox of living to 100 or 105 is that it's wasted if each day flies by quickly. I'd rather live to 80 with relative grace and ease than 105 and have it go by like that. Wouldn't you? How many would rather take 80 with grace and ease versus 105? 80? 105 just like that?

It seems as if the pace of life is sped up for everyone. When you understand that, solutions become natural. They just start coming naturally and easily.

There's a second item I want you to write down on your piece of paper. In the last year, in the last 52 weeks, how many totally relaxing weekends did you have? How many weekends say from Friday afternoon at 6:30 'til Sunday afternoon at 6:30 did you truly enjoy yourself the whole way through? You didn't bring work home, you didn't fret about something back at the warehouse, you truly had a relaxing weekend. Please write down that number. In the last 12 months.

When you're ready, please look up again. How many wrote a two-digit number? That's a good healthy number compared to many groups that I have seen. More than 20 anyone? For those of you who wrote less than ten, what range are we talking about? Eight, Nine? Four or five? One? Two? Zero? Six? Why isn't it thirty or forty?

Because we have taken everything that has been thrown at us and we've said, "Okay, in order to get through this world, in order to be successful, I am going to throw

my time in life right back at it. So I am going to read, I am going to study, I am going to get on the Internet. I am going to do all these things."

The days of our lives go by and we get older, and maybe we make a little more money, but what about the long run? We are not enjoying ourselves, and the marginal value of all that extra info that we take in is often questionable. I was in a position some time back that made me ask, "Why is my life going by so fast?" I worked for a consulting firm in Washington, D.C. in 1981 when, for the first time, someone let me borrow a pocket dictator. I started dictating my consulting reports instead of writing them out longhand.

All of a sudden I was doing a 40-hour job in 12 hours. Nobody in the office could believe it. I asked them to pick up this new piece of technology and try for themselves. Nobody would, so for years I had a 26-hour advantage on the rest of my office staff. I began writing articles, I began writing books, I began exploring why in fact society seems to be speeding up. I found that no matter what industry you're in, no matter to whom you report, no matter how long your commute, no matter what the size of your mortgage or rent is, no matter how many children you have, everybody in society is feeling the same crunch all the time.

How many have read a time management book in the last couple of years? How many have read any book on stress or life balance or simplicity? How many have read an article on any of those aforementioned topics? So what happened, you weren't paying attention?

What happened was that all the great ideas and all the books, and I have read books, too, frequently don't add up to the reality of what each of us faces on a daily basis.

I said to myself, "Okay, what is going on here? What is driving the pace of the world?" The first answer that came to me was world population. How many people are in the world today? We are approaching 6 1/2 billion right about now. But do you know that in 1850 there was only one billion? 1850, 1 billion. 1930, 2 billion. The world of our grandfathers and grandmothers: 2 billion people. 1960, 3 billion. 1977, 4 billion. 1987, 5 billion. 96, 97, 98, depending on how you count, 6 billion. We are on our way to 10.5 billion people by 2050. The demographers, the sociologist, the researchers are the people who know tell us that at that point world population will level off if it ever does. Is a world of 6.5 billion people that populate the

earth today anything like a world of 2 billion people in the 1930's? No.

What does a world of 6.5 billion people mean? In our everyday lives? It means more traffic every day when you head to the warehouse. More traffic everyday, more stoplights to accommodate more traffic, more stop signs. It means another boat on the lake, another house on the hill. In every community across the board. Anybody live in a community where there is less traffic this year than, say, a couple of years ago? Where they are knocking down buildings and not replacing them with anything?

Does anybody live in a place that is less congested than a few years ago? We think, "Oh, it's just my town, my community, my region," and the reality is that it's everywhere. Every island on earth is being taken up. Now you say, "Jeff, that's fine, theoretical stuff; what does that have to do with me? Right here, my job, right now?"

That leads us to the second mega reality — information. You see, a world of 6.5 billion people all but guarantees that there will be more information generated on a daily basis than any time in the history of the earth. As a matter of fact, when I was writing the first edition of *Breathing Space* in 1990, more information was generated in 24 hours in 1990 on earth than you could take in in the rest of your lives. Lives. Even if you were 20 years old. Today, more information is generated in one minute on earth than you could take in the rest of your lives. The rest of your life. Even if you are 20 years old. Is anyone in the room 20?

One minute, a lifetime of information. Next minute it repeats, next minute it repeats, next minute it repeats, and you think you're swamped by information. Everybody is swamped by information. No industry is immune. Every place that we turn, there is more information than people can possibly contend with. What do the first mega realities of frenzied existence tell us about what we need to do? As managers, executives, supervisors, mothers, fathers. Get off the road while everyone else is on it. Go is at different times, come back at different times, telecommute as often as you possibly can.

What does over-information to the degree that we have a lifetime of it generated every minute tell us about what we need to do as executives, supervisors, parents? Be more selective than we ever have been. Be more selective than any generation in the history of the earth, because, indeed, we are besieged by more information than any generation in the history of the earth. There has never been a group, ever, at any time that has ever been hit with the stuff that we get hit with on a daily basis.

There is more information waiting for you when you get back. There is more email, there is stuff in your in basket, there are some faxes, packages are high on your

desk. And all kinds of other things that people have put on your desk. This is symptomatic of being a professional in this day and age. Don't take it personally. Everyone is feeling the effects, but what all that information coming at us tells us is that we have to be more selective than any generation in the history of the earth.

We have got to get off of lists. We have got to protect our names. We've got to stop dropping business cards in the chamber punch bowl. If we have time to even get to the chamber functions. We have to be vigilant about where we give our time and attention. Because even if we live to 105, every single day could be taken up in a world that generates a lifetime of information in one minute.

We hit the last couple years of the 20th century, we hit 2000, and all of a sudden the population curve goes almost straight up. That tells us we are facing a population frenzy, the likes of which no one has ever experienced. It also tells us that to proceed into the future with the notions of the past simply isn't going to work. Here is what Eric Hoffer, noted philosopher and longshoreman, said about change. At a time of change, learners inherit the earth while the learned find themselves beautifully equipped to deal with a world that no longer exists.

I'm seeking to change your frame of reference, to convince you that it makes sense to let go of a lot of behaviors that you have accumulated for a lifetime. When you get back to the offices, I want you to get off of a list. I want you to pare down. I want you to start throwing out half of the stuff that you don't need to be holding onto. I want you to let go of information crutches. I want you to face the future more confidently knowing that with the search engines and the Internet, which defines programs and publications of work with the peer group network that you are developing, you don't have to have such voluminous files anymore.

Most of the information that you need is quickly findable, quickly retrievable, but you want to keep having file folders and drawers stuffed to the max. If that gives you comfort, okay, it's your office. But other people have to walk in, so I want you to break lifelong habits and recognize that the game has indeed changed. And you all know this on a lot of different planes. I understand that.

The third mega reality is media growth. But for review I want you to tell me the first mega reality. What is the second raining down on us everywhere we go? Information. So population, information. The third is media growth.

Walter Cronkite and the good folks at CBS, NBS, ABC told us 20, 30 years ago that when we heard the news, that was it. That was all we needed to know. That was what was going on in the world. Tune in for 30 minutes, and you will be up to date. What a deal. Was that ever possible? Not really. Maybe when there were 30, 40

people on the planet. But not really. What do we get when we watch the news? A sliver or a fraction or a subset of what is going on in the world at best. At best.

The news by its nature tends to be negative. The news by its nature tends to cover the same geopolitical areas of the earth — New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Paris, Rome, England, Moscow. A handful of places. It never says that 500,000 people went to bed last night in the New Orleans area happy. The news never says that.

It hardly ever says anything about what you are doing. And yet, we get pumped in information, we get pumped in stories coming to us from all directions, all the time, and it adds to the overall frenzy. You're beginning to see that independent of where you work, to whom you report, the size of your salary, the size of your mortgage or rent, how long your commute is, whether you have two kids, or three, or none, that independent of all these personal factors, as important as they are, simply living in this day and age all but guarantees that your time and attention will be totally taken. If you are not careful.

And so one of the keys to relaxing at high speed is to be vigilant as to where you give your time and attention. If you go to the video store, only take out the highest quality videos; if you sit there with the channel changer, swish, swish, swish, changing the stations every minute. You sit there with the channel changer and you resonate with all the world's problems. Who are you helping? No one, least of all yourself.

Be more selective when it comes to media as well. More selective as to your news sources, your information sources, your entertainment sources. More selective than ever before because as surely as there is another movie out, another book, another something. Whether you live to be 75 or 110, your days will go by like that unless you take control personally and decide that sometimes less is more. We are not in a world where they give you that message very often.

All the vendors and purveyors of all the goods out there say, "Come on, go ahead click here, push here, its okay, buy this, consume that." And I understand that and we all have to do that on occasion ourselves. But we have to recognize that there has got to be an upper limit as to how much we have on our plates. How much we can pack into a day. How much we try to put on the table.

Suppose I started stacking bricks on this table and there were no ceiling and they could go up as high as we possible wanted them to. How high could we get? Could we get 15 feet worth of bricks? Maybe. 20 feet, 25? But at some point the table has got to collapse. At some point, there is some engineering equation that tells us that the table can only bear so much weight. Everybody understands that. So there are structural limits to how much we

can put on that table.

Why do we proceed through the week as though there are no temporal limits? Temporal. How much we can stuff into 168 hours. I want to see everybody here go to bed one night a week at about 8:30 or 9:00 at night and get up nine or ten hours later. Give your body a chance to catch up, to renew. To declare your freedom at least for one evening from the rat race. You will have a day like you can't imagine.

The Sanford University Center for Sleep Research did a study of adult sleeping patterns in America and concluded that after years of analysis that the typical adult in our society today no longer has any idea what it is like to be fully awake and alert. No body here has that problem. It is just the people who report to you. We are all on overdrive too often, and we know it. Another TV show, another Internet site, another whatever. We have got to proceed with some self-imposed breaks or we will have the 105 years or however long it turns out to be go by just like that.

That brings us to the fourth mega-reality, and the word is paper. Paper, paper everywhere but not a thought to think. We were told in 1985 that in the future we would all be working in what? Paperless office. Paperless society. You all know it so well that you were able to give me the answer. Now, please raise your hand proudly when your category is called.

Who here works in a paperless office? Give up? No takers? I am going to soften the question. Who here works in an office that today has less paper than 12 months ago? Then five years ago? How many anticipate that 12 months from now there will be less paper in your office or offices? How many anticipate that five years from now there will be less paper? Well, here's the stats. Since 1985, the number of pieces of paper or the volume of paper, if you will, that the typical adult in America consumes has tripled.

Do you know what the projections are for the foreseeable future? More paper, more paper, more paper. How could that be? We were promised no paper. How could we be having more of the stuff? Why is there more paper than ever before? Well, printers. More information. More people. What else? Paradigms.

All of the above are true, but you know what? There are two fundamental reasons as to why we have more paper than ever before. We continue to have the lowest postal rates in the world. Hard to believe sometimes, but it is true. That has spawned a huge direct mail industry. If your name gets on a list, you get mail for 75 years plus life. Last year, Walden Pond and Henry David Thoreau received 70 pieces of junk mail. And Mr. Thoreau hasn't been able to open his own mail for 120 years.

Every place you turn, even the State Motor Vehicle department, someone gets your name, sells it to tire companies, the insurance companies, and you get birthday cards that say, "Happy Birthday and you probably need new tires." So we have to be vigilant in terms of paper use. We have got to recognize that most of the paper we hang on to is but a crutch. A tool. Something that we lean on that we don't really need.

I say handling too many pieces of paper is hazardous to your breathing space. Now, I know there are key documents that you have to retain, but I'm talking about those you have discretion over. I want you to go back and get leaner and meaner than you ever have been. Leaner than you ever have been. Because as surely as we are going to end in a few minutes, there will be more paper when you return to your offices, there will be more paper next month, there will be paper next year; and, in all aspects of your life, there will be more paper. Most of it's easily chuckable, but because we are retaining habits that we developed 20, 30, and 40 years back, we hang on to things that we don't need to be hanging on to.

In writing some of my books, I often get a chance to speak to multi-millionaires, CEO's of corporations, professors, very successful people from all walks of life, and to a person they agree that when they come into their office in the morning — and see if this is true for you — when they come into the office in the morning, when they see things in order, the piles not too high, everything where it ought to be, papers not strewn all around, in other words — order. They feel like a million dollars. They feel like they can take on the world. They feel like it is going to be a great day.

And the same ultra-successful people who come into their offices in the morning and see all the piles that they didn't contend with the day before and all the paper and all the post-it pads strewn all over the place feel defeated before they even get started. If some of the most successful people in our society feel this way about something as simply as managing paper, there has got to be some nuggets there for each of us.

The fifth mega reality is a cruncher. Choices. Too many choices. Every place we turn. See Alvin Toffler told us in his 1969 book *Future Shock* that if you are in poverty, if you are socially and economically disadvantaged, you don't have a lot of choices in your life, you feel stress and anxiety. Conversely, if you have got a lot of choices, place to go, people to meet, a lot of options in your life, much like everyone in this room, how do you feel? Quite often, stressed and anxious.

Today, having too few choices in life or too many paradoxically evoke the same feeling that there has got to be a happy middle ground. I want you to let go of the plethora

of low level choices because they take up our psyche. Focus on the handful of things each day that you must make a decision about because you are the head person, the key person on that particular topic. I will prove to you that too many choices confounds our ability to choose. Please raise your hand proudly when your category is called. How many here are single or used to be single?

If you are not single now, think back to the days where you were. 25 years old. Your first job, maybe it was in this industry; maybe it wasn't. It is a Friday afternoon. You just got paid. You're looking good and you're smelling good. It is a crisp autumn day and, after work, with the rest of the office staff, you are going to go to the hot spot in town where all the young professionals meet on Friday. Might have been called a yuppie bar a couple of years ago, but back when you were 25 who knows what it was called, but you know the place. You got it in mind?

Now, suppose you are a man and you come upon some women. Where are the women in bars? At tables, aren't they? There are three women talking at a table; you lean over as much as you can, just trying to get a sense about what they are talking about. Invariably, what does their conversation turn to? Three women in a bar, talking, what are they talking about? Men.

Now there's a topic. Men. Women who stay in the bar on this Friday afternoon, fall day, crisp air, beautiful, everything is going well. What do they say about the men in your town? They are pigs? That's putting it nicely. Don't they say things like "there are no good men in this town"? Sometimes they use a word, well, I guess I can use it. Sometimes they say that men are jerks. I've heard that. Men are jerks in this town.

Now suppose you are a woman and you go to the same bar. Where are the men at this bar? Are they at tables? No, they are literally at the bar; aren't they? So, you just kind of lean over and catch a little bit about what they are saying, and after they talk about sports and cars and investment, and all the things that men talk about, invariably their conversation gets to what? Women. Women at the table. That is being very precise. So they talk about women at the table. What do they say about the women in your town? On this Friday afternoon, crisp, autumn day, it is beautiful and you just got paid, you're looking good, you're smelling good.

What do men say? There are no good women in this town. What is the reality we perceive into the future a world of 6.5 billion people? Where every single place is in high development, more people, more choices, everywhere you turn? Suppose you are on a jumbo jet plane and you are flying from New Orleans to Seattle, Washington. How long a flight would that be? Six hours. Non-stop, you will be in the sky for six hours and there are 500 people on this

flight. You are still 25; you're still single. Here's your assignment. You have to meet your future mate.

And if you don't, you never will. How many think that under that scenario you could meet your future mate? All right, we are going to throw in the pilots and the flight attendants. Now how many think you could meet your future mate? I say that if you had to, you could. Suppose your choices in the future were limited to the town three miles where you currently live. The next town over where there are only ten thousand people. Think of a town of ten thousand people near you. Could you meet your future mate?

You know what? For those of you who thought that you couldn't do it, I want you to consider this. One time the entire population of the earth was only ten thousand people. The point I am leading to is that when we are confronted by too many choices or too few, our ability to choose breaks down. In your positions, you are probably constantly confronted by too many choices all the time.

Added to population, information, media growth, and paper, too many choices results in five mega realities that yield a world that seems like it is going by at a frightening pace. We have to take control in each of those areas. In terms of choices I say, on a continuing basis, limit the number of choices you make on a daily basis. You are going to a store and they say, "Do you want a particular product in red or green?" And it is of no consequence, so you say, "You decide." You are going to lunch with a coworker. The coworker says, "What restaurant do you want to go to?" Your response is, "What one would you like to go to?"

That's it, let all those low level choices go. Bad lunch, good lunch, most lunches you can't remember. They have no impact long term. Keep yourself ready for the handful of key choices in a day that you must make, and the day will slow down.

The rest is easy. Slow down to speed up. Sometimes,

paradoxically, the way to accommodate the faster pace of operations at your warehouse in the case of faster operations in life is to temporarily slow down. Take that sleep, that extra sleep one night for a week. Watch one less video. Read the newspaper a little less. A little less often. You can only take in so much, you can only absorb so much, you can only apply so much. Give more focus, have the strength to walk away from the nice but totally unnecessary. So slow down to speed up. A paradox of our times.

Next is to condition your environment. Make your environment work for you. How many saw the movie "Top Gun"? Tom Cruise is flying the friendly skies for the U.S. Navy. When you are coming into an aircraft carrier, the phrase "All hands on deck" means that even senior officers pick up a push broom and sweep that deck as clean and clear as humanly possible. Why would they do that? To increase the probability of a successful landing. Every paperclip, every speck of dust, everything off the deck. Now today they have blowers and vacuums and things, but the concept is the same. Plane one is coming in and landing. Clean deck. As clean as possible. Now suppose plane one has landed. Plane two is coming in, but plane one hasn't gotten out of the way.

What is going to happen if plane two lands? Obviously, it is going to crash and burn. Your desks, ladies and gentleman at work, are like aircraft carriers decks. Don't take the next pile of stuff that comes in and say, "I'll just park this on the corner and hope that the organizing fairy comes by and does something with it." Nobody is coming. Nobody can help you with this stuff because nobody understands the situation you uniquely face. Fortunately, you have the resources and tools to aid you along the way. The key is recognizing that you don't need to feel overwhelmed and that you alone must craft a workable resolution.

Peace

TRUTH, JUSTICE AND FREEDOM

Address by TENZIN GYATSO, *His Holiness the Dalai Lama*

Delivered to the European Parliament, Strasbourg, Germany, October 24, 2001

Madame Speaker, Honourable Members of the Parliament, ladies and gentlemen. It is a great honour for me to address the European Parliament. I believe the European Union is an inspiring example for a cooperative and peaceful co-existence among different nations and peoples and deeply inspiring for people like myself who strongly believe in the need for better understanding, closer cooperation, and greater respect

among the various nations of the world. I thank you for this kind invitation. I consider it as an encouraging gesture of genuine sympathy and concern for the tragic fate of the Tibetan people. I speak to you today as a simple Buddhist monk, educated and trained in our ancient traditional way. I am not an expert in political science. However, my life-long study and practice of Buddhism and my responsibility and involvement in the non-violent freedom