

# THE JORDAN HARBINGER SHOW

## Worksheet for Daniel Pink | When Is the Best Time to Get Things Done? (Episode 63)

When considering the time of day during which you're most productive, you probably already know if you're a morning person, a night owl, or somewhere in between. You probably also know how hard it is to change from one of these chronotypes to another -- but would you feel better if you knew there are more variables at play than your sheer willpower?

In [episode 63](#), [When: The Scientific Secrets of Perfect Timing](#) author Daniel Pink helps us identify our particular chronotype and maximize productivity accordingly. As Publisher's Weekly says, *"Pink should change many people's understanding of timing with this book, which provides insights from little-known scientific studies in an accessible way...By the book's end, readers will be thinking much more carefully about how they divide up their days and organize their routines."*

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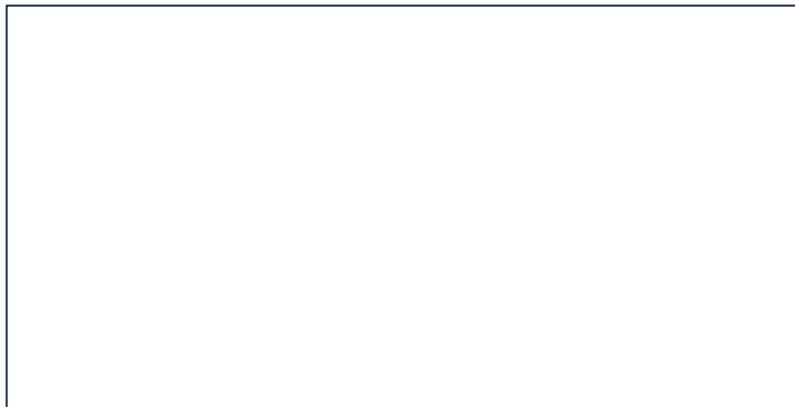
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## Are Humans Wired for Time?

As human beings, we don't have just one biological clock; our very cells pulse with the rhythms that regulate alternating periods of sleep and vigilance. But we also take social cues from our environment -- from the light of the sun to the darkness of night to the schedules that send us to work and school -- that result in the entrainment of our circadian rhythms.

Some of us are morning people (larks), some of us are night people (owls), and the rest of us fall somewhere in between. Chronobiologists call these categories chronotypes.

**Into which chronotype do you place yourself? Are you an early-rising lark, a late-night owl, or an in-between third-bird? If you're not sure, the next section should help you get a clearer idea.**

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## The Munich ChronoType Questionnaire (MCTQ)

The [Munich ChronoType Questionnaire](#) (MCTQ) is one test that you can take to better identify your chronotype, or you can spend the next few minutes reading through and answering the following:

Think about what a free day looks like to you, meaning you don't require an alarm clock to wake up, and you're not sleep deprived. You can go to sleep and wake up any time you want. What time would you typically go to sleep?

What time do you wake up? What we are doing here is identifying your mid-point of sleep on a free day. So if you went to sleep at 11:00 p.m. and woke up at 7:00 a.m., your mid-point of sleep would be 3:00 a.m.

Daniel talks about what we know: If your mid-point of sleep is 3:30 a.m., you're probably a lark, or a morning person. If your mid-point of sleep is after 5:30 a.m., you're probably an owl. If your mid-point of sleep is between 3:30 a.m. and 5:30 a.m., you're probably a third-bird in the middle.

**Into what category does this place you? After listening to this episode, how might knowing this help you better modify your schedule to maximum effect?**

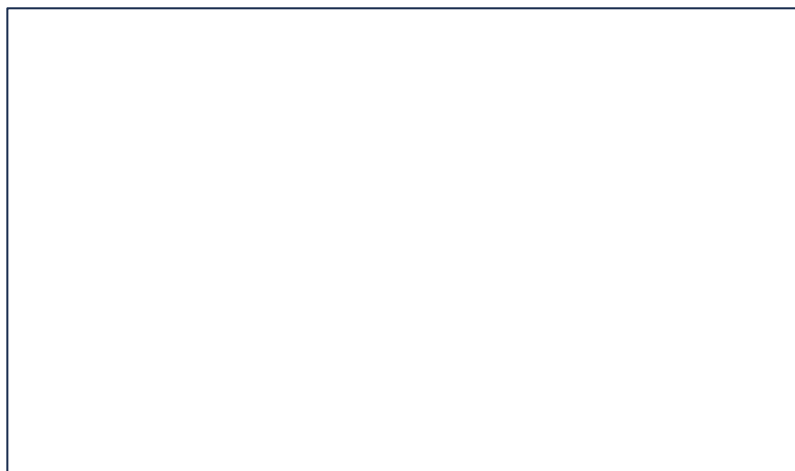
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## Breaking Down Silos

As Rob Weinhold mentioned way back in [episode two](#), experts in any given field can easily fall into the trap of only investigating the world that exists within their own silo. Daniel says researchers in economics, anthropology, cognitive science, social psychology, anesthesiology, and endocrinology have been asking the same questions about sleep's role on the human body for years, but they haven't been in communication with each other to share their findings until very recently.

**We've talked about this before -- connecting the dots. In what ways have you been able to connect dots in separate specialties in your world that others around you have not? How has this opened dialogue that otherwise wouldn't have occurred?**



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## Informed Decisions

"How do beginnings affect us? How do midpoints affect us? How do endings affect us? How do groups synchronize their time? This research, if we wrestle it to the ground, can help us make better decisions about when to do things informed by evidence and data, not simply by our intuition and guesses.," says Daniel.

**When have you found yourself making important decisions based off of intuition and guesses? Contrast this with a time you have made informed decisions based off of evidence and data. Which provided a better outcome?**

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## Timing Is Everything

Different domains have done various kinds of research showing the same kinds of effects. For example, with corporate earnings, a study at NYU put earnings calls into an analyzer looking at the conveyance of the words, positive, negative, and neutral sentiments. What they found was the positive and negative sentiment followed a daily pattern where basically the mood was better in the morning than it was in the afternoon. They made assumptions that companies that wanted to break bad news wanted to do it in the afternoon, which wasn't the case. However, calls in the afternoon were still more negative and combative than calls in the morning. What was interesting was that that negative sentiment also led to stock mispricings. What this means is that our days have a hidden patterns that we often can't see.

**Think about that for a moment, about how your daily patterns are. Can you look back on the mood of your day, and identify times of the day where it is more positive, negative or neutral? What are those times for you? If larger negative times are having an impact, think about things you can do to shift your day so that you bring more positivity, or at least neutral conveyance into it to strategically mitigate the negative.**

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## Cognitive Ability to Make Decisions

Daniel talks about how our cognitive abilities don't stay the same throughout the day. They change in predictable ways and can sometimes change in dramatic ways. Simply put, our decision-making capacity and our creative capacity are different at different times of the day. We make decisions differently based on the same set of facts at different times of the day.

**How have you found this to be true in your life? At what times of the day are you better making clearer decisions? At what times of the day are you most creative?**

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## The Perfect Match

Matching our chronotype to our work schedule would be ideal -- but what happens when we're not in control of the hours we work? What if we're owls who are just hitting our stride when all the larks around us are heading home for the day?

Rather than trying to modify our chronotype, Daniel suggests finding ways to change our environment if possible. He feels bosses will become more forgiving as new research into chronotypes is publicized, and it might be worth having a conversation to see if you can modify your hours to better accommodate your chronotype. Sometimes even an hour or two can make a world of difference.

**Taking his or her suspected chronotype into consideration, when's the best time of day to approach your boss for this conversation? If the boss is unwilling or unable to make adjustments to your starting time, what other ways can you help yourself to best operate on a less-than-desired schedule?**



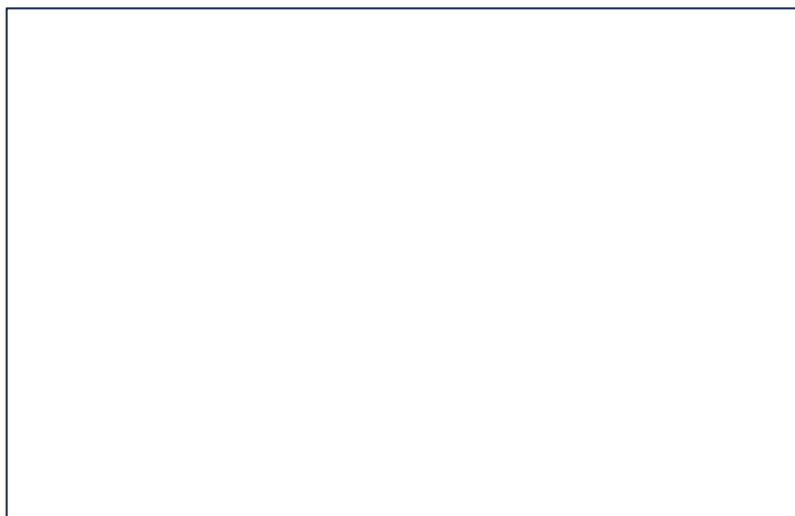
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## Deliberate Planning

If you do have to attend a meeting outside of your peak performance times during the day, one thing you could do is to bring a checklist formulated the day or night before during your peak. This will allow you to come to the meeting with deliberate information that you can draw upon without having to fight against your chronotype.

**What times of day do you feel you are running at peak performance? When will be the best time for you to make this checklist?**

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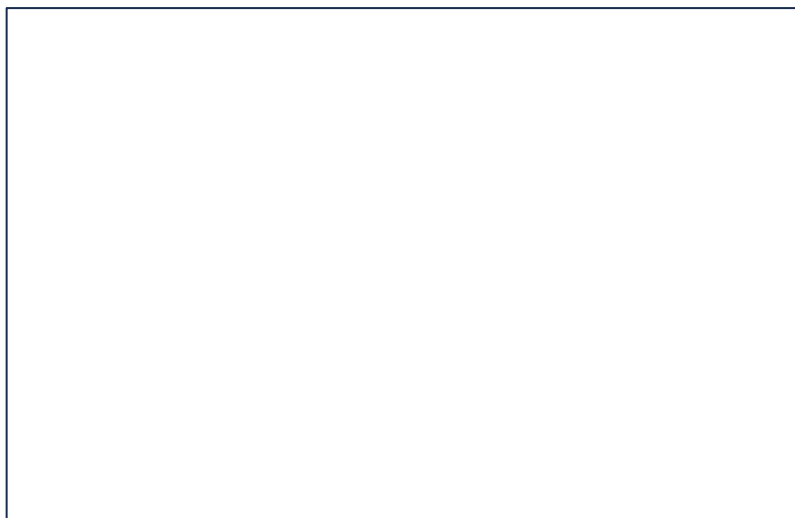
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## The 20-20-20 Break

Every 20 minutes, Daniel will look at something 20 feet away for 20 seconds, which is a great way to rest the eyes and the brain momentarily. But even standing up or taking a quick walk into another room and back can be a great way to treat yourself to a microbreak that has benefits beyond trying to stay focused through a non-productive, off-peak trough.

**Have you taken or implemented microbreaks into your day? When do you take them? When should you take them?**



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## Nap Time

Where do naps fit into all of this? Aren't they just a waste of time? Daniel says a 10-25 minute nap is ideal -- no longer, or you risk sleep inertia that leaves you groggy rather than refreshed.

For extra defense against this inertia, Daniel suggests recruiting the assistance of a cup of coffee before your head hits the pillow -- called the nappuccino, it will take 20 minutes to kick in and gently bring you back to the waking world.

**Have you done this before? Has it worked? I'm sure many of us have had caffeine before going to sleep, but what about right before a nap? How do you feel after having a 10-20 minute nap?**

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## Career Shift

One of the best ways to increase your salary is to switch jobs or careers. I've seen this in organizations where an employee will want an increase in wages. Unfortunately, because they don't have the skills for that position on their resume they are not awarded the job, despite their desire to grow with the organization. This has forced employees to feel like they've had to resort to leaving to another company for a similar job, but for higher wages that will also give them the skills needed for the position they couldn't get from the original job and company. Once they gained some experience, they added the skills to their resume, applied for the position back at the original company and then they hired them back at the desired wage. All this could have been avoided if the company were to invest in the employee to begin with.

**When have you been faced with wanting to earn more income, seen the position within reach, but have been looked past because you lacked a certain skill set? What did you do? If faced with this in the future, what would you do?**

Full show notes and resources for this episode [can be found here](#).

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## About



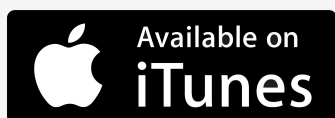
Join Jordan Harbinger (critically acclaimed host, formerly of The Art of Charm) as we get deep into the untapped wisdom of the world's top performers -- from legendary musicians to intelligence operatives, iconoclastic writers to visionary change-makers.

We deconstruct the playbooks of the most successful people on earth -- and learn new strategies, perspectives, and insights you can't find anywhere else. Then, take these insights into your own life and live what you listen.

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