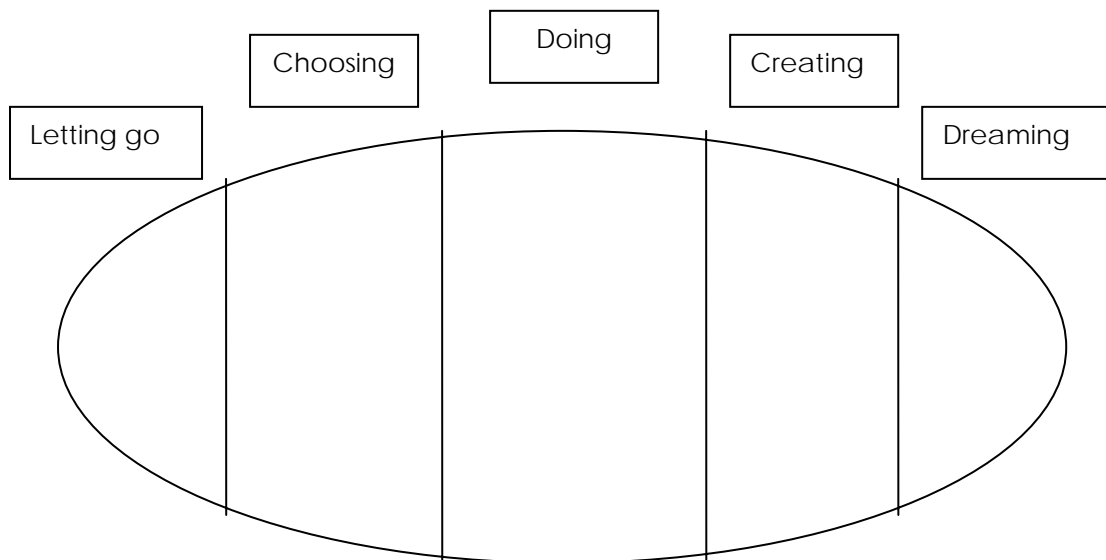


Time to NOW Bubble

Cyriel Kortleven (aka C'Real Shortlife)

Time to NOW Bubble is a model for a different way of looking at time. You can compare it with a big bubble that is located entirely in the present moment. All activities within the bubble form part of someone's field of attention. One important assumption in this model is that we do not move through time: instead, time comes to us. We are always in the NOW moment. This is in contrast to the conventional, linear model of time, in which we distinguish three time blocks: past, present and future. In the Time to NOW bubble, everything is here and now.

As our life changes, other activities come into our field of attention. At certain moments our attention is directed towards studies (and not towards work, building a house or going on holiday). But as our situation varies, so does our field of attention. We call this field of attention the Time to NOW bubble.



The Time to NOW bubble is used to draw up a list of all the activities in your field of attention. Within the Time to NOW bubble we can distinguish five domains, namely dreaming, creating, doing, choosing and letting go. These domains are subjective and sometimes overlap one another. But dividing your activities into these domains helps you to gain a better understanding of your experience of time. Each phase has a number of specific characteristics.

Procedure

The idea is for you to jot down a number of activities in each domain (at least three per domain). You can choose whether to focus on your personal life or your work life. Experience shows that a combination of both usually works best. Most people are familiar with the right-hand part of the bubble (dreaming, creating, doing), but they have more difficulty with choosing and letting go: our Western society doesn't pay enough attention to these two activities, and so people are increasingly unable to keep up with the pace of our society. They are mainly concerned with realising their dreams, but they "forget" that choosing and letting go are just as important for a healthy balance in life. One of the aims of the Time to NOW bubble is to bring more attention to bear on these two domains.

Each of the domains is explained in greater detail below.

Dreaming

The "dreaming" domain is a *thinking* domain. Here you should note all the activities that you would like to do, but for which you don't have time at the moment (for whatever reason): you have *not yet taken any action* to make your dream come true.

Examples:

- Going on a trip to New Zealand
- Writing a novel
- Launching a new product or service on the market
- Working with a new computer system
- Having a child

Creating

The "creating" domain is a *doing* domain. Note the concrete steps (actions) that you have taken to realise a particular dream or activity. It is no longer just an idea: you have taken a *decision* to realise a particular dream.

Examples:

- You have obtained information from a travel agent.
- You have already outlined the plot of your novel.
- You have organised a brainstorming session to think up a new product or service.
- You have downloaded the beta version of the new software.
- You have talked with your partner about having a child.

Doing

The "doing" domain is also a *doing* domain. The dream has already become reality. The activities that you note here often originate from the "creating domain" and are in the *carrying out* phase. For most people, these are activities that they spend most time on every day.

Examples:

- You are on your journey, enjoying all the sights.
- Your book is printed and in the bookshops. You give presentations and interviews about the main features of the book.

- Your new product/service has been launched on the market. You are lending support to the marketing department by contacting prospects.
- The program is up & running and you are making use of it.
- The child has been born and you are enthusiastically taking care of it.

Choosing

The "choosing" domain is a *thinking* domain too, but this time on the other side of the bubble. Here you note the activities that may not be so necessary or even enjoyable. When drawing up the list, ask yourself which things are not turning out so well.

Examples:

- Sightseeing in a particular city turns out to be stressful and tiring, because there are so many other tourists.
- Giving interviews about your book takes up a lot of your time.
- You discover that it takes a lot of effort to deal with technical questions concerning the new product/service.
- You keep getting spammed with promotional information about other software applications.
- You really don't like changing nappies.

Letting go

The "letting go" domain is a *doing* domain once more. You have taken the *decision* to give up a particular activity, and you are taking leave of it in a *physical or emotional way*. This letting go can call up certain emotions, such as relief or anxiety; it varies from person to person. Once you have let go of the activity entirely, it can disappear completely from your field of attention.

Examples:

- You avoid busy places and try to visit certain attractions early in the morning when there are fewer tourists around.
- You decide to give only one interview per month, even if it means generating less publicity for your book.
- You decide to keep providing the technical information anyway, and put "technical training" in your "creating" domain. You try to overcome the negative feelings that you had about tech support by focusing more on the fact that you want to manage all aspects of your product/service (including the technical side).
- You unsubscribe from the software supplier's mailing list.
- You accept that changing nappies is an essential part of having a child, and you decide that while doing it you will "dream" about all the pleasant things that you want to do together with the child.

Flexible model

You can also change the position of any of the activities that you put in the Time to NOW bubble; it's a flexible model, in which you can always take a certain decision back or fill it in differently.

One practical tip is to work with A3 or flip chart paper, on which you draw the Time to NOW bubble. You can write the different activities on separate Post-it notes. This allows you to move certain activities around if you feel they belong in a different place. The Time to NOW bubble works best if you fill it in just once or a few times per year.

For example, if after a year you haven't done anything about realising a particular dream, it's worth asking yourself whether it really is your dream, or whether it is just a "socially desirable" ambition. In the latter case, you can put this "dream" in the "choosing" domain, and subsequently either let go of it or put it in the "creating" domain.

Another example might be that you decide to move a certain activity from the "choosing" domain back into the "dreaming" or "creating" domain, on condition that you change something about the way in which you carry out the activity, so you get enough out of it.

The Time to NOW bubble is a model that you can play around with, and in which feelings play an important role. How do you experience the activity, and in which domain does it belong, depending on how you feel about it now?

For more information, contact: timetonow@newshoestoday.com.