

Mastering Time Spheres

Time has puzzled us, probably forever. What is this mysterious medium? Science says that it is part of the fourth-dimensional space-time continuum. Others claim that it does not even exist. Most agree, though, that the experience of it is subjective. Telephone "hold" times stretch into infinity; weekend vacations fly by as quickly as dreams.

We have several ways to divide and interpret segments of time. For those involved in creating a New Civilization, seeking enlightenment, or wanting a greater mastery of life, understanding the idea of *time spheres* may be useful.

A time sphere is a conceptual block of time with its own set of dynamics. From within these filters of consciousness, we form specific pictures of How It Is. In this model, we consider five spheres: (1) Present time, (2) Personal time, (3) Family time, (4) Historic time, and (5) Cosmic time. Let's see how these perspectives influence us. And they *will* influence us, because we believe that what they show us is real.

The Personal Time Sphere

The diameter of the Personal time sphere is small. Usually, it encompasses the present day or a few days into the past or future. Sometimes, it can include incidents as far back as early childhood (like remembering happy events or painful moments), or it can project decades into the future (like imagining being famous). At most, it encompasses our lifespan.

If you're thinking about losing weight, making plans for the weekend, or wanting to impress someone, then you're living in the Personal time sphere. Memories, hopes, and fears are part of it too.

We experience the drama of existential life here. Our concerns revolve around our ego, self-image, and biological programs. The Personal sphere is all about "me." It's easy to imagine that this is a selfish state, because it is. *This is the Small Picture*. However, it defines our unique personality. Without it, we would not be human. If you don't need depth, then you can live an OK life at this level.

Enlightenment

Enlightenment is an Eastern concept that has been gaining acceptance in the West for several decades. The closest Western concept we have is that of being wise and saintly. Mystics say that you won't find enlightenment by living in the Personal sphere. Neither will you find deep peace or sustained happiness. With our fleeting fears and desires occupying our mind, we remain shallow and two-dimensional, subject to the winds of circumstance. Enemies are those who block our desires or ambitions, or who threaten us.

The New Civilization

We will define the New Civilization as a group of beings who, at the least, respect one another constantly. At best, they live without suffering. The more broadly we define it, the more perspectives we can entertain.

The New World, as seen from the Personal sphere, will solve all of our personal problems. A New Civilization, though, is more than "I want" or "I don't want." It stands outside personality. New World pioneers create universal visions that call others to action.

Mastering the Personal Sphere

You master this Sphere by being aware that you are in it. If you are unaware, then it is mastering you.

The Family Time Sphere

The Family sphere is next and is larger than the Personal sphere. Time-wise, it reaches back into our ancestral past and stretches into the future a generation or two (through our children and grandchildren). Its natural, interpersonal diameter can be small. It may encompass only one's self, partner, and children (if any); however, it can expand to include the tribe, as well. This sphere is about blood: family and tribe. *It is the Bigger Picture.*

Here we learn about what is valuable in our existential life. Family and friends rank high on the chart, because humans are social creatures. You move to this sphere by dedicating yourself to a relationship or becoming a loving parent, and by playing out your role in the family or tribe. (As Western civilization has pretty much atomized the "tribe," we usually deal with near relatives.)

Expanding this sphere to include religious or state affiliations, however, would take us into the next level — the Historic sphere. When Jesus said love thy neighbor, he meant to include those beyond one's family and tribe. This was the first attempt to expand the Family sphere into a larger realm. However, this shift destroys the natural psychological and biological limits of the Family model. That is why we keep the idea of "One Race" or "One Tribe" in the Historic realm.

Enlightenment

The Family view requires us to compromise some of our ego demands. This is valuable, because it expands our psychological, social, and spiritual awareness. We can gain wisdom from this. Enlightenment, however, exceeds Family parameters. Altruism is a pillar of the enlightened state. And although the Family sphere is more altruistic than the Personal, it is not universal. Enemies are those who would threaten the family and tribe.

The New Civilization

Family visions of Heaven on Earth are more solid and universal than the Personal. They accent various family values.

Mastering the Family Sphere

To master this sphere, you must compromise some of your Personal demands yet keep your dignity. Relationship must be as important as your ego. Finding balance is the challenge. You must also consciously play your role in the family. This is difficult lately, because roles have become ill-defined. Do what you believe is best.

The Historic Time Sphere

The Historic sphere takes us beyond our brief lifespan, beyond the Personal and Family Spheres, and usually reaches into human pre-history. It forces us to see beyond our Personal and Family selves, that are temporary, and we play a small and perhaps important role in the unfolding human drama.

Maybe we evolved from monkeys. Maybe God molded us in His image. Or, maybe aliens planted us here. In any case, moving through time has led us to where we are today. Ours is a multifaceted story that we have interpreted in countless ways. *These interpretations are the essence of the Historic sphere.*

We now find the first hint of the Buddhist idea of impermanence. Unless we've made an impressive and widespread impact during our life, then the world will forget us after we die. That's not a pleasant thought for the ego. Our friends and family will remember us, and maybe our grandchildren. Beyond that, we, as individualized humans, become part of history. Even if we become historic figures, we cannot enjoy the fame.

These cultural myths describe humanity's purpose, how we fit into the grand scheme, or how the grand scheme works. They take the form of philosophy, religion, evolutionary psychology, political or economic theory, and even alien conspiracies. We can choose a complex mythology that employs a myriad of gods. We can choose a scientific model. Or, we may choose something as simple as, "Love God and love one another." Whatever our choice, it will mold our consciousness and strongly color our Personal and Family realities. This sphere is a vital, psychological and spiritual part of our humanness. *This is the Big Picture.*

The Big Picture

Part of mythology's value is to define experience in larger terms. Take suffering for example. In the Personal sphere, suffering is simply "I hurt." In the Historic, we have many explanations. Some say that its purpose is to test us spiritually. Others call it karma (or cosmic justice). For others, it shows that we still have lessons to learn: Life is a school. Maybe suffering is simply a biological mechanism.

How do we live the Historic drama? It was the job of our family and culture to teach the children how to do it. Be a good Jew or Catholic. Be a good citizen or Party member. Many, though, "lose the faith." They place Personal and Family sphere desires above Historic programs. How do they regain the faith or find a new one?

Occasionally, some experience a life-threatening situation. When they emerge, they begin to question the wisdom of their Personal and Family spheres. They ask Big Questions: What is the meaning of my life? What is important? Why am I here? This usually leads to radical shifts in their thinking and behavior. Having a near-death experience or other metaphysical encounter can trigger this process. Suffering a catastrophic loss or growing older can cause it too.

Historic realities impart a larger purpose to life and infer specific courses of action. For example, a Christian perspective says that human history is a testing ground for souls. It leads to individual salvation or damnation. What does this infer?

Say you suddenly feel that you are a different person. To define your condition, you could use a psychological Historic model: "Man is a materialistic, psychological creature." Within this context, you are mentally ill and should seek treatment. In contrast, you could use a New Age Historic model: "Humans are vehicles for an assortment of higher, other-dimensional beings." Within this context, you are a "walk-in" and should complete your mission.

Ask yourself: "Humanity is all about _____." Your answer will paint a background reality that affects you. For instance, in the background of most religious contexts God created us and loves us. Within most materialistic, scientific contexts, we are chance occurrences. How does each make you feel? Which do you prefer? We base our choices on our limited and subjective experiences.

Birth of Stories

Many Historic stories start as a "Cause" and then develop into an institution. We have Islam, Nazism, Zionism, Communism, and evolutionary biology — anything with an historic destiny.

A Cause often pits its goals against the "lower" desires of the Personal and Family spheres. This creates friction. The Cause instructs us to overcome those desires, because they hamper the goals of the "higher self." Often, overcoming them does make us better people. If the Historic demands are unrealistic or anti-social, though, then they can cause unnecessary suffering.

Enlightenment

Enlightenment is possible only within a story that allows it. Communism, for instance, doesn't consider it while Buddhism and the New Age allow it. Enemies are those who oppose the Cause.

The New Civilization

The Historic sphere is the nest where we hatch panoramic visions of the New Civilization. Our personalities are not normally in the picture, except as a footnote or a valued foot soldier. Let's look first at religious offerings and then at some civil ones.

Religious Stories

At first, we composed religious stories. A typical ending is that God brings together the Saved, Chosen, or Select Few. They would then live either in Heaven or on a New Earth, and — not to be trite — they would live happily ever after.

Note that most traditional religions do not expect us to build a New Civilization. Their heavens exist in other dimensions or God creates them on a purified New Earth.

Civil Stories

Civil Heaven on Earth myths arose recently. After the American Revolution, the idea that people could run their own societies, free from kings, fired the hearts of many. No more monarchs to oppress the people! Additionally, Voltaire and others had successfully debunked religion, enough so that many could no longer rationally rely on that institution. In Europe, these events cleared the way for Napoleon's rise to power. Liberating one country after another, many revolutionaries, or Patriots as they called themselves, pronounced him the new Savior.

Many secret societies were born, like the Masons and one of its offspring, the Illuminati. The people were calling this era the "New Age." Hopes for the New Civilization were soaring. This revolutionary enthusiasm, however, was short-lived. After Napoleon would liberate a country, he would systematically "liberate" its wealth. The people soon discovered that it wasn't the kings and popes who made us suffer. Heaven on Earth would still have to wait for a better idea — or a miracle.

A century or so later, Marxist institutions would follow the same pattern. Instead of plundering under the banner of Statehood, though, it used the symbol of the Worker. It too would confiscate the treasures and resources of the countries that it liberated. It would replace the promise of an idealized, egalitarian society with a deadening bureaucracy. The Brotherhood of Man appeared fatally flawed by no other than Man himself.

Another Economic Approach

Historically, humans have always traded: commerce is an integral part of our existence. It's no surprise then to stumble across the idea that capitalism — so-called free trade — is the road to Heaven on Earth.

This system promised to bring unimagined prosperity, freedom, and happiness to its followers. On the up side, it *has* produced unprecedented wealth and material abundance, including apparently miraculous leaps in technology.

On the down side, it has brought us dangerously close to ecological collapse. Culture has ebbed. It knowingly promotes, packages, and sells products harmful to people and the environment, killing us for profit. It disrupts and exploits countries through its banking and production practices. In addition, this path has yielded an unimaginable concentration of wealth for a few families, greater than any in history.

Even if we excuse, justify, or temper a large portion of these criticisms, this Historic system, while superior to others in some ways, cannot create Heaven on Earth.

A Time of Transition

Drawbacks exist in every system that we have ever devised, regardless of its "destiny." We now know that the Historic realities of religion and humanism can be lethal. Never underestimate their power: for some, these stories are to die for. At this stage of our race's psycho-spiritual evolution, perhaps that is our fate. Imperfect creatures create imperfect systems, despite how brilliant we think our theories are. In any case, many are still searching for ways to manifest a New World. The Historic pot is simmering.

Mastering The Historic Sphere

Mastering this sphere is not so much about judging the stories that we don't believe in (although a healthy discernment is useful). Rather, it concerns three points.

First, we must understand the nature of this sphere. Historic stories contain large amounts of theory, peppered with a few facts. Psychologically, this is not satisfying: psyches crave certainty. It can be difficult to accept that our stories are speculative, especially within myths that claim to be, or we accept as, completely factual ("The Word of God," "The Theory of Relativity," and other states of "Knowing"). And there's a rub: if we do accept that they are speculative, then we may limit their effectiveness. Being a True Believer has transforming effects. It's a trade off, but to master this sphere, we have to do it.

Note: For some reason, people are attached to facts. It doesn't matter whether they are really facts, only that we perceive them as such. In the Historic sphere, there's more theory than fact. Once we forget that, this sphere has mastered us. Our imagination takes on steel wall limits. It's subtle. It's powerful.

Second, we should have a clear understanding of what we *really* believe. (Much of what we believe is what we are supposed to believe.) We need to look deeply within ourselves and ask questions like, "What is the purpose of my life?"

Third, our story should fulfill us. Without an inspiring story that we can put our heart into, we are like a walking shell. Our Historic Path should have heart. If not, that essential part of our wholeness will atrophy.

Mastery of this sphere takes considerable introspection. If you don't have a story, then either find one or make one up. Most of the stories that we have were made up "on the fly": create them as you go. Just be sure you build on a solid foundation.

The Cosmic Time Sphere

The Cosmic sphere takes us beyond the bounds of the Personal, Family, and Historic Spheres. It is by far the most panoramic, starting with the creation of the universe and ending with its destruction.

To illustrate, let's look at three cosmological timetables. One is that the universe is born (the Big Bang), expands, and then contracts. It ends uncomfortably in the Big Crunch. Another is that the universe explodes into existence and continues to expand forever, dissipating as it goes. It ends with everyone freezing to death. Yet another is that the universe has always existed. It just is — always. This allows infinite possibilities to arise. In any case, the time scales that we are dealing with are as immense as they are uncertain. *This sphere is the Really, Really, Really, Big Picture.*

"Thanks for All the Fish. . . ."

It's a fair guess that the universe has existed for billions of years. If we consider this period a cosmic "day" (though it's not over yet), then a human lifetime lasts about one ten-thousandth of a second. Humanity (including its vast pre-historic period) has existed about two seconds.

In this realm, what can you do that is meaningful? How important is an argument about a football game? Winning an election? Becoming enlightened? Creating a New Civilization? How about enemies? Individuals,

the human race, and even the earth itself become insignificant. Everything must pass and eventually will be forgotten.

This sphere represents the peak of impermanence. Over 99% of the species that have existed on earth are now extinct. Disappearing is the rule, not the exception. In some multiverse cosmologies, even this universe — one among countless others — becomes insignificant and inconsequential. Infinity is the ultimate deconstructionist. "There is nowhere to go and nothing to do."

Viewed from the other time-sphere perspectives, the Cosmic view is apathetic and nihilistic. Right and wrong are meaningless, because our actions are insignificant. This conflicts with the basic tenets of the Personal, Family, and Historic spheres. However, its perspective is as valid as theirs.

Pitfalls and Benefits

The Cosmic view can easily become an ego trip: "My sphere is bigger than yours." If, however, we have embodied (lived) the Cosmic rather than just grasped at it mentally, then we realize that all spheres are equally insignificant. One is as good as the next.

This is a transcendent state. If something troubles you, ask, "How will this [thought, emotion, or action] influence the purpose of the universe?" This helps us to reevaluate the realities of the smaller stories and to forgive smaller-story imperfections. Don't expect this to be an instant cure-all though. For instance, if you suddenly feel angry, just thinking, "This is insignificant," won't make it go away. However, the more you live in this reality, the more effective it will be.

In this sphere, you appreciate and love the little things. Everything sparkles. Every insignificant creature, every act, is fresh and extraordinary. They are here for a moment only. Embody this perspective and you become the Omega Man/Woman. You don't sweat the small stuff, and from this perspective, even the Apocalypse is small stuff.

Unfortunately, it is hugely difficult to maintain this perspective. Psychologically, the perspectives of the Personal, Family, and Historic spheres are more natural and more demanding of our attention. Practically, this sphere is not useful for finding solutions to everyday problems, at least in the Western sense. It represents the extreme yin, allowing everything rather than solving anything. This runs counter to the basic tenets of Western civilization. If you plan to live in this state, then you probably won't earn a living as a CFO.

Mastering the Cosmic Sphere

Ask yourself this: "The purpose of the Universe is _____." Your answer probably reflects an Historic assumption. If you think that you have Cosmic reality figured out, then you are likely dealing with an expanded Historic story. (This includes the "I am God" theory.) You will not master this sphere like that.

Mastering this sphere is about surrendering control of the universe, psychologically detaching from the realities of the other spheres, and acknowledging that you live in the Mystery. It's about letting go, knowing that you are already there . . . probably.

The Present Time Sphere

This sphere has the smallest diameter. To live in Present time is to live in the Now. You are one-on-one with current, existential reality. You aren't relying heavily on the other filters; past referencing and projecting into the future are minimal. Neither do you concern yourself excessively with Historic causes or with the grand scheme. Instead, you are focusing on what is in front of you. *This sphere is the Picture.*

Like an open channel, you instinctively follow the direction of your spirit (or your nervous system, depending on your Historic view). You are the Alpha Man/Woman and represent minimally processed reality. The Moment intersects Infinity and you are there. "I am, therefore this."

Mastering the Present Sphere

You master this sphere by being it. This requires focus. Meditation, Tai Chi, and high art are helpful tools.

For more information about Present time reality, visit the link below.

Furthering Your Causes

We can interpret every act, thought, and emotion through any of these spheres. Each sphere will filter that experience uniquely. Take the controversial instinct of sex for example. In the Personal sphere, sex is about fulfilling a biological desire ("I want"). The Family sphere uses it for intimate, interpersonal bonding and to raise a family.

Historically, we have several options. We can practice tantric yoga to raise our consciousness. We can produce children for the Cause. Or, we can abstain from pre-marital sex and avoid committing adultery. Alternatively, we can see it as nature's way of continuing the species.

From a purely Cosmic view, sex is another dance in the palace of creation. In the Present sphere, it is what it is.

If we have the skill, we can juggle these spheres to become better individuals, partners, parents, and citizens. We can become more proficient at living our Historic life.

Conclusion

The spheres give life its complex texture. Each has value and is valid within its biological, psychological, social, or cosmic context. To help understand and appreciate them, you can concentrate on and live consciously within them. Practice each for several weeks or so. Interpret Personal sphere experiences within the larger contexts. Get to know each sphere. Then, you can identify in which spheres others are living. You will communicate more wisely.

In the tarot, the Magician has the four elements at his command. Similarly, we can master the five Spheres and apply them to whatever purposes we choose. As "masters of the spheres," we do not attach ourselves to them; we can set them down at will. This frees us from the limitations inherent in any particular sphere.

Mastering them is living art.