

Time Changes Everything

I'm going to visit with a financial advisor in the near future. The advisor will talk to me about money and the way I want my money to be invested. The idea is to make sure that when I die, there will still be enough money left aside to support anyone that I think needs to be supported without worries that someone will be neglected.

It sounds morbid, but since I personally will not benefit from this planning, I have little responsibility in the events. My only task is to delay the passing as long as I can. It's a rather uncomfortable thought, but it is a thought that we all have to consider if we see a need to help others, some of whom have yet to be born.

If I want to avoid financial hardship, maybe I should start to think about the passage of time and how time, rather than money, could affect this situation. Although my financial advisors may not agree, it is not money that matters; it is time.

Perhaps it's time to think of the theory of relativity as it affects our financial status. After all, no matter how wealthy a person is, they will still likely spend the same amount of money for a stick of chewing gum as would any other person on earth. Even though the wealthy person may have the ability to purchase millions or even billions of sticks of gum, they are limited by the number that they can chew at any one time. That same wealthy person may be able to purchase thousands of automobiles but will only be able to drive one at a time. Likewise, when that well-to-do person goes to the theater or to a concert, they can only listen with one pair of ears at a time. Thinking more about that person, they might choose to buy out the entire theater and listen to the presentation by themselves, but this will probably diminish, rather than expand, the enjoyment of the live presentation.

Unless we are theoretical physicists, we likely think of time as being rigidly defined. Time is divided into a series of increments. We look at a minute being 60 seconds, an hour being 60 minutes, and a day being 24 hours. But the day depends upon the rotation of the earth and, on a different planet, the length of a day would certainly be different. Perhaps this is why

Captain Kirk records his reports relative to star-dates rather than calendar dates.

The discussion started with a retirement fund for me and a death benefit for my heirs and it ended up as an episode of Star Trek. Perhaps it is important to state that my editorial goal was to describe how perception of time, as it affects implant performance, has changed over time.

We are now into the second half-century of implant dentistry. During these years, we went from a prescriptive approach that limited implant-related treatment being provided by a small group of experts to an ever-expanding group of prudent clinicians who see implant dentistry as a routine part of dental practice. Looking at the future, it seems quite likely that implant dentistry will become a treatment that is provided by robots, thereby removing the clinician from the treatment equation altogether.

That description of dental care being provided to us by machines might be perceived as being a bit aggressive. However, when we think about the advances in medicine, especially in surgical fields, it becomes more evident that the clinician of the future will provide treatment that comes not from their hands, but from their brains.

Many of us remember the description of the "wet-fingered" dentist. Today, the notion that a clinician would render treatment without some sort of barrier device is unacceptable to the patient and to the clinician. Indeed, the passage of time has improved quality and reduced risks.

What has it taken to arrive at this point? Time has certainly been part of the equation. Thinking about how far we have come in a relatively short amount of time demonstrates great hope for the future, and the amount of time it takes to reach that future is ever decreasing.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steven E. Eckert DDS MS".

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