



## 3rd floor – TIME

### In the hamster wheel of life

***Start the hourglass on the wall.***

***It runs for two minutes. Then start all the hourglasses in the figures. Keep all these hourglasses running during the two minutes. Because they all run for a different length of time, it becomes very stressful not to forget any hourglass.***

*Time cannot be collected like money or things. Time is there and it passes. Today there are more and more things we have to take care of. For each of them we need time. That's why we think everything is getting faster.*

### **Can you save time?**

If you try to save time, you lose it - this is what Michael Ende's novel "Momo" teaches us.

The grey gentlemen there are in constant stress: their cigarettes must not run out or they will die. Modern people often experience their own lives as if they were in a very similar situation; in a hamster wheel - or in several hamster wheels at once. If they don't keep up, they fall and get trampled. Their situation can be described as standing on 'slippery slopes' everywhere:

We operate in many arenas of life at the same time, and everywhere we are not running at that moment, we are sliding backwards, time is working against us. Everything we don't care about right now is in danger of becoming obsolete. So, we may buy the latest computer and software today - no sooner have we installed it than it is already out of date.

We may own high-fashion clothes: Next season it will be 'out. If we don't keep our address book up to date, we won't be able to reach our friends tomorrow. Our knowledge and skills become obsolete.

Our insurance is not up to date, our investments and mobile phone tariffs are out of date, we can no longer follow political events, we haven't done anything for our fitness and our appearance for far too long, and so on

### **We run in several hamster wheels at the same time**

At the same time, not all 'hamster wheels' run at the same speed - or not all slopes slide at the same pace: the email account fills up again if we let it out of our sight for a few minutes, the software becomes outdated a little more slowly, and we can take a little more time with our old-age security.

Acceleration pressure and time crunch, however, seem to be caused by the fact that, on the one hand, there are more and more arenas in which we have to run (just a few years ago, no one thought of changing their telephone tariff, regularly checking their old-age insurance, testing the fire alarms at home or booking a regular training course), and that, on the other hand, the wheels are turning faster and faster. We become breathless because in our daily lives we have to 'synchronise' the different wheels with each other: While they run at completely different speeds, we are forced to keep up everywhere, to keep up with all the wheels. Running faster and faster just to keep our place:

This is the attitude to life of acceleration modernity.

## Perception of time

***Which of the four time patterns do you experience in the right-hand cabin - which in the left-hand cabin?***

***Please wait until the booths are free - thank you.***

*Sometimes a minute seems long to us, sometimes it flies by. A few days of holiday where we experience a lot pass very quickly, but in our memories they seem like weeks. Half an hour in the waiting room seems like a long time, but later we can hardly remember it...*

### Two paradoxes of time perception

If acceleration means that time seems to pass more and more quickly and that it becomes increasingly scarce, so that we have the feeling that everything takes too long - then deceleration refers to a state in which time passes slowly and is available in abundance. In fact, we have the same amount of time available every day, and it always passes at the same speed.

### Time changes in perception

Their speed and scarcity only change in our perception - everyone knows that from experience. When many interesting things happen, when we experience a lot and exciting things - when we take a trip from the Black Forest across the Alps to the Riviera, for example - time passes quickly. But in the evening, when we go to bed after such a day, the day almost stretches out in our memories: It seems as if we have been on the road for three days already. It is just the opposite when we are bored because nothing happens all day, for example because we have to wait in a waiting room. Then time seems to pass infinitely slowly, we have the impression that the hands of the clock are standing still. When we go to bed after such a day, in retrospect the day shrinks to almost nothing. We have the feeling that we have only just got up. Time researchers call this the subjective time paradox.

	Time in experience	Time in memory	Example
Subjective time paradox	short	long	Holiday trip
	long	short	Waiting room
Television-Paradox	long	long	Accident, Sport
	short	short	zapping, Internet surfing

### Experience of time depends on the situation

But there are two other forms of experiencing time. In extreme situations, for example in an accident or a robbery, or during a penalty shoot-out in the final, those affected often experience time as if in slow motion, it seems to pass very slowly. And this does not change in the memory: What may seem like hours to us was in reality often only a few seconds. This creates a 'long-long' pattern of time perception: long in experience and long in memory. When we zap TV, play computer games or surf the internet, on the other hand, the opposite effect occurs: We wanted to take only a few minutes, but time passes quickly and when we look up, an hour or two has passed. But as soon as we turn off the TV or the computer, time seems to 'purr together'. Hartmut Rosa calls this the 'television paradox': Nothing is left behind. The explanation for all these phenomena is that the length of time in memory depends on how many memory traces the brain has created. If nothing interesting or important happens that really touches us and stays in our memory, at the

end of the day we have the feeling that we have only just got up. This feeling occurs when we have waited all day - or surfed the internet pointlessly. If, on the other hand, something important happens that leaves its mark on us and becomes part of our history, then the period of time also remains in our memory as a 'long time'. It is the same with an accident or a holiday trip. In modern society, time also seems to speed up for us because we tend towards the 'short-short' pattern: We experience a lot, there is always a lot going on, but nothing really touches us, nothing creates resonance - therefore nothing is left behind.

In our two time chambers you can directly experience this time yourself - try it out!