

It's About Time: *Manage Your Energy / Manage Your Life*

A Workshop in Six Sessions: "Teacher's Edition"

[Note] This book is not for teachers. I'm writing it, however, because I am a teacher and I know that the best way to learn anything is to teach it. It's not a book to be read; it's a book to be used.

As it unfolds you will begin to understand my journey. What started out as a passion for helping teachers deal with stress, slowly became a structure for time management. After I retired from teaching, I came to realize that without the discipline of schedules and bells, I couldn't seem to finish anything. Then one day, in a flash of insight, I realized that it's not about trying to manage stress or time . . . it's about managing energy. Or at least I became aware of the fact that with the life energy we are given – we are also given the ability to choose.

Bette Moore
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Prologue

The meaning of moments passes us by so gently it barely rustles the leaf of the will.

Robert Penn Warren

The Back Story

For the first 47 years of my life, I never asked the questions “Who Am I” or “Why Am I Here?” Unfortunately, that’s when the unthinkable happened and I lost myself. That sounds strange to me even now, but it’s the truth.

The details of that story don’t matter, but what’s important is that a traumatic event, one that probably isn’t particularly uncommon, so rocked my foundations that I lost touch with reality. I mean that literally. In a single moment I lost the “reality” of who I had always assumed myself to be. My life had not been particularly smooth, but whenever something happened that was upsetting, there always seemed to be a good explanation (or perhaps someone else to blame). In short, I was always able to get through it without learning much about myself.

At 47 years old I was a teacher. A pretty good one I had been told by my peers, my students, and their parents. I was also a single mother who was sharing custody of my two children with a man who, at 20 years old, I married because I believed he would take care of me for the rest of my life. Not so. Even as a single mother, though, I was still looking for Prince Charming – or at least a “father figure” who would complete the family by filling the empty seat at the dinner table.

That was the year my life fell apart and any dreams I had for my future were lost. I spent the next year feeling numb. At the end of that year, I married a man who had always loved me since we met at 15, and I began trying to reclaim the “self” I felt I had lost.

Moving On

Within five (happily married) years, I began to see that the experience I thought was the end of my world was, in reality, the beginning of a new and exciting chapter. I found myself retired from classroom teaching, living in a different state, and putting a lot of time into reflecting upon where I had been and where I was going.

I knew that when I left the classroom, I was not even close to wanting to leave education. A close friend suggested that my next steps might be to broaden my horizons and look beyond my own school, even my own district, and begin to learn about what was happening in education “from the 30,000-foot level.” I began attending state and national educational conferences. And, as it turned out, my journey took me to a place where even began to think about education at the global level.

But that, of course, didn’t happen right away.

First Baby Steps

When I was 51 years old, I attended my first large national educational convention at the Muscone Center in San Francisco. There were over 11,000 educators in attendance – mostly superintendents, principals, and curriculum directors. These were the people I had always seen as my superiors – and never with whom I could identify. All of that changed at that conference.

At the end of the weekend, after thousands of the participants had gone home, I attended the closing ceremonies. Tears came to my eyes as I listened to the “Presentainers,” a group of talented administrators from Calgary, Canada end their presentation with a song called “**Keeper of the Dream**”:

When the lights go down on Friday - crowd has all gone home . . .
You sit there in your classroom - but you never feel alone.
You've got pictures of the children hanging all along the wall.
In some there's smiles, in some there's tears - there's a little of you in all.

And you think of what it could be . . .
Build on what you've seen.
You've got memories and a vision - You're the Keeper of the Dream.

You've seen weak ones getting stronger,
Doubters start to try,
Quitters lasting longer,
And the bitter asking “Why?”
There were times when you would give them room –
and times when you were hard
But every time you were there to see so many come so far.

And you think of what it could be . . .
Build on what you've seen.
You've got memories and a vision - You're the Keeper of the Dream.

At times the road got steeper - you almost couldn't try . . .
But there were kids who need a second chance –
Sometimes teachers need to cry.
It's not something that just happens – there is no magic way.
You put together all these years by doing this day by day.

And you think of what it could be . . .
And you build on what you've seen. . .
You've got memories and a vision - You're the Keeper of the Dream.

John Clarke

I bought the audio tape of their performance because I knew my experience that weekend would change my life. Several weeks later I took time to write my story. I shared it with some close friends, and it slowly developed into a workshop that was worth offering to others.

Now I am revisiting that that story because it's the basis for this book. I called it *Dreamkeepers*. (It's now available online as a \$3.00 download on Teachers Pay Teachers): <https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Dreamkeepers-Awareness-Intention-and-Balance-3196219>

As I worked with *Dreamkeepers*, I realized that if I hoped to maintain some balance in my life, I was the one who was going to have to change. What started as a stress-management strategy for teachers, grew into a time-management strategy for just about anyone. I'm not really too sure when the phrase "*It's About Time!*" popped into my mind, but that's when I realized that our life *energy* fluctuates with the interplay of *stress* and *time*. At that point I no longer focused on workshops and began to think of *It's About Time: Manage Your Energy / Manage Your Life* as a "do it yourself" life coaching program.

It's now been over 20 years since I left classroom teaching. Technology has changed the field of education profoundly, and all my peers in teaching have been enjoying retirement for almost a decade. Looking back, I realize that I never retired at all. The idea for *It's About Time* has consumed me for most of those years. I've given it as a workshop lasting six weeks, as a weekend "intensive," as a small group counseling program in an alternate high school, and one-on-one in individual sessions. Through the years when life's transitions became difficult, I found myself returning to one or more of the six sessions to find some peace.

That's why I'm labeling this book/website "Teacher's Edition." The Introduction that follows is basically a lesson plan that can get you started offering workshops of your own. Over the years, however, it's become clear to me that perhaps the best use of *It's About Time* is as a "Do-It-Yourself Life Coaching Program. Feel free to use the material in any way you wish.

.Be Your Own Life Coach: The Workshop