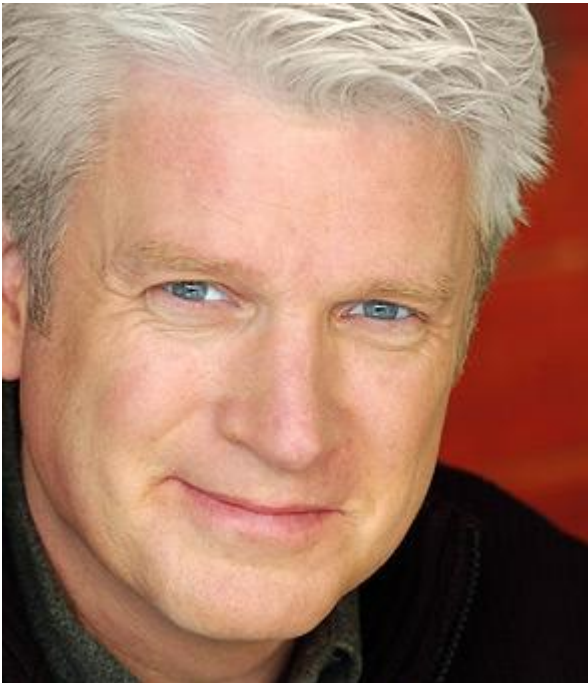




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## Q&A with *The Age of Speed* author Vince Poscente

By Andrea Sachs



Hug your BlackBerry! Cuddle your cell phone! It's time to make peace with the whoosh of your 24/7 lifestyle, says author Vince Poscente, 46, in his thought-provoking new book, *The Age of Speed*. Poscente advocates coming to terms with — nay, savoring — the "more-faster-now world." His contrarian message: "Speed leads to a more pleasant, less stressful experience." The author, a business consultant with a master's degree in organizational management, knows a thing or two about velocity. He competed in speed skiing, a demo event at the 1992 Olympics. (His personal best: 135 m.p.h.) TIME's Andrea Sachs spoke with Poscente, who was on a cell phone while he was driving in Dallas.

**TIME: How did you get interested in the subject of speed?**

Poscente: A fortuneteller in Singapore told me I would die at 40, and it stuck with me. I thought, man, I'd better hurry up.

**You write about how people have a love-hate relationship with speed. What do you mean by that?**

We want things faster, but we don't necessarily want to do things faster. So you get that disconnect.

**Many people complain that life is becoming too fast for them, but the message of your book is to embrace the speed. Why should they? What's in it for them if they feel as though life is already going too fast?**

I think everybody feels that rush, that busyness. Why should we embrace the speed? It really is the solution to having the time to enjoy the significant things. This book, in some ways, is about choice. Our productivity has gone way up, but it just means we're filling our extra time with even more productivity and not making the choice to say, 'wait a minute. I'm going to choose to shut my cell phone off. I'm going to choose to enjoy this time watching a sunset with my wife, or reading a book to my child'...[Speed] feels too fast when it's new. When you get used to it, it doesn't. Remember the first time you drove a car and you were driving at thirty miles an hour? I distinctly remember thinking how fast everything was. Then the first time I was up at sixty miles an hour and went back down to thirty miles an hour, I went, wait a minute, this isn't that hard.

**What is the big blur?**

[Traditionally], we delineated our work, home, and leisure time. So if I was home, then I didn't work. If I was on holiday, I didn't work. When I was at work, I didn't have any leisure time. The big blur is a blur of all those things. With the BlackBerry, the boss knows that they can get a hold of you at ten o'clock at night.

**Some people resent that, that work is blurring into their private life.**

Right. A lot of people are resenting that. I did a number of radio call-in programs, and people are mad. They're getting mad at me, because their cell phone was going off at night. They say, I resent the fact that I'm on call 24/7 with the more-faster-now. What we should really understand is that if we looked in the mirror, you're going to find out very quickly who's making that choice. To say, 'well, it's my boss's fault.' No. I'm realizing we're in the big shake-out. This time where we really have to decide, and our employers have to decide, how we're going to respect our time and the choices we can make and the boundaries that we want to have to be able to really truly have the time for those significant things. That's where the overwhelm is coming from. We have no time to think or do anything. This survey that I did, it's really interesting; 56% of people felt that in order to be successful they had to slow their lives down. But 77% felt that things would only speed up in the next five years.

So the knee-jerk reaction is that in order for us to feel like we're enjoying anything, we have to slow down. [But] things aren't slowing down.

**Your book is a first-cousin to "Who Moved My Cheese," which urged, 'Don't resist change.'**

Right, exactly. Speed is the new change. Speed is this zeitgeist of our time; everybody knows they have to change by design. They have to be ahead of that curve. They have to be taking the computer courses on the job so that if they lose their job or they move on to another responsibility, they're set. Speed now is that new thing, and we're right in the throes of understanding that this is something to be harnessed, to embrace, not cope with.

**So you don't have to use your speed to be speedier.**

No, that's the thing. You don't have to use the speed to be busier. We make these choices so we can have the more significant things in life, the things that are really important to us.

**What is the impact of all of this speed on families, when parents are so speeded up that they can't pay enough attention to their families?**

I think we're in some dangerous times and I think it is a bad thing. We are not choosing the extra time that all this technology and all the products and services that are supposed to provide. We aren't making the choice in many cases to say, 'wait a minute, I'm going to use this extra time with my kids.'

**Are you a BlackBerry guy?**

I'm a BlackBerry guy, and I love the BlackBerry. I look forward to a stoplight. I look forward to an escalator. I look forward to an elevator where I have to not look at the other person because I can bang out an email and then when I get back, I look forward to delays for a flight. I look forward to that wait time in a hotel lobby. Then when I check into the hotel, I don't have to open up the laptop and then start working again. It's done.

**What about the old saying, "Haste makes waste"?**

Haste can make waste, [but] a stitch in time saves nine. If we use the technology to accelerate, use the products, use the services that are designed to buy us this time, then you can change from the word "haste" to "leveraging the speed." Harnessing this oncoming force and use it to our advantage. That's the opposite of waste. That's where we have bought us the time to have more life than we have and enjoy it even more. It turns out that the fortuneteller was wrong.