Every day it seems, there is talk about the stress of managing time in modern living and how difficult it has become to cope with the demands of this age. Undeniably, in this first decade of the 21st century, life has changed significantly for many people. The early years of the new millennium have witnessed several events of historical significance, ranging from dramatic terrorist attacks on the symbols of Western capitalism to devastating storms, armed conflict in the Middle East and elsewhere, and the avian influenza scare.

In addition, emerging shortages of natural resources (including oil and water); the rapid modernization of China, India, and other countries; and famine and disease (e.g., HIV/AIDS) on the continent of Africa have resulted in an array of issues that, in a world with instant communication made possible by cell phones and the Internet, would have seemed distant only a generation ago but are now deemed worthy of local concern.

Emerging technologies made possible in the digital age are enabling not only rapid communication but also an unprecedented and accelerated explosion of knowledge. This, in turn, has created changes in the ways people live; how they think about work and play; how they spend their time; what activities they value; and how they contemplate, interpret, and make meaning in their lives.

Because these changes have been rapid and profound, they have challenged the abilities of most people to cope with them. This has created a widespread urge to slow down the pace of life or, at the very least, find ways of living that enable one to catch up with the burden of having too much to do with too little time to do it. This perceived imbalance between the demands of current lives and people’s abilities to adequately cope with them results in an experience of stress. Little wonder then that people want to find ways to avoid these stressful conditions and learn better ways of coping with them. Often, coping strategies include finding leisure and recreational outlets that promote relaxation, spending more time with family and friends, seeking more satisfactory working conditions, getting life coaching, moving to the country, or simply retiring early. Of course, not everyone has the resources or opportunity to cope, and their stories may include circumstances that are tabulated in statistical reports of burnout, depression, insomnia, self-inflicted injury, substance abuse, and suicide.