



# PERFECT TIMING

**Skills**

**Analysis,  
reflection,  
evaluation,  
extrapolation**

Leo Szilard was a brilliant German physicist who escaped persecution by immigrating to America at the start of WWII. As a scientist, he was instrumental in the development of nuclear power. He was also an inventor, and he worked with Albert Einstein on a refrigerator model. The invention was not successful. One of Szilard's sayings was...

IF YOU WANT TO SUCCEED IN THE WORLD, YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE MUCH CLEVERER THAN OTHER PEOPLE. YOU JUST HAVE TO BE ONE DAY EARLIER. THIS IS ALL IT TAKES.



Szilard himself displayed several instances of good timing in his lifetime. Either read the chapter "Leo Szilard and Albert Einstein's Howling Refrigerator" in *Edison's Concrete Piano* or do some Internet research to find at least two examples of Szilard's good timing:

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Describe a situation in your own life (real or imaginary) where delaying a decision too long had negative consequences.

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# PERFECT TIMING

Describe a situation in your own life (real or imaginary) where making a decision too early had negative consequences.

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Having good timing can have a big influence on our lives. BUT we can't know the future! This means we are not able to judge whether a decision was well-timed or not until after the fact. There are some things we can do to minimize the risks of "bad timing", however, depending on the situation. Here are some suggestions of questions to ask yourself while deciding on when to act on a decision:

- What consequences will there be if I do this too early? Too late?
- Will I have opportunity later to change my mind? Am I closing any doors of opportunity by making this decision? Am I closing any doors of opportunity by stalling on this decision?
- Is there a time limit on any of my options?
- Have I done everything I can to be ready? Are there things in my environment that could change and affect this decision? If so, how will I recognize these changes?
- Do I need to worry about other people acting before I do?
- Why am I hesitating? Is it for good reasons? Or just fear?

If there a decision with a timing issue that you are trying to make right now? Try these questions out; do they help?