

# LIFE IN 24 HOURS

There are two words in French for "day": jour and journée. When you look up the original French version of the play, the title is *Une Journée*. This implies that every day in our lives is its own journey. Let's take a closer look at what happens in our bodies and minds during that journey. From one sunrise to the next, here's what happens to your sleep, hunger, attention span and even your sex drive.

**Before bed:** 11 pm is the most popular time for sexual activity, but this has more to do with our schedules than our bodies. Some scientists believe that the morning is best, because testosterone and energy levels peak around 8 am and oxytocin secretion overnight emotionally bonds you and your partner. Others argue that 3 pm is best, when your body is at peak physical performance and estrogen levels make you more emotionally present.

**Falling asleep:** Your body goes through quite a few phases during sleep. Your pineal gland (in the brain) secretes melatonin, which signals the beginning of the sleep cycle.

**While you sleep:** A full sleep cycle takes between 90 and 110 minutes. There are four stages of sleep: deep relaxation, when you're half awake (5-10 min); light sleep (10-25 min); deep sleep, when your body is active (20-40 min); and REM, when your body is still and dreams are their most vivid and intense (20-40 min).

**Post-work:** It's a good thing happy hour falls when it does, because the body becomes more tolerant to the effects of alcohol around 6 p.m.

**Late afternoon:** It may not work for all of us to fit in a workout around 4:30 p.m., but that's scientifically the best time to do it. Your core body temperatures are peaking and you may gain twenty percent more muscle strength.

**Mid-afternoon:** Ever fallen victim to the afternoon slump? There's a reason for that. Although that spike of energy from your lunch was great at first, a spike of insulin that's thought to pull a little too much glucose from the blood afterward causes you to feel drowsy and probably craving a nap.

**Lunchtime:** The idea that lunch should be eaten at noon is fairly arbitrary. Your body is trained to feel hungry 3 to 4 hours after your last meal. So, if you prefer a mid-morning brunch, you can still expect to be hungry for lunch a few hours later.

**Mid-morning:** Your mental state is peaking. Most people are at their sharpest between the 2.5 to 4 hours after waking up. But memory is affected as the day goes on; we forget an average of 5 facts in the morning, and closer to 14 in the afternoon.

**An hour later:** This is the best time to eat breakfast and enjoy your morning cup of coffee, as your cortisol levels have dipped by this time and you can reap more of coffee's benefits.



# AN INTERVIEW WITH THE PLAYWRIGHT

**Gabrielle Chapdelaine** is a playwright, screenwriter and translator living in Montreal, Canada. She graduated from the dramatic writing program at the National Theater School of Canada in 2017. Originally written in her native Québécois French, *A Day* premiered at the Monument-National in February 2018, where it received the Gratien-Gélinas Prize for Best New Play. In August, the Center for Dramatic Authors (CEAD) produced a reading of the play as part of *Dramaturgies en Dialogue*, a Canadian new play festival. In an interview, Chapdelaine talked about what the play means to her (translated below!).

I don't know how many times in life it seems like we wake up in the morning and say "I think today is a game of getting up" and we're just not feeling it, but, at the same time, if we stay home all day then we just do nothing but spend the day the way I do, eating cheese in bed. But all of our usual worries still remain. Those times showed me that I wanted - I needed - to know that taking a break from everything was something maybe possible. **It can worry me - worrying whether or not it is okay to do nothing** - whether anything will be okay at all. The form of the play fits naturally to this feeling.

**The form follows the hours of the day.** In fact, each hour that comes back around the next day is a new event. So, the hours dictate everything. I have a lot of fun with this formula. After that it's very simple, it has a natural plot ending.

For my best writing, I really like to listen to Whitney Houston. I don't know, there's something so emotionally investing in her music. It makes me want to stop doing things and just write. I can't do things halfway while listening to Whitney.

[...] It was exciting when I saw the first reading to see the way the text would reach the audience. I had to sit back in the reading and listen for the 'traps' because there are plenty of **little challenges** to reading the play. It is full of little challenges, like Dante. It has several narrative processes. **It's full of characters who play different levels of 'the game' [of life] to see how they're going to cope with it.**

[...] I created the piece having in mind a **quote by Annie Dillard** that I like a lot. It's **"How we spend our days is, of course, how we spend our lives."** That quote, for me, is fantastic because, in one way, our lives are really flat and we spend our days doing nothing. Your day was "too bad," that's your opinion. Then, at the same time, there's something so miraculous and special about it all and the view that it's basically "your life." It's this opinion that **everyday life is beautiful** - even if it's flat, even if we get bored, even if it's the anti; it is what it is. If this is correct and if this is life, [then] it's not at all far-fetched or fairy tales. It's true that I would like some kind of relief for my existential dread. I would like that. I think that is what the audience gets a glimpse of while experiencing *A Day*.

Sabrina Zanello Jackson, Dramaturg