Abstract: People choose different options across time depending on a range of proximal and distal influences. I present research from three papers that draw on data from the lab, field, and archival datasets to show how the passage of time shapes consumption in the short-term (daily and weekly), medium-to-long term (monthly and yearly) and the very long term (across the lifespan). In each case, people consume to maximize well-being and minimize displeasure, which leads to different outcomes across time. In the short term they preserve categories of pleasant experiences for as long as possible while eliminating categories of unpleasant experiences as quickly as possible. Consequently, they prefer to alternate among a list of pleasant categories while eliminating one negative category before moving onto the next one. In the medium term, consumers are influenced by economy cycles, consuming light and entertaining cultural media (music, films, books, comedy) during downturns, and heavier, meaningful media during economic booms. These results reflect the fact that people are primarily driven to improve their moods during difficult times, whereas their positive moods during better times act as a resource that buffers them from psychological distress. In the long-term, since people think of life as divided into decade-long epochs (the 20s, 30s, etc.), they are more likely to audit the meaningfulness of their lives when they reach ages ending in 9 (just before they reach a new decade). Consequently, so-called 9-enders are more likely than non-9-enders to engage in behaviors that suggest an ongoing search for meaning (e.g., signing up to run a marathon) or a failed search for meaning (e.g., higher extramarital affair and suicide rates).