

# Give yourself a break!

*The notion of keeping up with everything is illusory, frustrating, and self-defeating. In order to be healthy and creative, you have to make choices about what is best ignored and what merits your attention.*

**Jeff Davidson**

**H**ere is a multiple-choice quiz question. Which word best describes the typical person working in the United States today:

- (A) overworked
- (B) underworked
- (C) energetic
- (D) lazy.

Although much has been written of late as to whether A, B, C, or D is correct, the most appropriate answer may well be "None of the above." Powerful social forces have the potential to turn each of us into human whirlwinds charging about in "fast forward." Work, time away from work, and everything in between appear as if they are all part of a never-ending, ever-lengthening to-do list, to be handled during days that race by.

To say that we work too many hours, and that too much work is at the root of the time pressure we feel and the leisure we lack, is to miss the convergence of larger, more fundamental issues. We could handle the

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longer hours (actually less than 79 minutes more per day) that we work compared to the Europeans. It's everything else competing for our attention that leaves us feeling overwhelmed. Once overwhelmed, the feeling of being overworked quickly follows.

Nearly every aspect of U. S. society has become more complex even since the mid-1980s. Traveling is becoming more cumbersome. Learning new ways of managing and new ways to increase productivity takes a toll. Merely living in the United States today and participating as a functioning member of soci-

ety guarantees that your day, week, month, year, and life, and your physical, emotional, and spiritual energy will easily be depleted without the proper vantage point from which to approach each day and conduct your life.

Do you personally know anyone who works for a living who consistently has unscheduled, free stretches? Five factors, or "mega-realities," are simultaneously contributing to the perceptual and actual ero-

sion of leisure time, including:

- population growth;
- an expanding volume of knowledge;
- mass media growth and electronic addiction;
- the paper trail culture; and
- an overabundance of choices.

## Population

From the beginning of creation to 1850 A.D., world population grew to 1 billion. It grew to 2 billion by 1930, 3 billion by 1960, 4 billion by 1979, and 5 billion by 1987, with 6 billion en route. Every 33 months, the cur-