

Win at Work and Succeed at Life

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Dialogue

Title of this book: Win at work and succeed at life. That wasn't always the case for you. When looking back, when did you realize?

Sadly, I didn't really have any close personal friends until about seven years ago. I hate to admit that. I had colleagues at work. But they were acquaintances, people I had a professional relationship with that I mistook for friendship.

As you've extending friendships outside of work, what's been different for you? What's different about your relationships today?

One of the principles in the book --> There's Incredible Power in Nonachievement. Tell about the power that comes from that.

So, we have two leisure modes: 1. We take time off; feel weird, uneasy, and distractible; and then settle into something more comfortable: email, a spreadsheet, whatever. 2. Exhausted by our long hours, we struggle to engage with more meaningful pastimes and opt for thumbing down the bottomless feed of Instagram or vegging out while Netflix autoplays us into oblivion.

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi in the book:

The trick is doing something that takes you out of your work context and plunges you into something altogether different.

One study --> Spending more time on a hobby can boost people's confidence in their ability to perform their job well, as long as the hobby isn't similar to your profession.

The challenge of high achievers starting a hobby -- they need to be a beginner again.

How start? My hobby is my work, etc. How have you really gotten away?

Bonni - themes from TIHE. Empathy.

What have you changed your mind on?

Reserve

Intentionally carve out time away from work to noodle on problems, think, puzzle, and dream.

Quotes

These high-pressure jobs would be enough to strain any relationship, but long hours and singular attention to work drive marital breakdown. "The No. 1 reason why CEO marriages fail is lack of time for family," according to a story by CNN. "CEOs are almost always at work and when they're not, they're thinking about work." Said an attorney quoted in the story, "You end up with these fractured relationships where the husband and wife are almost living two separate lives."

There's incredible power in nonachievement.

This is difficult to embrace because high achievers want to measure everything. It's got to count, or it doesn't matter. We're hardwired to pursue the all-important return on investment. But not everything is a goal. Not everything has an ROI outcome to measure—at least not in the short term.

Even more problematic is wrongly believing that achievement is always good, and nonachievement is pointless. As we'll see, it pays major dividends.

According to a study of how CEOs spend their time, the typical chief executive works about ten hours every weekday and puts in another eight most weekends. They also clock about two and a half hours per day most vacation days. In all, the study found CEOs averaged 62.5 hours a week on the job. Of course, if you count the hours spent noodling on their businesses and distracted by concerns in their off hours, it's far more.

I also had an inherent, insatiable drive to achieve. My top strength, according to my StrengthsFinders profile, is achiever. I loved climbing the ladder. I loved succeeding. I loved going from one level to the next. I was constantly trying to beat last month's numbers. That translated into long hours.

The research on the effects of kids who grow up having regular family dinners is compelling. Writing in the Washington Post, Anne Fishel of the Family Dinner Project points to studies that credit family meals with reducing teen use of alcohol, tobacco, and

drugs, along with lower incidence of eating disorders, suicidal thoughts, violence, trouble at school, and premature sexual activity.

Fast-forward to the end of your life. What will you wish that you had done differently? Palliative care nurse Bronnie Ware recorded the regrets of her dying patients. Among the five most common? "I wish I hadn't worked so hard." Bronnie observes, "This came from every male patient that I nursed. They missed their children's youth and their partner's companionship. . . . All of the men I nursed deeply regretted spending so much of their lives on the treadmill of a work existence."

Erin Reid, a professor at Boston University's Questrom School of Business, failed to uncover any evidence employees who worked eighty hours accomplished more than their colleagues who didn't. It turned out their bosses didn't either. "Managers could not tell the difference between employees who actually worked 80 hours a week and those who just pretended to," her research revealed. That's mainly because there are no gains to notice beyond 50 hours of work. Net gains are nonexistent...

As Warren Buffett says, "The difference between successful people and really successful people is that really successful people say 'no' to almost everything."

Sadly, I (Michael) didn't really have any close personal friends until about seven years ago. I hate to admit that. I had colleagues at work. But they were acquaintances, people I had a professional relationship with that I mistook for friendship. Those relationships are great as far as they go. However, that's an entirely different dynamic than having deep friendships with people who don't have any agenda other than to love you, share in your joys, and comfort you in times of sorrow.

So, we have two leisure modes:

1. We take time off; feel weird, uneasy, and distractible; and then settle into something more comfortable: email, a spreadsheet, whatever.
2. Exhausted by our long hours, we struggle to engage with more meaningful pastimes and opt for thumbing down the bottomless feed of Instagram or vegging out while Netflix autoplays us into oblivion.

Challenging, compelling, interesting hobbies bring enjoyment, as well as intellectual stimulation, which gives us something to invest our time and life in beyond our work. For those who have developed a love for cooking or gardening, they've discovered a tactile, sensory-rich experience that is very different from their day-to-day office work. And those who've made a hobby out of learning another language gain an appreciation for a culture different from their own.

Both of us enjoy fishing, especially fly-fishing. It's a generational thing in the Hyatt clan. Our fishing hobby has produced years of wonderful memories within our family. The challenge of placing a fly in just the right spot is thoroughly engrossing. And every time we cast a line, we're filled with peace, feel refreshed, and experience clarity. It's a centering routine, and we're both better leaders for it.

Plenty of research confirms the point. Not only do hobbies help renew the mind, one study found another benefit: "Spending more time on a hobby can boost people's confidence in their ability to perform their job well," as long as the hobby isn't similar to your profession.¹⁴

Researchers at San Francisco State University studied the impact on work performance that occurs when engaging in hobbies and creative activities such as cooking, photography, painting, and knitting. Assistant professor of psychology Kevin Eschleman reports, "We found that in general, the more you engage in creative activities, the better you'll do [at work]," and the study notes, "those who engaged in a creative hobby performed between 15–30 percent better at work..."

Gail bought me two Native American flutes. Today, I own about ten flutes, all in different scales. Each is handcrafted from a variety of woods. And I've been taking lessons for several years now. I try to practice my hobby for twenty to thirty minutes a day.

It's worth pointing out that there's a potentially big hurdle for high achievers to overcome when starting a new hobby. That is the idea of going back to being a beginner, doing something you're not initially good at.

References