

It can appear like individuals are more successful and creative than ever, either they workout twice a day, practice Italian from home or work long shifts at a technology startup.

But is it a positive idea?

Our fascination with productivity is making us depressed, stressed out, and physically ill, according to the writer. For ages, as if high productivity were what truly counts in life, we have followed ever-increasing milestones. In the end, we just managed to make ourselves sad.

This overview includes a description and a course of action for both. They're a solution to our hyper-productive society by integrating an analysis of where we have gone incorrectly in the past and clear tactics to put things better in the end.

Chapter 1 - History is embedded in our current obsession with competitiveness.

You may have found lately that efficiency is trending. Everything appears to be getting busier, and busier, and ambitions have never felt so optimistic for our job and personal lives.

Your colleagues may have made you dream of running a marathon. You may be contemplating your next raise, maybe. Or you might be curious if your kids are going to practice an instrument or take up a certain activity.

If your to-do lists seem to be getting longer every day, you are trying to optimize your hours, and hoping to find extra hours in the day somehow, you may have fallen victim to the "cult of effectiveness."

So what's this cult precisely? Well, it's a mentality that assumes that the busier we are the better. And while this movement has never been more dominant than it is right now, it didn't evolve instantly.

Believe this or not, we have not all worked as hard as we do today. Even peasant farmers spent fewer hours and they still had more holiday leave than the typical industrial worker!

In the stage of the Industrial Revolution, though, changes occurred. Factory operators began to pay salaries per hour instead of paying staff per assignment. This led to a drastic rise in the number of hours that persons were forced to work.

Common confidence in the American Dream in the United States helped to legitimize these new, intense work regimes. When did everybody know that hard work helps you to get forward, who could think about longer workdays? This American assumption that prosperity is only rewarded with persistence and perseverance helped plant the seeds of our new cult of quality.

Now, asset allocation is a different issue. Workers' wages have almost kept up with inflation since the 1960s, but CEOs have been bringing home bigger and bigger salaries at the same time. So in effect, our employers are generally reaping the fruit of our improved productivity and not us.

Consumer society has also driven our push for competitiveness. Smart advertising has forced us to work more hours to buy things that we had never needed before and the relentless bombardment of new styles and innovations has kept us going even after our most important needs have been taken care of.

Chapter 2 - The productivity cult makes one feel bad for spending free time.

The Industrial Revolution initiated a change in workplace wages, as we've just seen. Workers were compensated per working hour, not per assignment done. This sounds like a trivial disparity in certain respects, but the psychological implications are profound.

Why? Since you shift their perceptions towards time particularly towards time off when you pay employees depending on the number of hours they clock up. An hour of leisure started to sound more extravagant as industrial workers learned to place a dollar value on an hour of their time.

We tended to think of days off as time wasted, with the monetary impact of pleasure more evident. It's not about a historical interest. Currently, still, that's as real as it was back then.

Think of a study operated by UCLA and the University of Toronto scientists. Subjects broke into two classes in this study, and each listened to a brief piece of classical music. That being said, before listening, the members of one party were asked to approximate their hourly pay.

The research results? People who had worried about their time's financial worth became even more excited for the music to stop.

Put simply, it made it more difficult for them to relax and enjoy the music by worrying about their hourly pay.

It's no wonder, then, that when we get home, we always find it hard to withdraw from work. In reality, while we still feel the need to answer emails, field calls, and deliberate over business decisions, researchers use the word contaminated time to describe the kind of time off we encounter.

The consequence of contaminated time is that many individuals never feel at ease. And one of the key disadvantages of new, flexible working hours is this.

Back when we worked every day from 9 to 5, it was easy to realize when the job finished and our leisure time started. These two realms are much more likely to converge now that our hours are "flexible."

There are many negative sides of contaminated time. Our imagination and competitiveness are improved by a genuine break from work and can also improve the immune system.

On the other side, work overload, given the fatigue and depression that excessive work will cause, also just raises our revenue by 6 percent a year - a bad trade-off.

Chapter 3 - We aim for productivity and in our private relationships.

Things have been very simple so far. We also explored the roots of the productivity cult and examined some of how jobs can "contaminate" our time off and compete with our pleasure.

All we need to do is split our job and personal activities, and the issue will be fixed - right?

Well not entirely. You know, one of the most significant points about the rise towards productivity is that it left its roots in the office quite rapidly and became an approach towards life in general.

So even though you haven't worked in ages, you might notice yourself under the control of an attitude that, for its own sake, values perpetual self-improvement and busyness.

The notion of enjoying "quality time" with family is one way that we can track the penetration of productivity into our personal lives.

Today, there is nothing unusual about having to spend time with loved ones; it is always a satisfying remedy to our normal emphasis on "getting things done." But the idea of quality time suggests that in a few satisfying, condensed, yet unforgettable hours we can and should pack our family responsibilities.

Bonding time, in other terms, is family life tailored to a philosophy of success, a mentality only limited to the office.

A further way in our private lives we can recognize a performance mentality is by paying attention to the social importance attached to being occupied.

Ample free time once implied riches and high social status, but the tables have now turned entirely. These days, relative to persons without a degree, college-educated employees are double as likely to work over 40 hours a week.

It is no wonder, in this context, that busyness has become such a prized trait. And our willingness to post our milestones on social media makes it obvious that engagement carries obvious prestige.

Chapter 4 - We may be robbed of real interpersonal relations through our emphasis on efficacy.

The overwhelming majority of individuals lived in rural, close-knit neighborhoods until the Industrial Revolution attracted workers to big cities. The social needs of the time were served by these communities; people wanted a limited number of close friends, a smaller community of decent companions, and a wider network of familiar associates.

Sadly, much of our social needs go unfulfilled these days. The interpersonal bonds of a warm, real-world group can not be replaced by getting hundreds of "friends" on Facebook.

Unfortunately, in our search to make our lives more successful, we have lost a lot of human connection, a reality with unignorable repercussions.

You know, loneliness isn't just stressful physically. It will slash your longevity and also raise your chances of developing cancer or having a heart attack, among other risks.

In a microcosm, let's look at the issue. At any step, the contrast between typing a text and communicating with someone will teach us a lot about the disadvantages of optimizing productivity.

Emails and messages also come in useful in the field of work. For one thing, they can be submitted at any moment, whether the person you are approaching is free to communicate with or not. Not just that, you're both left with identical trade histories, so there's no room down the road for misunderstanding.

Given these benefits, as we ignore the human voice, we also miss a lot. The idea that it will humanize whoever talks is one of its biggest strengths. This is not just nostalgic talk: new research found that when we hear them spoken out loud relative to when we read them, we're better at respecting different viewpoints.

As they listened to a story being told, another interesting study attached participants to an fMRI system and tracked their brain waves. Astonishingly, the researchers discovered that the brain

function of listeners started to mimic that of the storyteller! Scientists call this effect the synaptic coupling of the speaker-listener or in clear terms, mind-meld.

No amount of emojis can equal the emotional effect, which makes it very hard to create substantive relations via email. Again, then the performance victory has inevitably proven to be empty.

Chapter 5 - Social media makes contrasting ourselves to someone so convenient.

There is no doubt that the religion of productivity in its rise to power has been supported and promoted by social media. It's the best place to talk about anything you've crossed off your to-do list, after all.

Have you just reached the tenth conference of your day? Tweet on how productive you are then. Have you baked some extravagant cake? Yeah okay, why not share an Instagram photo! Run a Charity Marathon? Do not hesitate to tell all your mates on Facebook about it.

There is a catch, however. We don't just exchange updates about ourselves when we use social media, we even experience the updates other individuals publish.

The urge to outshine others, if we are not cautious, will find us engaged in a constant competition to be the most successful and efficient individual on the internet. Pointless to mention, this is a fight that we will never win.

Comparing ourselves with those around us is human nature. It is doubtful that this fact would change any time soon, and it did not arise in the social media era.

Much the same, the laws of the game have been fundamentally modified by social media. In the past, the number of people we might equate ourselves with was dramatically reduced. For the most part, "keeping up with the Joneses" required matching a couple of neighbors and coworkers' living expectations.

Today, though, anyone can be the Joneses on your profile. If you just follow close friends and relatives, it could be great, but what about all of us who follow the Kardashians and Elon Musk?

We unconsciously convince ourselves that we are not great enough as we associate ourselves with hugely popular outliers like these and that the lives we live are grossly insufficient.

The remedy? Learn to base your assessments on yourself, without caring about someone else and what they may have achieved.

Avoid matching your dirty spaghetti bolognese with the picture-perfect bowl you had seen on Instagram, in other terms. You don't have to deal with those uncomfortable contrasts if the food was delicious enough for you.

Chapter 6 - A few basic adjustments can help us decelerate and enhance our standard of life.

Granted, the productivity cult is all around us. This dominates the world and is expanding rapidly into our private lives. It pollutes our free time and may rob us of rewarding human experiences. And if relative to those of others, our lifestyles fail to match up, the cult of productivity will make us feel as if we are incompetent individuals.

But it doesn't mean it's lost all faith. The contrary, in truth, is real. One of the very few challenges we can address by simply doing little is our single-minded emphasis on competitiveness. Although as simple as it is, what we need to prepare actively is to do nothing.

In addressing our emphasis on performance, the first thing we need to address is that many of us have no clue where our time goes. Researches have shown for instance, that people sometimes overestimate how much they work; the average time spent employed has not statistically increased in the last few decades, amid common feelings of exhaustion!

So what we ought to do is enhance our understanding of time. Why? Well, to start with, our judgment and empathy can be impeded by thinking that we are overstressed, whether or not we work long hours.

Second, persons with a greater view of time are less likely to be stressed and waste less time viewing television and surfing social media pages. As a consequence, for real pleasure, they should make time.

In reality, research performed at the Academy of Music in Berlin showed that the best young musicians were the most conscious of how their time had been spent. They were not only mindful of the time they spent rehearsing but also more conscious of the amount of time they spent interacting and resting.

How in your own life can you make use of such knowledge? To enhance your time perception, begin by maintaining a list of your tasks. Log all down, even though it's just social media surfing.

When you have a good vision of how you are spending your time, build a plan that outlines how you would like to look at your days. Note, this is a timeline that promotes recreation, not efficiency. To encourage yourself to be completely lazy and inefficient, set aside a bunch of time each day.

Chapter 7 - We need to learn to differentiate between means and ends to reclaim our free time.

One of the challenges of celebrating success and performance is that these ideals can allow us to lose track of the bigger picture. Not only does a society that emphasizes hard work and busyness convince us to ignore free time; it also allows us to rely on means rather than ends.

Focusing on how much we get accomplished, to be more specific, might cause us to forget what we get accomplished. Most of us are so nervous about ticking boxes that we have avoided wondering if the stuff we're doing makes us happy.

We ignore the result when paying too much attention to performance, and instead concentrate on the process. Once we learn to create this right, much of its significance is lost by the cult of efficiency.

Put bluntly, a means is a method or a strategy that takes one closer to an end target. Having a stable career could be a way of making a fair income, which could be a means of raising a happier family in exchange. Yes, for one, healthy eating is a sensible way of enjoying a longer life.

The trouble with concentrating on productivity is that it allows one to disregard the overall target. It may be an admirable display of self-discipline to clock up long hours at the workplace, but it may also conflict with important long-term interests, such as maintaining strong relations with our children or contributing back to our local people.

What should be done, then? Well, we need to make a habit of wondering whether our "productive" habits get us closer to our long-term goals.

Does responding to emails on a Sunday morning help you do something that matters to you? If no is the response, then take it out of your life. Are you walking twice a day to improve your health or only for the fulfillment of doing things? If it doesn't help you hit an ultimate goal, feel free to remove the repetitive exercises.

If you lose track of your long-term ambitions, it is possible to fill your life with things that are "productive" yet essentially unfulfilling. You will find that you have ample time to work on your true goals if you drop these activities and even to rest.

Do Nothing: How to Break Away from Overworking, Overdoing, and Underliving by Celeste Headlee Book Review

We have been blinded to the joys of relaxation and laziness by our current emphasis on optimizing performance. Oddly, in truth, our fascination with changing our lives has made us more lonely, unhealthier, and anxious than ever before. The remedy to this state of affairs is easy: make time in your life for genuine pleasure and just do nothing.

Manage the preferences of people by modifying your email signature.

If you feel under pressure to respond to emails the moment they appear in your mailbox, to enjoy true downtime, you would find it very difficult to withdraw from the office. Try modifying your email signature to clarify why you do not automatically respond to messages, to make things easy for yourself. A short note that says something like, "Thanks for the email. Within 24 hours, I am trying to reply to all messages," should be enough to do the job.

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