

**TICK TOCK, DON'T STOP:
A MANUAL FOR WORKAHOLICS**

a non-fiction work

by Robert S. Swiatek

This is dedicated to my father, who worked most of his life. Without his inspiration, this would never have come into print.

Acknowledgements

My sincere thanks to Gina Maria Kleinmartin, for all her suggestions while editing this book. I would also like to thank my parents, who instilled within me a good work ethic as well as all those for whom I have labored over the years. These encounters have become part of this treatise.

Preface

He works sixteen hours a day, seven days a week.

Where did the time go?

A woman's work is never done.

I've got to keep busy.

I'm swamped with work.

There aren't enough hours in the day.

A man works from sun to sun.

I don't have the time.

I have got to run.

She is a slave to her work.

Time waits for no man.

She's just so busy.

The above phrases should sound familiar. Taken in combination, some may even seem contradictory but they all apply to our non-stop pulsating world. When I began this book, I had a different title in mind, but I think the current one more aptly describes my intent.

This work is all about "work," which is an obsession with many people on this planet. Human beings can't relax and spend time doing nothing, but instead need to keep "busy." Most people in the new millennium must be

constantly occupied; otherwise they get bored, that is, fidgety, uneasy and irritable. Many primitive people are quite content to sit for hours at a time doing nothing.

We don't have the time to appreciate a crackling campfire or wonder in awe at a glorious sunset or a thundering waterfall. Even vacations are rushed to the point that the return to the home front dictates a few days more off for recuperation. It seems we have transferred our work habits with all the hustle and bustle to our time away and that makes matters even worse. If you don't believe this, why do so many people check their Email while on vacation and why do they have to check in with the office?

While I am alluding to beepers and pagers, we have all types of new technology that should enable us to lead better lives and work considerably less than previous generations. Unfortunately the workweek has not only not changed, it has gotten even longer. Perhaps all the "improvements" in the way we accomplish things have not been for the better. It really shouldn't take us longer to get a job done using some machine. Even if it takes a bit less time with a computer, that gadget may not be all that worthwhile. This consideration is something that cannot be overlooked. The long hours at the office or even at home when we log on to our PC to get Email has not helped in the long run. The endless days of work have had many ramifications, including the breakup of the family and the breakdown of individuals. If our society is to progress, drastic changes must be made and soon.

This book will try to remedy some of these concerns. You may not be completely free of the burdens of work but, by reading this, you may be able to better cope with the 9-to-5 routine. There is no one who shouldn't read this and I sincerely hope that it will have some beneficial effect on your life.

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Introduction

You may wonder where work originated. As soon as there were human beings on the earth, work was around. If prehistoric man decided to become a couch potato, he didn't really have that option as there were neither couches nor potatoes, let alone satellite TV. Since food and drink are necessary for survival, the caveman had to make sure he had plenty of both. Certainly one could survive without food for some time, but not without water. Nonetheless both were needed at that time to sustain good health just as they are today.

Perhaps the early caveman, whom we shall call Charlie, came home to his cave mate Millie with his new find from the woods. Out for a stroll he happened to stumble onto some blueberries and he tasted one. He was quite pleased with the taste so he picked a few more and indulged, and the remaining berries he brought home to Millie. When she tried them, she liked them too so he spent afternoons harvesting those little nuggets. After a time, he may not have been able to find anymore or even worse, Millie had a reaction to them.

"Those blue things are good, but they really leave my digestive system in knots," Millie said to her friend.

"Maybe I can find something in the field that won't cause us to run out of toilet paper," Charlie replied. Well, those weren't his exact words but I think you get the point.

The master of his domain headed out in search of some other food and noticed these beautiful animals gliding across the landscape. He also saw small animals hopping in front of him in the meadow. Suddenly a thought occurred to him. These creatures could be a nice substitute for the blue stuff but somehow he would have to subdue them. His job (a definite reference towards "work") was to come up with a scheme to "bring home the bacon!" Perhaps he figured he

could entice the animal to eat some of that blue food, provided the creature liked it, but who wouldn't? While the deer was indulging, Charlie could smack him on the head with a rock or large stick and then bring him home for supper. He couldn't shoot him since he didn't have a gun. The NRA wasn't around then. Eventually he succeeded in overcoming this animal and brought him to the cave.

Of course there were still some slight difficulties, as the meat was inside a layer of skin and the deer had to be "processed." When this was done and Millie and Charlie sat down at the dinner table, they may have been a bit disappointed.

"Charlie, this tastes gamey and I don't like it," Millie offered.

"You're right dear; it needs something." Partaking of the raw flesh, which really hadn't aged, wasn't exactly their idea of good eating.

"Perhaps we should barbecue it!" Charlie's better half suggested. Well, she really didn't offer that suggestion but perhaps putting the meat into or above the fire (assuming they had that luxury) could do something to improve the flavor. So let us assume that they did have a fire going close by. Millie took it upon herself to make this venison more edible by cooking it.

Thus Charlie worked at capturing game and harvesting food for the table while his partner was also working by preparing dinner. Since neither party minded doing his job, it may have been work but it certainly wasn't drudgery. Perhaps the person who had to do the dishes afterward did consider it an inconvenience and something to be avoided. You will note that neither got paid, as their reward was something to keep them going from day to day.

It couldn't have been too long before either or both of them got tired of deer and berries. Millie may have been outdoors one afternoon and tried some green leaves she

found and it may not have been too long before they had salad on their table. At around the same time Charlie brought home pheasants and rabbits and their menu now became varied.

Charlie ran into another human being, whom we shall call Frank, and they exchanged business cards. Well, that really didn't happen but they got to be friends. They didn't kill each other off in a brutal and violent way because Tarantino and Craven weren't yet on the scene to give them any ideas. Our hero was quite creative and had another brainstorm. He could have more time for leisure if he could get his neighbor to do his hunting for him. His idea was to somehow convince Frank to hunt and process the meat and Charlie in turn would then reward him with a portion of the spoils. Thus the agent was born.

You will notice that Frank never realized that he was getting the raw end (pun intended, get it?) of the deal since without Charlie he would have had the whole animal to himself and he was doing all the work. If Frank came to this realization and refused Charlie's offer, the former may have come up with a counteroffer, namely that he would hunt the game, Charlie would process it and they would split the meat. Another possibility is that Frank might have offered to do the processing while Charlie did the hunting and trapping, with a split of the venison once again occurring as in Frank's offer. Thus we have the first business deal as Charlie and Frank became incorporated.

Not long after this arrangement Charlie met a guy who had trinkets around his neck and was really impressed by them. He asked Tom, the owner, where he got this beautiful necklace and the response was that he made it by collecting different shells and stones as he wandered about the area.

"If you'd like, I can make you one just like it," Tom offered.

“That would be great and in return you can have some of this processed deer meat, if that suits you,” Charlie added.

“What does it taste like?” was Tom’s reply.

“Come in and try some.”

After Tom had a taste, he said, “You’ve got yourself a deal.”

Thus the first barter took place, where goods were exchanged and money was not involved.

Some time after this Charlie was out and about when he saw four guys who seemed to be bored. This sparked an idea in his brain, as he was a bit weary of his food producing endeavors. He approached them and offered to teach them to hunt and process animals that were captured. In return he would let them take home some of the spoils (in this case the game and not what spoiled.) They figured “why not”, so he spent some time teaching all the fine points and before long his business was even better since he minimized his work. Thus the first manager was born, the teaching profession began and the first firing as Frank was no longer needed. The business world can be very cruel indeed!

One day Jeff, who had been working for Charlie the longest, indicated to his fellow employees that he liked his job but what he took home for his efforts was less than expected. Charlie gave him and the others meat from the legs of the deer but he felt that there was much tastier venison on other parts of the animal.

“We can’t just complain to the boss,” said Jeff.

Tim replied, “What if we organize and all have the same demands?”

“That could work, but we could also all get canned as Charlie might be able to find someone else to replace us,” added Lloyd.

“If we do this in the proper manner, stand firm and are unified, it might develop in our favor,” Jeff chimed in.

Thus the first union was formed and probably not long after this Tom stopped working one morning and pulled out a thermos and poured himself a cup of coffee. Lloyd reached into his pocket and pulled out a short funny thing that he brought over to the fire and lit. He then put it in his mouth and before long, he exhaled rings of smoke from his lips. This was the beginning of the coffee break and the pause for a cigarette.

The union meeting may not have come about for many years and perhaps the same could be said for the work break but each did eventually happen. It was just a matter of time and certainly the organization that existed in the twentieth century was much more intense than those first attempts to unionize. But there was a beginning sometime very long ago, even though there were neither dues nor cafe lattes at that time!

As you can see work has been with us for a very long time. The first jobs were necessary and today many tasks are done for the same reason. People need to put food on the table and they have to pay the rent. Thus work is a must. And yet many people work when they really don't need to do so. The idea of necessary work comes into question. It's based on society as it exists today, inspired by the almighty dollar and our desire for possessions.

We shall also see that there are all kinds of work. In some ways work today is so much different from prehistoric times while at the same time it is so similar. This book will cover some of the issues that Charlie faced. It will state many of the reasons why we work and have to do so, the role of the union, housework, management, laziness, creativity on the job and work without pay. Our caveman friend may not have encountered it, but this book will mention an aspect of work that has been around for centuries and cost thousands of people their lives: slavery. Sadly, it has not gone away.

It will also will get into unnecessary work, dangerous

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