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Live with Passion. Lead with Purpose. Leave a Legacy.

The REAL Reasons You are Overworked

One of the number one complaints I hear from people who've "made it" professionally is that they feel overworked. This is true for corporate CEOs, middle managers, and even entrepreneurs. They are making more money than ever before and yet they realize they are working too much. Here's the scary part, though: They are proud of it.

Have you ever felt that way? You know you are working way too much and yet you feel a sense of pride?

The Working Rich

Here's what a Harvard Business Review article entitled, *Why Men Work So Many Hours* said about you:

How do the elite signal to each other how important they are? "I am slammed" is a socially acceptable way of saying "I am important." Fifty years ago, Americans signaled class by displaying their leisure: think banker's hours (9 to 3). Today, the elite — journalist Chrystia Freeland calls them "the working rich" — display their extreme schedules.

Did you catch that? Being overworked is *something to be proud of*. Rather than long weekends of golf and luxury at the beach, today's elite wear their 70-hour weeks like a badge of honor.

It's not only socially acceptable today, but admirable, for you to decline coffee with a friend or a mini-vacation with family because of your busy schedule. It's something you can say with pride.

Here's what you are really saying:

I am important. People need me. My employer needs me. My team needs me. My company cannot survive without me. I have no time for little things or little people.

In short, you are missing out on life. And for what?

3 Reasons You're Overworked

Here's the thing about this Workload-As-Status-Symbol Syndrome...it's not about hustling, working hard, chasing a dream, or even how critical you are to the success of your company.

You're overworked because of three common reasons:

1. An inability to delegate

When you fail to delegate, everything falls back on you. Workload always increases as your business grows, rather than others taking on more work.

You don't delegate because *you* can always do better. You don't trust others to do things exactly like you would. What a miserable trap.

SOLUTION: Start delegating non-critical tasks immediately. Identify the things you aren't good at or hate doing and start assigning those tasks to others.

Here are two posts that will help you learn how to delegate better:

What Every Great Leader Eventually Learns

This One Weird Discovery Made Me a Better Leader

2. Fear of missing out

If you are anything like me, you don't like to be "out of the loop." You want to know what is going on at all times.

I have no easy tip to get past this other than to do what I did and learn to be comfortable knowing only what you need to know. It's incredibly freeing.

SOLUTION: Identify these three things: *What* you fear missing out on? *Who* will it affect? *What* is the cost? Missing out is not as bad as you usually think.

3. Trying to live up to someone else's standards

The boss and the top sales guy stay until 8:00pm, so you do, too. All the other optional attendees go to the meeting, so there you are every Tuesday wasting an hour.

Stop trying to live up to someone else's standards and you'll suddenly find a lot more margin.

SOLUTION: Come to grips with the reality that *most* people care more about your performance than the time you spend. If you are delivering the goods and you leave two hours earlier than everyone else, they'll idolize you, not look down on you. Stop trying to be like someone else. Do your thing and do it well.

Importance is Misunderstood

All three of these reasons can be summed up in word one: Ego

Your ego holds you back from delegating, it inflates your importance, and it causes you to try to be someone else so you'll look good.

The reality is that most people would rather feel important than *be* important.

Being overworked is not the same as being important. In fact, it often strips away your true importance - to your family, your friends, and your legacy.

Are you overworked and proud of it? Have you seen others fall victim to this fallacy?