

ARE YOU A PLAYAHOLIC?

BY RICHARD PEARSON

In Hong Kong there is a high premium on working hard and playing hard. So much so that we may sometimes feel that leisure time is no longer the relaxing and enjoyable break we need.

We feel pressured to use our time off as effectively as time on the job. Many people end up rigidly scheduling their weekends- a golf game, followed by a lunch date, tennis and a junk trip or dinner in the evening. This chronic overscheduling is compounded for playaholics with family demands. They face a full schedule, with little or no free time for spontaneous activities.

Our world has become so activity-centred that we no longer have time in our busy lives for reflection, and only through reflection can we recharge our batteries and get our creative juices flowing. In the last article we looked at confusing activity with achievement. To be creative - to be able to effectively plan your life strategies - it is sometimes necessary to sit back and simply free your mind. If you're rushing from one thing to another, you'll never have time for reflection.



Consider this:
a balanced life
requires that you plan
unplanned time.

How do you rate?

Give yourself two points for every **Yes** answer and one point for every **No** answer.

17-20 points:

You are a playaholic. Get off the treadmill! Make sure your play isn't becoming work and that you can still enjoy unstructured leisure time.

13-17 points:

With a little push, you could be a playaholic. Leave the phone at home and allow yourself to do nothing for at least four hours next weekend.

10-13 points:

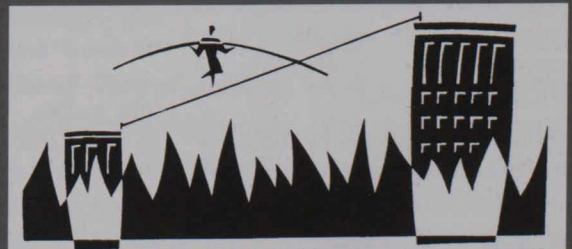
People don't have to tell you to slow down. You are probably more productive at work and happier at home because you're leading a balanced life.

Take this quiz to determine whether your leisure time has become so structured and planned that you are a playaholic.

- Yes No Have you accumulated vacation time from past years?
- Yes No Did you take two weeks vacation or less in the past year?
- Yes No Did you feel you had to plan or schedule each holiday day?
- Yes No Did you take work with you on your last vacation?
- Yes No While on holiday, did you keep in contact with the office by fax or phone?
- Yes No Do you prefer to take "active" holidays (skiing, golfing, tennis, hiking or other adventures?)
- Yes No Do you prefer to have plans for a weekend day rather than starting the day with no plans?
- Yes No Do you frequently feel your time off is too busy?
- Yes No Do you rate your weekend by how much you accomplished or how active you were?
- Yes No Has your leisure time ever caused you stress?

For the transformation of the workplace to establish a new equilibrium, employers and employees must somehow find ways for workers to lead balanced lives. Empowerment and shared responsibility are undeniably good - but paradoxically they increase the burdens on people who are already overstressed. Workers who lack the time and emotional energy to lead balanced lives risk burnout, and the companies that depend on them will lose. Find the solution to that one - somebody has to - and you'll be the biggest hero of the new world of work.

-From "Brave New Darwinian Workplace"
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