



Overwhelmed: Work, Love, and Play When No One Has the Time

By Brigid Schulte

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Can working parents in America—or anywhere—ever find true leisure time?

According to the Leisure Studies Department at the University of Iowa, true leisure is “that place in which we realize our humanity.” If that’s true, argues Brigid Schulte, then we’re doing dangerously little realizing of our humanity. In *Overwhelmed*, Schulte, a staff writer for *The Washington Post*, asks: Are our brains, our partners, our culture, and our bosses making it impossible for us to experience anything but “contaminated time”?

Schulte first asked this question in a 2010 feature for *The Washington Post Magazine*: “How did researchers compile this statistic that said we were rolling in leisure—over four hours a day? Did any of us feel that we actually had downtime? Was there anything useful in their research—anything we could do?” *Overwhelmed* is a map of the stresses that have ripped our leisure to shreds, and a look at how to put the pieces back together. Schulte speaks to neuroscientists, sociologists, and hundreds of working parents to tease out the factors contributing to our collective sense of being overwhelmed, seeking insights, answers, and inspiration. She investigates progressive offices trying to invent a new kind of workplace; she travels across Europe to get a sense of how other countries accommodate working parents; she finds younger couples who claim to have figured out an ideal division of chores, childcare, and meaningful paid work. *Overwhelmed* is the story of what she found out.

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Editorial Review

From [Booklist](#)

Journalist Schulte manages to take a fairly pedestrian topic, the value of leisure in modern American society, and turn it into a compelling narrative on work, play, and personal achievement. Liberally peppered with her own experiences as a wife, mother, and Washington Post reporter, this artful blend of memoir and cultural exploration asks hard questions about how to create a well-lived life. Is leisure a waste of time, or the only time to “live fully present”? Are we more concerned about a purpose-driven experience, or bogged down in “banal busyness”? Schulte, juggling the demands of children and work while facing conflicts with her spouse over familial responsibilities, realizes that she is mired in busyness. Her discussions with a wide range of experts clarify her concerns and open her mind to the manufactured madness of a competitive culture and the false promise of the ruthlessly dedicated “ideal worker.” Schulte follows every lead to uncover why Americans are so determined to exhaust themselves for work and what has been lost in the process. For Lean In (2013) fans, and everyone who feels overwhelmed. --Colleen Mondor

Review

"Schulte takes a purely practical and secular approach to a question that philosophers and spiritual teachers have debated for centuries--how to find meaningful work, connection, and joy--but her research is thorough and her conclusions fascinating, her personal narrative is charmingly honest, and the stakes are high: the "good life" pays off in 'sustainable living, healthy populations, happy families, good business, [and] sound economies.'" - *Publisher's Weekly* starred review

"*Overwhelmed* is a superb report from the front lines of the sputtering gender revolution. Brigid Schulte takes up the perennial problem of women's 'second shift' with fresh energy and fascinating new data, effortlessly blending academic findings and mothers' lived experiences, including her own often hilarious attempts to be both the perfect parent and a successful full-time journalist. ... read this book!" - Barbara Ehrenreich, author of *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America*

"*Overwhelmed* is a time management book that's not just about how to be more productive and effective--it's about the broad and fascinating role time plays in our emotional satisfaction, our physical health, and even our notions of gender equality. The more overwhelmed you feel, the more crucial it is to take the time to read this important book." - Daniel H. Pink, author of *Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us*

"Every parent, every caregiver, every person who feels besieged by permanent busyness, must read this book. A new wave of research, experience, and insight is challenging deep assumptions about why we have to live and work the way we do. *Overwhelmed* is a wake-up call and an exhilarating prescription for change." - Anne-Marie Slaughter, president and CEO of the New America Foundation and author of "Why Women Still Can't Have It All"

"Why is life so insanely busy? What happened to 'leisure' time? Tired of the modern hamster wheel, Brigid Schulte set out to find a better way to live. Her voice is delightful, her findings surprising and hopeful. *Overwhelmed* is a passionate, funny, very human book that reads like a detective story." - William Powers, author of *Hamlet's BlackBerry: Building a Good Life in the Digital Age*

"Schulte takes a purely practical and secular approach to a question that philosophers and spiritual teachers have debated for centuries--how to find meaningful work, connection, and joy--but her research is thorough and her conclusions fascinating, her personal narrative is charmingly honest, and the stakes are high: the "good life" pays off in 'sustainable living, healthy populations, happy families, good business, [and] sound economies.'" ?*Publisher's Weekly* starred review

"*Overwhelmed*... brings a fresh perspective and needed insight into what's too often called the problem of the work-life balance." ?*Elle*

"An unexpectedly liberating investigation into the plague of busyness that afflicts us all." ?*The Washington Post*

"This artful blend of memoir and cultural exploration asks hard questions about how to create a well-lived life... For *Lean In* fans, and everyone who feels overwhelmed." ?*Booklist*

"An eye-opening analysis of today's hectic lifestyles coupled with valuable practical advice on how to make better use of each day." ?*Kirkus*

"Just reading the first chapter of *Overwhelmed* may be cathartic: as bad as it is... at least you're not the only one... *Overwhelmed* is Schulte's attempt to not merely survive but also unpack and analyze the quintessentially modern and increasingly universal experience of feeling utterly unable to cope. Putting her own crowded life (two children, thriving career) on the slab for dissection, Schulte tries to figure out how we got here and how we can get out of it." ?*Time*

"*Overwhelmed* is a superb report from the front lines of the sputtering gender revolution. Brigid Schulte takes up the perennial problem of women's 'second shift' with fresh energy and fascinating new data, effortlessly blending academic findings and mothers' lived experiences, including her own often hilarious attempts to be both the perfect parent and a successful full-time journalist. Before you embark on parenthood, before you volunteer to make cupcakes for a school party or stay up late to finish a fourth grader's science project--and definitely before you pick up another copy of *Martha Stewart Living*--read this book!" ?*Barbara Ehrenreich, author of Nickel and Dimed: On(Not) Getting By in America*

"Reflecting on her meticulous research, searching her feelings, and renegotiating the division of emotional labor with her husband, Tom, Brigid Schulte offers us a well-written and timely book, both witty and wise." ?*Arlie Hochschild, author of The Second Shift: Working Families and the Revolution at Home*

"Beautifully written, with searing facts, engaging stories, illuminating history, and wry personal observations. A must-read by a truly perceptive author!" ?*John de Graaf, editor of Take Back Your Time: Fighting Overwork and Time Poverty in America*

"Why is life so insanely busy? What happened to 'leisure' time? Tired of the modern hamster wheel, Brigid Schulte set out to find a better way to live. Her voice is delightful, her findings surprising and hopeful. *Overwhelmed* is a passionate, funny, very human book that reads like a detective story." ?*William Powers, author of Hamlet's BlackBerry: Building a Good Life in the Digital Age*

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book. A new wave of research, experience, and insight is challenging deep assumptions about why we have to live and work the way we do. *Overwhelmed* is a wake-up call and an exhilarating prescription for change.”
?Anne-Marie Slaughter, president and CEO of the New America Foundation and author of "Why Women Still Can't Have It All"

From the Author

This is an accidental book, and surely friends who knew me growing up - and waited as I burst into places late, trailing shoes and socks or a toothbrush - guffawed heartily when they heard I was working on a book about time. It all started with a phone call. I was part of a group of journalists at the Washington Post asked to research why fewer and fewer women under the age of 50 were reading the newspaper. The journalists, all of us women, most of us caretakers of some kind - mothers, guardians for nieces and nephews, daughters of aging parents - figured women were just too busy. After all, we sometimes found it hard to find the uninterrupted time to read the very newspaper we worked for in the swirl of morning craziness. My assignment was to find the time study data to prove how busy women are. Knowing nothing about time research, I googled, "busy women time" and up popped someone by the name of John Robinson, one of the first and most eminent time-use researchers in the world. I called him up, expecting to find easy validation. Instead, he told me women like me had 30 hours of leisure time every week. And thus the journey began.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Gerald Troups:

In this 21st century, people become competitive in every single way. By being competitive today, people have to do something to make these individuals survive, being in the middle of the crowded place and notice by surrounding. One thing that sometimes many people have underestimated that for a while is reading. Yep, by reading a book your ability to survive improves then having a chance to stay than other is high. For you personally who want to start reading a new book, we give you this kind of *Overwhelmed: Work, Love, and Play When No One Has the Time* book as a nice and daily reading reserve. Why, because this book is more than just a book.

Freddie Patton:

Overwhelmed: Work, Love, and Play When No One Has the Time can be one of your basic books that are a good idea. All of us recommend that straight away because this publication has good vocabulary that could increase your knowledge in vocabulary, easy to understand, bit entertaining but nevertheless delivering the information. The author giving his/her effort to get every word into a pleasure arrangement in writing *Overwhelmed: Work, Love, and Play When No One Has the Time* however doesn't forget the main level, giving the reader the hottest as well as based confirmed resource data that maybe you can be among it. This great information may draw you into a brand new stage of crucial pondering.

Aaron Covington:

Your reading sixth sense will not betray an individual, why because this *Overwhelmed: Work, Love, and Play When No One Has the Time* publication written by well-known writer we are excited for well how to

make book which can be understand by anyone who also read the book. Written in good manner for you, dripping every ideas and publishing skill only for eliminate your own personal hunger then you still uncertainty Overwhelmed: Work, Love, and Play When No One Has the Time as good book not simply by the cover but also with the content. This is one book that can break don't assess book by its handle, so do you still needing yet another sixth sense to pick this kind of!? Oh come on your examining sixth sense already alerted you so why you have to listening to yet another sixth sense.

Louetta Cantrell:

As a student exactly feel bored for you to reading. If their teacher inquired them to go to the library or make summary for some book, they are complained. Just minor students that has reading's heart and soul or real their leisure activity. They just do what the educator want, like asked to the library. They go to right now there but nothing reading really. Any students feel that studying is not important, boring as well as can't see colorful photographs on there. Yeah, it is to be complicated. Book is very important for you. As we know that on this era, many ways to get whatever you want. Likewise word says, many ways to reach Chinese's country. Therefore this Overwhelmed: Work, Love, and Play When No One Has the Time can make you sense more interested to read.

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