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168 Hours: You Have More Time Than You Think



Synopsis

It's an unquestioned truth of modern life: we are starved for time. We tell ourselves we'd like to read more, get to the gym regularly, try new hobbies, and accomplish all kinds of goals. But then we give up because there just aren't enough hours to do it all. Or if we don't make excuses, we make sacrifices- taking time out from other things in order to fit it all in. There has to be a better way...and Laura Vanderkam has found one. After interviewing dozens of successful, happy people, she realized that they allocate their time differently than most of us. Instead of letting the daily grind crowd out the important stuff, they start by making sure there's time for the important stuff. When plans go wrong and they run out of time, only their lesser priorities suffer. Vanderkam shows that with a little examination and prioritizing, you'll find it is possible to sleep eight hours a night, exercise five days a week, take piano lessons, and write a novel without giving up quality time for work, family, and other things that really matter. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

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Customer Reviews

I usually try to be fair and tactful in any review, but the only honest thing I can say about this book was it was a horrible waste of time. For starters, the suggestions the author makes really only apply to people who are (a) professionals in corporate environments who have subordinates and flexible schedules, or people who are self-employed, either way making probably at least \$100,000 a year; and (b) people who are married with children. I guess the author assumes if those criteria don't apply to you, you must not be busy enough to worry about. She certainly shouldn't have needed an

entire book to state her suggestions, which can be summed up simply: for every thing you don't want to do in your life, either get someone else to do it, or just ignore it. The 'getting someone else to do it' involves delegating (at work, to subordinates; at home, to other family members) or hiring someone to do it for you. To be fair, delegating at work is a great idea if there are reasonably people you can delegate to; I knew that wouldn't apply to me, but there's not much I can change about my job, and I got the book more for suggestions of how to create more free time in my home life. That's the chapter that really bombed for me. If I followed this author's advice, I'd have a maid, a cook, a lawn & garden service, and a laundry service - all on my legal secretary's salary. She blithely talks about the \$2,500 a year one of these services costs, or recommends a personal shopping assistant like the one she used - at a cost of \$400, all she had to do was "try on clothes and hand people my credit card." Yeah, because all of us have that kind of cash to throw around.

There is no shortage of books on the subject of time management. In fact, the last time I checked, offers 11,229 of them but not one of them explains how to increase the number of hours within a seven-day period: it is 168, no more and no less. What sets this book apart from the dozens of other books on time management that I have read is the fact that Laura Vanderkam rigorously follows what Albert Einstein recommends: "Make everything as simple as possible...but no simpler." For example, in the first chapter, she suggests, "Picture a completely empty weekly calendar with its 168 hourly slots." She then helps her reader to document his or her (the reader's) current allocation of time. She achieves that objective as well as each of her other primary objectives such as disabusing her reader of major misconceptions about how much time (on average) people spend on sleep, work, and leisure time components. While doing so, she cites real-world examples (i.e. real people in real time) that both illustrate and confirm basic strategies that produce more and more enjoyable as well as better, and achieved sooner, in less time. She also identifies the core competencies that her reader must develop and then leverage to achieve that same objective. She is at her best when explaining how to determine what the "right job" is, what it requires, and how to obtain it. [She cites Teresa Amabile's admonition, "You should do what you love, and you should love what you do." If that doesn't suggest what a "right job" is, I don't know what does.

I was right on board for the first few chapters... I am a small (and I mean smaaaaall) business owner mompreneur and I run the business from my home. I struggle with striking a balance between housework, work-work and time with my kids (8,4 and 1). I was hoping that this book would allow me to find that hidden balance between home and work that had been eluding me. Well, although

some of the core principals are correct, (less tv, focusing on work WHILE working and always thinking on how to advance your work to greater heights, where this book falls far short is showing how to do that on an under \$45,000 a year (with BOTH our incomes). If I could hire people to do everything and anything for me, from cooking and cleaning, to my laundry, I wouldn't have needed to get this book. The title of this book should be "168 hours... The rich and pretentious of the world have more time than they think". I actually started getting somewhat insulted by this book when she began saying that things "making your own jam" or "making your own grout cleaner from lemon juice and cream of tartar" waste are things that women are doing out of a sense of nostalgia, and not simply because, not only are home made things (food or cleaners) healthier for you and your family, without the chemicals or foreign ingredients you can't pronounce... But they are CHEAPER.. With my budget, it's not a matter just hiring someone to do my laundry for 1.50 a lb. Even if (hahahahaa) I could get by on the minimal amount of \$25 a week that she talks about in her book for this service, that is \$100 a month that I have nowhere but the mortgage or food budget to take from. What should I give up? Minimal time putting wash in a laundry machine, and folding while my kids do their homework or sleep, or the roof over their head?

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