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## **Need to be Busy 1: Making Peace with Less Work**

*By Brooke Loening*

So many of us are busy, busy, busy. If there is a window of potential down time we will fill it with something right away. Some people's lives require them to be on the move most of the time just to "keep it together." Yet so many people are busy not just out of necessity, but because they are being driven by impulses that they are not completely aware of. How busy are you, and why are you so busy all the time? This is the first in a series of articles on the subject, and today I would like to take an initial look at busyness and how we respond to less demand in our career and work.

People ask you, "How is work?" "Very Busy" you respond, feeling good about it. "Oh, that's great." "Yes it is." What are some of the subconscious beliefs that you may have when you are busy with work?

- "I am successful at what I do."
- "Others approve of and like my product or service."
- "I know what I am doing and I am good at it, and I am making money because of it."
- "People like me."
- "I am doing something worthwhile with my time."

Conversely, if we are not "busy" with work, we may experience some of the opposite thoughts.

- "What am I doing wrong?"
- "People don't value what I have to offer."
- "People don't approve enough of what I do to pay for it."
- "My self-esteem is low because I am not so busy with work."
- "People don't like me."
- "Should I be in another business?"
- "I am not doing anything worthwhile with my time."

In this way, our sense of self-worth is often directly linked to how busy we are at work.

These are just a few beliefs that might you might have depending on how busy you are with work. After this past year's economic slide, lot's of small business owners have experienced a decline in the demand for their services, and many people are without a job altogether. These people are certainly faced directly with all of their own internal dialogue about their need to be busy with work.

Accepting "What is"

If you are working less not by your own choice, what emotions does this bring up for you? Most businesses are cyclical and will likely bounce back after a period of decline. If you can weather a decrease in income for a while, does a reduction in work hours need to be a source of constant worry or anxiety? Instead of allowing your subconscious beliefs about “work” to create fear or panic, maybe you could accept it as part of your journey. So many of us spend a great deal of emotional energy resisting “what is” in our lives when that energy could easily be directed towards other pursuits that provide a bigger reward!

#### Time for other important pursuits

From this new place of awareness, can you look at some of the opportunities and upsides that this new situation makes possible? Maybe the excess energy you have expended at work has worn you down, and this may be a time to renew yourself by maintaining a less rigorous pace. Possibly your diet and exercise program have taken a back seat to your work for the past few years and you need to get your physical health back on track. Perhaps you have always wanted to do some drawing or painting and have never “had the time.” This could be an opportunity to start spending more time with your family and make a stronger connection with them.

If you do find that work is slower than it used to be, right now might be a good time to revisit your thinking about it. We have so many emotions about life situations, and act on them, without a full understanding of what is generating them. One of the goals of this column is to bring more awareness to various important issues that we face in our lives. This allows us to operate on a level of consciousness, which in turn reveals new choices for us about how we want to live, relate to other people, and conduct our lives. Without that deeper understanding, we are sometimes not even aware that we have a choice; we just “do” based on our subconscious beliefs.

If you find yourself resisting and pushing at work without results in response to changes that you face, try recognizing the internal beliefs that are driving you, and fully accept your current situation without labeling it “bad” or “good.” Embracing reality without passing judgment, and having increased awareness about it will put you in a position of empowerment where you can make better choices in your life.

An affirmation, which may help, is as follows: “I am at peace with less work, and I take advantage of the new opportunities that I have now.”

My next article will offer more insights into to why some of us are so busy with work.

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