



Enthusiastic Under-Commitment

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The journey starts here, with life and death, with the choices we make.

He had a couple of young children and a high paying, important job which demanded twelve hour days. Important and urgent. Then his spouse died without warning. What is important and urgent now? Job, grieving, children? What? The question still stands. He gave me the idea of a life of fierce under-commitment.

Guess how long the average work week is for a typical hunter-gatherer? It's twenty hours. Did you guess longer? Shorter? The work week for the aborigine of Australia is seven hours. Work WEEK! In a drought it spikes to 21 hours. So what do they do with all that "spare" time? Do they go to the mall? No, they spend their time in connection with the Sacred, in relationships, in ritual, and in art. (Fact: On average, Americans shop six hours a week and spend only 40 minutes playing with their children.)

If you are not talking on the cell phone and drinking a latte while driving too fast to get somewhere, you are a failure. Being busy means that you are a success. Being a workaholic in the 50's was the norm. Of course, it wasn't called workaholicism, it was called dedication to the job, to the firm. Then, in

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the 60's and 70's we had a short revolution. During the 80's greed was good. Now, we have kids working at the big software companies and other similar hot high tech companies that put in 50-60 hours of work a week because its fun. All their relationships are at work, except their spouses, but many aren't married. When they get to crunch points they bump the hours up to 60-80 hours per week, of course, there is almost always a crunch point. They don't have or need lives outside of their jobs. Oh, did I forget, they have the promise of great wealth just around the corner. Many who have gone before them have realized this promise. Some of these young people expect to be millionaires by age 35 at the outside. They feel entitled. Does this sound crazy?

What if there was space in your day? You know space with nothing going on. Not space to be filled with anything, not even with TV. (I still recommend less than 5 hours per week of TV.) But real space. Space to be available to your child or spouse, for instance. Children just like to know you're available. They may not want to do anything with you, but they do want you to just be there. Spouses want the same kind of privilege. Space to be with you. Go figure. If you are always doing something, you are not available.

We have the notion that quality time makes up for quantity. What a crock. You can not have quality unless you have some quantity. Quality happens because space is available. You can't jam kids, spouses or friends into a compartment of time and expect quality to come out the other side.

How about time for yourself? How much of that do you need. I need a lot. How do I get it? I schedule, then I have to be firm and not let anything else come into that space. Assuming all the other truly important life stuff is handled, nothing is more important than time for myself. In my life almost anything may look more urgent, but it is not more important. I have to block off time for me. The tyranny of the urgent will trample on what is truly important if you let it.

“. . . what I like *doing* best is Nothing”

“How do you do nothing?” asked Pooh, after he had wondered for a long time.

“Well, it’s when people call out at you just as you’re going off to do it, What are you going to do, Christopher Robin, and you say, Oh, nothing, and then you go and do it.”

“Oh, I see,” said Pooh.

“This is a nothing sort of thing that we’re doing now.”

“Oh, I see,” said Pooh again.

“It means just going along, listening to all the things you can’t hear, and not bothering.”

“Oh!” said Pooh.

They walked on . . .

From **The House at Pooh Corner**

Urgent and Important?

	important	not-important
urgent	do this now!	skip
not-urgent	schedule this	skip

There are four possibilities: urgent and important, urgent and not-important, not urgent and important, not urgent and not-important. (See box above.)

What box does your life go in?

If you don’t attend to it, your life will generate a crisis. then you will be in the urgent and important box. This is not where we want to be.

To clarify, if something is truly urgent and important ask: Can this wait a day, a week, a year? A variation is: will anyone care 100 years from now?

Mail marked “urgent” is usually neither urgent nor important. An emergency room type injury is probably both, but they are usually obvious.

Con artists will urge decisions by saying the offer is good for only a short time, ‘till midnight, and your life will be a ruin if you don’t buy.

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How Do You Carve Out Time?

While hunting for a good head of lettuce to bring home to dinner, I bumped into a colleague in the grocery store. We talked about **Enthusiastic Under-commitment**. She gifted me with this phrase: "It's nice to say no." She said it in the softest voice, so sweetly. However, if you didn't get her "no", she could glare at you with a look that would melt steel. You wouldn't want to hear "no" a third time from this woman.

Nice to say, "no." She means this two ways. First, it feels good to say, "no." And second, we are being nice to others and to ourselves when we say, "no." When we set good boundaries, we take care of everyone around us. When we take good care of ourselves, we take good care of everyone around us.

Burn out is not pretty. Even if you have lots of money, burn out is not pretty. There is a syndrome here in Seattle--Microsoft Millionaires. Rich, young and burned out. You don't have true prosperity unless you are in balance--physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. Burned out workaholic, excitement junkies are still burned out. Once you've gone over that edge you have a long way to come back to balance. It's not easy. The siren song of excitement and project fever pulls hard. It is tough to give up a life where you believe everything is urgent and important.

The last straw breaks the camel's back. What is the load the camel can carry effortlessly for days with joy and satisfaction. That is the load of all hunter-gatherers.

Raising children, having relationships, touching Spirit are all time intensive behaviors. They can not be short changed without paying a price.

Here are some questions to explore:

- ◆ What is the load that works best for the camel?
- ◆ What are you not getting enough time for? What's missing?

- ◆ Do you resent work? Do you resent your spouse, friends, or children asking for your time?
- ◆ Who says you have to work so hard? Really, who does the voice in your head that makes you work so hard belong to? When one of my patients sits down to rest for a few moments on the couch she hears her mother's voice say, "If you don't have anything to do, I'll find something for you to do." Whose voice is it for you?
- ◆ Every time one of my patients has free time built into her schedule again she obsessively fills it up. How do you fill up your free time, so that it is no longer free?
- ◆ And what is the payoff for filling up that time?

Tell me, what else should I have done?
Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon?
Tell me, what is it you plan to do
with your one wild and precious life?

The last four lines from a **The Summer Day** by Mary Oliver

This summer (July 97) my mother died. I have been fierce with not over scheduling. Every so often I hear the voice urging me to do more. But what I need is lots of time to just be with the loss. I need time to write poetry, to paint, to sit in the mountains gazing at wildflowers. (My mother introduced me to wildflowers. What a concept for my young mind: Wild Flowers. Untamed, running loose in the woods of Ohio. I thought flowers only existed in gardens.) Grieving is important and it takes time.

FRIENDLY RESOURCES – WHERE YOU CAN FIND HELP AND FASCINATING THINGS TO EXPLORE

BODY AND SOUL MENTOR

The [Body and Soul Mentor](http://www.BodyAndSoulMentor.com) private member web site offers inspiring, effective life coaching and potent information at an easily affordable price that empowers you to live a life you wholeheartedly love -- body, and soul.

Explore the site. You can use **The Eight Fundamental Secrets to Living Well** free e-course to help you make a decision to join. Even if you do not choose to join, the course will benefit you in many ways. Go for it!

www.BodyAndSoulMentor.com

WILLIAM'S E-MANUALS FOR WHOLEHEARTED LIVING

All of the books here and below certainly have the potential to improve your life powerfully.

Explore my other e-manuals in the series, **William's E-Manuals for Wholehearted Living**.

MIND MAPPING -- A TRAINING MANUAL TO EXPLODE YOUR CREATIVITY AND CHANNEL IT FOR SOLVING PROBLEMS, COMPLETING DAUNTING TASKS, AND BREAKING OUT OF RUTS.

I wrote this training manual to be a companion work to increase the value you receive with **Looking Deeply into Presence**. If you are not familiar with mind mapping, then you will want to read this manual. If you are familiar, I think you will still gain value. If you don't feel you got your money's worth, then you can easily get your investment back. You can put it to the test at no risk. Go for it. (Note: As an owner of **Looking Deeply**, I will let you know how you can get **Mind Mapping** when I publish it.)

SIMPLY SERENE – FOUR AMAZINGLY POWERFUL WAYS TO BE INSTANTLY ALERT AND AT PEACE – www.HowToBeSimplySerene.com

ALTAR MAKING – A SPIRITUAL PRACTICE TO DEEPEN YOUR CONNECTION TO THE SACRED – <http://tinyurl.com/qxkjr>

This one's free.

The titles say it all.

WORK WITH ME TO DEEPEN YOUR LIFE ENGAGEMENT

Many people benefit from one-on-one mentoring with me in person or over the phone. Talk to me about personal Life Coaching for you or a loved one. I answer my own phone at 206.328.2073. Or reach me by e-mail at William@BodyandSoulMentor.com.

You can explore to see how Life Coaching might serve you at www.VitalArts.net.

As a member of **Body and Soul Mentor**, you will be able to work with me in another delightful way.

The **Body and Soul Mentor** offers inspiring, effective life coaching and potent information at an easily affordable price that empowers you to live a life you wholeheartedly love -- body, and soul.

Explore the site and make a decision to join. Go for it!
www.BodyAndSoulMentor.com