

Beyond Busyness: How to Achieve More by Doing Less

Peggy Sullivan

Amplify Publishing

(225pp)

979-889138265-7

Calling for a more balanced and fulfilling approach to life and work, Beyond Busyness is a refreshing self-help resource.

Peggy Sullivan's illuminating self-help book *Beyond Busyness* makes a compelling case against the cult of productivity, presenting an alternative vision for focus, contentment, and authenticity.

Urging people to part ways with hustle culture and regain control of their time, this book argues that people can accomplish more if they are happy, rested, and not trying to get something done at all times. Its "Busy Busting Process" is all about avoiding burnout and fatigue to lead a more authentic, rewarding life. It encourages people to master the metrics of their work habits, create moments of joy, refresh their mentalities, and adjust their schedules to align with their personal values.

Organized around the development of its central thesis, the book spells out its three-step process in methodical fashion, identifying the problem with busyness, introducing healthier alternatives, and outlining how to recover and avoid relapsing. Report cards, playbooks, worksheets, and other interactive supplements end each chapter for mnemonic reinforcement.

Centered on personal and professional experience, the book grounds its work with stories about speaking at conferences, helping seniors with groceries, and getting promoted. There are insights on how happiness is a muscle to flex, how connection gives life meaning, and how a day without learning is a lost opportunity. It leavens its wisdom with a light humor, for instance describing the mortification of moaning "pretty loud" while savoring chocolate as a happiness ritual in a crowded coffee shop.

The writing addresses its audience in a direct fashion, often telling stories in the first person, making them more engaging and immersive. It uses simple declarative sentences to communicate in a clear way, for instance suggesting specific happiness rituals like drinking chamomile tea, scratching a dog's belly, or going out for a beer with one's brother. The book also relates others' stories to convey examples of its ideas, as by listing off real and fictional "badasses" to emulate and recounting how a friend from Singapore came up with the concept of the 100 Coffee Challenge after losing a job offer in New York City with just 52 days left on her visa. Much of the language is straightforward, and the style is conversational, with flair and flourishes. However, the book's ending—which recapitulates its core arguments, contends that less is more, and issues a call to action—skews toward sloganeering that contrasts with the more thoughtful approach to concepts like work-life balance that reigns throughout.

The empowering business book *Beyond Busyness* argues against busyness for its own sake, calling for a more balanced and fulfilling approach to life and work.

JOSEPH S. PETE (September 5, 2024)

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