

## Adult Recess

**E**ver since I discovered my true calling, I've been a workaholic and have never learned to take regular vacations. As a high school and college English teacher, I worked late into the night reading and writing long comments on reams of student papers and preparing for the next day. During summer breaks, I rarely took vacations, even when I could.

For the past twenty-seven years, I've published this magazine, run a book publishing firm and a consulting business, and for many of those years, sixteen hours has been a standard workday. I've become more skilled at shutting down when the clock strikes five, but I still find it challenging to take a day off, much less a week or two or three like smart people. When there's the chance for an extended break, I often think—how can I be away for a week? There's far too much to do.

I know there are other people out there like me. Maybe you're one of us. We're those people who'll regret missing precious time with family and friends when we're facing our final hours. We won't be wishing we'd spent more time at the office.

The Europeans—and lots of Americans, too—cherish their holidays, taking three weeks or a month vacation every year, heading to the river or mountains or to their easy chair for time away from deadlines, a demanding boss, or a long commute. If you're one of those people who can leave the workplace, close the door behind you and forget about your inbox, I praise and admire you. You're likely to live a much longer and healthier life spending more time with the people you love. What else is more important?

Although it's a gradual evolution, I'm beginning to improve my vacationing behavior. I bought a new pair of hiking boots last time we were in NYC, the kind you need in the Adirondacks, and I'm finding myself paying more attention to the links my wife sends me about cruises and special air fares. For years, I refused to use the four-letter word R-E-T-I-R-E, and now I'm even looking seriously at a shorter workweek without cringing.

Over the years, I've written a lot in this column about what I learned from my father. He always taught me through his noble deeds that a strong work ethic earns respect (and money, if you're lucky). There's no one I respect more than you, Dad, but let's face it, when you're seventy, work can go too far. We always need to put it in its proper place and find a healthy work-life balance. When I gaze into my crystal ball, I see long highways and landscapes stretching out before me.

Here's wishing all our readers many long and inspiring vacations to come. *pl*



Editor/Publisher