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## ***Overworked, part 1***

By Paperitalo Staff

You and I often hear people tell us how overworked they are. This has become the mantra of developed countries. I'm tired of hearing it, and, further, I don't believe it. Overworked is a relative, comparative idea. My grandfather's last job before he was killed in 1930 in a coal mine accident was digging coal out of a mine that was three feet high. The week before he was killed, he, my dad and my dad's cousin earned a combined grand total of USD 8.00 (by comparison, around the same time, Jack Morgan, son of J. Pierpont Morgan, was spending around USD 60,000 per year on keeping his various estates staffed with appropriate servants for a person of his stature--talk about income disparity!). I don't know anyone in a first world country today that is working on their hands and knees digging coal out of a narrow vein in the side of a hill. If they are, they should go to the appropriate authorities and call out their employer.

However, despite all of this, people often think they are overworked. We are going to spend as many columns as necessary over the next few weeks to show you how to extract yourself from the overworked syndrome. Don't know how many weeks it is going to take, and don't care. But it is time we put our big boy (or girl) pants on and fix this (perceived) problem.

Most likely if you are reading this column, you do not do physical work, other than perhaps climbing stairs, as a normal part of your routine. So, we are going to ignore physical work for this discussion. Your mental work may consist of (1) managing people, (2) monitoring processes, (3) troubleshooting, (4) creative activities, (5) preparing reports, (6) interpreting reports, (7) presenting reports to others. If you can think of any category I have missed, please email me at [jthompson@taii.com](mailto:jthompson@taii.com) and we will be sure to include it in a future issue.

We'll cover specific areas in future columns, but for now, we are going to stay at a big picture level. So the first thing I want you to do is take a piece of paper and make a grid on it. Leave a border around the edge, and make it seven columns wide by 10 rows high. Just do it freehand--it is only for you to use. Mark the columns Sunday, Monday, and so forth and mark the rows by the hour, starting with whatever hour you normally get to work.

Don't do a thing with this during the day, but before you go home each night, for that day, put a checkmark in the hour box for that day for which you think you wasted your time. Then, at the bottom of that column, put a couple of short notes about the boxes with checks in them--again, nothing fancy, this is just for you.

The instructions for the notes should be longer than the notes themselves. They are these: First, try to characterize the wasted time as being caused by you or by someone else. Second, is this a repetitive time waster or a onetime only time waster? Third, knowing what you know right now, could you have avoided this time waster? Fourth, does this time waster involve something being lost (physically or electronically)? Fifth, if you had been absent today, what would have happened concerning this time waster?

Make up your own code/shorthand for how you are noting these matters. The goal is to be quick about it, but yet have enough information you can come back later and look at it again in order to detect patterns. Do the whole thing in five minutes right before you go home. Do it every day you are at work for a month, including Saturdays and Sundays.

At the end of a month, you will have a great deal of data which will allow you to take some actions that can affect your future behavior.

For safety this week, everyone should be carrying a Medical Information Card. Here is a place where you can make one and print it out for free: <http://medids.com/free-id.php>

Be safe and we will talk next week. ##