

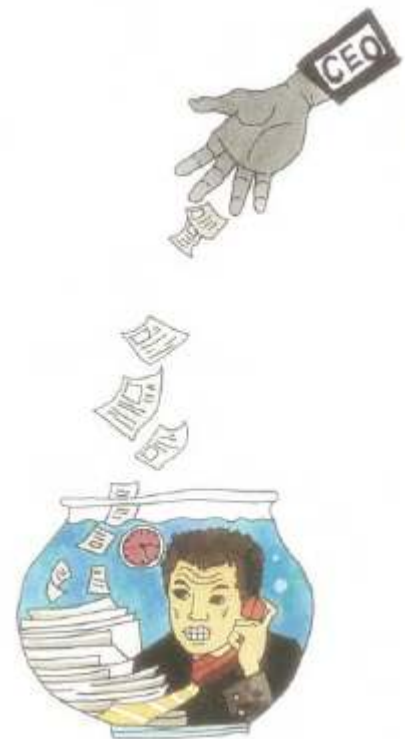
ISSUE 1

Are You Busy?

Most people **claim** to be extremely busy. But I wonder if they are really any busier than people who lived at other times. Maybe most people generally **regard** themselves as being busy even if they are not. No one wants to admit to idleness or laziness, not even to himself. It may also be that people are aware that there are so many possibilities of things to do that they feel **compelled** to do them all.

What keeps you busy?

1. My job
2. Family concerns
3. **Cultivating** relationships with others
4. My kids
5. Efforts to improve the quality of my life
6. I just pretend to be busy.



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- > **claim** : say that (sth) is true, even though there is no definite proof
 - > **regard** ; think of (sth) or (sb) in a particular way
 - > **compel** : force (sb) to do (sth)
 - > **cultivate** : develop a friendship or relationship with (sb)



Are you busy?

Issue 1

Sample Answers

- (A) On weekends, there always seems to be some sort of family **obligation** I have to attend. Someone is always having a birthday or anniversary or graduation or a wedding or other kind of family reunion. If nothing is scheduled and I think I will have some free time, it always seems like a family **emergency occurs**, so I never have time for myself.
- (B) Children are not only expensive but time-consuming as well! Every day I have to make sure they are doing their homework. They participate in sports and other activities that I have to attend, too. But even without these obvious instances, they always need my personal love and attention **on display**. It **wears me out**!

SPEAK YOUR MIND

1. Who is the busiest in your family?
2. Do you have enough time to do what you want? Why or why not?
3. How do you spend your free time?
4. If your boss asked you to work **overtime**, would you agree?
5. Do you usually come home late or early? Why?
6. Who do you think are busier, kids or adults?
7. Which do you think is more important, making money or spending time with your family or friends?
8. What is a **typical** example of how you waste time?
9. Who do you think are busier these days, men or women?

> **obligation** : moral or legal duty to do (sth)

> **emergency** : unexpected situation that must be dealt with immediately

> **occur** : happen

> **on display** : presented in a visible, prominent manner

> **wear (sb) out** : make (sb) feel extremely tired

> **overtime** : extra hours that (sb) works beyond the minimum requirement

> **typical** : having the usual features or qualities of a particular classification

Speak Your Mind Helpers

1. Who is the busiest in your family?

- (A) I am. I work nine to five plus overtime. When I return home, my wife expects me to help her with her chores and to take care of our kids while she cooks supper. But by then I'm tired and just want to relax for a while.
- (B) Being a housewife is always the busiest job in the world. My husband must think household chores are a form of leisure activity. But, of course, even though he always says he is ready to help, he never actually does any of these chores, so how could he know what they're like? If he would help me just one time he would never think that way again. It's not leisure, it's hard work!

2. Do you have enough time to do what you want? Why or why not?

- (A) It's all just a matter of management, actually. There is more to life than merely work and obligation. The busier I am, the more **disciplined** I have to be, but I always **budget** enough time for the important things. It's only when I'm not very busy that I find myself not accomplishing everything I want, because I get lazy.
- (B) Maybe if I had two or three more hours a day, I could actually do some of the things I want to do. As it is, I'm always spending most of my time doing what other people want me to do, and in the time left I'm too tired to do anything.

3. How do you spend your free time?

- (A) I go to the movies every chance I get. It doesn't have to be a particularly good film to **work** its magic. Before long, I am living someone else's exciting life, not my own boring one anymore. Two hours later, I feel like a new person, refreshed and ready to **resume** my own existence.
- (B) The best thing I can do with my free time is to spend it on my hobbies. I have several collections of stamps and coins I'm **working on**. **The beauty of it** all is that the time is **flexible**. If I only have ten minutes a day to spare, that's fine, but it's also easy to spend hours at it.

> **disciplined** : well organized and following rules and standards

> **budget** : plan

> **work** : bring about

> **resume** : start (sth) again after stopping temporarily

> **I'm working on** : I'm dealing with

> **the beauty of (sth)** : particular good quality that makes (sth) especially appropriate or useful

Speak Your Mind Helpers

4. If your boss asked you to work overtime, would you agree?

- (A) Of course. What choice would I have? I want to get promoted and I certainly don't want to get **fired**!
- (B) It depends on the circumstances. Once in a while it may be necessary to complete a project that is taking longer than expected. But if I had a **prior commitment** with my family for some special occasion, I would respectfully **decline** and **make it up** some other time.

5. Do you usually come home late or early? Why?

- (A) I have to go home early every day. Someone needs to take care of the kids after school and cook supper for the family.
- (B) Unfortunately, I get home later and later. I can't get out of the office until my boss leaves, and he seems to want to live there! And then, I feel **obligated** to spend time with my fellow workers. It's important to have close friendships at work, and we all need to **unwind** from a hard day. But I wish I could just go home **at a decent hour** and spend more time with my family.

6. Who do you think are busier, kids or adults?

- (A) Kids think they are busy, because they have not experienced the grown-up world yet. I know that I would love to be a youngster again and deal **exclusively** with my childish problems instead of the really serious ones I have to **grapple with** every day now.
- (B) Adults must forget what it was like to be my age. They complain about how busy they are, but it seems like they always have the time to do the things they want to do. They can go out whenever they want, watch TV, read a book, or meet their friends. But all I ever do is study. If I'm not studying, I'm sleeping. I have no free time at all.

> **flexible** : capable of changing; adaptable

> **prior** : coming before in time, order, or importance

> **decline** : refuse politely to do or accept (sth)

> **unwind** : become free of worry or tension; relax

> **exclusively** : only

> **fired** : dismissed

> **commitment** : promise to do (sth)

> **make up** : compensate

> **obligated** : forced

> **at a decent hour** : at an early or reasonable time

> **grapple with** : try hard to deal with

Speak Your Mind Helpers

7. Which do you think is more important, making money or spending time with your family or friends?

- (A) It is certainly more enjoyable to spend time with loved ones, but that isn't the question. Most of us don't have any option in life. If we don't work hard, we don't work at all, and if we don't work, we don't eat or have a **roof over our heads**. So it's very important to make money, even though I would rather be with my family.
- (B) I used to think that money was everything and that my family would thank me for all the hard work I put in **on their behalf**. But I was wrong. I was a stranger to my wife, and my kids hardly knew me. Now, when it's too late, I realize that I was not only depriving myself of their presence, but I was depriving them of mine as well. If I could do it all over again, my **priorities** would be different.

8. What is a typical example of how you waste time?

- (A) Now that I think about it, I guess that all the time and money I spend playing electronic games is the biggest time-waster in my life. In a typical week, this is way over half of my free time! I guess I should spend more time with other people.
- (B) I like to **gossip** with my friends. I'll spend hours and hours every week on the phone or at a coffee shop or bar talking to all my friends. Meanwhile, the important goals I've set myself are just **receding** further into the future.

> **roof over (one's) head** : place to live

> **on their behalf** : for their welfare

> **priority** : (sth) important, that must be done first or needs more attention than anything else

> **gossip** : talk about other people or about things that are not important

> **recede** : become more distant

9. Who do you think are busier these days, men or women?

M : As always, men are busier than women are.

F : What! How can you say that?

M : Maybe, at one time, "A woman's work is never done" was true. But these days, a woman can do all of her housework in a few hours and have lots of leisure time to shop and meet her friends before her husband and children get home. I wish I had life that easy!

F : You aren't a woman, and it's obvious you don't know what you are talking about.

M : Obviously I'm not a female. But that doesn't mean that I'm ignorant.

F : The modern woman has to get up early in the morning, **fix** breakfast for her family, get her children ready for school, get herself dressed, go to work, spend a hard day on the job, come home, help kids with homework, do the housework, prepare supper, do the dishes, put the kids to bed, finish any work that she has taken home with her from the office, deal with her husband's needs, and then finally go to sleep. And then, early the next day, she starts the **routine** all over again.

M : Nevertheless, I spend far more time at work than my wife does. Even after hours, I have to meet with clients to **further** the company's interests.

F : You mean you go to fancy restaurants and expensive bars instead of going home and helping your wife.

M : It may seem like fun to an outsider, but it is actually very stressful. I really just want to be at home.

F : Once a man's done with work, he's done! But a woman has to maintain two jobs, one at home and one outside the house. No wonder she gets old so fast.

M : Oh, come on! Women **outlive** men by several years. I'm convinced that the hard work shortens men's lives, and the women get to save their energy and live longer.

F : No. But maybe women are so busy they aren't able to drink or smoke or overeat the way men do — it's those activities which **kill them off**, not the work!



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- > **fix** : prepare
 - > **routine** : usual way of doing things
 - > **further** : help (sth) succeed or be achieved
 - > **outlive** : live longer than (sb) else
 - > **kill off** : destroy completely