

From The Stoop-may2013



There are busy times on the stoop. Really, there are. Morning coffee when everyone passes by on their way to work and not quite as busy at quitting time. I guess something is keeping some at the office. The ones who actually are going home seem to have all the tools to bring a part of the office with them. Like Mr. Green, here he comes right on time. His briefcase slung off his left shoulder which I am sure is what causes him to walk on a slight slant, his cell phone cradled in his right hand with his thumb flexed at the ever ready position, his head perched forward looking down at the tiny screen. "How are you today, Mr. Green" I say and as expected he replies with a "Busy...Crazy Busy".

"Ya, me too" I say.

I can't quite figure out is if it is a boast or a complaint, if it is a fear of idleness or pride in using up all your available time. I guess you would need to ask two distinctly different types of people. One type being those that work three jobs or double shifts to make ends meet. They would never volunteer a busy response. They are just plain tired. The others, the ones who carry a self-imposed load of time consumption are the ones who are proud to announce busyness. It is a badge.



There are 47 million Google results for how to cope with a crazy busy life and I am sure not one of them advises to simply quit being busy for a while. There are ways to better manage your time, methods to delegate what you simply don't have time to do and a multitude of books devoted to the cause. There are motivational speakers who will come and speak to you about being more productive in the limited time you have and thousands of YouTube videos you can tuck into the corner of your screen as you analyse the data of your accomplishments.

The other day, John stopped by the stoop and I asked him if he wanted to do something next week. He replied that he was really short of time but if something came up to send him a text and he would try to put work aside for a little bit. He really missed the point. I wasn't giving him a heads up to perhaps expect an invite, this was the invite. I gave up trying to compete.

Busyness is not mandatory, it is a choice. We decide that if we are not as busy as those we associate with that we will be left out of something or we will not have accomplished enough in our lifetimes. To quote Tim Krieder "Busyness serves as a kind of existential reassurance, a hedge against emptiness; obviously your life cannot possibly be silly or trivial or meaningless if you are so busy, completely booked, in demand every hour of the day."

Here, on the stoop, I am not visibly busy. I practice a form of lazy ambition. I am not obligated nor am I in demand. The stoop is a mental vacation, a time out to observe the demise of those who never stop. It is a necessary diversion that allows me to stand back from life and put a perspective to what is waiting for me when I pause from being crazy busy again. If it wasn't such a unneeded repetitive task I could play Loving

Spoonful's '[What a day for a daydream](#)' over and over again as an anthem to that daily break we all need and crave.

I have discovered the perfect cure for Crazy Busyness. It involves sitting with a straight back, gazing off into the distance and when you are ready for the magic to happen touch your index finger to your thumb and close your eyes. The real benefit to this self-treatment is that it takes only minutes to realize that there will indeed be plenty of time to be busy.

But not just now.



Comments



banksd Says:

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Very wise words and wonderful advice Leo!