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PRESS RELEASE

Time Off: The New Work Ethic

Workers once relied on employers or lawmakers to dictate work hours, vacation time, and pay scales. Increasingly, however, it's up to individuals to decide how many hours to work, what type of benefits to demand, and how and when to take time off. Those who haven't yet adapted to this new economy are vulnerable to allowing others, who often have their own agendas, to dictate their work-life balance.

"You've heard about managing your career, but what about managing your need for free time?" ask Kristine Enea and Dean LaTourrette, coauthors of the new book, *Time Off! The Upside to Downtime* (Leisure Team Productions, \$17.95). Their mission is "to help you give *yourself* a break, to help you figure out how to work *and* live."

In fact, Enea and LaTourrette claim that time off is every bit as important, and necessary, as work. Downtime, they point out, can take many forms:

- A sabbatical. More and more companies are instituting formal sabbatical programs, both paid and unpaid, as rewards for loyal service. The obvious benefit of a sabbatical is that you can take a break from a job that will be there for you when you're ready to return to work. If you want a sabbatical but your company doesn't offer one, consider negotiating for some form of unpaid leave – employers are increasingly open to flexible work proposals.
- Vacation days. You're entitled to vacation days – use them. Americans on average squander one quarter of their paid vacation time each year. You may be pressured to work through your vacation to get the job done, but resist the temptation. Remind your employer that Europeans work a much shorter year than we do, and the world doesn't fall apart while their workers are on hiatus. And when your vacations days are all used up? Negotiate for unpaid days when you need them.

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- Resignations and layoffs. If you don't like your job, then give it up. And enjoy your nonemployment. Decompress. Learn to enjoy your time off. "Believe it or not, even getting the axe can lead to greater peace of mind in the long run, especially if you have a bit of savings," Enea and LaTourrette point out. If you have no money tucked away, you can shore up your pocketbook via odd jobs, low-income utility programs, free health clinics, affordable insurance, and other resources available to you. "Remember that if you lost your job, you're not alone," Enea and LaTourrette emphasize. "Your life is not over, and there's nothing wrong with you. You still need and deserve a life beyond the job hunt."

Time off, Enea and LaTourrette stress, doesn't have to be lengthy or formal. All it requires is a desire to transcend your daily obligations for a year, a month, or even just one savory afternoon. "Time off can work wonders for your psyche when overwork has turned you into a psych-o," Enea and LaTourrette promise, "not to mention what it will do for the psyche of everyone around you. Rich or poor, famous or obscure, working or not—everyone needs time off. And everyone can get it."

Many Americans believe that leisure awaits them only in retirement, but a growing number of people – including Enea and LaTourrette – see leisure instead as a way of living life to the fullest at any age. They see leisure as an attitude and a lifestyle. For those who want to take a break from work, they hope to tip the scales in favor of gaining a new perspective on leisure and learning to enjoy "playing a little hooky now and then" or just take advantage of their free time without burning through piles of money.

Time Off! The Upside to Downtime

By Kristine Enea and Dean LaTourrette

Leisure Team Productions

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Foreword by Ernie Zelinski, bestselling author of *The Joy of Not Working*

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Author Bios

Dean LaTourrette

Dean has worked in marketing on and off for the past 15 years—“on” during periods of fulltime employment with a variety of companies, and “off” during extended hiatuses to travel, surf and write. He has written for numerous publications, including *Men’s Journal*, *Surfer Magazine*, and *the San Francisco Examiner*. Dean swears that the idea for the *Time Off!* book series came to him while he was sneaking a nap at work, which only reinforced his desire to quit his job and write it. Dean is also responsible for sales, marketing, and overall schmoozing for Leisure Team Productions, the publisher of *Time Off!*.

Kristine Enea

Kristine used to negotiate deals for a large software company but she saw the light and decided to take off and travel. Her subsequent trek to Panama City, Panama, and back—by car—led to the expansion of her family in the amount of one dog and several cats. Kristine is a film-fest junkie who has been known to deplete her bank account to make it to Telluride around Labor Day. In addition to co-authoring the *Time Off!* book series, Kristine heads up operations for Leisure Team Productions, managing book production and paying the bills.

Suggested Interview Questions

1. You say that “time off” and “downtime” are misnomers. Why?
2. What are some of the forms that “time off” can take?
3. Why do some people feel guilty about taking time off?
4. What about money – how can people afford to not work for an extended time period?
5. If taking breaks from work is so great, why don’t more people do it?
6. How can you convince yourself that you deserve to take time off?
7. Do you advocate “playing hooky” from work, and if so, under what circumstances?
8. Is it okay to call in sick when you really just need a “mental health day?”
9. Is taking a day off once in awhile enough “downtime” for the average person?
10. How do you feel about the European system of providing workers with longer vacations, and will American companies ever adopt the practice?
11. You say there’s a positive side to losing your job. Can you explain that?
12. What are the benefits of taking time off?
13. Are there any pitfalls to taking time off – for instance, can you become lazy?
14. What would you say to people who claim they’re too important to take a vacation?

Endorsements for *Time Off! The Upside to Downtime*

“Everyone thinks that someday we’ll start living. *Time Off!* helps you to start now.”

--Cecile Andrews, author of *The Circle of Simplicity*

“*Time Off!* Is the ultimate guide to leisure with a purpose.”

--Daniel H. Pink, author of *A Whole New Mind*

“Read *Time Off!* slowly, follow the advice and start living a more balanced life—today.”

--John de Graaf, founder of Take Back Your Time