

What has Dr. Shook Been Reading?

“In Praise of Slowness”

By Carl Honore

Harper 2004

Carl Honore was once a slave to his schedule. Every moment of his day was filled with work, tennis, phone calls, travel and responsibilities. One hectic day Carl found himself seriously considering ordering a series of “1 Minute Bedtime Stories” to streamline the nightly and time consuming, bedtime ritual that he shared with his story hungry 2 year old. That is when Carl realized he had a problem. That is when Carl started making changes to slow down his life.

With beautiful prose and lovely visualizations, “In Praise of Slowness” takes the reader on a journey around the world to visit towns, cities, businesses and people who have made a conscious decision to slow down and live their lives at a pace more harmonious with their own internal rhythms.

With Mr. Honore as my story telling guide, we visited a meditation retreat where participants learn to still their minds. In Italy we dined on glorious food that was grown and prepared by the family that served us. We went to a gym and tried “Super Slow” weight lifting. There were cities that have opted for less parking and more pedestrian travel. Some nations, such as France and The Netherlands apparently have shortened their work weeks. We even visited a Tantric sex workshop in north London (everybody kept their cloths on).

One of my favorite chapters was the discussion on raising an unhurried child and the importance of providing a child with unscheduled time for play and imagination.

At first many of the suggestions for slowing down seemed to be a bit unrealistic or certainly for someone who makes a lot more money than I do. However I was glad to see Carl does acknowledge that not everyone can afford to work 35 hours a week. But, as Carl points out, we can all watch a little less T.V., cook a few meals, share those meals with family and friends, plant a flower or a garden, take a walk, meet our neighbors, read a book, turn off the cell phone and take a moment to breathe and quiet our minds.

This was a pleasant book and fun to read with plenty of additional reading and websites listed for further study. If you or someone you love is stressed out by their lives, a slave to the clock, running flat out like a jack rabbit then you probably need this book or perhaps some unscheduled time for play.

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