

The Myth of Hard Work

- Work hard. You'll achieve more.
- Work hard. You'll earn more.
- Work hard. You'll be happier.

Phooey. You probably grew up hearing one of these maxims, but living by them often comes at a cost.



Yes, hard work gets you noticed—usually. And if workplace politics don't interfere, you may achieve promotions and achievement.

And if working hard gets you noticed in the right way, it can translate into earning more. The world's assumption is that, if you achieve prestige and earn more money, you will naturally be happier.

So if all that holds true—notice I said *if*—then working harder means you will achieve even more, earn even more, and finally, be even happier.

And to all that I say phooey.

Of course, people wouldn't pay attention to these ideas if they didn't work for some people. Many adults do work hard and achieve, becoming highly successful in their fields and their bank accounts, and they push their kids to do the same. *Study hard, write the essays, jump through the hoops in order to get into the right school.* Parents aren't just pushing their kids this way in order to get into a prestigious college; they're pushing them this way to get into the right high school and even the right middle school.

Think that's going too far? According to Daniel Markovits in *The Atlantic*, wealthy parents in some cities are jumping through the same hoops of essays and interviews to get their children in the right kindergarten! I think my parents were happy I went to a kindergarten where at least we were discouraged from eating glue.

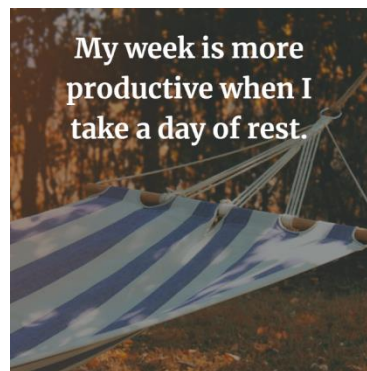
Parents are grilling their kids to work, achieve, work, achieve, work, achieve ... but to what end?

Let me back up my rant and say there is a place for hard work. I grew up with the age-old Puritan work ethic. I even like to work; there is a sense of satisfaction in working hard and doing good work. But work should not be done at the expense of everything else in our lives.

Many who have fallen for the myth of hard work are seeing it for what it is. In [*The Time Divide*](#), Jacobs and Gerson encountered what they described as "a time famine." Because of their work, people are not saving any time for other pursuits, and they are starving their relationships with spouses, children, and friends.

God calls us to work—and we should be motivated to work hard in order to honor Him and give Him our best—but God also calls us also to rest. Rest is not a time-waster; it is a gift from God.

No one can outdo God in working hard. He created the universe and the estimated 8.7 million different species of animals and living organisms in six days. But then He stopped—and rested!



I have found I am more productive—*far more* productive—when I take a day of rest. It just seems logical that if I worked seven full days, I'd get more done. That's just not true. God wired me to rest. And when I live as He designed, life is richer, fuller, and more productive.

God designed you the same way. Isn't it time you stopped starving yourself in how you use your time? Embrace the gift God has given you. Rest.