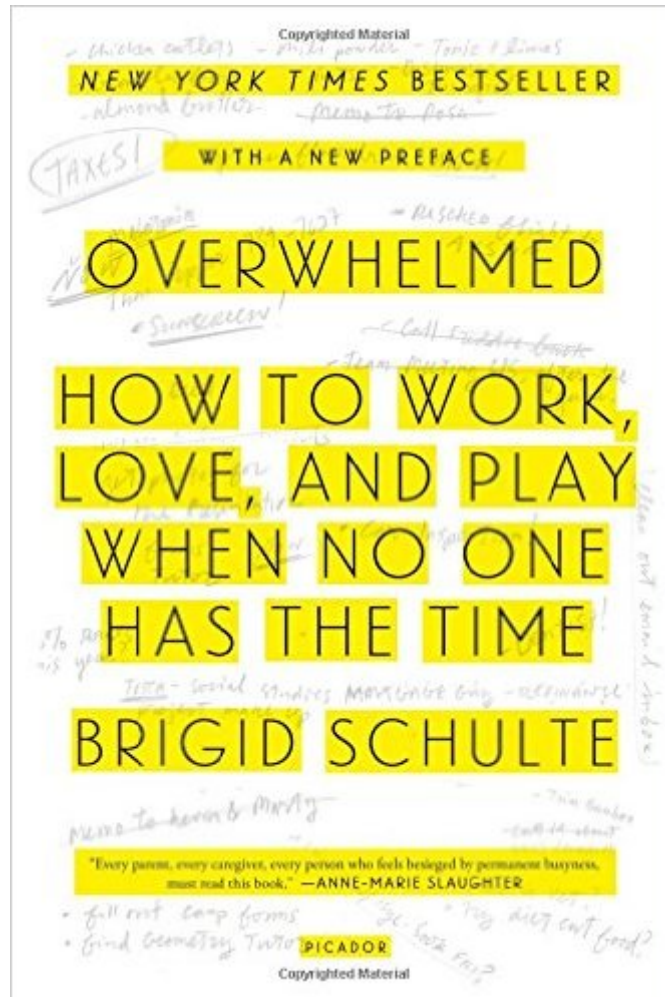


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Overwhelmed: How To Work, Love, And Play When No One Has The Time



Synopsis

"[Schulte's] a detective in a murder mystery: Who killed America's leisure time, and how do we get it back?" Lev Grossman, "Time" When award-winning journalist Brigid Schulte, a harried mother of two, realized she was living a life of all work and no play, she decided to find out why she felt so overwhelmed. This book is the story of what she discovered and of how her search for answers became a journey toward a life of less stress and more leisure. Schulte's findings are illuminating, puzzling, and, at times, maddening: Being overwhelmed is even affecting the size of our brains. But she also encounters signs of real progress evidence that what the ancient Greeks called "the good life" is attainable after all. Schulte talks to companies who are inventing a new kind of workplace; travels to countries where policies support office cultures that don't equate shorter hours with laziness (and where people actually get more done); meets couples who have figured out how to share responsibilities. Enlivened by personal anecdotes, humor, and hope, "Overwhelmed" is a book about modern life a revelation of the misguided beliefs and real stresses that have made leisure feel like a thing of the past, and of how we can find time for it in the present."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

As soon as I saw the title I knew I wanted to read it. Overwhelmed is just the beginning of what I have been feeling lately and I have been really struggling to get a handle on it all. Schulte's book is divided into three parts. The first part on "Time Confetti" really captured for me what I have been feeling a lot of lately. Reading it, it all seemed so obvious. While the details of time confetti in their parts were not really news to me, Schulte presented the sum of those parts in a way that resonated

with me. Reading the first part of the book was comforting because it made me feel like I was not the only one who was feeling this way. Schulte talks about "the sense that life is speeding up at a breakneck pace and that, though they yearn for it, many people can't seem to find an elusive moment of peace." She also talks about "living in an an always-on technological haze [that] leads to mental exhaustion," plus overwork, role overload, "this feeling of never-ending responsibility" and the concept of "contaminated time." Contaminated time describes the mental tape loop phenomenon that is so common for women - your to-do list is always going, the tape is always running in your head, and it causes mental pollution. Then there is the feeling of time pressure caused by the constant switching from one role to the next - mother, wife, worker. My generation has always been told that we can "have it all," but reading Schulte's book just confirmed for me the long held suspicion that the way society is currently structured we just can't do it. The only way we can have it all is if we change what that looks like and if we have a ton of help. Right now society requires ubiquity at work and ubiquity as a parent.

This book left me with more questions than answers and didn't provide much in the way of practical information on how to lead a calmer and less overwhelmed life. To be fair, there was great general information and some very fascinating studies discussing time use, particularly in comparison to other countries. I enjoyed reading the book and found it to be well written and much of the information to be interesting, it just wasn't very constructive in terms of advice on de-cluttering my time or being less overwhelmed by all I [feel I] need to do. My main complaint with this book is its bias toward working mothers. I've got news for Ms. Schulte; stay-at-home parents and single working folks with no kids have the same issues with being overwhelmed. There is more going on in our society than simply employers wanting more face-time at the office or being inefficient in how we use our time. My kids are grown, I own my own business and can set whatever hours I like and I am overwhelmed. Ditto for my husband. Ditto for my single twenty-something daughter (and my other twenty-something daughter, and my twenty-something son, and from what I can tell, most of their cousins and friends). I was lucky enough to be able to stay at home with my kids through the bulk of their childhoods and guess what? I was WAY overwhelmed and incredibly guilty about it. I mean come on, what's up with being supported by a spouse and having three kids in school all day and still being overwhelmed? What was wrong with me? Luckily I knew lots of women, and a few men, in the same predicament so I know it wasn't just me. Nothing changed when they all moved out - still overwhelmed trying to get it all done.

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