

Opinion: Why you hate work

By Tony Schwartz and Christine Porath, New York Times

The way we're working isn't working. Even if you're lucky enough to have a job, you're probably not very excited to get to the office in the morning, you don't feel much appreciated while you're there, you find it difficult to get your most important work accomplished, amid all the distractions, and you don't believe that what you're doing makes much of a difference anyway. By the time you get home, you're pretty much running on empty, and yet still answering emails until you fall asleep.

Increasingly, this experience is common not just to middle managers, but also to top executives.

Our company, The Energy Project, works with organizations and their leaders to improve employee engagement and more sustainable performance. A little over a year ago, Luke Kissam, the chief executive of Albemarle, a multibillion-dollar chemical company, sought out one of us, Tony, as a coach to help him deal with the sense that his life was increasingly overwhelming. "I just felt that no matter what I was doing, I was always getting pulled somewhere else," he explained. "It seemed like I was always cheating someone – my company, my family, myself. I couldn't truly focus on anything."

Mr. Kissam is not alone. Srinivasan S. Pillay, a psychiatrist and an assistant clinical professor at Harvard Medical School who studies burnout, recently surveyed a random sample of 72 senior leaders and found that nearly all of them reported at least some signs of burnout and that all of them noted at least one cause of burnout at work.

More broadly, just 30 percent of employees in America feel engaged at work, according to a 2013 report by Gallup. Around

the world, across 142 countries, the proportion of employees who feel engaged at work is just 13 percent. For most of us, in short, work is a depleting, dispiriting experience, and in some obvious ways, it's getting worse.

Demand for our time is increasingly exceeding our capacity – draining us of the energy we need to bring our skill and talent fully to life. Increased competitiveness and a leaner, post-recession work force add to the pressures. The rise of digital technology is perhaps the biggest influence, exposing us to an unprecedented flood of information and requests that we feel compelled to read and respond to at all hours of the day and night.

Read the whole story

Young people shunning national parks

By Outdoor

A recent CNN report by “Inside Man” Morgan Spurlock found that although America's national parks drew a record 292.8 million visitors in 2014, the National Park Service is having trouble attracting young people.

Spurlock reports that the number of visitors under age 15 has dropped by half in the past 10 years. Visitors to Denali average 57 years old, and Yellowstone's average guest is around 54.

Bob Roney, a retired Yosemite ranger, told CNN that the problem is younger generations are too plugged in for the

outdoors.

“People want modern conveniences,” he said. “Young people are more city oriented and tend not to be wildlands oriented.”

Read the whole story

Genoa Cowboy Festival returns for year 6

The sixth annual Genoa Cowboy Festival is April 30-May 2.

This year's event will feature performances by some of the best-known entertainers in Western music and cowboy poetry, including Lacy J. Dalton, Gary Allegretto, Mike Beck, Belinda Gail, Richard Elloyan, Sourdough Slim, Larry Maurice, “Bimbo” Cheney, The Western Flyers swing band, and many more.

Other festival events include: Chautauqua performances; a birding nature walk at the River Fork Ranch; a Birds and Buckaroos in the Carson Valley photography show at the Nature Conservancy's Whit Hall Interpretive Center; and a dinner and barn dance April 30 at Trimmer's Outpost in the Town of Genoa.

The Genoa Cowboy Festival is a blend of beautiful setting, entertainment, heritage and Western culture. This year's event is free to the public and also features cowboy mercantile crafts and clothing, Western art exhibits, pioneer and Old West living history re-enactors, and a variety of delicious food from popular local eateries.

For tickets to evening concerts and more information go online.

Tourists spending billions on wellness travel

By Jeri Clausing, Travel Weekly

At Blackberry Farm, a resort in Tennessee's Smoky Mountains, a new "Wellhouse" offers Japanese forest bathing and other "deep healing woods" activities, including in-forest yoga, meditation and endurance hikes. At the Fairmont Princess in Scottsdale, Ariz., guests can do a whole lot more than keep up with their usual workout routines at the hotel gym: They can also get state-of-the-art body-fat assessments and take the latest in fitness and wellness classes.

And in suburban New York and Washington, D.C., travelers now have the choice of a new, wellness-focused midscale hotel brand that has cork floors and in-room fitness equipment, healthy organic foods and bedding and amenities focused on relaxation and better sleep.

Over the past few years, wellness has moved way beyond the niche market of yoga retreats and fitness camps, informing and redefining virtually every aspect of the travel industry, from luxury hotels and spas to business hotels, even airports.

Several recent studies show wellness tourism is growing twice as fast as any other sector, and there are no signs that it will be letting up as everyone from aging baby boomers to millennials focus on adopting healthier lifestyles.

Read the whole story

Devotion to exercise sets retirees apart from their parents

By Michelle Fay Cortez, BloombergBusiness

Bob Hemm, a 93-year-old retired chemical engineer, still drives his Mercury Milan and tutors fourth-graders in reading and math at a school near his home in Springfield, Va. Four years ago, at the cusp of 90, the widower remarried.

Where does all of his energy come from? Exercise, says Hemm, specifically a three-times-a-week aerobics class, one that he occasionally leads.

“I’m going to do it as long as I can,” he says. “I figure that’s what’s keeping me alive.”

Science suggests he’s right. Exercise has been proven to help the heart, strengthen bones and the brain, and improve mood and balance. A half-hour a day of physical activity, even in 10-minute increments, boosts life expectancy by almost four years, according to a 2012 National Cancer Institute study of 650,000 people.

“Exercise is the only thing – and you should underline that – that helps everything associated with aging,” says Janice Schwartz, a professor of medicine at UC San Francisco. “And anyone can do it.”

Read the whole story

‘Chasing Ice’ to be shown at LTCC

“Chasing Ice” is the story of one man’s mission to change the tide of history by gathering undeniable evidence of the changing planet. With a band of young adventurers in tow, James Balog began deploying revolutionary time-lapse cameras across the Arctic to capture a multi-year record of the world’s changing glaciers.

The film will be shown April 17 at 7pm at Lake Tahoe Community College’s Duke Theatre. Doors open at 6:30pm.

Ticket are \$10 for adults, \$5 for students and children, and free for kids 12 and younger. Tickets are available at Lake of the Sky Outfitters, League to Save Lake Tahoe, Sierra Nevada Alliance, or at the door.

Proceeds will benefit the League and Sierra Nevada Alliance.

Calif. leaders routinely use private email

By Michael R. Blood and Juliet Williams, AP

Gov. Jerry Brown, Lt. Gov. Gavin Newsom and other top elected officials in California acknowledge using personal email accounts to conduct government business, and it’s not clear if their private exchanges are retained as public records or

subject to disclosure.

An Associated Press survey of email use by the state's four legislative leaders and eight top elected officers found a loose patchwork of practices under which private electronic conversations while on the job are alternately commonplace, infrequent or discouraged.

Brown's office says the governor occasionally uses private email to contact staffers, while Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson conducts most of his state business on a personal email account.

The use of private emails by public officials has come under increased scrutiny as former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton faces sharp criticism for using a private email account while at the State Department and acknowledging she deleted thousands of messages.

California has no blanket policy restricting the use of personal email for government-related activities. Advocates warn that the gap in the law gives officials the opportunity to hold private electronic discussions on state matters – with lobbyists or political donors, for example – that could be erased or edited with the push of a computer key or tap of a cellphone.

"There is always a cloud hanging over a public official who is not using an official email to conduct the public's business," said Kathay Feng, executive director of California Common Cause, which promotes government transparency. "That hurts public confidence."

The Democratic governor, who carries an iPhone, uses a private email account for what his office described as "informal communication" with his staff, such as distributing news stories or brief messages such as "please call."

Controller Betty Yee, a Democrat, said she does not use a

personal account for official matters because “the public’s business should be conducted through state resources, and that includes using government email accounts for government work.” Attorney General Kamala Harris, a Democrat running for U.S. Senate, told AP earlier this month she uses private email to communicate with top staffers, but only rarely.

By comparison, Torlakson said he conducts most of his state business on private email because it’s more convenient.

“As an elected official, I am legally obligated to use private email for all campaign-related communications and find it both practical and convenient to use the same email for most state issues,” he wrote.

Treasurer John Chiang has used personal emails for state matters, but after being queried by the AP his office said he will impose a new policy to ensure that communications involving state business are “conducted using official mediums, where there is an official public record.”

“The state Treasurer’s Office has never had a policy addressing this particular matter. At a time when technology can quickly outpace law, policy and practice, government agencies have to work harder to catch up,” a statement from his office said.

California Secretary of State Alex Padilla was the only official who did not respond to the AP’s questions.

Most state transparency laws, including open records laws that apply to California state government and the Legislature, were written before electronic communications were common and they vary significantly.

In California, each agency is charged with developing its own policy for retaining records and can set rules for email policy. The state Justice Department email policy does not prohibit the use of private messages to conduct state-related

business. However, it bans employees from sending files with confidential or personal information to private email accounts outside the department's system.

Last year, the California Supreme Court said it will decide if private emails and other electronic communications of government officials are public records in a case involving the San Jose mayor and city council.

Public disclosure can present tricky issues when it comes to government officials using personal email accounts, said Jessica Levinson, an attorney and member of the Los Angeles Ethics Commission. In general, the public should be able to see email exchanges involving government business, but it's not always simple, she said.

"Their salaries are paid by taxpayers. It is appropriate to ask them to give up some amount of privacy," said Levinson, who teaches at Loyola Law School. But "we don't get to listen into public officials' phone calls every time they are conducting official business."

When asked if he retains private emails, Torlakson said they would go into the state email system if one is sent to an agency employee. It wasn't clear what would become of an email sent outside government. He said he would make his private emails available "when an appropriate request has been made."

The four Assembly and Senate leaders did not respond directly about their use of private email to conduct legislative business, instead pointing to strict rules governing the use of state-issued email accounts.

"The Assembly does not have a policy on non-state emails used for state purposes, as the focus has always been to make sure state resources are not being used for private purposes," said John Casey, deputy chief of staff for Assembly Speaker Toni Atkins, D-San Diego.

There also is apparently no policy in the Legislature to retain records pertaining to legislative business sent from private accounts.

Three of the leaders declined to give their view on whether such exchanges should be public records, while Assembly Minority Leader Kristin Olsen, R-Riverbank, said the Assembly should consider such questions given the changes in technology.

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How skiing went from the Alps to the masses

By Andrew Denning, Atlantic

Triple gold-medalist Alpine skier Jean-Claude Killy of France, O.J. Simpson, and Chevrolet executive John Z. DeLorean sit at a table, while Hunter S. Thompson takes notes from the side of the stage. This might read as the tortuous setup to a particularly hackneyed joke, but it's the punchline. Such was the scene at the 1969 Chicago Auto Show, where this trio touted the virtues of the all-American Chevy Camaro.

But one of these things was not like the other. Simpson, fresh off his Heisman Trophy-winning campaign at the University of Southern California, was known for his charm and affability, making him an ideal pitchman. DeLorean, widely regarded as a

brilliant engineer, had a non-conformist, counter-cultural public persona that positioned him as the future of Chevrolet. So what was a 25-year-old from the French Alps doing with these two American icons, hawking a special edition “Killy Z-28 Camaro”?

The answer lies in the changing role of downhill skiing in the postwar decades, which transformed Killy from a relative unknown into a celebrity with lucrative global endorsements for Chevy, Schwinn Bicycles, and Head Skis, among others. To Thompson, Killy was emblematic of the changing fortunes of the global middle class.

Concerted efforts by public officials and private businessmen intersected with broad economic trends in the decades after World War II to transform skiing into a mark of middle-class status and a motor of economic development – first in the European Alps, and then in mountain ranges around the world.

Read the whole story

The Beekley Family Foundation

This transformation proved shocking to those who popularized the sport of skiing at the turn of the century. Archaeological evidence of skiing dates back to 6,000 B.C., and for the vast majority of their history, skis were a utilitarian means of locomotion in snowy environments. Norwegians pioneered leisure skiing in the mid-19th century, and the sport rapidly became a marker of national identity that distinguished them from their Swedish overlords. Socially elite skiers first took to the Alps in the last decades of the 19th century, seeking diversion during prolonged winter stays at Alpine resorts. Skiing was one winter leisure option among many, and early skiers were mocked as “plank-hoppers” by their fellow tourists, who favored activities such as ice skating and tobogganing. Many preferred to ski at night to escape the derision of Alpine inhabitants. And yet, by the dawn of the 20th century, skiing had emerged as a popular leisure option, marked by its unique blend of speed and appreciation of

nature.

Early exposure to peanuts helps prevent allergies in kids

By Marilyn Marchione, AP

For years, parents of babies who seem likely to develop a peanut allergy have gone to extremes to keep them away from peanut-based foods. Now a major study suggests that is exactly the wrong thing to do.

Exposing infants like these to peanuts before age 1 actually helped prevent a peanut allergy, lowering that risk by as much as 81 percent, doctors found. Instead of provoking an allergy, early exposure seemed to help build tolerance.

Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, called the results “without precedent” and said in a statement that they “have the potential to transform how we approach food allergy prevention.”

His agency helped fund the study, the largest and most rigorous test of this concept. Results were published in the New England Journal of Medicine and discussed at an American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology conference in Houston.

A big warning, though: The babies in the study were checked to make sure they didn’t already have a peanut allergy before they were fed foods that included peanuts, so parents of

babies thought to be at risk for an allergy should not try this on their own.

“Before you even start any kind of introduction these children need to be skin-tested” to prevent life-threatening reactions, said Rebecca Gruchalla, an allergy specialist at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas.

Also, small children can choke on whole peanuts, so smooth peanut butter or other peanut-based foods are safer, said Gruchalla, who wrote a commentary on the study in the journal.

The main finding – that early exposure to a problem food may keep it from becoming a long-term problem – should change food guidelines quickly, she predicted.

“Isn’t it wild? It’s counterintuitive in certain ways and in other ways it’s not,” she said.

Peanut allergies have doubled over the last decade and now affect more than 2 percent of kids in the United States and growing numbers of them in Africa, Asia and elsewhere. Peanuts are the leading cause of food allergy-related severe reactions and deaths. Unlike many other allergies, this one is not outgrown with age.

Food allergies often are inherited, but research suggests they also can develop after birth and that age of exposure may affect whether they do.

Researchers at King’s College London started this study after noticing far higher rates of peanut allergies among Jewish children in London who were not given peanut-based foods in infancy compared to others in Israel who were.

The study involved more than 600 children ages 4 months to 11 months old in England. All were thought to be at risk for peanut allergy because they were allergic to eggs or had eczema, a skin condition that’s a frequent allergy symptom.

All had been given skin-prick tests to make sure they were not already allergic to peanuts. They were put into two groups – 530 who did not show signs of peanut allergy and 98 others with mild-to-moderate reactions, suggesting an allergy might be developing.

Half of each group was assigned to avoid peanuts and the other half was told to consume them each week, usually as peanut butter or a snack called Bamba, a peanut-flavored puff.

The results at 5 years of age:

- –Among children with no sign of allergy on the skin test: Only 2 percent of peanut eaters developed a peanut allergy versus 14 percent of abstainers.
- Among children with some reaction to peanuts on the skin test: Only 11 percent of peanut eaters developed an allergy versus 35 percent of abstainers.

Hospitalizations and serious reactions were about the same in all groups.

Questions remain: How much peanut protein do infants need to consume, how often and for how long, to avoid allergy? If a child stops eating peanuts for a while, will an allergy develop? Would the same approach work for other foods such as milk, eggs and tree nuts?

“These questions must be addressed, but we believe that because the results of this trial are so compelling, and the problem of the increasing prevalence of peanut allergy so alarming, new guidelines should be forthcoming very soon,” Gruchalla and Hugh Sampson of Mount Sinai Hospital in New York write in the medical journal.

American Academy of Pediatrics guidelines used to recommend against giving children foods with peanuts before age 3, but that advice was dropped in 2008 because there was no evidence it was preventing allergies. Now, most parents introduce

peanut-based foods as is appropriate for the child's age, like other solid foods.

Gruchalla thinks that babies with some signs of a peanut allergy risk, such as parents who are allergic, should have a skin test between 4 and 8 months of age. If it's negative, they should be started on peanut products as the babies in this study were. If they show some sensitivity to peanuts, a "food challenge" monitored by a doctor experienced at this should be tried.

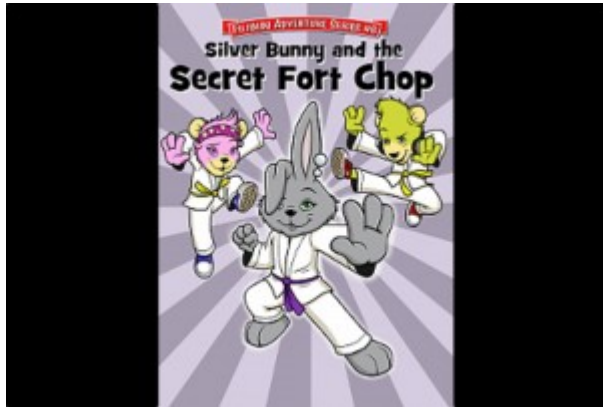
For children who already have peanut allergies, researchers have been experimenting with small regular amounts of exposure to try to train them to tolerate those foods. But these are still experimental and must be done with the help of a doctor.

'Secret Fort Chop' sure to be a hit with kids

By Kathryn Reed

The importance of practicing and asking for help are the major themes of the latest Fujimini Adventure Series. Like the previous books, it is geared to preschoolers through first-graders.

"Karate Kid" is what came to mind when reading "Silver Bunny and the Secret Fort Chop" by Eileen Wacker. "Wax on, wax off" was going through my head.



The book involves a colorful cast of animal characters who are bored with their Taekwondo class. These rabbits and hamsters have minds of their own and ideas to circumvent the adults.

But it doesn't take them long to realize they don't know as much as they think they do.

The message is clear, but not preachy.

Illustrations by Curt Spurgin are bound to keep the attention of youngsters.

Wacker blends Chinese, Korean and Japanese cultures into her books.

"Asian cultures take immense pride in their customs and traditions," Wacker said in a press release. "The characters in the books represent this in a way that strives to honor those traditions and share the wonder of Asian culture with children everywhere."

The back of the book has a glossary of terms so the learning can be carried further if so desired. Things like Taekwondo, Noni bush and Mount Fuji are defined.

While there is a message, the book is also fun and light-hearted.