



Elogio de la lentitud

Carl Honoré , Jordi Fibla (Translator)

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"¿Por qué tenemos siempre tanta prisa? ¿cómo se cura esa auténtica enfermedad que es nuestra actitud ante el tiempo? ¿Es posible, e incluso deseable, hacer las cosas con más lentitud? Vivimos en la era de la velocidad. El mundo que nos rodea se mueve con más rapidez de lo que jamás lo había hecho. Nos esforzamos por ser más eficientes, por hacer más cosas por minuto, por hora, cada día. Desde que la revolución la obra de Tácito se ha convertido en un monumento literario que mantiene su vigencia a lo largo de los siglos. industrial hizo avanzar al mundo, el culto a la velocidad nos ha empujado hasta el punto de ruptura.

Elogio de la lentitud Details

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From Reader Review Elogio de la lentitud for online ebook

Natali says

I enjoyed this book a lot, although ironically, I did get slightly impatient towards the end. Some chapters had a few too many examples of the main point. Otherwise, it is certainly a worthy read! It is about how time-obsessed our culture has become and how we choose quality for quantity in far too many activities.

One question I felt was left unanswered is this: What do we sacrifice when we slow down? It is abundantly clear what we gain. But what are the opportunity costs? Obviously the trade-off is worth it but I would have liked some discussion about what we give up when we slow down.

This book won't encourage you to be a lazy sloth. It will encourage you to find a balance. As for me, I have been trying to "Just Say No" to my iPhone and laptop a lot more since traveling in Italy earlier this year. I don't want to miss out on my life because my eyes were glued to OS X. This book validates that effort. Honore says that the Italians know the value of slow and purposeful living more than anyone else. They don't sit around all day drinking wine in the sun. They have a balance.

Honore concludes, "What the world needs, and what the Slow movement offers, is a middle path, a recipe for marrying la dolce vita with the dynamism of the information age. The secret is balance: instead of doing everything faster, do everything at the right speed. Sometimes fast. Sometimes slow. Sometimes somewhere in between."

Julia says

I learned about this book from the goodreads Green Group, and Bill McKibben gave it this blurb: "Try reading this book one chapter a day--it is worth allowing this subversive message to sink slowly in so it has a chance of changing your life."

I've learned that the Slow Movement has its own website: <http://www.slowmovement.com/>

And the author of the book, Carl Honoré, has a TED talk from 2005:
http://www.ted.com/talks/carl_honore_...

And his own website: <http://www.carlhonore.com/>

The book is an important look at the addiction to "fastness" in the developed world. Honoré discusses "slowness" in relation to food, cities, mind/body, medicine, sex, work, leisure, and children. Each chapter reiterates that slowness enriches and deepens our lives.

The opening citation is from Gandhi: "There is more to life than increasing its speed." Some other quotations that stayed with me are:

p. 33 "It's hard to think about the fact that we're going to die; it's unpleasant, so we constantly seek ways to distract ourselves from the awareness of our own mortality. Speed, with the sensory rush it gives, is one strategy for distraction." (Mark Kingwell, professor of philosophy at the University of Toronto)

I had to smile at these words from Plautus, the Roman playwright, in 200 BCE:

"The God confound the man who first found out
How to distinguish the hours--confound him, too,
Who in this place set up a sundial
To cut and hack my days so wretchedly
Into small pieces!...
I can't even sit down to eat unless the sun gives leave,
The town's so full of these confounded dials..."

I really liked his discussion of how clocks and watches make us their slaves. He makes excellent points in each of the sections, moving into areas such as alternative medicine, yoga, and meditation. He himself sees them as valuable tools for slowing us down, but does not attach a spiritual component, which I appreciated.

The most touching chapter was the one on children, titled "Raising an Unhurried Child." The segment on reading bedtime stories to his son was such a great personal example of what can happen when we stop all the hurrying.

I was glad to find this book, which I probably would not have chosen on my own.

hayatem says

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Cass says

Ironically this book was way to fast. Ideas and thoughts and examples sped across the page, the author barely touched on one facet before he sped off to the next. There was no meat to the discussion.

I was about a third of the way through the book and still felt like I was reading the introduction. You know the part where ideas are presented to be expounded on as the book progresses, except I was a third of the way through the book and it was clear that this was how the book was going to continue.

Lots of interesting ideas proven with only an anecdote or two, not enough depth. Some of the anecdotes I recognised as untruthful. I mean I believe the anecdote, but not that it fully represents the broad sample of population, or proves the point, as is implied.

In the final chapter of the book I realised the big problem with this book. It sounds like it is written for another medium. As a documentary it would work really well, the anecdotes would be interesting and I would not be expecting every statement to be backed by strong proof and logical arguments. As a speech for a bunch of slow-movement followers it would also work well, I could imagine them nodding along but not

I agree with the premise, we need to slow down. However this book does not make any contributions, it has no new ideas, and fails to properly explain the issues with being so overwhelmingly busy.

Frankly, I don't care about a single one of the people who populate the book, and I wish writers would settle for actually writing something instead of compiling useless and hopelessly inadequate anecdotal examples. I also wish I'd never picked this up.

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[illegible]

Matt says

Honore has written about an insightful perspective that makes me think about how I can use my time better, feel less stressed in life, and achieve more balance and more meaningful connections with other people and with subjects that I learn.

"The problem is that our love of speed, our obsession with doing more and more in less and less time, has gone too far; it has turned into an addiction, a kind of idolatry."

"We have forgotten how to look forward to things, and how to enjoy the moment when they arrive."

"Our impatience is so implacable that, as actress-author Carrie Fisher quipped, even "instant gratification takes too long." This partly explains the chronic frustration that bubbles just below the surface of modern life. Anyone or anything that steps in our way, that slows us down, that stops us from getting exactly what we want when we want it, becomes the enemy. So the smallest setback, the slightest delay, the merest whiff of slowness, can now provoke vein-popping fury in otherwise ordinary people."

"This is where our obsession with going fast and saving time leads. To road rage, air rage, shopping rage, relationship rage, office rage, vacation rage, gym rage. Thanks to speed, we live in the age of rage."

"Fast is busy, controlling, aggressive, hurried, analytical, stressed, superficial, impatient, active, quantity-over-quality. Slow is the opposite: calm, careful, receptive, still, intuitive, unhurried, patient, reflective, quality-over-quantity. It is about making real and meaningful connections— with people, culture, work, food, everything. The paradox is that Slow does not always mean slow. As we shall see, performing a task in a Slow manner often yields faster results."

"That is why the Slow philosophy can be summed up in a single word: balance. Be fast when it makes sense to be fast, and be slow when slowness is called for. Seek to live at what musicians call the tempo giusto—the right speed."

"Time-sickness can also be a symptom of a deeper, existential malaise. In the final stages before burnout, people often speed up to avoid confronting their unhappiness."

"The spirit, by its very nature, is Slow. No matter how hard you try, you cannot accelerate enlightenment. Every religion teaches the need to slow down in order to connect with the self, with others and with a higher force. In Psalm 46, the Bible says: 'Be still then, and know that I am God.'"

"Janice Turner, a Guardian columnist, recently noted that taking the Slow road can be bittersweet for the modern woman: 'How cruel for a generation of women educated to succeed and fill every hour with purposeful activity to discover that happiness isn't, after all, about being the fastest and busiest. What awful irony that contentment, more often than not, is about slowing down: taking pleasure in a bedtime story, not skipping pages to phone New York.'"

"In education, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the French philosopher, rang in the changes by attacking the tradition of teaching the young as though they were grown-ups. In *Emile*, his landmark treatise on schooling children in accordance with nature, he wrote: 'Childhood has its own way of seeing, thinking, and feeling, and nothing is more foolish than to try to substitute ours for theirs.'"

"In Holt's view, stuffing information into children as fast as possible is as nourishing as wolfing down a Big Mac. Much better to study at a gentle pace, taking time to explore subjects deeply, to make connections, to learn how to think rather than how to pass exams. If eating Slow excites the palate, learning Slow can broaden and invigorate the mind."

A great, real example of how slowing down makes life better:

"The cue to slow down often comes from children themselves. Take the Barnes family, who live in west London. Nicola, the mother, works part-time for a market research firm. Her husband, Alex, is the financial director for a publishing company. They are busy people with bulging diaries. Until recently, their eight-year-old son, Jack, was the same. He played organized soccer and cricket, took swimming and tennis lessons, and acted in a drama group. On weekends, the family trawled through art galleries and museums, attended musical events for children and visited nature study centres around London. "We ran our lives, including Jack's, like a military campaign," says Nicola. "Every second was accounted for."

Then, one afternoon in late spring, everything changed. Jack wanted to stay at home and play in his room instead of going to his tennis lesson. His mother insisted he go. As they sped across west London, screeching round corners and surging through yellow lights to avoid being late, Jack fell quiet in the back seat. "I looked in the mirror, and he was fast asleep—and that's when it hit me," Nicola recalls. "I suddenly thought: 'This is mad—I'm dragging him to something he doesn't really want to go to. I'm going to burn out my own child.'"

That evening, the Barnes family gathered round the kitchen table to downsize Jack's diary. They decided he should do no more than three extracurricular activities at a time. Jack chose soccer, swimming and drama. They also agreed to cut back on their scheduled weekend outings. As a result, Jack now has more time to potter around in the garden, meet friends in the nearby park and play in his room. On Saturdays, instead of collapsing exhausted into bed after supper, he now hosts sleepovers. On Sunday morning, he and a friend make pancakes and popcorn. Shifting down a gear did take some getting used to, at least for the parents. Nicola worried that Jack would be bored and restless, especially on weekends. Alex feared he would miss cricket and tennis. Jack, however, has blossomed on the lighter schedule. He is livelier, more talkative and

has stopped biting his nails. His soccer coach thinks his passing is sharper. The head of his drama group feels Jack has more get-up-and-go. "I think he's just enjoying everything about his life more," says his mother. "I just wish we'd lightened his load sooner."

Nicola feels closer to her son now that they spend more time just hanging out together. She also finds her own life is less rushed. All that shuttling from one activity to the next was stressful and time-consuming."

"The secret is balance: instead of doing everything faster, do everything at the right speed. Sometimes fast. Sometimes slow. Sometimes somewhere in between. Being Slow means never rushing, never striving to save time just for the sake of it. It means remaining calm and unflustered even when circumstances force us to speed up. One way to cultivate inner Slowness is to make time for activities that defy acceleration—meditation, knitting, gardening, yoga, painting, reading, walking, Chi Kung."

"The great benefit of slowing down is reclaiming the time and tranquility to make meaningful connections—with people, with culture, with work, with nature, with our own bodies and minds. Some call that living better. Others would describe it as spiritual."

"When it comes to slowing down, it is best to start small. Cook a meal from scratch. Take a walk with a friend rather than dashing off to buy things you don't really need at the mall. Read the newspaper without switching on the TV. Add massage to your lovemaking. Or simply take a few minutes to sit still in a quiet place."

Bob says

I stopped reading this one because if I have to hear the story of "Slow Food" one more time I may scream.

Sure, slow food is a great concept, but I hoped for more out of this book. I'm not interested in reading about 'movements' in a way that's trying to get me involved in them. I'm interested in reading about concepts that make me think harder about life.

I thought this book was going to be lots of the latter with little of the former, but it was just the opposite. So, about 1/4 of the way through, it went back to the library. Maybe the rest was genius...but I stopped because I was pretty sure it was just more of the same.

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Leah says

I enjoyed the main point of this book, which, as the title makes clear, is about the need for humans to slow down and enjoy life.

The problem I had with the book is that throughout, the whole thing feels dated. Not only in his specific examples of technology (this was published before the iphone, for example), but in his general conviction that this is a "worldwide movement," which it may be, but I've never seen it outside this particular book.

Each chapter is devoted to one facet of human existence that we could slow down: food, sex, child-raising,

etc. And in each of these, I agree that there are probably some people out there who are interested in making these things slower. But the only part of the book that I think actually constitutes a "movement" is the Slow Food movement, which has managed to penetrate into general cultural consciousness.

Anyway, I found that dated nature of the book distracting, and it really felt as though I were reading something that was a product of its time, even though that time was less than 10 years ago (!). It really felt as though it was written in the 1990s.

Leaning-Good says

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Goodness, the goodness of this book's happened to me by Slowly Reading.

[Ha],
Suka

Ian "Marvin" Graye says

Speed Reading

I read this book quickly. It dealt with the most important issues very efficiently. It was a good use of my time.

Therein lies the issue, or more precisely why I can only give it four, not five, stars.

The book originated in a series of articles Carl Honore wrote for the “National Post”.

It’s well-researched, well thought out, well structured, tells a good story, makes good use of relevant quotations, it’s never boring (though once I’d worked all of this out, I was glad when the end was in sight).

Ultimately, it is a consummate work of journalism, but it is not the work of deeper philosophical analysis I was hoping for.

This is a product of my expectations, rather than the author’s delivery.

I suspect that the book achieved everything the author, the publisher and the National Post expected of it.

The Bad News

For the last two or three centuries (since the Industrial Revolution), something has been happening without us thinking about it:

“We have developed an inner psychology of speed, of saving time and maximizing efficiency.”

“...we have lost the art of doing nothing, of shutting out the background noise and distractions, of slowing down and simply being alone with our thoughts...”

We view “speed as a sign of control and efficiency”.

Milan Kundera uses the language of narcotics to describe the “ecstasy of speed...the sense of rush it gives”.

In the words of Carrie Fisher, once an imbibor of alcohol, even “instant gratification takes too long.”

When it comes to food, we “gobble, gulp and go”.

We have joined “the cult of speed”, we’ve been worshipping “the false god of speed”. We’re suffering from acceleration and “time-sickness”.

A few decades ago, the same problem was defined as “stress”, and that probably sold a lot of books for a lot of authors and publishers.

Back then, the cure was supposed to be “Stress Management”.

It probably made a lot of money for counselors and management consultants.

Did the cure work? I don’t think so. The problem only seems to have gotten worse.

Time Wars

Honore describes the two different approaches (Fast and Slow) in the following manner:

“Fast is busy, controlling, aggressive, hurried, analytical, stressed, superficial, impatient, active, quantity-

over-quality.”

“Slow is the opposite: calm, careful, receptive, still, intuitive, unhurried, patient, reflective, quality-over-quantity.”

“Fast Thinking is rational, analytical, linear, logical...Slow Thinking is intuitive, woolly and creative.”

The Good News

The good news is that there is a Slow Movement that is trying to address the problem now.

The Movement addresses the problem of Speed in a number of aspects of society (life generally, food, cities, health, medicine, love and sex, work, leisure, child-rearing and education), the common thread being its desire to slow things down.

What it is seeking is a balance, the ability to do things at the “tempo giusto” (the right speed), the right to do things in our “Eigenzeit” (our own time):

“What we are fighting for is the right to determine our own tempos.”

The new tempos sound great. Honore describes “a little oasis of slowness,” “slow pleasure”, “quiet material pleasure”, “erotic deceleration” (yeah, baby).

These quotations might make it sound like the book is all about sex, but that’s not the case.

If anything, it’s about approaching all aspects of life with a fresh intensity, vivaciousness and sensuality.

For all our speed, we have lost our vividness, we’ve been worn out and worn down, we’ve lost our touch.

Some argue that we should “do fewer things in order to do them better”.

Honore even remarks with some hint of envy that Albert Einstein was “famous for spending ages staring into space” (ironically, discovering that the speed of light is a constant, very fast, perhaps the fastest).

Others argue that we should just do things more slowly, more sensuously.

It’s not a race (to the death).

It’s just that if it’s worth doing, it’s worth doing slowly.

Time as an Abstract

Early in the book, even though there is a discussion of clocks and time-keeping (“the clock gives us our bearings”), I started to wonder about the nature of time.

Does time exist? Is it a thing? Does it pass? Can we ever have enough of it? Can we ever run out of it?

We only have a sense of time, because we measure it against something else, the movement of the sun, the ticking of a clock, the distance travelled by a moving object.

It's these other things that move and measure time, not time itself.

Yet we seem to have created such a rod for our own backs.

What would happen if we slowed down? We wouldn't explode. We wouldn't implode.

What would happen is that we wouldn't achieve as much of this other stuff as we wanted to.

We wouldn't do as much in the allotted "time". We wouldn't make or acquire as much of the other stuff in the allotted "time".

Greed, Not Speed

I started to wonder whether time and speed aren't the problem, it's actually our expectations of these other things, the stuff we're trying to stuff into time.

Time is the bag and these other things are the measure of our greed.

Why don't we need less in our bag? Why don't we know when enough is enough?

Is the perceived problem of time actually a problem determining priorities?

Honore comes close when he cites the following comment by an academic:

"You need to take time to think about what is really important, rather than trying to figure out how to pack as much as you can into the shortest possible schedule."

For a long time, we have wanted to have everything, and now we want to do everything...ironically, for a long time.

Money restrains the first aspiration, "time" restrains the second.

But I started to feel that it's not time that is the problem, it's our aspirations, our ambition, our greed.

In a way, we waste our time on what we don't have or haven't done yet.

We don't give what we already have (or have already done) enough time or, more importantly, enough respect.

We don't respect time.

You can see it in the way we eat. We race to the end of a meal so we can continue whatever else we were doing (or continued to do while we ate).

We don't respect our meal or the passion or love that went into its creation.

We don't respect our time together and what we could achieve with this time.

To paraphrase Saul Bellow (who Honore quotes), we don't respect and value "the achievement of stillness in

the midst of chaos.”

Stop

The message of the book is to slow down or to modulate your speed or to find the right speed for you in the moment.

Nowhere does it suggest that we should actually stop, except to the extent it discusses meditation.

The Slow Movement must still be a movement of some kind. It must move. It cannot come to a grinding halt. It cannot go the whole hog and slow to a stop. It cannot slow to a stop and then “stay the whole hog”.

If there is a flaw in the Slow Movement, it is this, that it is not radical enough.

As much as the message of the Movement and the book appeals to me, ultimately it preaches moderation.

Everybody is different. There are different strokes (of the clock) for different folks.

Everything is relative. Nothing is wrong. Perhaps, then, nothing will change.

Carolyn Gerk says

There are not many among us who can say that he or she does not need to slow down. We could all use a bit more downtime, a bit less high pressure on the go time. The idea of reading this book about taking time for ourselves, about movements around the world in favour of slowing down our lives in order to get more out of our time here, seemed like a great idea.

By the times I was in the last half of the book I found myself so tired of repetitive prose and useless anecdotal evidence that I tended to skim chapters.....not very slow of me, I know. It seems that maybe Carl Honore was looking for some sort of balance between an objective study and his own personal revelations about these movements, but he missed the mark, failing to successfully deliver either. Whole chapters would go by without the author's personal exploration, so that when he did finally describe his experiences, they felt out of place. With a heavy dose of stories about everyday-normal-guys who benefited from taking pauses, In Praise of Slow is chock full of less than credible opinions. Not to mention the obvious repetitions of Carl's goal in writing this book. It began to feel like the only thing slow about the way Honore wrote this novel was the time spent pouring over a thesaurus to phrase and rephrase in order to make this content long enough to be a book and not just an article.

Heavy handed and less than groundbreaking, In Praise of Slow offered me a bit of information about various slow movements around the world and a few interesting bits about why its a good idea to take our time and smell the roses. For the most part, however, it didn't offer me much that I didn't already know. I do take away a desire to spend less time stressing and more time absorbing the good in my life, but I took away a similar feeling just from reading the back of the book.
