



TAKE BACK YOUR TIME

OCTOBER 24 WWW.TIMEDAY.ORG

NEWSLETTER -- AUGUST, 2006

Heirloom tomatoes -- a quintessential image of summer brought to us by Martin Ringhofer. A longtime supporter of Take Back Your Time, Martin continues to stay in touch, offer encouragement and share his successes with taking back his time. Martin writes:

"I have TAKEN BACK MY TIME and spend as much time in activities which keep me OUT of the STRESSPOOL that landed me in the hospital near death three plus years ago. Most of my spare time is devoted to the outdoors, enjoying my garden at Soap Lake, WA."

We hope you follow Martin's example and take back some time this summer to grow tomatoes, go to the beach, run through the sprinkler, share a picnic meal with family and friends, or however it is that you slow down, relax and rejuvenate.

CONTENTS:

- [The Incredible Shrinking Vacation](#)
- [Work To Live Says "Vacations Save Lives!"](#)
- [Myth Of The Shrinking Vacation \(In Europe\)](#)
- [Thank You For Your Support... And It's Not Too Late!](#)
- [Take Back Your Time Day 2006!](#)
- [Take Back Your Time Day Theme -- Let's Get Back To The Table!](#)
- [How You Can Celebrate Take Back Your Time Day!](#)
- [Take 4 Windows Of Time](#)
- [The Motherhood Manifesto Documentary](#)
- [New Radio Series About Time: Requests For Personal Stories...](#)
- [Blueprint For Take Back Your Time Student Movement](#)
- [National Sleep Foundation Study On Adolescent Sleep Habits](#)
- [Take Working America's Ask A Working Woman Survey](#)
- [Voluntary Simplicity Survey](#)
- [Take Charge Of Your Life](#)
- [Simple Living & The Rekindling Of Public Life](#)
- [Thank You To Arthur Waskow](#)
- [We Want To Hear From You](#)

The Incredible Shrinking Vacation

The surveys are out and things don't look good for American workers:

- One in four workers plans to work while on vacation this year. (CareerBuilder.com)
- Workers are expected to give back 574 million vacation days this year. (Expedia.com's annual vacation deprivation survey)
- The number of vacation days employees are skipping this year increased by one over last year. (Expedia.com's annual vacation deprivation survey)
- And the Conference Board reported that only 39% of American families are taking a week-long vacation this summer.

[Table Of Contents](#)

Work To Live Says "Vacations Save Lives!"

Are you on the fence? Do you need some motivation for why a vacation is good for your health, your overall well-being, and your ability to produce on the job? Are you curious about exactly how much time off (mandated by law!) the French, Belgium and even the Chinese enjoy? Check out the revised and expanded [Work to Live](#) website, the go-to site for all things vacation.

The founder of Work to Live, Joe Robinson, will have an article on vacation in this Sunday's (8/13) Los Angeles Times. Check it out!

[Table Of Contents](#)

Myth Of The Shrinking Vacation (In Europe)

With almost weekly headlines like "Europe's Long Vacation Is Ending" (Philadelphia Inquirer, 6/11/2006) one might conclude that the American model -- no vacation -- is winning the global vacation wars. In response to a similar article posted on the [Shorter Work Time](#) list, John Messenger of the International Labor Organization set the record straight.

"The picture painted by these articles is an inaccurate one. Although some European firms, particularly in some sectors in Germany and France are pushing for longer working weeks, there is certainly no movement towards a reduction in paid annual leave (paid vacation) in the EU -- where a minimum of 20 working days (4 weeks) of paid vacation is required under the European Working Time Directive. This is a key point because the main reason for the difference in average annual working hours between the US and the EU countries is not weekly hours, but rather the difference in paid annual leave, which is between 5 and 6 weeks in most of the old EU --15 (the average number of days of collectively agreed annual leave across the entire EU is 26 working days), as compared with only 2 to 3 weeks of paid vacation in the US (and US workers, like the Japanese, also don't take all of their vacation days).

In fact, when it comes to paid vacation, it is not the EU but the US that is the outlier because the US is now (after the recent enactment of the Work Choices legislation in Australia) the only industrialized country that provides no statutory minimum entitlement for paid vacation for its workers.

I hope that this helps to clarify the current situation regarding working time in the EU vs. the US."

[Table Of Contents](#)

Thank You For Your Support... And It's Not Too Late!

Thank you to those of you who responded to our recent funding appeal -- we wouldn't be here without your support.

As we look ahead to our busiest time of year -- organizing Take Back Your Time Day -- if you haven't given yet, now is the time!

You can make a one-time donation through our website:



Or sign up for an automatic, recurring monthly donation:



You can also send checks made out to CRESP/TAKE BACK YOUR TIME to:

TAKE BACK YOUR TIME
P.O Box 19862
Seattle, WA 98109-6862 USA

THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU DO! And here's what's coming up this fall.

[Table Of Contents](#)

Take Back Your Time Day 2006!

October 24th is Take Back Your Time Day and this year's theme is "Let's Get Back to the Table!"

People need to be reminded of why we want to take back our time and the focus this year is about how we are neglecting relationships -- not taking enough time for family, friends, community, and civic engagement. We're expressing that theme by reminding people about the joys of gathering around the table -- from the dining room table to the card table to the picnic table.

Consider planning a Take Back Your Time Day activity that involves people gathering around the table. A local group might have a potluck or a game night or just encourage their members to plan social events. Others might decide to take the table outside and stage a little street theater. Please let us know what you're planning and we'll post it on the web site. Below is something you could send out to people or post in the library or pass out to coworkers.

But remember, you are free to celebrate Take Back Your Time Day in any way you wish. For a list of different activities and for materials about how to organize an event, check out the [HOW YOU CAN CELEBRATE TAKE BACK YOUR TIME DAY!](#) section of the newsletter.

[Table Of Contents](#)

Take Back Your Time Day Theme -- Let's Get Back To The Table!
Nobody's at the table anymore.

The family dinner table stands empty. Time for family meals has been decimated as parents work long hours and kids scurry to activities intended to beef up their college applications. Of course, since family meals are a high predictor of school success for children, eating family dinners around the kitchen table might be a better investment of their time!

Think about it. Who has informal chats at the kitchen table? How often do we use our dining room tables for company or our coffee tables for gatherings with neighbors? "Having people over" has been reduced by nearly half in the last forty years. Instead, we're eating fast foods alone in our cars, bringing a crisis in health and obesity and loneliness.

are we concerned? Because happiness has been on the decline and depression on the rise as we race through life trying to get ahead. Happiness research shows that after you've met your basic needs more money doesn't make you happier. What's important is your relationships with other people. Strong, caring bonds are the primary ingredient for well being, and you only get these by spending time with others. (Often, around the table.)

And we've lost a lot of the fun times that involve gathering around the table. Card tables don't even come out of the closet. The old fashioned pastime of playing cards has practically disappeared. Picnic tables stand neglected. As we forsake these traditional pastimes, we have fewer people to enjoy ourselves with. Studies have shown that the number of intimate friends has continued to plummet, making us more isolated and lonely. And lonely people are less happy and healthy. Curiously, we're also more in debt -- in part because countries without community shop more! We're not enjoying ourselves much these days.

Finally, who's gathered around the discussion table hashing over the ideas and events of the day? Conversation about public matters seems like a thing of the past as membership in civic groups declines. Robert Putnam, author of *Bowling Alone*, notes that the culture in which people talk with each other is the culture in which people vote. John Dewey said that democracy begins in conversation. Text messaging is not conversation!

So what? We're all busy! Isn't this good for the economy? People are out there working hard and being productive! But they're not. They may be working long hours, but productivity begins to dip as work hours lengthen. Chronically stressed workers make more mistakes, are less motivated, and don't get along as well with coworkers. European workers (where they have 4-6 weeks vacation against our two weeks) are often more productive because they limit their work hours and take time off.

From the homespun ideal of "kitchen table wisdom" to the church ideal of "table fellowship," gathering around the table has a long tradition. Coming together with others brings us feelings of security, belonging, and self respect. We feel more cared for and we become more caring. And maybe we even have more wisdom.

So take back your time by coming back to the table -- the kitchen table, the card table, or the picnic table. Eat with your family. Have neighbors over for a pot luck. Have friends over for Scrabble. Go to your local cafe and start a conversation. Be a part of this growing movement to rekindle conversation, community, and conviviality by gathering round the table and taking time to talk!

All over the country on Take Back Your Time day -- October 24th -- people will be coming back to the table. Start planning now and write and tell us what you plan to do. Share your ideas with others and you not only inspire us, but yourself as well.

[Table Of Contents](#)

How You Can Celebrate Take Back Your Time Day!

There are many ways to celebrate Take Back Your Time Day -- from organizing an event on your campus, at your local library, in your union hall or with your faith or community group, to hosting a brown bag lunch at work, simply taking a long lunch, or gathering for an evening meal with family or friends. Consider incorporating the



LET'S GET BACK TO THE TABLE THEME. Here are a few ideas to get you thinking about what you might want to do (or not do):

1. **For a range of ideas for how you can celebrate Take Back Your Time Day**, check out the [50 PLUS PRETTY QUICK THINGS YOU CAN DO FOR TAKE BACK YOUR TIME DAY](#).
2. **Are you interested in organizing an event?** Check out the [TBYT DAY section](#) of our website. You will find suggestions and materials for organizing an event. Also take a look at the Take Back Your Time Day events in 2003, 2004 & 2005 for more ideas.

Consider inviting political candidates to your event! Present them with the [TIME TO CARE](#) six point policy agenda and ask them to speak to what they are going to do to help ease the tension between work and life.

And be sure to **contact the media** to let them know what you're planning. For suggestions about how to pitch a story, take a look at [How To Pitch \(Not Place\) A Story](#) by Eric Brown.

If you decide to host a TAKE BACK YOUR TIME DAY event, please let us know and we'll post it on the web site.

3. **Use the posters!** It's a simple way to acknowledge the day. [Download a few of our time-themed posters](#) and hang them up in your office, your dorm room, or on your refrigerator. They really help get conversation going.
4. [Participate in the TAKE 4 WINDOWS OF TIME program](#) (see below)
5. **Send us your stories!** Reporters often want to put a local face on their stories, if you are willing to share your experience of the struggles and triumphs with taking back time, please send an email to: lisa@timeday.org.

Let us know what you decide to do!

[Table Of Contents](#)

Take 4 Windows Of Time

Taking our lead from the Massachusetts Council of Churches, we will be shifting the dates of the Take 4 Windows of Time program to begin on October 24th and to run through the winter holidays, with the goal of offering an alternative way to celebrate the holidays -- giving gifts of time, resting and regaining balance. The Take 4 Windows of Time program encourages participants to select four "windows" or periods of time for slow, quiet, reflective, life-renewing activities. Anyone can take part -- as an individual, a family, or with friends -- and the program can also be sponsored by any organization, such as a school, a community group, a religious congregation, a union, a workplace, etc. Click here for more information about the [Take 4 Windows of Time](#) program.



[Table Of Contents](#)

The Motherhood Manifesto Documentary

In September, we hope you will participate in the national distribution of THE MOTHERHOOD MANIFESTO documentary by hosting a screening in your home or with your community group! [MomsRising.org](#) will be orchestrating the house party program, and we will be sending out announcements as

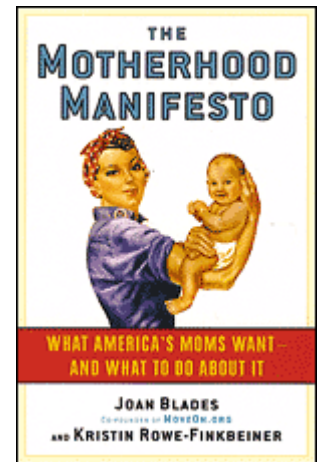
information becomes available about how to purchase a DVD copy of the film and how to organize a screening (setting a date, calling friends, family, colleagues, and suggestions for post-screening discussion topics and action steps). Please send an email to lisa@timeday.org if you want to host a screening!

In the meantime, we want to tell you a little bit about the film.

THE MOTHERHOOD MANIFESTO documentary brings to the screen many of the characters, experts and stories from the new book by the same name, written by Joan Blades, co-founder of MoveOn.org, and Kristin Rowe-Finkbeiner.

Moving personal stories combined with humorous animation, expert commentary and hilarious old film clips tell the tale of what happens to working mothers and families in America and how enlightened employers and public policy can make paid family leave, flexible working hours, part-time parity, universal healthcare, excellent childcare, after-school programs and realistic living wages a reality for American families.

Fast-paced and engaging yet carefully balanced and researched for journalistic credibility, THE MOTHERHOOD MANIFESTO turns the camera on America's hidden crisis of caring.



THE MOTHERHOOD MANIFESTO travels from Washington State to Washington DC, from Oakland to Denver to Indianapolis and Chicago, from small-town Vermont and Pennsylvania to big city New York, to introduce viewers to people like:

- Kiki Peppard, a Pennsylvania mother who has been battling discrimination against moms for the past decade.
- Selena Allen, who had to return to work four days after she gave birth prematurely.
- Sharon Dorsett, whose son's illness bankrupted her family even though the Dorsetts had health insurance.
- Jim Johnson, a conservative businessman who found that flexible hours and family-friendly policies can increase a company's profits and success.
- Joya Chaverin, who knows what California's new paid family leave law means to mothers.
- Police officer Don Arnold, who knows how after-school programs reduce crime.
- Dr. Deborah Richter, who has seen patients die because they didn't have health insurance.
- Congresswoman Lynn Woolsey, a former welfare mother who works tirelessly to help working mothers.
- Angenita Tanner, a childcare provider who takes in children from families too poor to afford childcare.
- And Bev Betters, a hilarious animated character whose advice to working moms always seems to backfire.

Narrated by actress Mary Steenburgen, THE MOTHERHOOD MANIFESTO shows dramatically just how far behind all other industrial countries the United States lags in its support for families. Prominent female leaders including Karen Kornbluh, Joan Williams Jody Heymann and NOW's Kim Gandy make the case that American can do much better. Like the book, THE MOTHERHOOD MANIFESTO is a stirring call to action for all Americans, a film that not only shows what's wrong but we can and are doing to improve the lives of American mothers.

THE MOTHERHOOD MANIFESTO was produced by Take Back Your Time national coordinator John de Graaf and NOVA producer/director Laura Pacheco and photographed by five-time Emmy winner Diana Wilmar. Joan Blades is the Executive Producer.

Help Support Take Back Your Time!

10% of the proceeds from all sales of the book [Motherhood Manifesto](#) from The Simple Living Network are donated directly to Take Back Your Time. [Click here to order your copy today!](#)

[Table Of Contents](#)

New Radio Series About Time: Requests For Personal Stories Regarding Time Poverty

Take Back Your Time Board member Debra Krumholz is developing a radio show, "It's About Time," which will air every Thursday from 6:00-6:30 p.m. EST on WMUA, 91.1, Amherst, Massachusetts. The focus of the show will be on issues related to overwork, over-scheduling, and over-consumption.

If you or someone you know has a show idea or related personal story about the challenges, frustrations, and/or successes you've had involving issues of time (personal, family, workplace, community) that you'd like to share, please contact Debra at tbytamherst@comcast.net.

[Table Of Contents](#)

Blueprint For Take Back Your Time Student Movement

We want to take a moment to thank Jackie Stallard (recently graduated from Allegheny College in Meadville, PA) for spending the past year researching and developing her senior thesis to explore best strategies for building a Take Back Your Time student movement. It's a terrific resource, extremely well-researched and produced, and we're happy to make it available to anyone who's interested, particularly other students and teachers. If you are using Take Back Your Time handbook in your classes or have studied Take Back Your Time as part of your course work, be sure to let us know, so that we can continue to build our college and university networks. Thanks, Jackie! And also thanks to Mike Maniates, Jackie's faculty advisor, for overseeing this important project!

[Table Of Contents](#)

National Sleep Foundation Study On Adolescent Sleep Habits

Take Back Your Time was proud to be a co-sponsor of the National Sleep Foundation's SLEEP AWARENESS WEEK, March 27-April 2nd.

As part of SLEEP AWARENESS WEEK, the National Sleep Foundation (NSF) released the results of a poll on the sleep of America's adolescents (ages 11-17, grades 6-12). Conducted during 2005 and randomly surveyed 1,602 households across the US, the poll found that teens are falling short in the amount of sleep they are getting vs. the amount that they need to function at their best, with only 20% getting an optimal nine hours of sleep.

The study highlights the conflict between early morning school schedules and teens' circadian rhythms, which trend toward staying awake later and sleeping in later. The study recommends "communities to help shape the schedules and expectations for children and adolescents so that we reduce the conflict between biological needs and social expectations."

The study also looks at the effects of sleep deprivation on mood. While some parents might think all teens are moody, or it is natural for teens to act irritable and irrational, in fact, lack of sleep can cause teens to act out and succumb to feelings of anxiety, depression and hopelessness.

To read more about the poll, visit the [National Sleep Foundation](#).

[Table Of Contents](#)

Take Working America's Ask A Working Woman Survey

If you are a woman who works outside of the home, we encourage you to take the [Ask a Working Woman Survey](#). Sponsored by Working America, a community affiliate of the AFL-CIO, the survey addresses issues of wages, health, etc, the survey is an opportunity to be heard as working women. Responses will be given to every U.S. representative and senator as well as state and local officials around the country on Labor Day.

[Table Of Contents](#)

Voluntary Simplicity Survey

Are you simplifying your life? Interested in Voluntary Simplicity? Researchers from the University of South Florida St. Petersburg are conducting a survey to explore what motivates you to simplify, and how your interest in simplicity has impacted your life and your relationship to the environment around you. The information collected in the survey is completely confidential and secure. You won't be asked to give your name. Results from the survey will be made available to the public. [Just follow this link to take the survey](#). You must be an adult to complete the survey.

If you have any questions about the voluntary simplicity project, please contact Dr. R. Johns at 727-553-4556 or rjohns@stpt.usf.edu.

[Table Of Contents](#)

Take Charge Of Your Life

By Stephanie Marston, MFT

The following article was written for Take Back Your Time's newsletter -- thank you to Stephanie Marston for her contribution. If you have an article you'd like to share with us, send your submission to: lisa@timeday.org.

The majority of us are exhausted from climbing the corporate ladder, dressing for success and trying to balance our work and family lives. We live as if we are careening down a freeway at warp speed. The French philosopher Rene Descartes said, "I think therefore I am." Our modern day version of this has become "I do therefore I am." So many of us live by the mantra "I have to keep up," "I am what I do," "I have to push myself," "I have to prove my worth," "I have to keep going." As long as you continue to subscribe to the philosophy that you are what you do you'll be driven to prove yourself, please other people and live up to someone else's standards. In other words, your life won't be your own.

Stop and consider for a moment what would happen if you took the next available exit on the freeway of your life, pulled onto a quiet country lane, slowed down and reflected on your life. What would happen if you asked yourself, "Are you doing too much" "Are you driven by societal and peer pressures?" "Are you living the life you want to live?" As you ponder these questions you may discover that you want to make some changes. You may find that you need to reassess your priorities based on what you've determined is most meaningful in your life. You may decide that you need more balance, more time for yourself. You may realize that you have to take greater charge of where you invest your time and energy.

One of the cornerstones of living a high quality life is to know what you value -- what's most meaningful in your life. Yet when our life is all about completing the millions of tasks on our "to do" list we often lose our

perspective. We lose our ability to discern between what's important and what's not because everything feels equally urgent -- equally critical.

No matter how frantic life gets, no matter how much frenzy seems to be present, the most successful people are able to rise above the pandemonium and maintain their perspective. They can do this because they know what's important. Their values are their compass -- they keep them on course regardless of the chaos and confusion of life. These people maintain a vision of what truly matters, what their life is about and what they want it to be.

By clarifying your values you can adjust your life so that you invest your time and energy in those things you hold sacred. Yet in order to do this you have to ask yourself what do I value? What's most important to me? These kinds of questions will not only help you to understand yourself on a deeper level, but ultimately to refocus your life around what's truly meaningful. As strange as this may seem, it's actually less important to understand the meaning of life itself than it is to understand the meaning of your life.

Think about your core values and principles. Ask yourself the question, what matters? List the qualities and attributes that you consider essential to living your best life. These are the values you use to define yourself.

As you read over your list how do you feel? What did you learn about yourself? Were you surprised by anything? Now ask yourself, how are these values reflected in your current life? Which values are you neglecting? In what ways would your life be different if you honored these values?

Evaluating your values is the foundation for leading a life you love. The next time you're faced with a decision ask yourself, "Is this decision consistent with my deepest self, with what is most meaningful in my life? Use this question as your compass to keep you true to your core beliefs.

Stephanie is an acclaimed speaker and author. Her new CD program, 30 Days to Sanity contains powerful, innovative, practical tools to reduce stress, balance work and family and make time for what truly matters. Stephanie is the author of Chicken Soup for the Soul's Life Lessons for Women: 7 Essential Ingredients for a Balanced Life, If Not Now, When? Reclaiming Ourselves at Midlife and Life Coaching for Parents: Six Weeks to Sanity. For more information and a free Sanity Saving Solution visit www.30daystosanity.com.

[Table Of Contents](#)

Simple Living & The Rekindling Of Public Life

We want to let you know about the upcoming public conference "SIMPLE LIVING AND THE REKINDLING OF PUBLIC LIFE: Sustainable Business, Local Community and the Common Good". Sponsored by Simple Living America and the *Simple Living with Wanda Urbanska* national public television series, the conference will be held at the SLEEPING LADY MOUNTAIN RETREAT in Leavenworth, Washington, November 3-5, 2006.

We want this conference to be more than just another interesting weekend. We want it to be transformational in people's lives -- an impetus for public involvement, a "school for democracy."

-- Dr. Cecile Andrews

Conference keynoters include actor Ed Begley, Jr. and television host Wanda Urbanska. Also anticipated are Washington Governor Christine Gregoire and Earth Day co-founder Denis Hayes. Other planned speakers include:

- John de Graaf, national coordinator Take Back Your Time
- Cecile Andrews, The Circle of Simplicity and Slow is Beautiful

- Frank Levering, director/co-producer Simple Living with Wanda Urbanska
- Al Runte, Public Lands, Public Heritage: The National Forest Idea
- Carol Holst, Simple Living America
- Harriet Bullitt, Sleeping Lady Mountain Retreat
- Wenda O'Reilly, Birdcage Press
- Dave Wampler, The Simple Living Network
- Paul Andrews, Green for Good
- Myra Strober, Stanford University economist
- Stan King, The Simplicity Forum
- Brett Olson and Jan Joannides, Renewing the Countryside
- John Wear, Jr., Catawba College Center for the Environment
- Sam Ruark, Sustainable Communities Consulting

The cost for the conference per person is \$75.00 for Saturday, Nov. 4 (includes lunch) or \$100.00 for Nov. 3-5 (includes lunch on Nov. 4 only; contact [Sleeping Lady Mountain Retreat](#) at 800-574-2123 to arrange your lodging, accommodations and other meals). Pay online by [clicking here](#) or send your check in U.S. funds with full contact information to Simple Living America, P.O. Box 9955, Glendale, CA 91226, U.S.A. All seats are final.

For more details and to view the schedule, please visit: www.simplelivingamerica.org

[Table Of Contents](#)

Thank You To Arthur Waskow

We want to say a special thank you to Rabbi Arthur Waskow for his service to Take Back Your Time. Arthur has served on the Take Back Your Time Board since its inception and has recently decided to step down. Thank you, Arthur!

[Table Of Contents](#)

We Want To Hear From You

We want to know what you're thinking. Send your thoughts, opinions, your stories of how time poverty impacts your life, and essay submissions to lisa@timeday.org. Thank you!

[Table Of Contents](#)