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# *How Did I Get So Busy?*

The 28-Day Plan to  
Free Your Time, Reclaim Your  
Schedule, and Reconnect  
with What Matters Most



**By Valorie Burton**

**“Burton’s book is a wakeup call, an effective and inspiring plan for change.”**

*—Publishers Weekly*

Do you find yourself thinking there aren’t enough hours in a day? You’re not alone. Most of our lives aren’t just overloaded—they’re lived in overdrive. We’re compelled to get double the amount of work done in less time and we end up constantly striving for the next thing—rarely stopping to consider if the next thing is something we even want. The bottom line: we’re just too busy. But do we have to be?

Now, over the course of twenty-eight days, author and acclaimed life strategist **Valorie Burton** shows readers how to assess their schedules and pinpoint the activities that swallow their days—often activities they don’t need or want to do. Drawing on personal experience as well as the experiences of her countless clients, Burton knows the perils of an overwhelming schedule: difficulty catching up at work, minimal time with friends and loved ones, trouble maintaining household chores, poor sleep, no time to exercise .... the list goes on and on. In her fifth book, **HOW DID I GET SO BUSY? The 28-Day Plan to Free Your Time, Reclaim Your Schedule, and Reconnect with What Matters Most** (Broadway Books Trade Paperback Original; On Sale: December 26, 2007; Price: \$12.95), Burton inspires readers to tame their schedules, create room to breathe, and make time for their true enthusiasms and priorities.

“The problem with being too busy is that you lose your sense of self. In the race to get it all done, you give up the experience of being fully engaged in anything. The commitments you love, like your work or favorite hobbies, can become burdensome because they only add to your heavy load,” explains Burton. **HOW DID I GET SO BUSY?** is about addressing the factors that have allowed us to create an overcommitted lifestyle—including modern technology like Blackberries and cell phones. Its simple plan aims to help readers produce results in the shortest amount of time and start feeling more satisfied emotionally and spiritually. By focusing on one idea or goal for each of the twenty-eight days, readers will learn how to strip away mindless busywork and rediscover what actually fulfills them. Each “day” or chapter ends with a challenge, a five-minute journal exercise, and a one-minute meditation to help readers affect real change.

Throughout **HOW DID I GET SO BUSY?** Burton also outlines her Ten Commandments of Self-Care (see attached list). Burton defines self-care as the act of maintaining, nourishing, and protecting the mind, body, and spirit for the purpose of maximizing effectiveness, happiness, and productivity. She notes, “Self-care is not selfish. It is a smart way to live—not overtaxing yourself, doing things that make you feel good about yourself, and continually replenishing your energy to do the work you are meant to be doing.” Embracing Burton’s Ten Commandments of Self-Care empowers readers to nurture and strengthen their relationships, dramatically decrease stress, effectively manage their time, and improve work performance—all of which are key to ridding themselves of busywork for good.

The good news is yes, there is enough time in the day to do what we are created to do. And with Valorie Burton’s **HOW DID I GET SO BUSY?**, you can eliminate the chaos and clutter in your world and discover the life you’ve always wanted.

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### **About the Author**

**VALORIE BURTON** is the author of *Rich Minds, Rich Rewards, Listen to Your Life, What’s Really Holding You Back?*, and the recently published *Why Not You?*. A professional certified coach (PCC), Valorie inspires entrepreneurs overseeing multi-million dollar businesses and professionals seeking a more purposeful path. She helps people live more fulfilling less stressful lives and has served clients in over 30 states and seven foreign countries. She is a regular columnist for CBN.com and has been interviewed by CNN, ABC Radio, *InStyle*, *Self*, *Essence*, *Real Simple*, *USA Today*, and the *Los Angeles Times*, among others. She resides in Annapolis, Maryland with her husband. For more information, please visit Valorie’s website at [www.valorieburton.com](http://www.valorieburton.com).

*How Did I Get So Busy?*  
*The 28-Day Plan to Free Your Time, Reclaim Your Schedule,*  
*and Reconnect with What Matters Most*

**By Valorie Burton**

**Broadway Books Trade Paperback Original; \$12.95**

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**++ KINDLY SEND A TEARSHEET OF ANY REVIEW OR MENTION ++**

## **The Ten Commandments of Self-Care**

- 1. Use all of your vacation time every year.**
- 2. Commit your time off solely to nonwork-related activities.**
- 3. Take your rest seriously.**
- 4. Have fun at least once a week.**
- 5. Eat regularly, preferably sitting down.**
- 6. Exercise regularly, preferably standing up.**
- 7. Be fruitful and productive, not busy.**
- 8. Use technology to gain time, not consume it.**
- 9. Connect heart-to-heart with the people who matter.**
- 10. Be led by the Spirit.**

## **AN INTERVIEW WITH VALORIE BURTON, AUTHOR OF HOW DID I GET SO BUSY?**

**Valorie, as a writer who had earned a master's degree at age 21, you UNDERSTAND what it's like to be on a professional treadmill. Why do you think people are so busy?**

There are a variety of reasons. Life simply moves at a faster pace than it used to, for one. Technology has given us many advantages, but the inability to use technology to gain time rather than consume it leaves many people feeling overwhelmed. Surprisingly, though, I have found that busyness is often based in fear. Many people are afraid to slow down—afraid of what others will think, afraid of what they might miss, afraid of running out of time, and afraid of the unknown. If you've been busy long enough and simply don't know any other way, the idea of change can be frightening.

**Cell phones, the Internet, i-Pods, Blackberries—these things are supposed to be SAVING time, but instead they seem to drain time. How do we tame our technology habits?**

It is important to get clear about why you use the technology you use and set clear boundaries around the technology so that it serves you rather than you serving it. Respond to technology rather than reacting to it: You don't have to answer the phone because it rings, follow a link online because it pops up, or answer email as soon as it shows up in your inbox. Open and respond to email at specific times. Consider "no technology" periods so you can have some down time. And if work emails and text messages are intruding on your personal time, remember that you teach others what your boundaries are. Don't make yourself so available that your time is being abused.

**You surveyed 300 adults and over half of them hadn't had a friend over for a social visit in two months. Why do you think people aren't socializing with friends as much as they used to?**

This was a surprising finding—many people simply don't have friends over to their home on a regular basis. In larger cities, people are often spread across a wide metro area and don't stop by to see friends. For many people, their schedules are simply too packed. Having friends over gets squeezed out. It is one of the signs that busyness is an epidemic.

**For readers who fall into that category, what advice do you have to help them reconnect?**

First of all, know that there is a better way. You *can* reclaim your schedule. You *can* make time for yourself and those who matter most to you. But you must be intentional about it. That means making sure your priorities are reflecting in your schedule. Is family first for you? Then make sure you all connect every day—whether over breakfast or dinner, through conversation and time spent together. The same holds true for reconnecting with yourself. Resting, self-reflection, vacation, hobbies, fun—these are all important aspects of living intentionally and fully. When these things get crowded out, it's a sign that you're too busy.

**What's going on behind the busyness psychologically?**

Again, for many people it is fear. Busyness is often based in fear is a subject I discuss on Day 4 of the book. It's often the "what if?" questions that cause people to get stuck. "What if I say 'no' to certain activities and let others down?", "What if I slow down and it backfires?" "What if I stop taking on so much and discover people don't need me as much as I thought they did?" Often, people equate being busy with being significant. They are not one in the same. It is essential to make a distinction between the two. One is about doing a lot. The other is about making an impact.

### **What are some practical ways to slow down?**

Create deliberate daily rituals such as time to meditate, taking a bubble bath instead of a shower, or sitting down for conversation and a meal rather than eating on the go. Schedule a vacation. Stop taking work home. Take your rest seriously. Slow down when you drive, walk, talk and eat—people who are perpetually busy tend to all of these things in a hurry.

Practicing my “Ten Commandments of Self-Care” is a way to keep yourself reminded of the need to slow down.

### **What are the benefits of slowing down—health wise, spiritually, emotionally?**

Emotionally, you feel more calm and in control. If you have an adrenaline addiction, you wean yourself from the need to be under pressure in order to get things done. You decrease your stress level, which has numerous benefits for your health including disease prevention and longevity. Spiritually, you are able to connect with yourself and inwardly to get direction and clarity in your life.

### **You are passionate about helping people connect with what matters most to them. Can you share a story about someone who made a life change as a result of looking at busyness differently?**

One of my coaching clients recently turned in her letter of resignation to pursue her entrepreneurial dream, one that she has nurtured on the side for nearly ten years. With a family and a six-figure executive level position, she has achieved a great deal of success. But at this stage of her life, her definition of success has changed. What she wants is more time with her children, more control over her schedule and *less work* (as her position is being filled, the organization is actually posting three job vacancies to replace her!)

Her change is a bold one. But as she begins her new career, she is shaping it to intentionally reflect what matters most—scheduling a minimum of six weeks of vacation, starting the work day at 10 am so that she take her children to school and work out before diving into work, and refusing to say ‘yes’ to every opportunity that comes her way.

All of us have the capacity to change our lives and our schedules. Whether it is a major change, such as quitting a job or moving to another city, or a small change such as incorporating more fun into your schedule, change is possible. The key is to be intentional by making a decision that busyness does not have to be a way of life for you.

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## **28-Days to A New You**

- Day 1**            **There Is a Better Way**
- Day 2**            **Assess Your Situation**
- Day 3**            **Hurrying Up Is Slowing Your Down**
- Day 4**            **Busyness is Often Based in Fear**
- Day 5**            **Make a Heart-to-Heart Connection Daily**
- Day 6**            **Work to Live, Don't Live to Work**
- Day 7**            **Have Fun at Least Once a Week**
- Day 8**            **Take Stock of Your Self-Care Habits**
- Day 9**            **Develop a Self-Care Plan**
- Day 10**           **Tame Your Tech Habits**
- Day 11**           **Eat Good Food, Preferable Sitting Down**
- Day 12**           **Get Good Exercise, Preferably Standing Up**
- Day 13**           **Be Led by the Spirit**
- Day 14**           **Address Your Adrenaline Addiction**
- Day 15**           **Create Deliberate Daily Rituals**
- Day 16**           **Tame Your To-Do List**
- Day 17**           **Set Your Personal Priority Criteria**
- Day 18**           **Take Time to Gain Perspective**
- Day 19**           **Celebrate Your Milestones!**
- Day 20**           **Stop So You Can Catch Up**
- Day 21**           **Finally Break Your Procrastination Habit**
- Day 22**           **Learn to Manage Your Household—Automate and Delegate!**
- Day 23**           **Respect the Pace of Others**
- Day 24**           **Being Busy = Being Significant**
- Day 25**           **Allow Space for What You Want**
- Day 26**           **Stop Striving, Start Trusting**
- Day 27**           **Don't Fight Every Battle**
- Day 28**           **Don't Miss the Journey**

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