

HUSTLE
&
FLOAT

Reclaim Your Creativity
and Thrive in a World Obsessed with Work

RAHAF HARFOUSH

DIVERSION
BOOKS

Diversion Books
A Division of Diversion Publishing Corp.
443 Park Avenue South, Suite 1004
New York, New York 10016
www.DiversionBooks.com

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For more information, email info@diversionbooks.com

Book design by Elyse J. Strongin, Neuwirth & Associates.

First Diversion Books edition February 2019.

Paperback ISBN: 978-1-63576-578-6
eBook ISBN: 978-1-63576-577-9

Printed in the U.S.A.
SDB/1902

1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

*To my husband Jesse.
My heart. My anchor. My Home.*



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INTRODUCTION

MAKE IT HURT SO GOOD

Craigslist has developed a well-deserved reputation for being a marketplace where no request is too bizarre. Looking for someone with Jedi powers to help induce your labor? A person with a fantastic beard who can mentor you while you grow your own? What about a personal waiter who will serve you for two hours at your local McDonald's? In 2012, Maneesh Sethi added his own quirky request: he was looking to hire someone who would literally slap him in the face whenever he was being unproductive.¹

You see, Sethi had been using a program to measure his productivity while working and wanted to see if he could improve his performance. Naturally, he turned to Craigslist and hired a young woman who, for \$8 an hour, would sit next to him and slap him if he dared to check social media or lost focus by browsing the web.

The hack worked: Sethi claims to have quadrupled his productivity during his sadomasochistic, if not amusing, work experiment. Sethi, the editor of Hackingthesystem.com, a website

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designed to help readers find “unconventional solutions to live better, travel further, earn more money and be more productive,” is also working on a new wearable device product that lets your Facebook friends zap you if you’re not following through on your goals, a technological version of having an accountability buddy.

While Sethi’s slapping solution was a little unique, his determination to increase his creative output (writing blog posts, drafting proposals, etc.) has become a standard part of being a professional creative in today’s hyperconnected knowledge economy, and people everywhere are coming up with new (and bizarre) ways to accomplish this goal.

I was surprised to learn that face slapping wouldn’t be the strangest proposed solution. In 2013, Rob Rinehart raised more than \$3 million dollars in crowdfunding for his product, Soylent. Rinehart invented the “universally applicable” nutritionally complete, beige, smoothie-like meal replacement after he noticed that making healthy meals was a task that was taking up too much time. In Silicon Valley, the popularity of protein-packed liquid meals like Soylent (and other oddly named competitors like Schmilk, Schmoylent, and People Chow) is rising, promising to remove the pesky decisions around what to eat and get busy people back to work quicker than they can chew.² In 2017, Soylent further expanded into the retail market, becoming available in 2,500 7-Eleven stores across the country, followed by a 2018 expansion into 450 Walmart stores. Meal replacement extreme goes mainstream.

Following the same train of thought, at a recent SXSW panel on “Life Automation for Entrepreneurs,” Dave Asprey, CEO of Bulletproof, a company that helps people “enter a system of high performance every day,” recommended blending the contents of your dinner to be able to “drink it while you’re doing something else.”³

Lately, it seems like every corner of the Internet is seething with tips, tricks, and hacks to help us *do more*. Want the creativity-inducing, stress-relieving benefits of meditation but don't have time to meditate? Pop-guru Deepak Chopra has a one-minute meditation that can help—it has been downloaded ten million times. Need to inspire your work ethic but don't have the right inner motivation? Lifehack.org suggests faking adversity so you have an inner incentive to “prove them wrong.”⁴ Schools of thought, such as David Allen's Getting Things Done, Inbox Zero, and even the Covey Quadrant have developed cult-like followings all in the name of fitting more tasks into every hour of our day.

And herein lies one of the more interesting facets of our cultural psyche: the desire for more is one of the underpinnings of our intense focus on productivity. We want to be better, faster, stronger, richer. However, by constantly striving to do more, we are highlighting that on some level we believe that what we are doing is not enough, an attitude that is reflected back at us in the host of new services and tools aimed at helping us squeeze in as much as we can into each second.

This scarcity-focused mindset has implications on our self-worth, our mental health, and our happiness. After all, on the surface, productivity is billed as a way to free up more time. We operate under the assumption that by streamlining our tasks and obligations we will be rewarded more time we can use for other, more meaningful pursuits. Instead, many of us are filling up this free time with more work.

Overwork has become a hallmark of leadership behavior. In the tech industry, Marissa Mayer admitted to 130-hour workweeks at Google and sleeping under her desk.⁵ Twitter and Square co-founder Jack Dorsey claims to work sixteen-hour days⁶ while sleeping only four hours a night. Elon Musk is rumored to have worked one hundred-hour workweeks for the

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past fifteen years! And in this way, the values trickle downwards, galvanized by recent stories like Goldman Sachs implementing a new rule that interns must leave the office between midnight and 7:00 a.m., which they implemented after a young analyst committed suicide from the top-down pressure of overworking. From art to politics, it's a theme that repeats itself across industries: the continuous obsession with output that is attained at all costs, where sacrifices like lack of sleep and personal time are worn like a badge of honor.

This is particularly disturbing for knowledge-work professionals who must shoehorn their creativity into these mechanical, often rigid methodologies that add a constant pressure to produce, produce, produce. Write faster. Draw more. Ideate constantly. But where did this imperative to do more come from? What has shaped our collective obsession with productivity?

SHE GRINDS FROM MONDAY TO FRIDAY, WORKS FROM FRIDAY TO SUNDAY⁷

The idea for *Hustle & Float* was born in the midst of an epic meltdown.

It was April 2014, and I had just returned home to Paris after launching my book, *The Decoded Company*. I was feeling restless and anxious. I didn't know what to do with the sudden increase of free time, and for some reason I felt guilty looking at the empty slots in my calendar. With each passing day, I felt a mounting pressure to find the next deliverable, book, project, client—to do something useful. Something productive.

As I surfed the web in search of inspiration, I stumbled upon a post on Tumblr that had been shared hundreds of thousands of times. It was an image of a white ceramic mug with the caption, "You have the same number of hours in a day as Beyoncé." The post helpfully mentioned that this quote was also available

printed on a variety of merchandise ranging from hoodies and mugs to pillows and tote bags.

There, dressed in sweatpants and surfing Tumblr on a Tuesday afternoon, the discrepancies between myself and Beyoncé, in both achievement and performance, were perfectly clear. I snapped. I FaceTimed my younger sister Riwa immediately. “Beyoncé has already done so much,” I told her. “I’ve wasted so much time being unproductive. My life is a failure.”

Now, Riwa is a practical sort of person and a firm believer that if you couldn’t beat them, you should join them. “Beyoncé is amazing,” she agreed. “Let’s learn everything we can about her to see how she does it.”

And so, two sisters became Beyoncéologists, searching the web endlessly for all articles, interviews, and videos about the woman who was voted by *Time* magazine as one of the most influential people of 2014, is considered to be the world’s greatest living entertainer, and who, at thirty-five, had already transcended fame to become a bona fide cultural icon. (And who could forget her endless other accomplishments, including several Super Bowl halftime shows, singing at both the 2008 and 2012 Presidential Inaugurations, being the first woman to reach Number 1 on the Billboard 200 with five albums, and having sold over 178 million records? Don’t even ask me about Beychella, Lemonade, OTRII, or that legendary music video filmed at the Louvre.)

At first, our plan backfired. Being faced with such a high level of achievement was demoralizing, but we pressed on, determined to leave no link unclicked. The majority of Beyoncé’s media coverage focused on two distinct themes: her obvious creative genius, and her unrelenting work ethic. “Let’s hear it for Beyoncé, the hardest-working woman in showbusiness,” declared one *Guardian* headline.⁸ Beyoncé’s sister, Solange Knowles, commented about her sister’s nonstop pace in an *ASOS* magazine cover story saying, “I have never seen anything like it my life, from anyone. It’s absolutely insane.”

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She added that motherhood hadn't slowed Beyoncé down in the least. "Now that she's become a mother, and the way that she's able to balance that, is so inspiring. If I am ever feeling like I want to open my mouth and complain about how hard I am working, I think, 'Uhh! Sit down!'"⁹ We even discovered that Beyoncé's "legendary work ethic" had become the subject of a Harvard Business School case study, the ultimate example of the Productive Creative: a woman who had managed to successfully combine her creative pursuits into a lucrative, sprawling business empire.

Hours later (Days? Weeks? Time lost all meaning as we delved deeper into our search.), we stumbled on a newspaper article so brief we almost missed it. A short quote referenced the year-long hiatus the singer took between tours in 2011. "Things were starting to get fuzzy," Beyoncé was quoted as saying. "I couldn't even tell which day or which city I was at. I would sit there at ceremonies and they would give me an award and I was just thinking about the next performance. My mother was very persistent, and she kept saying that I had to take care of my mental health."

We were stunned. Even Beyoncé, with her reputation of never-ending hard work (the singer reportedly reviews video footage after every performance and circulates notes to her team about what needs to be improved or fixed), was not immune to the perils of hyperproductivity and had battled with burnout. The woman who was the Internet's gold standard of productive time management still felt like *she* wasn't doing enough. And if Beyoncé, the platonic ideal of creative success, feels the pressure of constant creative productivity, how are the rest of us mere mortals supposed to survive? As Productive Creatives we can certainly relate to feeling the pressure that you're only as good as your last good idea.

If Beyoncé could also fall victim to this work culture epidemic, then clearly this was something worth investigating. After all, based on our society's standards, the singer represented the

pinnacle of creative and financial success: recognized by her industry as the most Grammy-nominated artist of all time, Beyoncé has released several critically acclaimed albums and launched a multimillion dollar business that spans clothes, fragrances, and sponsorship deals. What more could she want?

HOW DO YOU WRITE LIKE YOU'RE RUNNING OUT OF TIME?¹⁰

We didn't have to look far for other signs of the effects of hyperproductivity.

The symptoms of this dysfunction are all around us. According to a Glassdoor 2014 Employment Confidence survey, the average US employee only takes half of their allocated paid vacation leave.¹¹ More depressingly, when they do manage to take some time off, 61 percent of respondents admitted to feeling pressured to do some work anyway. In 2004, a study published by the Families and Work Institute estimated that one third of all American workers could be categorized as chronically overworked—a condition that has been linked to an increased risk of clinical depression and a drop in performance.¹² In fact, sleep deprivation has been labelled a public epidemic by the Center for Disease Control. If that seems overly dramatic, consider that in 2016 sleep deprivation cost American companies a staggering \$411 billion in lost productivity.¹³

Riwa and I are both guilty of getting caught up in the pressure to do and accomplish more and have personally experienced this craziness first hand. We have tried everything from waking up extra early (as recommended by Hal Elrod in his book, *The Miracle Morning*) to dividing up our week into certain types of days (Dan Sullivan's Strategic Coach Entrepreneurial Time System¹⁴). We have downloaded software like OmniFocus (which embraces David Allen's methodology of getting things

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done) and have looked to endless resources to help us resolve this particular pain point.¹⁵

The scramble to keep up with the expectation of a never-ending stream of creative output has resulted in a culture that is obsessed with hustling. Currently, Google lists 188,000,000 results when you type “productivity” into their search box. Amazon’s productivity category boasts nearly 79,000 books designed to help us work better and faster so that we can “worry less” and “achieve more.” Funnily enough, the first sub-category in the Kindle store is “stress management”—Amazon knows what’s up. Apple’s App Store has a dedicated productivity category with over 3,500 apps. In the rush to boost performance, we have become overworked, overscheduled, and overwhelmed. And is “productivity” a worthwhile goal in itself? Have we become so focused on working hard that we’ve lost sight of why we’re doing all of this in the first place?

And thus, the conundrum: As creative professionals, we have come to believe that we can be simultaneously highly productive and highly creative in equal measures. We come to work armed with to-do lists, life hacks, and Inbox-Zero mentalities. We are trained to respond at a moment’s notice, manage competing priorities, and rapidly jump from task to task.

We focus on attaining maximum efficiency while trying to generate creative solutions with the same rigor as completing our tasks. And when it doesn’t work as planned, we force ourselves to push through, to work longer and harder to chase down the ideas that seem to elude us. We have evolved into an unsustainable hybrid state, trying to be both productive and creative, when that might not be effective—or possible.

In relationships, we define the experiences we’ve had with our exes as baggage—events that mold our behaviors in our present relationships. If your ex-partner cheated on you, then it’s normal for you to carry that lack of trust into your next relationship. It’s clear to us that we are in the same situation

culturally with productivity. We wanted to understand why, to figure out and trace back the history that has created a nation of people who are overworked and overstressed. Instead of better managing our time, our energy, or our food, I wanted to dig deeper and examine our beliefs and attitudes—our operating system (OS) if you will, that runs in the background, influencing every decision we make.

Productivity alone isn't the issue. Things really get interesting when you add creativity into the mix. As we've shifted from a manufacturing-based economy to a knowledge work economy, we've brought with us a ton of our own baggage—behaviors that were supposed to help us but that instead hinder our creativity. For us, it is this tension between creativity and productivity that inspired us to explore the world of *Hustle & Float*.

To understand the tensions that exist within our contemporary work culture, we must understand how (and why) productivity and creativity changed from being completely unrelated to inexorably intertwined. The answer is that both of these concepts have undergone a fundamental shift in terms of scale.

Productivity started as a management practice developed by governments and militaries to manage large groups of people performing standardized tasks. It was adapted by businesses during the Industrial Revolution to improve the quality and output of manufactured goods as a way to ensure a consistency in speed, quality, and overall production. Today, productivity has shrunk. It has moved away from its group-oriented roots to become a deeply personal practice. As individuals, we are now responsible for our own productivity. From Inbox Zero to GTD systems, we are accountable for our own output in both our personal and professional lives. Productivity, which started out as a collective metric, has now become an individual obsession and is a recognized marker of success.

Creativity is moving in the opposite direction. During the Enlightenment, the Romantics defined creativity as a state of being,

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an inalienable part of human nature, while the social psychologists in the 1950s measured it as a cognitive strength. In both cases, the focus was on the smallest unit possible: the individual. The knowledge economy has forced creativity to expand, to become big enough to encompass organizations that now value this trait in their employees and are determined to measure it.

THE PLIGHT OF THE PRODUCTIVE CREATIVE

Hustle & Float started as a hobby project driven by my curiosity to investigate our “productivity” origins, to track and understand the events that have shaped our understanding of modern-day work, and to establish a context around how our attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors are impacting our ability as creatives to produce the type of work many of us feel called to do.

I started my research by speaking to people Riwa and I defined as Productive Creatives: anyone whose work involves unstandardized tasks and high cognitive ability: marketers, strategists, communication & PR professionals, managers, lawyers, accountants—the list is endless. If you’re thinking this seems like a pretty broad umbrella, you’d be right—the majority of people today who are engaged in some type of knowledge work are facing high levels of pressure to produce. What we heard was consistent across the board: It was imperative to focus on honing one’s performance in order to increase production.

For too long, creativity and productivity have been considered equally essential but unconnected. Thousands of books have been written about each of these concepts as separate entities. In fact, nearly every business book tackles achievement and performance through one of these two lenses. In reading the multitude of suggestions, solutions, and frameworks about work proposed by gurus, experts, and celebrities, three things became abundantly clear.

First, the rising popularity of content that focuses on issues such as mindful leadership, habits, creativity, productivity, and cultivating focus, signals a need that there is large population of people who are seeking to improve their working life status quo. Second, despite the varied approaches, the promise to the reader remains consistent across these genres: Follow the advice herein and achieve the holy grail of contemporary culture—that elusive work-life balance. Third, when you set aside branding and buzzwords, the majority of the advice is grounded in what can only be described as common sense:

- In her book *Thrive*, Arianna Huffington advocates the need for sleeping and eating regularly.
- In *Deep Work*, Cal Newport encourages readers to carve out periods of uninterrupted work time to improve creativity.
- Brigid Schulte, author of *Overwhelmed: Work, Love, and Play When No One Has the Time*, rails against our overscheduled culture and suggests to simply start “doing less.”
- In *Essentialism: The Disciplined Pursuit of Less*, Greg McKeown urges us to narrow down our priorities to the two or three things that truly matter.
- According to Charles Duhigg, author of *The Habit Factor*, the solution lies in creating new behaviors that become routine.
- Tony Schwartz believes we should treat our energy as a resource that becomes depleted and needs constant replenishing.

Clearly, we are not alone in searching for some relief.

These books all provide sound, logical advice, and with so many resources available through a variety of channels including apps, podcasts, videos, books, and more, the real question

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isn't "What should I do to work better," but "Why *AREN'T* I doing it?"

In talking to over one hundred professionals including entrepreneurs, executives, artists, authors, and small business owners, we heard the same refrain: they know what they should be doing to work better. They know the virtues of taking breaks and meditating but couldn't seem to apply the advice to their daily lives. They were constantly busy. We wanted to know why. After all, these were smart, successful, motivated people. There clearly was a disconnect between what they should be doing and what they were actually doing.

Once again, Beyoncé came to the rescue, talking about how challenging she finds it to stop and take a rest. "It will be the hardest thing in the world for me to make myself not do an album and shoot a video and turn it in and say 'I'm ready [to relax]!'" the singer said. "I already have all these melodies and ideas in my head. I have to tell myself, 'Sit down! Sit Down!'"

That's when we figured it out: The importance of creativity in the modern workforce has resulted in a culture that idolizes creativity but worships productivity. Our modern-day heroes include entrepreneurs, CEOs, and celebrities who have turned their talents into financial success, usually through highly mythologized accounts of hard work. These stories share common themes including putting in long days, a lack of sleep, and a pride in outperforming competitors through sheer endurance and strength.

It is our reinforcement of the American Dream, a deeply powerful belief embedded in our cultural psyche that promises equal opportunities and prosperity to anyone willing to work hard. Our belief in the dream continues to be strengthened as we culturally internalize productivity metrics as a tangible way to quantify our effort, a way to actively measure our deservingness of a better life.

We treat our work as an extreme sport, where our struggles and sacrifices in the name of our job are glorified. No wonder we feel guilty when we turn off our phones. All of the above-mentioned tactical solutions and frameworks only ever addressed the surface symptoms of something much deeper: an entrenched yet subconscious worldview that fuses our self-identity to our profession, within a culture that values nonstop momentum as a validator of skill and strength.

In other words, we have a society where individuals are under extreme pressure to apply the tenets of productivity (inherited from the Industrial Revolution) in jobs which demand creativity. As we force creativity and productivity together, we can see the incompatibilities that so many of us experience on a daily basis at work.

For one thing, productivity is based on a model of continuous output, a need to account for every minute of the day, to prove that we are indeed contributing. Creativity, on the other hand, is a messy and disjointed process that often requires large chunks of unstructured time. One cannot corral our creativity through sheer willpower and endurance, but that hasn't stopped us from trying. We continue to favor models of work that reward sustained performance and falsely believe that doubling (or tripling) our efforts will result in a proportional increase in creative output.

Ironically, our frantic actions are sucking our creative juices dry. As we strive to eke out the most of every single second, the processes that we have implemented to make us more productive are actually depleting our creative resources. Our belief systems are leading us away from what we actually need: creativity in balance with productivity. It is only by recognizing and openly addressing our subconscious prejudices about work that we can shift toward a more balanced state of working and being.

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Or, to use Beyoncé's words: we really just need to force ourselves to sit down.

A POST-WORK SOCIETY

As if competing against each other isn't hard enough, we're now also competing against machines, and it's a contest we're going to lose. Automation, artificial intelligence, and algorithms are all developing at an exponential rate and unbalancing decades of models and best practices.

When thinking about the future of work, especially within today's disruptive technological context, it's easy for us Productive Creatives to breathe a sigh of relief. After all, many of the labor upheavals that are looming on the horizon at first glance appear to be focused on industries that require a certain level of menial work: manufacturing, automotive (taxi drivers, delivery trucks), or other tasks that fall firmly within the realm of blue-collar work. This sense of security is false—a deeper look reveals that while creative automation is not as advanced as its manufacturing counterpart, it is being developed and deployed in decidedly creative jobs: from lawyers and doctors, to writers and artists, the technological revolution will spare no one, and it's time we started truly preparing for it.

Consider that an AI is already being used as a creative director for an ad agency and that Google's AI started creating original works of art mere hours after it was programmed. In Japan, a novel written by an AI was a finalist in a prestigious literary competition (more on them later). Companies like Goldman Sachs are using algorithm software that can do the work of ten analysts in seconds, while sophisticated chatbots are being used to help citizens navigate the legal system. This disruption will impact all of us: both Productive Creatives and non-creatives alike.

What happens when our society realizes that this isn't a problem that can be solved by working smarter or harder? What happens when the foundation of using work as a societal symbol of individual value and status symbol begins to crumble?

It is clear to us that in the peak of our contemporary obsession with work, we are nowhere near ready to face this upcoming change. We'll never be ready to embrace the dramatic work upheaval coming our way if we can't break free of our past. We need to start asking these difficult questions now.

A COMPLEX ISSUE

There is no single culprit to point to.

The culture of work spans nearly every field you can think of and then some. We saw relevant conversations happening across an array of diverse fields, and we believe *Hustle & Float* is unique in not shying away from this complexity, instead embracing the interconnectedness of who we are and what we do. We've focused on a cross-disciplinary approach that includes research insights from neuroscientists, historians, media critics, sociologists, artists, managers, CEOs, dancers, artists, philosophers, celebrities, entrepreneurs, and more.

What started out as our trying to answer some questions about our own behavior has evolved into an exploration of the increasing tensions between productivity and creativity as contextualized by our social, historical, and biological constructs. We've strived to unpack how our ideas of contemporary work have evolved, and pinpoint the moments, people, and ideologies that have shaped our current outlook of work to paint a holistic and deeply human view of the challenges we face in being Productive Creatives.

From the origins of the American Dream and the worship of Silicon Valley Bros Culture, to entrenched legacy systems and

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outdated performance metrics, we'll never shift toward a more balanced state of working and being if we don't acknowledge the imprints these cultural legacies left behind on our contemporary work culture. We'll delve into the hidden forces that are influencing our work behaviors by exposing how our history has created a set of cultural narratives, archetypes, myths, and symbols that subtly reinforce specific attitudes about the values of work in our modern society.

This book is broken down into four sections. The first three sections each focus on one hidden force that we believe underpins our modern behaviors and beliefs: our systems, our stories, and ourselves. These three forces combined create the foundation for our work belief systems, a powerful mix of history, learned behavior, and genetics that influence our behavior in ways we're not aware of. *Hustle & Float* is the first book to approach this subject from a holistic perspective that looks at how these forces interact within a broader cultural and psychological ecosystem. The fourth section takes all of these forces and extrapolates them into the future, exploring how technology disruptions will play a part in shaping our worldview around work.

Let's dive into each section:



1. Our History [Systems]

Contemporary work culture is the product of hundreds of years of thinking about the role of creativity, productivity, and the value of work. Understanding its origins is key to revealing our biases and the basic assumptions we take for granted that are entrenched in the business systems governing our lives today.

In this section, we'll take a look at how the concepts of creativity and productivity evolved throughout our history to encapsulate our modern-day views. You'll read about Venetian merchants, who in the thirteenth century were the first to measure Return on Investment (ROI) of their sailing fleet. We'll look at how military and government institutions were the first to effectively deploy productivity metrics. You'll also see how creativity was once seen as a divine gift of the gods and how over the years it has transformed into a carefully honed and highly valued skill set for most of today's Productive Creatives.



2. Our Media Culture [Stories]

The second section will focus on the cultural aspect of work, or how we as a society use media, journalism, and the arts to transmit and validate specific ideas about success. We'll take a look at the American Dream, one of the most powerful and enduring ideas in our history, and reveal how it still resonates deeply with people from around the world on a visceral level. Its inception, evolution, and representations in pop culture is a fascinating exploration of how we have translated our understanding of the centrality of work into representation of morality, success, and achievement wrapped in our hopefulness and optimism of a brighter future.

We'll dive into our cultural obsession with entrepreneurship and examine the influence that major cultural figures like Steve Jobs, Bill Gates, Mark Zuckerberg, and Elon Musk have had on how we think about our work and our self-worth. We would be remiss not to mention the social media revolution and the unimaginable amount of terabytes created by regular people sharing pieces of their lives online. We'll track how the rise of certain hashtags (#soblessed, #hustle) have created a

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subset of digital culture that dictates how we talk about our work and share our successes (or not) within our society today. We'll trace how the merging of self-help, work culture, and New Age spirituality have created a new era where financial success must also be matched by a spiritual fulfillment in the shape of a calling or greater purpose.



3. Our Identity and Biology [Self]

In the third section we turn our focus inward. We ourselves are a type of biological machine, programmed with inputs and impulses that are not altogether within our control. We'll look at some of the latest studies from fields like neuroscience to show how modern-day work culture has hijacked our primal instincts—once used by our ancestors to survive, we now use those same instincts to navigate our complex work hierarchies. We'll look at how the forces of nature and nurture play a part in our productivity and creativity. In this section, you'll read about how our egos and desire for hierarchical recognition are often triggers for a host of complicated hormones and neurochemicals that can impact our behavior at work, as well as arguments for and against the case of creativity being a genetically passed trait.



4. Scenarios

In this section we'll take a look at some of the changes that are looming on the horizon. We'll spend some time discussing the economic costs of overwork in countries around the world, including how countries like Germany and France are passing new laws to protect knowledge works from the physical and mental

burdens of hustling too much without any float. We'll assess how beliefs are made and what we can do to begin recognizing and changing our own worldviews. You'll read about both the promise and perils of the technology-driven Gig Economy and see how Uber's premise of providing workers with autonomy and financial freedom comes with a dark side. And we'll end with a few case studies of countries that are exploring alternatives to modern-day work, including options like basic universal income, robotic taxation, and more.

Online Section: The Frameworks

We've added an online section that you can find at www.hustleandfloat.com. We researched so many different aspects of productivity and creativity over the past three years, and we couldn't include everything we wanted to. That's why we consolidated some of the work that we thought would be most helpful for you to enjoy as an added benefit. This includes book lists, summaries, frameworks, and more. We'll be regularly updating this with new resources we find, so be sure to check it out!

A TIME FOR REST

In white water rafting, riders battle waves, heavy rapids, and unpredictable drops. They have to hustle hard to avoid obstacles, respond quickly to changing river conditions, and paddle with all of their strength to safely reach their destination. These heart-pounding bursts of strenuous activity are punctuated by periods of rest, when the water becomes calm enough that riders can float and enjoy the scenery. As any experienced river guide will tell you, the ideal trip is comprised of both hustle and floating—a balance between focused exertion and intentional recovery. Too much hustle leads to exhaustion that can

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jeopardize the split-second decision-making that's needed to avoid injury. Too much float will result in a boring and aimless ride, devoid of challenge or purpose.

As it turns out, there are many similarities between the way we white water raft and the way we live our lives. The rise of the creative economy has engendered a work ethic among creatives that focuses exclusively on the hustle.

I wish I could tell you that the “Beyoncé Incident” was enough of a wake-up call to have us changing our habits. It wasn't. Over the course of the three years it took to research this book, we both suffered with the ramifications of overwork.

I suffered an episode of burnout so severe I was incapable of producing anything for several months, delaying this project and adding to my productivity shame. It felt as though my brain simply stopped working. Whenever I tried to reach for an idea or attempted to complete a cognitive task, it was as if I was reaching into blank space. It was one of the most petrifying experiences of my life. To make matters worse, I suffered physical symptoms including fatigue, insomnia, and hair loss. The hair loss was a particular rock-bottom for me, as I discovered it at the hair salon, where my stylist's gasp caught my attention. I looked up to see a fistful of my hair in his hands. I hid in the washroom and bawled my eyes out, certain I had ruined both my health and my mental well-being permanently. Through it all, I berated myself for not being able to get it together, for not writing enough, missing word count deadlines, not waking up at 5:00 a.m. to journal and drink kale smoothies.

The irony of undergoing these types of struggles while writing a book about the natural rhythms of creativity did not go unnoticed by me. The frustration of knowing better and yet not doing better was a sharp reminder of the gap that often exists between our beliefs and rational mind. The tools we've provided in this book have been created and used by us, and we hope they'll help you on your own journey.

It wasn't until we started digging deep, forcing ourselves to look at the entire ecosystem that creates and promotes these cultural values, that we started to unravel the beliefs that had wrapped themselves so tightly around our ideas of the importance of work.

I believe this is an essential message for all Productive Creatives and one of the major reasons I wanted to write this book. There isn't a single person who won't nod their head in agreement at the advice that they should take a break, work less, or take more vacation. And yet we don't.

This isn't a book about quick fixes. I hope this book will spark conversations that will help us to shed light on these interconnected forces in order to start making real, positive changes. If we don't start deconstructing our relationships with work, picking apart all the pieces that have been put into place by history, by our upbringing, by our experiences, by our media, we will continue to spiral deeper into a belief system that will actually hurt our ability to continue to produce creative work in a meaningful way.

As creatives, we have been at the front lines of new economies powered by innovative and disruptive technologies that are redefining the nature of work. The global economy continues to shift toward knowledge work, and the days of standardized work are long gone, replaced by the mounting pressure to come up with endless ideas to maintain our competitiveness. Where employers once prioritized productivity as the ideal employee trait, they now expect their workforce to be endlessly creative as well. Today's Productive Creatives must be constantly creative and constantly productive.

This is the first book specifically aimed at Productive Creatives to tackle the issue of the future of work. We wanted to share what we learned so that others in the same situations could apply this insight within their own lives.

HUSTLE & FLOAT

If you are working in a job where unstandardized tasks and problem-solving are the norm, then this book is for you.

If you've struggled with burnout, held yourself to impossible standards, lamented your life in comparisons to others on social media, and woken up in the middle of the night with the fear that you're never going to get to that novel, that project, that business idea—this book is for you.

If you've ever felt suffocated by the pressure of producing, producing, producing—this book is for you.

If you're willing to challenge some of society's most closely held definitions of success and achievement—this book is for you.

If you're ready to accept that there is a better way and are prepared to ask yourself difficult and maybe painful questions—this book is for you.

Hustle & Float is both a record of our past and a call to action toward a better, more human, more balanced future. This is not just a book about work but an extensive overview about our own history, identities, and beliefs. This is our story and your story.

We are the Productive Creatives, and it's time to take back the world of work.

Happy Reading,

—Rahaf