

## Are Your Hobbies a Distraction?

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Shouldn't we all have a hobby - something that captures our attention and balances our daily work? Even if no one else cares about it, should that matter? Sooner or later someone will ask you if you have a hobby. If you don't and can't come up with an answer, you might be labeled as boring, or worse, unimaginative.

On the other hand, when does a hobby take on a life of its own and interfere with one's core vocation? "Beatnik" author and poet, [Charles Bukowski](#), once wrote, "Find what you love and let it kill you."<sup>1</sup> In a search of quotes about hobbies, I found many warnings about the lure of avocations taking over your life and distracting from the business at hand. [Bishop John Lancaster Spaulding](#), a 19th-century Catholic author, felt that "a hobby is the result of a distorted view of things. It is putting a planet in the place of a sun."<sup>2</sup> He appears to have favored "shoulder to the wheel" industrious behavior over fun stuff.

### When Hobbies Go Haywire

I have learned 24 million people play golf. My chiropractor friend Bruce was one of them. "I was spending too much time playing the game," he told me. "It was an excuse to ignore dictating reports and finishing daily notes. I finally had to admit it wasn't a hobby, but a distraction; an excuse to procrastinate."

That declaration seemed insightful until he described his new interest, that of day-trading stocks early in the morning before he left for work. At least in my own experience, the worst of all hobby pursuits is when one thinks the hobby will make money! (It never did for me.)

An acquaintance of mine, Dr. Judy, inherited several Raggedy Ann dolls (popular many years ago) from her mother. But Dr. Judy took on the task of expanding the collection, adding a few every year ... until she had to turn a bedroom in her home into a Raggedy Ann museum. She had Raggedy Ann clothes, banners, scarfs, purses, etc., etc.

The hobby seemed harmless at first, but progressively Judy began taking longer weekend trips to Raggedy Ann conventions, and even to the annual Arcola, Ill., parade in the hometown of the doll's originator. Problems began to arise when she started running out of disposable income. She was spending less time in the office, partially because she was on the Internet so much looking for the next "big find" in virtual Raggedy Land. Because she wasn't in the office as much, people simply went somewhere else. The last I heard, she had "snapped out of it" and was trying to find a broker to sell the entire collection.

Could Continuing Your Education Actually Become a Distraction?

Can pursuing greater professional competency become a distraction? One of my young DC friends told me a story I must repeat. A DC (let's call him "Bill") was in solo practice for about three years, and was known as attending postgraduate seminars frequently. Chiropractors attending any course or seminar that came through the region would find Bill there.

Apparently, his wife got tired of his obsession, pointing out how much time and money he was spending on such activity. After all, he couldn't really prove that his seminar "addition" was helping his practice to prosper. She suggested he get a "real hobby." But (the story goes), he just couldn't give it up.

When he walked the dog, he listened to podcasts about patient education. He told his wife he was going to a genealogy group meeting, but stayed in his car watching a Skype presentation on chiropractic philosophy. He went to Las Vegas with a gaggle of guys who were ready to gamble, but sneaked off to a big chiropractic exposition at the Flamingo Hotel.

### Choosing a Healthy Hobby

A multitude of sources promulgate the healthy benefits of hobbies, especially for professionals, the retired and the terminally bored. Social research seems solid in this regard. Not all of us are severely "overwhelmed" or distracted by hobbies. So, what are some of the serious factors in choosing a healthy hobby?

First, I would suggest a sober assessment of one's ability to handle the "[7 Deadliest Hobbies](#)."<sup>3</sup> These include scuba diving, motorcycling, mountain climbing, hang gliding, boating (alcohol risk!), civilian pilots and sky diving. As chiropractors, shouldn't we ask ourselves, "Can I make a living with broken arms or a smashed-in head?"

Second, as [an article](#) on DailyMail.com points out, "well-to-do" professionals often choose sport hobbies like golf and tennis, or collecting expensive items.<sup>4</sup> A DC friend of mine spends about \$500 a month on golf and tennis. The phrase "choose wisely" really comes to life when dollars are involved.

I found [a blog post](#) on TinyBuddha.com that expands the "thoughtful choice" philosophy of hobby selection.<sup>5</sup> The blogger suggests just being honest with yourself. What "must you have" as opposed to "nice to have"? Just because you find everything interesting doesn't mean you have to investigate it further. "Experiment, explore, and shuffle" activities and pursuits, which I interpret as meaning, "You can always say no!" And above all, consider this in regard to your hobbies: Are you *really* enjoying yourself?

### References

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