

## THOUGHTS FOR THE WEEK

## LESS BUT BETTER

April 22, 2022

*If you are in a position to do anything in the world, what do you really want to do?*

- Brandon Hatton, *Conscious Wealth*

*If you don't prioritize your life someone else will.*

*If We could be truly excellent at only one thing, what would it be?*

- Greg McKeown, *essentialism – The Disciplined Pursuit of Less*

Each member of our team, and each of you, our readers, is on the around-the-clock, around-the-world voyage of life. Our business is built to act as the financial guide through that journey. Over two decades we've erected the infrastructure to help clients navigate life's financial turbulence and safely reach their destinations. If we do it right, our clients are left with more time to pursue the things they love. Managing one set of assets (financial) to create more of the most asset - time.

But our team is a means to an end for clients – a facilitator of the journey. But a big challenge still lies ahead for any client, especially if they have already achieved many of the original big goals – raise family, build a successful business, etc. - *what voyage to take with the rest of their lives.*

Author Greg McKeown tackles these questions in his book, *Essentialism – The Disciplined Pursuit of Less*. He dives into how to determine what you care about, how to pare life down to its essentials, and how to apply your energies and re-examine you how to approach the rest of your own unique voyage.

McKeown's book is part philosophy and part how-to-guide for learning "how to do less but better". The simple premise – we've bought into three pervasive myths that place strains on our time and energy, and often leave us feeling over-committed, over-stretched, and over-worked.

1. **"More is better"**
2. **"We can have/do it all"**
3. **"We can have multiple priorities"**

We live in a world of mass abundance and nearly unlimited choice. But still only have 24 hours in a day. And the myths we buy into create a dilemma – more success brings greater abundance, but often robs us of the time to appreciate the choices we make.

The word "Priority" entered the English language in the 1400's, derived from the word Latin "Prioritas – meaning "the first thing". Singular. One could have only one priority. But in the 1900s the word was pluralized, and multiple "priorities" came into being. McKeown argues that "If many things are your priority actually nothing is". In his view the inner dialogue of managing a growing set of priorities - "I

have to”, “It’s all important”, “I can do all of this” - is reactive, can veer out of control, and leaves us overwhelmed and unsure of whether we’re making the right moves.

As a remedy, McKeown suggests that we replace these three myths with three truths:

1. **“I choose to”** - We can choose how to spend our energy and time by asking ourselves what is essential and brings us satisfaction and joy, and then being ultra-selective filtering these choices, making the trade-offs required to pursue the essential. Saying no is a critical skill.
2. **“Only a few things matter”** – Much of what surrounds us is noise. Only a handful of things are exceptionally valuable – take the time to figure out what those things are and then build your life to prioritize them.
3. **“I can do anything but not everything”** - Actively eliminate the many, less important, things that compete for your attention. Failing to say “no” to a non-essential pursuit is another of way of saying “yes” to that pursuit.

To McKeown, your best asset, through which you can most impact the world, is *yourself*. Underinvesting in yourself – your mind, body, and spirit - damages the very tool we need to make our highest contribution. Sleep, exercise, play, solitude, thinking time, boundaries, routines, and systems are all habits that help eliminate the nonessentials of life, and help better execute the essentials, our true priorities.

*Essentialism* is a rich vein of ideas, suggestions, questions, exercises, and checklists that can help propel you toward a more meaningful life. Since reading *essentialism* I’ve improved my daily routine – building in time for reflection, meditation, and fitness - and set boundaries around things like e-mail. I can tangibly feel my inner game improving, and my true goals coming into clearer focus.

We are all on this voyage together. As you think about what is essential to you, and enjoy the upcoming *Earth Day* weekend, keep the poet Mary Oliver’s words in mind: “Tell me, what is you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?”

Enjoy your reading and your weekend,

Mike, Cate, Scott, Marina, Oscar, Suzy, and Willis

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Sources:

*Essentialism, The Disciplined Pursuit of Less*, Greg McKeown, Copyright 2014, 2020, Currency Trade Paperbacks, an imprint of Random House, 274 pages, [https://www.amazon.com/Essentialism-Disciplined-Pursuit-Greg-McKeown/dp/0804137382/ref=tmm\\_hrd\\_swatch\\_0?\\_encoding=UTF8&qid=1649713356&sr=8-1](https://www.amazon.com/Essentialism-Disciplined-Pursuit-Greg-McKeown/dp/0804137382/ref=tmm_hrd_swatch_0?_encoding=UTF8&qid=1649713356&sr=8-1)

*Conscious Wealth: Money, Investing, and a Financial Awakening for the Person Who Has It All* - Brandon Hatton, Conscious Capitalism Press copyright 2021, <https://www.amazon.com/Conscious-Wealth-Investing-Financial-Awakening-ebook/dp/B09DRMHTRG>

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