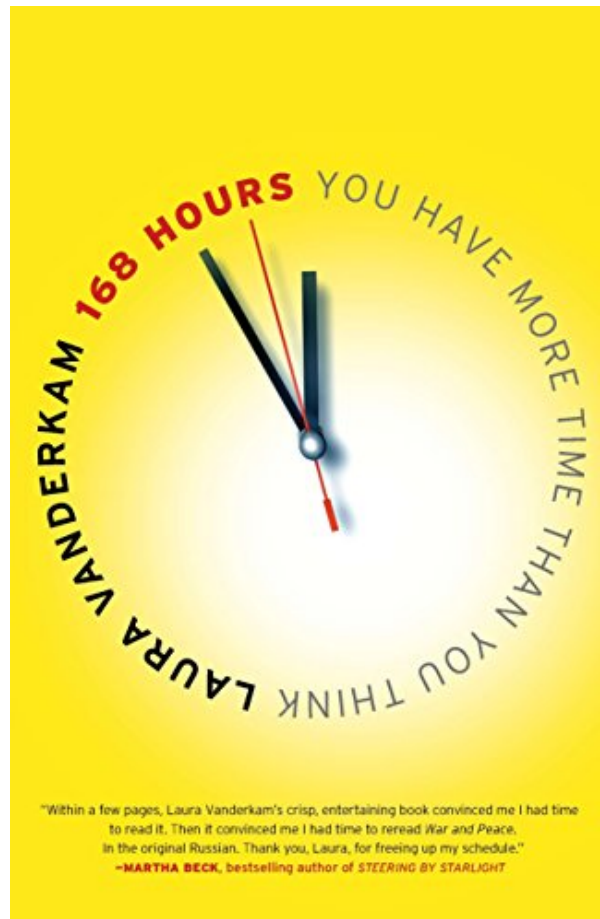
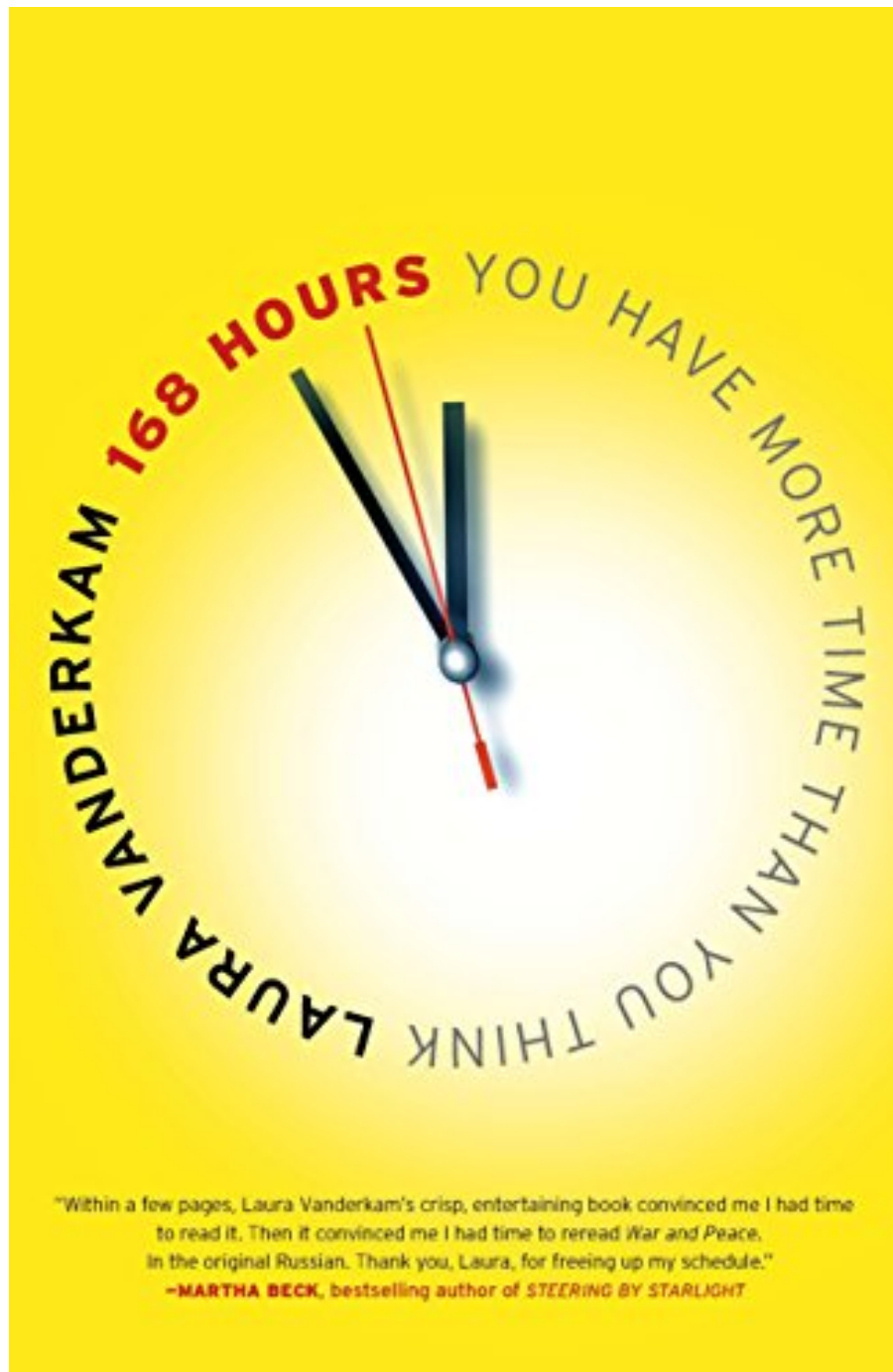


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From Publishers Weekly

Vanderkam (Grindhopping) offers a new system of time management: if readers want to make more time to spend with their children, get fit, or write that novel, they must slash nonessential time wasters and minimize tasks that are not core competencies, a business term for what a company does best and must prioritize. She offers solid and even excellent career advice, about both how to make the most of time at a current job and how to manage time to get ahead. And there is something curiously fascinating about her bizarrely brutal approach to time management (There's little point... in spending much time on activities in which you can't excel). But given that the author seems to be targeting a very rarefied echelon of upper-middle-class working moms (like herself), the book might have very limited appeal. More alienating, though, is her insistence on pummeling the life out of life. Vanderkam's vision may yield plenty of time to pursue worthy activities, but it's a life leached of color or spontaneity. (May)

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It's an unquestioned truth of modern life: we are starved for time. We tell ourselves we'd like to read more, get to the gym regularly, try new hobbies, and accomplish all kinds of goals. But then we give up because there just aren't enough hours to do it all. Or if we don't make excuses, we make sacrifices- taking time out from other things in order to fit it all in. There has to be a better way...and Laura Vanderkam has found one. After interviewing dozens of successful, happy people, she realized that they allocate their time differently than most of us. Instead of letting the daily grind crowd out the important stuff, they start by making sure there's time for the important stuff. When plans go wrong and they run out of time, only their lesser priorities suffer. Vanderkam shows that with a little examination and prioritizing, you'll find it is possible to sleep eight hours a night, exercise five days a week, take piano lessons, and write a novel without giving up quality time for work, family, and other things that really matter.

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Most helpful customer reviews

887 of 974 people found the following review helpful.

Don't Waste Any Of Your 168 Hours On This Book

By Karen Hall

I usually try to be fair and tactful in any review, but the only honest thing I can say about this book was it was a horrible waste of time.

For starters, the suggestions the author makes really only apply to people who are (a) professionals in corporate environments who have subordinates and flexible schedules, or people who are self-employed,

either way making probably at least \$100,000 a year; and (b) people who are married with children. I guess the author assumes if those criteria don't apply to you, you must not be busy enough to worry about.

She certainly shouldn't have needed an entire book to state her suggestions, which can be summed up simply: for every thing you don't want to do in your life, either get someone else to do it, or just ignore it.

The 'getting someone else to do it' involves delegating (at work, to subordinates; at home, to other family members) or hiring someone to do it for you. To be fair, delegating at work is a great idea if there are reasonably people you can delegate to; I knew that wouldn't apply to me, but there's not much I can change about my job, and I got the book more for suggestions of how to create more free time in my home life.

That's the chapter that really bombed for me. If I followed this author's advice, I'd have a maid, a cook, a lawn & garden service, and a laundry service - all on my legal secretary's salary. She blithely talks about the \$2,500 a year one of these services costs, or recommends a personal shopping assistant like the one she used - at a cost of \$400, all she had to do was "try on clothes and hand people my credit card."

Yeah, because all of us have that kind of cash to throw around. This author often made me feel like those of us making 'average' wages (less than \$40,000 a year) are just peasants who, since we can't afford a single one of her suggestions, apparently don't deserve more leisure time. Maybe in her world, only the upper class citizenry deserve that luxury.

I think the dumbest thing I read in this book was this: she suggested that to save hours making dinner night after night, you should either go out to eat, or purchase pre-cooked, frozen meals to heat up (not TV dinners, heaven forbid, she's talking about using some type of catering service or expensive online service that ships you meals) ... and then she graciously says that if you can't afford that option, you might consider taking a second job to pay for it.

Really? That gives me MORE time to myself? I stop cooking to save a few hours a week, and then have to take a second job to pay for this "time-saving suggestion"?

And she got paid to come up with these? Obviously I AM in the wrong line of work.

I realize no one book is perfect for everyone, but this author doesn't even appear to try to offer any useful suggestions to anyone who doesn't fit into her tiny category of people who could afford to do what she suggests. That's fine, but the book really ought to be re-titled so that the rest of us know there's nothing there of use to us. Something like "168 Hours: How To Buy Yourself Some Free Time On Over \$100K A Year" might about do it.

I am an avid reader, and have read a LOT of books. Not all of them have been good, but I realize no author can please everyone, and I'm usually pretty forgiving. But I just couldn't do it for this author's elitist attitude and absolutely useless suggestions.

Don't waste your money or time on this book - if you're looking for inspiration, get a good book on 'simplifying your life' instead - real world suggestions that generally cost little to no money (in fact, often save money) and provide tangible results for anyone, regardless of status or income.

107 of 120 people found the following review helpful.

Book is short on Time Management and long on anecdotes

By J. Russell

The demographic this book seems to aim at are women who either (1) are evaluating staying in the work force full-time after having a child; and (2) those who already have children and continue to work full time. Most of the anecdotes revolve around successful women that had children and continued to work full time. Apparently most men have no time management issues.

It seems that the author never missed an opportunity, no matter how slim, to imply that time constraints could not justify a woman working less than full-time once they became a parent. Far better to work full time, spend "quality time" with the children doing the things only you can, and then pack them off daily to a quality daycare for all of those routine needs that anyone could perform just as well as you.

As far as most of her time management tips...watch less TV. The rest were most useful to those who (1) are self employed-thus having nobody to answer to; (2) have jobs that are task driven and can be done anytime (ie-writing); (3) have enough cash to hire someone else to do all of the things they do not want to (laundry, cleaning, cooking). If you see yourself here, BUY THIS BOOK!

I had enjoyed Ms Vanderkam's periodical pieces and had high hopes for this book, but would definitely not recommend it to somebody looking for Time Management tips. It took too much time to sift through all the fluff to find the few that were useful.

153 of 179 people found the following review helpful.

How to make the most of "the 168-hour mosaic of our lives"

By Robert Morris

There is no shortage of books on the subject of time management. In fact, the last time I checked, Amazon offers 11,229 of them but not one of them explains how to increase the number of hours within a seven-day period: it is 168, no more and no less. What sets this book apart from the dozens of other books on time management that I have read is the fact that Laura Vanderkam rigorously follows what Albert Einstein recommends: "Make everything as simple as possible...but no simpler." For example, in the first chapter, she suggests, "Picture a completely empty weekly calendar with its 168 hourly slots." She then helps her reader to document his or her (the reader's) current allocation of time. She achieves that objective as well as each of her other primary objectives such as disabusing her reader of major misconceptions about how much time (on average) people spend on sleep, work, and leisure time components. While doing so, she cites real-world examples (i.e. real people in real time) that both illustrate and confirm basic strategies that produce more and more enjoyable as well as better, and achieved sooner, in less time. She also identifies the core competencies that her reader must develop and then leverage to achieve that same objective. She is at her best when explaining how to determine what the "right job" is, what it requires, and how to obtain it.

[She cites Teresa Amabile's admonition, "You should do what you love, and you should love what you do." If that doesn't suggest what a "right job" is, I don't know what does.]

Vanderkam also explains how to control investment of time so that "there should be almost nothing during your work hours - whatever you choose those to be - that is not advancing you toward your goals for the career and life you want"; how to determine what the "next level" of personal and professional development looks like and how to "seize control" of the schedule while completing a transition to that level; and what a "breakthrough" is and how to achieve it to expedite the transition process. Vanderkam believes, and I fully agree, that our lives proceed through a series of levels above or below, better or worse than where we were previously; the journey to each should be one of personal discovery; and that it is important to know what we value most but we must realize that priorities change at various points in our lives as circumstances, relationships, obligations, and aspirations change. Each life is, quite literally, a "work in progress."

At the outset of this review, I noted that Amazon now offers almost 12,000 books on time management.

Several of them are outstanding. In my opinion, 168 Hours is less about time management than it is about self-management (especially self-discipline) as well as decision-making (especially setting priorities). Laura Vanderkam provides about as much information and counsel as anyone needs to alleviate a real or perceived time crunch, leverage core competencies, define and then locate or create the "right job," control rather than be controlled by a calendar, achieve breakthroughs to greater understanding higher-impact performance, and in all life domains (career, family, personal, community, and society) be happier and more productive.

I congratulate her on a brilliant achievement. Bravo!

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