

Know Thyself

“Know thyself” and “Nothing in Excess.” These are the two phrases inscribed into the stone pediments above the doorways leading into the temple of Apollo at ancient Delphi. It’s a smart place if we listen to it. I’ve been in recovery for about 27 years and a lawyer for just short of 20. One thing I’ve noticed about me is that whatever direction I am inclined toward I’m a better person for myself and others when I try to push myself the other way. When I want to talk I could stand to listen a bit. When I want to beat myself up I could stand to stop and think something good about myself.

A colleague of mine just today told me that she burns the candle at both ends. There are too many work projects to do and too much pressure for billable hours. There aren’t enough hours in the day.

In a ground-breaking study that I just made up, the data strongly suggests that most people are actually more productive when they take some time off. On average, persons included reported achieving more productivity over the course of a 50 minute hour (with a 10 minute break) than a sixty minute hour with no break. They also reported more work satisfaction and an ability to work for longer stretches.

Take time off. Off off. Take time for yourself. You will bring more to your work if you do and both will benefit. Even if this turns out not to be true, remember that nobody complains on their death-bed that they didn’t spend enough time at work.