

# research in brief

## Vacation Facts

If you can't enjoy a vacation, could you enjoy retirement? What are the benefits and payoffs of a vacation? *Psychology Today* reported a survey on "How Americans View Vacations: Expectations, Satisfaction, Frustrations, Fantasies." Here are some of the findings.

The survey confirmed that work is still important and, with the exception of those who get only one week off, many people take less vacation time than they're entitled to.

Vacations provide an essential escape valve; however, there's a gap between vacation fantasy and reality. It was found that very few succeeded in any remarkable transformations while on vacation, but carried the same psychological baggage with them wherever they went. "Workaholics" transferred their compulsions to a new location—they brought along their briefcases to catch up while they were on vacation.

The majority of those who seemed to enjoy their vacations were the same people who reported they enjoyed their work most. In the same light, those who didn't enjoy their work, also didn't have much fun on their vacations.

Other highlights of the vacation survey were:

1. Men enjoyed their vacations less than women.
2. Men liked spending money on vacations less than women.
3. Women considered their work more important than men did.
4. Men were more eager to go back to work after vacations, probably because they enjoyed themselves less.
5. Almost half the respondents felt they got as much vacation time as they deserved.
6. Men had a stronger sense of vacation entitlement than women did—that is, they felt they deserved more time off than women felt they deserved.



*Implications*        The ideal vacation, and perhaps the reason vacation time is allotted to an employee, is to give the person a chance to rest and relax, recharge, get renewed, catch up on nonwork related activities, and visit with friends, relatives, associates.

*Questions*        Ask yourself the following questions:

1. Does Extension-type work generate more workaholics?  
It would seem that our work is seldom, if ever, finished. There's always another project that should have been done some time ago.
2. Do you use the vacation time for the purpose it was intended?
3. Do you owe it to yourself, your family, your friends, and associates to make better use of the vacation time you're allocated?
4. Would you be a better Extension worker if you found more effective ways of using your vacation time for the purpose it was intended?

Perhaps we all need to reassess our use and utility of our vacation/leave time.

"How Americans View Vacations: Expectations, Satisfaction, Frustrations, Fantasies." Carin Rubenstein. *Psychology Today*, XIII (May, 1980), 62-76.

*Glen Jenson*