

# Recommended Reading

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## Breathing Space: Living & Working at a Comfortable Pace in a Sped-Up Society,

by Jeff Davidson (MasterMedia Limited: New York, 2000)



**S**tress, pressure, busyness, information - it's all around you and it seems there's so much of it, and it's so insistent, and it's so loud, and it's so invasive.

And in reading Jeff Davidson's latest resource for leaders, managers, and just about everyone, it's clear that the pressure is here to stay, at work and at home - and it will get worse. There is no returning to an earlier, simpler, unhurried time.

So.... we need some strategies, some tools, and some..... breathing space.

Fortunately, Jeff Davidson makes good on his title. Breathing Space starts with a clear and compelling analysis of why we feel so pressured. The reader is then focused on very positive, healthy strategies to deal with a world where 565,000 books are published each year, 95 million printers are spewing paper from at least 95 million computers, and the typical executive receives 225 pieces of unsolicited mail each month.

In 22 succinct, comfortably paced chapters, Breathing Space offers practical and innovative strategies for clearing up the clutter, breaking through procrastination, organizing your work-space, managing your reading, and choosing your priorities wisely - among other work and personal challenges.

Breathing Space attacks paper clutter with a vengeance, as in - get rid of it! Eighty percent of the paper we save will never be needed. Most importantly, the reader learns how to control paper at the intake point, so that it never piles up in the first place.

Davidson's insights are especially powerful on the widespread perceived need to keep up with information overload from print, media, and electronics. He draws our attention to how much we are exposed to information that does not really support us but which, day after day, robs us of breathing space. His sensible strategies leave the reader with a feeling that this too, can be handled, and that we need not waste energy in guilty responses to an information overload which we can never possibly keep up with.

Chapters are broken up with short messages labeled Fresh Air, that put our need for breathing space in perspective. One Fresh Air message captures a theme that radiates throughout the book: Teltale signs of being too busy:

If you're too busy to enjoy life, you're too busy; If you're too busy to stay calm, you're too busy; If you're too busy to stay in shape, you're too busy; If you're too busy to see your friends, you're too busy.

Breathing Space is really about quality of life, or more accurately - learning to leave enough space in your life so that you identify what matters to you, and then allocate your life efforts accordingly. It is about taking control and creating environments that support your choices in life, as opposed to reacting to useless information, negative people, and distracting but ultimately unfulfilling stimulus of many sorts.

Without a doubt, Breathing Space is must reading for anyone who wants to master the art of dealing effectively with more information, pressure, and time crunch. From the looks of what is to come, that is just about all of us.

