

NON-WORK OBLIGATIONS

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NON-WORK OBLIGATIONS

On the Delicate Art of Dealing
with Disagreeableness

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PREFACE

Over the years, I have written off and on about non-work obligation defined as disagreeable activities that are neither work nor leisure. This book pulls together much of that writing, while adding many new ideas which emerged as I started to put everything together. It bears on both work and leisure, but indirectly so. Scholars in both fields have mostly ignored this third domain of life, on the grounds, I suspect, that it appears to be of no concern to them. As an excuse, such an attitude is myopic, for non-work obligations negatively affect our well-being and the positive side of our lifestyles and can demand that we engage in some voluntary simplicity to mute their impact. The first two in this list are of great concern in leisure studies and stir the interest of some of those who study work. Additionally, the current research interest on work–life balance cannot afford to ignore the effects that non-work obligation has on it. Consumer studies specialists will be interested in the purchase of goods and services related to these obligations.

Chapters 1 and 2 are primarily conceptual. Enough of the serious leisure perspective is set out in the first chapter to enable me to link it later in the book with non-work obligations treated of as distinct activities. Chapter 2 is devoted to defining those obligations. In the next chapter, we explore the personal meaning of non-work obligations and then, expanding the scope of the analysis, we look in Chapter 4 at the lifestyle of non-work obligation that takes shape across the years. In this context, I discuss work–life–obligation balance and people’s efforts to implement some measure of voluntary simplicity as the years pass. Chapter 5 is devoted to the social world of non-work obligations and the culture in which they are embedded. We return in Chapter 6 to the matter of definition of non-work obligation. This is also the place to consider the disagreeable personality, which is not always, however, a non-work activity, but rather an adventitious encounter with such a person

while at work or leisure. Nonetheless, disagreeable people can routinely haunt recurring free-time gatherings. Finally, the difference between responsibility and duty in non-work obligation is clarified at this point as is the question of the degree of disagreeableness experienced when we confront odious duties and responsibilities of a diverse sort.