

SERIOUS PLAY: THE YUPPIE SYNDROME

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[Assignment: Do adults play? If you think they do, write an essay classifying the kinds of activities that constitute adult play.]

(1) For many young urban professionals, play has become as serious a matter as their advancement in the corporate market place. For them, play is something they do to insure productivity at work. In fact for some, play requires much discipline because they must force themselves to stop working long enough to play. A well organized yuppie will try to schedule a calculated variety of play activity each week, trying to touch on each type of play once a month. Most yuppies believe that if they don't follow this routine, their productivity level will diminish and they will "burn out." They very carefully plan their play time in order to meet specific needs. The play activities fall into five major categories, each meeting a different need: physical, social, intellectual, rest and relaxation, and the "quickie." Of course, these categories overlap both in types of activity and purpose. Nevertheless, they may be distinguished in terms of their primary aim.

(2) Physical play, which serves a triple purpose, is scheduled in order to vent frustration, keep physically fit, and meet new clients. Yuppies look for every opportunity to do more than one thing at a time, so this type of play is a favorite. Most yuppies belong to a gym or fitness club of some kind, and try to get there two or three times a week. Some of the activities they enjoy the most are running, racquetball, tennis, and swimming. The casual atmosphere of fitness clubs is conducive to cultivating new client relationships.

(3) Social activities are another form of play that is scheduled more than once a week. This type of play serves a dual purpose. It offers a little bit of relaxation, and it is an excellent way to entertain clients. Social play is usually in the form of Happy Hour cocktails. A great number of restaurants in large cities offer free hors d'oeuvres in the lounge between 5:00 and 7:00 p.m., and commonly refer to this as the attitude adjustment hour. Normally a group of people from the same department will make plans to meet after work. A hardcore yuppie will invite a few clients to join them at the bar, thus allowing for simultaneous fulfillment of two goals. Of course, there are other types of social play, for instance, dinner parties, and social events for special interests. For some of these activities, young professionals may include their spouses, or some other significant persons from their personal lives. In this way they have the opportunity to develop personal relationships while they play.

(4) Intellectual play is not scheduled as often, but is equally important, because this type of play is commonly used to broaden the mind. Depending on the individual, this type of activity may not even be scheduled on a weekly basis. Leisure reading and other intellectually stimulating hobbies, like tinkering with elaborate computer and stereo systems, may occur daily but they are not normally scheduled. The scheduled types of intellectual play may include the theater, ballet,

symphony, or museums of fine art. In some instances the arts may be used as a means to enhance a significant relationship while relaxing, or simply another opportunity to entertain a client.

(5) Rest and relaxation is truly the most important play for young professionals because they push themselves so hard. Some yuppies may actually have to be forced to take extended periods of time off from work. In some corporate environments, relaxation has become a requirement. Nothing improves yuppies' attitudes and work productivity as an extended period away from the office. Then they are so anxious to return that their charge of anxious energy can continue for months at a time. Most of these young professionals have enough money to take a cruise in the Caribbean, or travel to distant places for one or two weeks at a time. These are the best forms of rest and relation because they take the yuppie far away from telephones, facsimilies, and appointments. However, a yuppie would never leave his laptop computer behind; after all, what were these work aids designed for but beaches and airplanes? Of course, yuppies will naturally organize rest and relaxation as effectively as other forms of play. Yuppies wouldn't dare miss the opportunity to visit a client who "happens" to be located in a city, or on an island, where they are vacationing. By the time they schedule all the sights and dinner engagements into their timetables, their play time begins to resemble their work time.

(6) Then, of course there is always the "quickie." Because yuppies are so success-oriented, they tend to schedule every part of their lives into fifteen minute increments. They check their watches often to insure that they are still on schedule. For example, one yuppie set her watch to beep every fifteen minutes to remind her to stay on schedule and (note the dual purpose here) to take five deep breaths in order to relax--her way of grabbing some quick play.

(7) Playtime is very serious business for yuppies. They have it as finely tuned as worktime. It is not something that many take lightly; their busy schedules, and the demands they put upon themselves, necessitate that recreational time be most productive and achieve the widest array of purposes. Most yuppies believe that if they don't have a well-rounded play schedule, they will soon burn out and never reach their really important goals such as achieving the head of the corporate ladder. So whether they watch their watches to squeeze playtime into fifteen minute increments, take a four day cruise, or breakfast in London--it is all very serious indeed.