

## WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT

### *Fully Engaged*

This is **the right message for the present age**. Everywhere I go around the world I see the results of disengagement: Leaders direct without passion, and employees struggle to define a real rationale for too much of too much. John's message is clear, and his story offers examples of the choices we can make to live richer, more productive, more meaningful lives.

—PETER GEREND, Managing Director, Duke Corporate Education

John's gift for reaching inside your soul and revealing your inner self and purpose is **powerful and life-changing**. My journey of becoming *Fully Engaged*—through reflection, contemplation, and growth—is changing my life. I am using my God-given gifts every day, and it feels amazing!

—DAWN BENKO, Leader, Distribution Development, Thrivent Financial for Lutherans

The simple elegance of being *fully engaged* has taught me that “**enough is as good as a feast.**”

—PHILIP STYRLUND, CEO, The Summit Group

Getting caught in the web of “doing” can disorient and disconnect us from finding any deep satisfaction despite our best efforts and intentions. John Busacker’s book is **a guide out of this web of autopilot activity** and into the riveting clarity of a *fully engaged* life.

—BOB MANN, Vice President, Cargill Ferrous International

Being *fully engaged* has become a prominent focus of my life’s work. John’s insights have been **astonishingly helpful!**

—NANCY SCOTT, Director of Education and Professional Development, Minneapolis Area Association of REALTORS®

We committed to growing *fully engaged* members and employees as core success measures. What a difference it has made! John’s **straightforward insight and wisdom** in *Fully Engaged* have guided and inspired us to stay on track with the importance of “being more.”

—BRAD L. HEWITT, President and CEO, Thrivent Financial for Lutherans

Within each of us, God has placed His signature, reminding us that we belong to Him and are purposed for extraordinary things. *Fully Engaged* **invites us to live out our purpose** at God’s speed in awareness, community, and grace.

—TOM LANGSETH, Sounding Board member

Living *fully engaged* is far more art than science, and John has a unique gift for nurturing this along through simple-yet-profound awarenesses and practices that literally transform how we live. Living *fully engaged* has **helped me move beyond the surface of things to find greater significance and deeper fulfillment in my everyday life.**

—KRISTIN EVENSON, Managing Director, Nonprofit Solutions,  
Integrated Governance Solutions (IGS)

John has “softened the soul” of our organization with his principles of a *fully engaged* life. The result has been **explosive growth with a deep sense of purpose and satisfaction.**

—JOEL A. JOHNSON, Managing Partner, Thrivent Financial  
for Lutherans

In a time-wearied world that buys the lie that busier is better, John Busacker offers **a countercultural call to drop the ball and reclaim your uniqueness and time**, becoming *fully engaged* in the only life you’ll ever have. These principles will lead you personally and practically in discovering the life of significance for which God created and redeemed you.

—DR. MIKE GIBSON, Lead Pastor, Christ Lutheran Church and  
School, Costa Mesa, CA

Awareness, alignment, and action—the path outlined by John Busacker in his latest book—are energizing. John’s writing initially engages my mind and **causes me to reflect but ultimately causes me to act.** *Engaged* and *astonished*, as described in John’s book, are precisely what I want out of life.

—ROGER STOESZ, Vice President, R&D, Product Management,  
MMX Group

Relief and hope are just two of the emotions I felt as I took to heart the words in this book. More does not lead to a more fulfilling life; it only leads to a fuller one. That truth seems so obvious, but so often I end up missing it. Thank you, John, for getting my attention and helping me take some **steps toward living a clearer, simpler, and more meaningful life.**

—DR. SCOTT RISCHE, Executive Director, PLI-International

fully  
how to DO *less*  
engaged  
and BE *more*

J O H N   B U S A C K E R



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*Summerside Press<sup>™</sup> is an inspirational publisher offering fresh, irresistible books to uplift the heart and engage the mind.*

Printed in China

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TO CAROL

My best friend, soul mate,  
and unwavering inspiration  
for a *fully engaged* life

.....





## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To Brett—our great son, who continues to inspire and hold me to living a *fully engaged* life as I gracefully age!

To Josh—our other great son, who is teaching me from afar what it *really* means to be *fully engaged*, faithful, and courageous.

To Mallory—for being the wonderful daughter we never had and for saying yes to becoming an “official” part of our family this year.

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To Joel—who allowed me to test-drive many of these concepts for the last two years and whose friendship has been a remarkable blessing for almost 30 years.

To Brad—you are blessing me by radically expanding my view and practice of what it is to be truly generous.

And to my mom and dad—for loving me enough to start me on this faith journey when I was a little boy and for still praying for me daily today.

## How Satisfied Are You?

*Take this quick quiz to find out.*

On a scale of 1–10 (1 being not at all; 10 being completely satisfied), how would you rate yourself in these six important areas of life?

- \_\_\_ I have a deep sense of purpose. I know where I'm going in life and why I do what I do.
- \_\_\_ My current physical routines increase my energy and personal resilience.
- \_\_\_ I am authentically optimistic even in the midst of bad news and life's daily struggles.
- \_\_\_ I fully use both sides of my brain—analytical and creative.
- \_\_\_ I take time for intimate relationships with friends and family members. They are a priority.
- \_\_\_ I am working in an area of my passions and strengths.



**|en•gaged|**

adjective

*To become consumed in the pursuit  
of something vital, lasting, valuable, unique.*



# Contents

INTRODUCTION: From Average to Astonishing by Doing *Less!*  
*Really live each day—and love it!* . . . . . 17

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## AWARENESS

*Are you living purposefully?*

CHAPTER ONE: Measure Your Worth  
*Your life is worth so much more than money.* . . . . . 27

CHAPTER TWO: Share Your Story  
*Your life is a blog, not a book* . . . . . 39

CHAPTER THREE: Do What Matters  
*Your values determine your choices* . . . . . 53

## ALIGNMENT

*How does what you have and what you  
do match what you really want out of life?*

CHAPTER FOUR: Occupy Your Space  
*Your work is a calling.* . . . . . 69

CHAPTER FIVE: Dream Wide Awake	
<i>Your dreams inspire movement. . . . .</i>	83
CHAPTER SIX: Drop the Ball	
<i>Your life is more than just showing up. . . . .</i>	95

## ACTION

*How do you move toward an exhilarating future?*

CHAPTER SEVEN: Celebrate Your Setbacks	
<i>Your engagement is fueled by failure . . . . .</i>	109
CHAPTER EIGHT: Stay in Touch	
<i>You are designed to live in community. . . . .</i>	119
CHAPTER NINE: Give It Away	
<i>Your engagement is sustained by generosity . . . . .</i>	131

.....

CONCLUSION: DO <i>Less</i> to BE <i>More</i>	
<i>You can choose to live purposefully. . . . .</i>	145
A FULLY ENGAGED LIFE . . . . .	149
<i>Record notes and thoughts for your journey.</i>	
LIFE WORTH SATISFACTION SURVEY . . . . .	155
ENDNOTES . . . . .	157
ABOUT THE AUTHOR . . . . .	162



## INTRODUCTION

# From Average to Astonishing By Doing Less!

*Really live each day—and love it!*

I knew my wife, Carol, and I were in for a long haul even before our boys started elementary school. Carol was talking with our neighbors in Seattle, Washington, and was blown away to learn that they were “double-booking” their children in kindergarten.

I knew the airlines regularly did this—and they still do—but *kindergarten*?

Our neighbors’ actions weren’t driven by the fear of not getting a seat, but rather by the primal desire to get a “jump on first grade.” So the little neighbor boys and girls were enrolled in one school for the morning and another for the afternoon session.

Now I fully acknowledge that we live in a hyper-competitive era driven in part by what best-selling author Thomas Friedman calls a “flat world.” Don’t get me wrong. Education is vital. But this incessant and ever-increasing gravitational pull for being more, doing more, and having more—beginning in the very earliest stages of life—is wearing people out. It wore us out. And I bet you’re reading this book because it’s wearing you out too.

In the end, living and working in double-booked mode leads to sleepwalking exhausted through your waking hours. How can you enjoy the beauty that each new day can bring if you’re feeling overstressed and numb? Or if you’re so bored with the way your life is going that you miss the energy and vitality your day could have? Or if you’re feeling hopeless that things can change—and for the better?

Double-booking doesn’t create a *fully engaged* life. In fact, it does just the opposite. It amounts to an “air guitar life”—furious motion and considerable energy, but in the end no sound and little lasting impact.

I want you to ask yourself one question: “What should I do with my life?”

If you responded, “Exactly what I’m doing right now,” then congratulations! You are among the 1 percent of the population of people who don’t need this book.

Double-booking amounts to an “air guitar life”—furious motion and considerable energy but in the end no sound and little lasting impact.

You know where you are in all areas of life, you are satisfied with where you’re going, fulfilled by what you’re doing, and heading straight-as-an-arrow down the life path to where you want to be in the future. You are *fully engaged* and living the life you were designed to live. So pass this book to a friend or colleague.

But if you’re in the 99 percent majority, like most people who feel that a key ingredient is missing in their level of satisfaction and fulfillment in one or more areas, then *Fully Engaged* is perfect for you.

If one or several of the questions in the “How Satisfied Are You?” quiz caused you to pause and reflect, and perhaps feel a little lost and nervous, *Fully Engaged* can help.

Here’s a litmus test of whether you are *fully engaged*.

Quick—what’s your first thought when the alarm goes off in the morning?

Are you feeling **burned out**—fatigued by family obligations and buried under the burden of work? Before your feet even hit the floor, do you feel defeated by deadlines and worn down by the worry of keeping all of the balls in the air? Are your family, fitness, finances, or faith on tilt?

Or are you feeling **rustied out**—merely marking time in your relationships, spiritual life, and work? Do you put life on hold until “someday”—the weekend, vacation, or retirement? Have you put your passion on pause and dug your routines into a rut?

You were not designed to live this way! You have gifts to give, family to love, and dreams to live. You were created to learn and grow, not to replicate and repeat. What if you could not only live each day, but *really* live it—and love it?

When was the last time you felt *fully engaged*?

Perhaps you were riveted by a project at **work** because it tapped into your unique giftedness and you knew in your bones that it would touch someone’s life in a meaningful way or deliver lasting value to the planet.

Or maybe you felt fully alive in a **relationship**. You had the deep sense of being completely in tune with the person you love the most. So much so that the unspoken communication resonated louder than any words either of you could have spoken to each other.

You have gifts to give, family to love,  
and dreams to live. You were created  
to learn and grow, not to replicate  
and repeat.

Maybe you were gripped in your **faith** with an overwhelming sense of God's presence and love that brought deep joy and an inexplicable peace of heart and boldness of action.

We all deeply long to be this engaged—to feel connected, joyful, and alive. The question is, how do you lead an engaged *life*, rather than simply stringing together fleeting *moments* of passion?

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**|ful•ly en•gaged|**

*To be riveted.*

*To be fully alive.*

*To be gripped.*

Take a close look at each of these three descriptions of full engagement. The common denominator in each is

*time*. It takes time to be *riveted, fully alive, gripped*. Full engagement is not characterized as much by its pace as by its presence. The core of each description is not *doing* something, but *being* someone—the person you are designed to be with your unique passion, gifts, vision, life experiences, and relationships.

We all long to feel called, connected, and fully committed. We all want to know that what we do in life has lasting value.

Here's the key: You need to **DO less** in order to **BE more**. To live this way is completely countercultural, especially in America, the nation of exhausted doers. It's so tempting to think:

- *If 50 hours of work gets me in the queue for the next promotion, 65 hours will only accelerate the process.*
- *If my best friend is a room mom, I should be one too.*
- *If practicing sports for two hours a day is good, three hours a day year-round will help fashion my child into the next great pro athlete.*
- *If church on Sundays is good, additional Wednesday night Bible study and Friday morning small groups will surely make me more spiritual.*

And it's all a lie! The end result is exhaustion, not engagement.

This book takes a bold stand on what it takes to live *fully engaged*. It is both *personal* and *practical*.

*Personal*, because you'll be blessed to walk closely with people who don't have it all figured out but are intentional about doing less and being more while living out their days with purpose and passion.

*Practical*, because each chapter concludes with simple practices that are a catalyst for deeper conversation and bolder action, all in the pursuit of a *fully engaged* life.

Erwin Raphael McManus, a native of El Salvador, well-known speaker and Christian thinker, and pastor of a large church in Los Angeles, California, was once challenged by his daughter to choose his words carefully when he spoke at an event. "Remember, nothing less than *astonishing!*" she told him.

What if *you* felt summoned every day to that same level of engagement? What if you lived each moment as if it were "nothing less than astonishing"?

God uses ordinary people like you and me to do astonishing things if, and only if, we are *fully engaged*.

It's time to live in a way that makes good on all the talents and promise you were born with—and to enjoy the satisfaction, success, and excitement that come as a result.

Adventure awaits.

Let's be astonished together. Let's DO *less* and BE *more*.

All you have to do is turn the page.