

Weekdays of bondage, weekends of escape

A deep look at how weekday-weekend thinking exposes modern inner dissatisfaction.



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Modern life has quietly divided time into two species: days one endures and days one awaits. Monday to Friday are spoken of as a stretch to “get through”, while Saturday and Sunday are celebrated as islands of relief. The calendar looks innocent, yet the inner meaning we attach to its days reveals something grave about how we live. A society rarely questions the patterns it normalises; yet these patterns often contain the very clues to its distress.

The very distinction between weekday and weekend carries a warning. It means the weekend is being treated as a period of recuperation. And if the weekend is a time to recover, then the weekdays must have been a time of injury. Where rest is worshipped as escape, work has already become oppression.

One often hears that those who “live for the weekend” are simply seeking balance. But when Saturdays and Sundays become disproportionately important, something else has happened beneath the surface. The more special the weekend feels, the more suspect the week becomes. If one stops giving importance to these two days, life expands. If one is always

counting down to them, life has already shrunk.

THE HIDDEN TROUBLE IN LOOKING FORWARD

Young people today have a thousand ways to “spend” their weekends. Cafés are full, highways are busy, screens are lit late into the night. Yet the question of how to spend a Saturday or Sunday arises only when the rest of the week has been reduced to a transaction. A life that feels meaningful does not require periodic escapes from itself.

Work, as it is widely experienced, is something that taxes and drains. It tires not only the body but the mind’s appetite for life. The workplace becomes a zone to survive, not a field to express oneself. In such a setting, looking forward to the weekend appears natural. But looked at carefully, this habit reveals a deeper pattern.

Looking forward is not a neutral movement. For the mind, attraction and aversion are rarely separate forces; eagerness toward one thing often conceals discomfort toward another. If one cannot wait for Friday evening, it often means one cannot bear Monday morning. Anticipation then becomes a subtle form of rejection. The next outing, the next party, the next “break” are not simply attractive in themselves; they are attractive as an escape from what one does not want to face.

If there is something in one’s life that one constantly wants to look away from, the honest question is not how to escape it more efficiently, but why it

is there at all.

WORK THAT DEMANDS RECOVERY

In a healthy life, work does not stand outside life as a burden. It is a major part of life itself. A suitable job is not one that forces a person to seek regular rehabilitation from it, but one that does not require such rehabilitation at all. Where work is an expression of one’s being, it has a strangely restorative effect; it may physically tire, but it inwardly enlivens.

There is no day one flees from, and no one flees to. When the portfolio of life is clean, there may still be effort and fatigue, but there is no hatred of one’s own schedule. This may seem idealistic at first glance, but it simply reflects a deeper principle: life becomes harmonious when its major components do not mutually contradict one another.

FRAGMENTATION AND THE FOG OF MECHANICAL LIVING

However, most people do not find themselves in such circumstances. They occupy jobs that feel boring, taxing, or life-sapping. Many experience a gradual inner degradation after entering the workforce. The change is visible.

A young graduate who was energetic at twenty-two is often several kilograms heavier at twenty-four, not merely in body but also in psychological inertia. Alcohol consumption often goes up with income. Sports and physical play, which were at least occasionally present on campus, disappear. Gym memberships are



bought but not used. Even the quality of conversation tends to decline, restricted to office politics, surface-level entertainment, and habitual complaints.

None of this indicates a higher level of consciousness. It suggests that something vital has been traded away. This trade is not just for money. It is often for the feeling of having “settled”. Once one feels “established” in a job, the inner urge to improve, to question, to move deeper, loses its edge. While one is still challenged, there is a certain greenness within, a sense of being alive to possibility. When life begins to feel like a fixed arrangement, inward decay quietly sets in.

TWO PATHS FOR THE WEEKEND

Within this reality, the weekend becomes a crucial mirror. It shows how one relates to the discomfort of the weekday. Broadly, there are two tendencies.

In the first, one spends Monday to Friday in a state of harassment and inner resistance, fully aware that the work is not being enjoyed. Come Saturday, there is a rush to drown the entire experience in alcohol, entertainment, late mornings, and distractions of all kinds. The objective is simple: to forget what the week felt like, even if only for a while. This is the route most commonly taken.

In the second tendency, a person acknowledges that, for now, the circumstances are heavy. There may be debt, family obligations, or a lack of immediate alternatives. The job will therefore continue for some months. But this recognition does not lead to hopelessness; it leads to a different use of free time. Saturdays and Sundays are not occasions to prepare oneself to tolerate the same grind again, but opportunities to uplift oneself.

The difference between

these two tendencies is not moral, but something essentially spiritual. One deepens the very cycle one secretly resents. The other begins to weaken it.

A CYCLE THAT MAINTAINS ITSELF

When weekdays drain a person and weekends are spent merely recovering from that drain, the entire week begins to resemble a closed loop. There is effort, there is fatigue, there is temporary relief, and then the same effort begins again. Movement happens, but progress does not. A year passes, but little within has changed.

In such a cycle, the employer’s interest and the individual’s interest are not the same. The employer does not particularly mind if one wastes the weekend, so long as one returns on Monday with just enough freshness to perform. If the two days are squandered in mindless excess, the

company suffers very little. But the individual loses the only unsold portion of the week.

For five days, one has effectively sold one’s time in exchange for money. These days are not truly one’s own. Only Saturday and Sunday remain in one’s possession. These two days carry a significance that goes beyond rest. They are the only part of the week in which one is relatively free to choose how to relate to life.

BEYOND THE WEEKDAY-WEEKEND DIVIDE

The very need to divide time into “work days” and “real days” points to an internal division. As long as life is lived in compartments, some part of it will always appear as an enemy. Mondays and Fridays will keep symbolising this conflict.

The enquiry therefore does not end with rearranging schedules or negotiating fewer hours. It extends to asking: what kind of work allows one to welcome both Monday and Sunday with equal openness? What kind of inner clarity makes it unnecessary to yearn for escape? The way out does not lie in finding a more comfortable weekend. The way out is the way in: to look honestly at the life one has built and ask what it is really doing to the one who lives it.

The answer is not in a particular profession or industry. It lies in the relationship between the worker and his own life. When work begins to express who one is, rather than compensate for what one is not, the old

distinction between weekdays and weekends loses its force. Days remain different in their content, but not in their fundamental character. Free time then no longer appears as compensation for a wounding week. The very idea of “free time” as a separate zone becomes questionable, because work itself no longer stands in opposition to freedom.

Then Saturday is not a refuge, and Monday is not a sentence. Both are simply days to be met with the same attention. As long as that is not the case, the calendar will remain our master. The disproportionate importance given to two days, and the quiet resentment reserved for five, reveal the portfolio of one’s life more clearly than any diary could.

The correction cannot come from the calendar. It must come from seeing, with growing honesty, how one has arranged one’s energies, one’s duties, and one’s loyalties. The distinction between weekday and weekend is not merely a scheduling convenience. It is a symptom. It tells us where we stand with respect to our work, our time, and ourselves. To take that symptom seriously is already to stop following the borrowed lights of others and to reach for one’s own switchboard. When one’s own headlights come on, the road ceases to be someone else’s route, and each day, weekday or weekend, becomes one’s own.

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