

The Slow Manifesto
Joseph Ratliff, Joseph Ratliff

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Dedication

I dedicate this book to my wife, Dawn.

Without her, in March of 2011 I would not have woke myself up out of the long slumber of the “status quo.”

Acknowledgements

There are way too many people to acknowledge.

Friends, family, acquaintances online, and others. If I even attempted to list them, I would forget someone.

So I'm not even going to try. If you and I spoke about, wrote about, Skyped about etc... living a "slow life" ... then you know who you are.

I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

And thank you for reading this book.

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
The Slow Introduction	1
Chapter 1 - The Slow Life	2
Manifesto	2
Did You Notice The Birds?	5
Racing To Life's Finish Line	6
You Work 70 - 80 Hours A Week, So What?	7
Going Fast, Always Producing, Wanting More Stuff ... Are You Content?	8
Why Can't You Just Call In Sick One More Day?	9
Slow Risk	10
Slow Down ... Or Burnout	11
Slow Thinking	14
Writing Slowly	15
Chapter 2 - Slow Technology	16
Slow Down: Let's Not Let Technology Replace Humanity	16
Slowing Technology Down	18
Slow Social Media	20
Slow Smart Phones	22
Slow Google Plus	23
3 Steps To Slow #Twitter	24
The Story Of The Snail	25
Chapter 3 - Slow Culture	28
"Slow" Is Not An Excuse	28
Forget The News	29
Genuine Connection	30
Slow Environmental Progress	33
Slow Consumption	34
Slow Politics	36
Slow Religion	37
On Progress	40
Slow Privacy	41
Slow Society And Our Children	42
About The Book	45
The Author	45
The Book	47
Resources	49

Introduction

The Slow Introduction

Slow down, and welcome to *The Slow Manifesto*.

At one point, the book that follows was going to be a heavily researched, more “academic” style of writing. It was going to share data, facts, resources etc... about the need for our society to slow down. It was going to demonstrate in a fairly scientific way the benefits of slowing down for humans.

Eventually, I said to myself (as I usually do), **screw that**.

This needs to be a book of **action**... a book that fills you up with the feeling there is more to life than the next iPhone upgrade, the next 41 megapixel camera, the next 70 hour work week etc...

So that is what this is. I’ve turned what was “Slow – The Book” into a manifesto for lifestyle change. I’m going to get “in your face,” and I’m not going to hold anything back in this writing. I won’t insult you, dear reader, but there is no place for sugar coating anything when it comes to major lifestyle change.

Slowing down your life is serious business, and that mentality is carried throughout this book.

If you don’t like that style of writing, please stop reading. If you paid for this book, I thank you for your patronage, but by all means please return it and get your money back.

If you’ll stick with me though, what I hope to convey through this manifesto is the seriousness of the situation we’re in as a society, and what to do about it so you can enhance your life. I hope you’ll enjoy the read, and more importantly I hope you’re inspired to make a positive change in your life, as I was.

Thank you, thank you for reading my very first published book. Slow down, and enjoy it.



Chapter 1 - The Slow Life Manifesto

by [Joseph Ratliff](#)

We need to slow down, as a society... *not* just as individuals.

We need to slow down our use of technology, the advances in technology, our daily lives, our consumption of various natural resources (which ARE limited), and we need to slow down and think more critically in our communication.

We just need to slow down... period.

But, with that being said, “slowing down” doesn’t mean we need to stop. So, for the purposes of this manifesto, I’m going to define what I think “slow” is, and what “slow” isn’t... and hopefully that can help you define “slow” for yourself.

Slow is:

- Not checking email or texts first thing in the morning, and instead enjoying a cup of coffee, preferably with a loved one.
- Not eating in 15 minutes or less, instead savoring each bite... and enjoying your meal.
- **Focusing on quality** instead of quantity. We live in a “mass-produced for the masses” society, we need to slow down, and get back to a local, hand-crafted society.
- **Pacing yourself through life**, of which you only get one... and right now, we aren’t doing such a good job as a society.
- **Slowing our work down**, enjoying “mini-retirements” along the way, and sending a BIG middle finger at huge corporations who focus on 70 hour weeks and barely two-weeks of vacation.
- **Developing the ability to critically think**. That means slowing down enough to look at both sides of an issue, and having an open mind when it comes to hearing the “other” side you might not agree with.
- **Reading past page 18 on average... seriously?** I was shocked when I found out most people haven’t read a book since high school. This is depressing.
- **Slow is about taking care of you and your health**, because without those, the rest of this doesn’t



mean anything.

- **Slow is about finding balance in your life**, and being willing to find it in the face of seeming “weird” to people who haven’t figured it out yet.

Slow isn’t:

- An excuse to be lazy.
- An excuse to not participate in society (however, you don’t have to participate in every living thing either).
- An excuse not to stand for something.
- An excuse to “opt-out” and hope things just get better (they won’t without your help).
- An excuse to be depressed.
- An excuse to over eat, or fail to take care of yourself.
- Slow isn’t an excuse, it’s a mindset, it’s a movement... it’s what life is meant to be, not what marketing companies make you believe.

Now that we’ve defined (somewhat) what slow **is** and **isn’t**, let’s briefly cover *why* slow is necessary as a society (my book will cover much more detail).

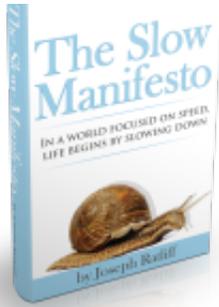
We need to slow down and wake up, people.

Right now, greed and outdated principles are ruining our lives... and we’re going so fast, we don’t see it (as a whole). We can’t bitch about how things are going if we’re not slowing down long enough to think and do something about it.

But this isn’t a book, or a manifesto, about activism, so don’t worry about that. You can read Derrick Jensen or Bill McKibben if you’re interested in that topic (recommended).

We have to start somewhere, and “Slow” is where I’m starting. I hope you will too.

This mini-manifesto is a companion to the new online book I have self published, free to read and supported by your donation, on [this website](#):



The “Slow Manifesto”

In a world focused on speed, life begins by slowing down

NOTES: I wrote this “mini-manifesto” before I started writing the book itself... and it came from a very “passionate place” in my writing. The manifesto represents more of how I see things from a “slow” perspective.

The book, written essay by essay here on this website ... is written with more resources and references for you to enjoy.

You can continue your travels today by reading [this blog post](#) (*opens in a new window*), which inspired my initial investigation into the concept of a slow lifestyle... then I recommend downloading my free short guide titled [“Life As I See It.”](#)

Also, there are many other books on the subject, such as “*In Praise of Slowness*” by Carl Honore.

I’ve discovered this is a **huge** movement of sorts, from [slow food](#) to different [ways to approach speeding laws](#). You’ll discover, as I did, that we’ve deviated from a much simpler time in our evolution as humans.

I hope that by reading [the book](#), and from visiting the resources, you’ll at least consider the possibility of slowing down your own life (if you aren’t already).

If I’ve helped at least one person in that regard... this whole project will be more than worth it.



Did You Notice The Birds?

Your mobile phone is ringing.

Another text is coming in... you have email in your inbox, there is an “important” meeting you need to attend.

You’ve got to upgrade your laptop, your mobile phone, your sunglasses... you need more stuff... need to go to that party (to be on your phone again).

Life keeps moving faster, faster, faster... you’re soooooo busy.

BULLSHIT.

You’ve made all of your “busy-ness” up. It’s a status symbol.

Deep down, you think you “need” to be busy, or society won’t accept you.

BULLSHIT again.

While all this was happening... the coolest bird just flew by. Your son, your daughter, they’ve been asking for your attention.

Your wife, she wants to make passionate love to you.

Your husband, he wants to tell you something... but you keep getting that damn phone.

Did you notice the birds?



Racing To Life's Finish Line

A post I wrote some time ago... which explains one of the basic premises behind my upcoming book...

"I've gotta paint my house." (do you? or do you just need something to do?)

"We've gotta get these bushes out of the backyard by Fall." (we do? last time I checked, we can always do it next year)

"I've gotta pull an all-nighter just to get this done on time." (really? did you fuck up the management of your time to begin with? or are you going for 'status symbol' here?)

Jesus people.

If you keep running towards the 'finish line' of life, when do you stop to catch your breath? And why is it we attach some fucked up status symbol for 'sacrificing' so much of our lives to get things done?

What...the....hell?

Who really cares that you work 80 hours a week doing a job that should only take you 30 hours a week to complete (yet you, for some fucked up reason, stretch it out to 80, then brag about it to your coworkers)?

Here's a little insight, nobody really cares. They are all too busy with their own lives to care about your all-nighter or 80-hour week. People might give you a pat on the back of some sort, but at what expense?

Do you really lack self-confidence so much that you need those little, tiny "hoorays" to function in life? (like the typical, 'I need my 15 minutes of fame' person the news media finds to interview when they bring you "live" to a scene)

So what do I mean by the title to this post?

Simple.

Walk through your life...don't run. It never has been, and never will be about *how much* you get accomplished...rather it's the *quality* of what you accomplish that matters.

We can get *how much* from anyone...are **you** willing to step up and offer us *quality*?



You Work 70 - 80 Hours A Week, So What?

I just love it when someone comes up to me and brags about “how they pulled an all-nighter last night”...

Who gives a fuck?

Great, you’re ruining your life, and your health, in the name of a faceless corporation or business that doesn’t really give a shit in the first place (for the most part).

All in the name of some fake “status symbol” you can hold up and get 4 minutes of recognition for.

I mean, think about it... you say this... and really, how much does it mean to other people?

Nothing, except empty platitudes and a pat on the back from your boss who DIDN’T have to pull the all-nighter.

Whoever invented the 40-hour “full-time” work week needed to be shot on sight.

But think about this today...

If you work yourself down to the bone, in the hopes of getting a big promotion or raise at the expense of your health... is it really worth it?

Can you look your family in the eyes and say; *“I’m working 80 hours a week and I can ALSO truly be here with you too, because I’m so full of energy AFTER working myself down to the bone, that I can do everything!”*

Didn’t think so.



Going Fast, Always Producing, Wanting More Stuff ... Are You Content?

If you always seek to acquire “stuff.” If you always are looking to move “fast,” be “first,” and go, Go, GO...

Maybe you're not **content** with your life.

[Contentment](#) is a number one cause for some of the stress in our lives. Being content with your life requires a “slow” mindset... a present mindset... an “in the moment” mindset.

So look into it. If you look slow enough, there is a surprise in this very post that can get you started.



Why Can't You Just Call In Sick One More Day?

I just went through a nasty upper respiratory infection that lasted 3 weeks.

During this time, I reflected on what it was like to work in the “retail” world over 12 years ago. I remember what it was like to be sick, and perhaps call in sick for “one” day, to rest... but then to have to go to work right afterwards, sick or not.

Had to “keep that job” you know... right?

Wrong, I couldn't have been more wrong.

Just because your job might demand performance, doesn't mean you have to do so when you feel like crap. So call in sick, take your recovery slowly, and perhaps even call in sick for one day *after* you're better.

If your job fires you, or threatens to, for taking care of yourself... was the job really worth it begin with?

Probably not.

And, if you're in the hospital because you didn't take care of yourself when you were sick, and got a secondary infection that was even worse... what is the point of performing anyhow? If you're dead... none of it matters either.

On top of that, I'm willing to bet that any company that truly expects you to work while you're sick, doesn't really care at all if you're there in the first place.

As for the income part, the “*Well, I need the money*” part... when you think really hard about it... is money worth ruining your life over?

I'm willing to bet if you lived “slower” in the other parts of your life, sell some stuff or quit buying useless stuff etc... you could probably find a way to get by until you found a new job (IF they fired you, but they probably won't).

Hell, you could, dare I say it, you could go create something yourself, share your gift with the world (e.g. write a book, create art, etc...).

Read “*The Art Of Non-Conformity*” by Chris Guillebeau for a good starting point on the subject. Follow that with “*The Icarus Deception*” by Seth Godin.

Slow Risk

Risk is one of those topics that is subjective.

So, when I talk about “slow” risk, I’m actually not referring to one specific type of risk, as there are many types.

But when we take risk, or examine it, we need to slow down.

There is advice circulating out there similar to the following:

“Fail fast, and fail often.”

That statement seems to be loaded with **risk**, right? If you fail fast, you’re also contradicting the very essence of the “slow” philosophy I’m referring to as it pertains to risk, right?

Not so fast.

I challenge that by failing fast, and failing often, you’re actually slowing down **risk**... because you’re allowing yourself small steps of failure, instead of an unpredictable mode of a large, catastrophic failure that is bound to happen if you take big risks too fast.

Think of it this way, if you are trying to avoid every little failure and prepare for every single possible negative consequence, especially when you’re “risking” the unknown... you never **learn** about that unknown.

And learning is how you **slow risk**... failing fast is how you learn to do just that.

You see, *Slow*, the book, isn’t about going “slow” all the time, in everything... it’s about picking the highest leverage points at which to go slow.

Right now, I think we need to get better at picking the right points to go slow... and that’s why I’m writing the book.

Slow Down ... Or Burnout

By Jack Forde at CopywritersRoundtable.com

(reprinted here with permission)

“In the realm of ideas,” the writer Johann Wolfgang von Goethe once said, “everything depends on enthusiasm.”

In fact, said Arthur Balfour — the former British Prime Minister, agreement-maker, and ex-philosopher who was, ironically, known for his dispassionate demeanor — “Enthusiasm is what moves the world.”

And had you thought to ask Churchill, during your time travels, he would have told you the same and more, in the phrase, “Success is going from failure to failure without losing your enthusiasm.”

Without losing any of the irony that opening today’s post with other people’s quotes is, in itself, not all that creative, I can only add... “Easy for them to say.”

Sometimes, you just can’t help it.

There you are, half way up the mountain. Or worse, at the foot, bundled up in your metaphorical sleeping bag. And you figure... meh.

What to do?

TEN CURES FOR CREATIVE BURNOUT

First, let’s acknowledge a few things.

We are, I’ll be you’ve noticed, flooded with more opportunities than ever to be distracted...

Did you know, for instance, that according to the McKinsey Global Institute, the average working person spends a whopping 2.6 hours per day sorting through email? That’s 27 days per year!

Throw in nearly two hours of researching and reading “essential” information... plus a few more hours of combined chatting, work-free web surfing, smartphone checking, and pointless meeting having, and it’s a wonder anything in the world ever gets done.

I mention the distractions because I think they do more than just help us procrastinate — they can also become a crutch for a more serious condition, creative burnout.



Dry patches do happen.

But what to do when you find yourself unable to focus... apathetic toward results... hankering for “Miller Time” on a Monday morning... subsumed by the creep of cynicism... short tempered or moody or sleepless, all over work... or any of those other things Business Insider calls a symptom of burnout?

The French would say, take a vacation. And a long one. We “no-vacation-nation” Americans don’t do that nearly enough, frankly. And when we do, we rarely do it well.

Case in point: We took a week at the beach this summer. And of course, I took my laptop. Every day, I got up 5 am and worked until 1 pm. Even saying it now makes me feel oh-so-virtuous. I also had two one-hour meetings via Skype, plus various undisclosed, work-related email exchanges.

Yep, we hit the beach in the afternoons. And yep, I got in some kid time too. But I can’t help but think I’m not doing it right. To boot, the project I worked didn’t pan out nearly as well as hoped. So there’s that.

Next week, I’ve also got deadlines. I owe better stuff than I think I’m turning out to a few people, have more than one speech to write for two different copywriting “bootcamps” to come, and there are those standing weekly meetings... but we’re going away on a laptop-free trip to the south of France anyway. I’ll let you know if it pays off.

Meanwhile, what about the non-vacation solution to creative burnout? Turns out there are quite a few.

Like these, for instance...

- 1) Keep a journal: Write three pages every morning. Doesn’t matter what. And carry it with you during the day, just in case.
- 2) Add ‘change’ to your everyday routine: Move your desk across the room. Walk a different street. Read someone else’s magazines (but ask first).
- 3) Chill: This might seem a little counter-intuitive, given what we’ve said so far, but once in awhile the best way to get an idea really is to STOP trying. Think about it. Have you ever gotten a great idea while driving? Or taking a walk? While in the shower? The subconscious mind is a powerful thing.
- 4) Paint, Draw, Play Music: Skills that force you to think creatively, but do things alien to your routine can jump-start a slumbering mind.
- 5) Think in squares and circles: Put one idea in the middle of a page. Write related ideas around it. Use lines and shapes to map out the connections.
- 6) Practice more problem solving: Just as musical people often learn languages faster, and people who do



crossword puzzles live longer and stay sharper, just spending more time trying to be a problem-solver in any capacity — outside of work — can help you get back into the habit work-wise, too. The mind, it turns out, is a muscle.

7) Pick a hero: Start by imitating the creative greats who went before you. What did they do? Pretend you're them and do it yourself. You might get mocked, but it's an excellent way to pick up good habits.

8) Read: This is an easy one. Anything that's in motion needs fuel and your brain is no exception. To get more out, you've got to pour more in. Does it matter what you read? Of course it does. But that resource might be different for different people, depending on what you're trying to do. Not just blocks and niche-specific websites, but history and science, good fiction, good non-fiction — you never know what's going to surprise you by being relevant.

9) And of course, there's going back to what you're working on like a beginner. Imagine what you would do if you'd never seen what you were about to sell before... and if you knew nothing about how to sell it. Where would you begin? Revisit the original pile of product samples, articles and news clips, testimonials, studies, and more. And revisit a basic how-to book on copywriting too. You might be surprised how squinted shut your eyes have become, and how they might re-open.

10) Talk to somebody, anybody: Get in a conversation with the people you don't usually talk to — or haven't talked to awhile — inside your work circles... and outside them. They've often thought through the things that puzzle you or have the energy you can't seem to summon on your own. And just by getting into a good conversation, some of that can easily transfer back to you.

As for me... well... I'm actually going to take off next week from the CR too, and I'll talk to you when I get back... hopefully, renewed, recharged, and ready to go.

Slow Thinking

How many times have you seen something interesting, say online, and immediately blogged about it... tweeted it... commented on it... etc...

Instead, why not slowly think about it?

Because you've got no time, right? You've got to move on to the next thing, right? If you don't, you'll be "behind," right?

Wrong.

In our society of "go, go, GO"... I'm starting to see a disturbing trend develop. Overall, the time we spend thinking about things is diminishing.

As a result, we see more "reactionary" thinking... instead of **proactive** thinking. We lost **deep** thinking (for the most part) awhile ago.

Let's get our deep, slow, methodical thinking back.

Don't get me wrong, there is a place for "on the spot" decisions, but *not* everywhere.

And by the way, if we DON'T slow down, and think... that is **exactly** what advertisers, marketers, and for that matter politicians... want. Because if you're not thinking deeply, clearly, slowly... the decisions you make will be based on a *limited* amount of information that seems convincing on the surface.

TV commercials, or even worse... **news media** anyone?

But you don't have to listen to me... and just for reference, [my book](#) and this blog are NOT meant to be academic writings. They are written from experience, and careful observation however. These things are happening, right now, as you read this.

So I encourage you, don't listen to me, do your own research... observe your own habits... I'm pretty sure you'll see what I'm referring to. 😊



Writing Slowly

Who said you had to blog every day?

They're wrong.

Write slowly.

I am.

The book, "Slow" will be published in 2014, but it might be slower than that.

As for this blog, why not [subscribe in a feed reader](#) *other* than Google Reader (which is going to pasture), and you'll be able to keep up with the slow updates. (*Feedreader.com, Feedly, RSS Owl etc...*)



Chapter 2 - Slow Technology

Slow Down: Let's Not Let Technology Replace Humanity

We have a gift.

It's called our **humanity**. It consists of our consciousness, ability to adapt, and our ability to think beyond primitive needs.

We live in an age where technology has developed to a point where it can replace certain parts of our humanity. For example, **email** replaces face to face meetings, a fact that [Stephen Petranek](#) reminded me of before a call we had last week.

Think about this one small way technology is actually damaging our human relationships. When you email someone, that email takes all of the emotion, tone, inflection, and understanding of the communication away.

You no longer have the necessary elements for a human, face to face conversation. And while we could replace that with say, a Skype conversation (video or audio), or as Stephen pointed out... a hologram conversation... we don't do that, do we?

Nope.

We send an email because it's convenient.

And in our overly progressed, overly efficient society... **convenience causes obsolescence**. What we create in technology that can bring us what we want more conveniently, typically makes the solution before it obsolete.

Email is making conversations more convenient.

Plus, we can "hide" behind our monitor, so we sometimes say hurtful things that we would NOT say face to face, or video to video.

This is a simple example.

Eventually, some of society is looking forward to a "singularity" where technology makes some of our biology obsolete.

I don't look forward to that. Because when biology, seen as an outdated model by singularists, gets replaced by technology... humanity ceases to exist.

Sure, technology can "perfect" a human form and processes... but it cannot replace humanity. Technology



needs to be left to evolve itself, not transcend to attempt to evolve humanity.

Slowing Technology Down

I'm an avid user of technology. I do think we need to take more control and start slowing technology down, however.

Here's what I mean...

I surf the Internet, I use mobile technology, I text, I Tweet, etc... so I'm not afraid of what the latest technology can do for us.

What I **am** afraid of is what some types of technology, and the attached mentalities behind buying, consuming, and using said technology... are doing TO us.

There have been spectacular innovations within the last 50 years. The Internet, the mobile phone, the social media, wearable technology, sensor technology etc...

All of it, good innovation in concept, and for the most part, in use.

That said, we need to slow down what I will call our "consumer mentality" when using various technologies... and instead adapt a more-focused "user mentality." Here's the difference:

Consumer mentality = "gotta get the latest update/version/gadget/color/Tweet/text/etc..." in order to claim my status within society.

User mentality = "think 'do we really need to upgrade?'/Tweeting valuable content, *not* what you had for breakfast/I don't NEED to get that latest text right away/I shut OFF my phone from time to time as appropriate/Bottom line, I USE the technology, it does NOT run my life at all, EVER."

Bottom line, life-saving, world-changing, problem solving technologies are a good thing. Standing in line so you can try and be first to get the latest iPhone 5s and get your 15 minutes of fame on YouTube... that is more of the consumer mentality.

We need to slow down our technology so we can use it, and quit letting it use us.

Their marketing and advertising is aimed at turning you into a consumer, so they can increase their quarterly revenue and churn out profits. They could care less if you lose a bit of your humanity in the process.

But, don't take it from me, look around the next time you walk down a city streets, or drive in traffic... how many people aren't paying attention?

We need to fix that. And, that is only one small example of many examples for the need to slow down our



technology. Focus more on the world-changing, problem solving, life saving stuff... and WAY less on getting a bigger camera in your phone.

The main inspiration for this rant, comes from the potential I see with our use of technology. I suppose I would like to see technology being developed and used in a way that makes this world a better place, not a tabloid news bite.

Slow Social Media

If you want to be, you could be connected 24/7.

In fact, there are some people that don't stop answering their phone, checking their status on whatever social media account, don't stop to talk to someone without connecting to something else etc...

Bullshit. This is complete and utter bullshit.

Why do that to yourself? Because some commercial on TV said you had to?

(Have you ever slowed down long enough to analyze WHY you do these things? It's OK, most people haven't read another book past high school, so you're not alone)

For the purposes of [my book](#), and this blog... I'm defining **social media** as any media form that you interact socially with someone or something else.

So, **slow social media** would mean slowing down long enough to have *a full conversation with everyone you talk to face to face, 100% of the time...* for example.

Can you imagine that?

Can you imagine turning your phone off, for most of the day, and picking times of the day where you immerse yourself in media and return phone calls.

I know, I know, you might miss something if you don't have it on 100% of the time, engaging your Twitter feed while you're talking to people, and acting what I like to call "bullshit busy."

(That means you're acting busy, for some reason, but it's really bullshit)

Who cares if you miss something? Was there some scheduling deity from up above that came down and decreed:

"You MUST answer the phone when it rings, you MUST answer every status update, or post your own... or even look for something to do online when there is nothing... you MUST!"

I think not.

And the sad thing is, we do this when we're talking to another person right across from us... or even worse... while we're driving a car.



Have you stopped to think what the other person is thinking when you do this?

Didn't think so... most people haven't.

And the REALLY sad thing is, this is just one sliver, one small example of our 24/7/365 society and social media use.

So slow down... try turning the phone off unless you CHOOSE to engage in social media and return voice messages. You'll probably find you really don't miss that much, and the weird feeling you get? That will go away.

The reward? Your time. 😊 And that's a reward that is becoming more and more valuable as we go along.

NOTE: I am active on social media, but slowly, at a pace I control... and I have to say the boredom I feel sometimes is a relief, *not* a negative consequence. As for the mobile phone, it stays off until **I** want to use it. Amazing concept eh?

ANOTHER NOTE: Yes, I used to be the 24/7/365 guy... and man I'm ashamed of myself for sinking to that level. Not to mention the health consequences. Let's slow down, and take back control of our lives folks.

As the title to this website says...

"In a world focused on speed, life begins by slowing down."

Slow Smart Phones

It's simple...

Turn the ringer off... turn the notifications off... and use the phone, don't let it use you.

Too many people are letting their phones use them... don't believe me?

Ask the next one who bumps into you because they were texting while walking down a crowded sidewalk.
Or the next one who is paying more attention to their smart phone than the other cars on the road while driving.

Or, the idiot who sits at a green light because whatever they are watching on their smart phone is more important than keeping traffic (which is already enough of an issue) flowing.

Or, the worst example... the person who does one of two things:

1. Starts talking to you, then interrupts that conversation saying "I've got to take this." No, they don't.
2. Has to text someone who is less than 500 feet away from them, instead of walking up to them and talking to them face to face.

Sad. Slow the smart phones down people.

Slow Google Plus

In a previous post, I had started a “[Minus Google Plus](#)” experiment.

Here is the result of that experiment... expressed in one Tweet:

Google Plus experiment result: couldn't get away from it. But will control the use of it to focus on the “content relationship.” [#GPlus](#)

— Joseph Ratliff (@JosephRatliff) [January 4, 2014](#)

NOTE: You can follow me (circle me) on Google Plus at <http://google.com/+JosephRatliff>

3 Steps To Slow #Twitter

I'm a "slow" [Twitter user](#).

You can be too, and the rewards are numerous, but one key reward is taking control of some of your time. That, and not getting wrapped up in some of the "high school drama" that can manifest itself on this social media tool.

With that in mind, I've prepared a short, easy to implement set of 3 steps (tips) to slow down your use of Twitter and reclaim your time:

1. Establish time parameters. It's so easy to get lost in the Twitter feed (especially if you use the #Discover feature in the top bar). Before you know it, you've wasted a ton of time clicking on meaningless links (in the big picture), looking at cat pictures, and retweeting stuff that probably won't get seen anyhow (if you think your Tweets get seen by a TON of people, unless you have 100,000 followers... probably not).

2. Get a focus, plan your use of Twitter. Don't just log on and say to yourself "*Yeah, I'm going to only spend 45 minutes on Twitter today.*" You'll end up spending more. So, have a focus, a purpose, for logging on... and make it as specific as you can.

Good examples are connecting with a specific person, using Twitter to research a specific topic or seeking a specific piece of information, and be careful with this one... using the feed to discover a news bite (if you're a journalist, or your vocation centers around news).

3. Don't use Twitter every day. Yep, I said it. You don't have to log on every single day. This is one I'm still working on myself, but I'm getting better at it.

Now, you might be saying to yourself "*But I'll miss something if I don't at least, CHECK Twitter once a day.*" No, you won't. And even **if** you did, and that's a BIG "if"... it won't be the end of the world. Twitter works tomorrow as well as it does today... until it quits working, that is... then NO ONE will have the "advantage" you're thinking about.

So there you have it, 3 steps to slow #Twitter. I hope you'll try these with an open mind, because there are much better things to do with the little time you have on this Earth.

Like, GASP, write a letter longer than 140 characters... and GASP AGAIN... **mail** it to them. 😊



The Story Of The Snail

If you've noticed, there is a snail on top of the world in the header graphic for this website.

Yes, it sits right there on top of the world.

Aside from the obvious thought that the snail is there because they ARE "slow"... or that "slow and steady wins the race"... there are much deeper reasons a snail exists on top of the world.

This is that story...

I thought to myself one day... *"What if that snail had the ability to think on a basic human level? Not evolved, critical thinking, but just enough so that snail could express their thoughts to me."*

They would feel on top of the world... wouldn't they?

To be given the gift of human thought, the ability to think and express themselves, this snail would feel eternally blessed to have been given the gift of **evolution**.

Have you ever stopped and thought about the gifts like these that you have been given? Well, the snail in this story, and on the cover of my book, has. It feels like it's on top of the world (and in the header graphic, it is).

Now, the snail moves so slowly, anything it would try to do to express itself would have to top a short list of the things this snail want to accomplish, right? And, depending on the type of snail, we're talking about a time period of only [2 to 7 years](#) (in the wild, up to 25 years in captivity) to get whatever this snail wants to do accomplished.

In short, there's NO time like the present, especially when compared to our average human lifespan of almost 80 years, currently.

And, this snail moves at an astoundingly slow rate of 1 millimeter per second... so I suppose a "snail's pace" really does apply here.

For the sake of argument, and for this story, we're going to say that this snail can really only pick one thing, maybe two things, that it can really focus on accomplishing for its life.

We're talking about the thing, or perhaps the couple of things it wants to do to truly feel on top of the world. Also, it doesn't have time, nor can it make time for doing much else other than focusing on what we'll call its "dream."

Notice, that the snail in the header of this website IS in fact on top of the world?

It moved slowly, because that's natural for a snail to do, but it also accomplished its one or two things.

And that's the lesson of the snail on the cover of [my book](#).

It hasn't reached the top of the world yet, but it's going to, because it's following its own "[slow manifesto](#)"... one free of technological advancement, one free of distractions, one that I'm sure will be loaded with [genuine connection](#) (because heck, it doesn't have time to create anything else).

We need to be human, but think like this snail. Yes, it's obvious we can move faster than the snail, we are the evolved species etc... but we can still think like the snail.

How?

It starts with picking your one or two things.

Quit trying to be everything to everyone (you can't), quit trying to please everyone (you can't), and quit trying to do everything everyday (you can't).

Slow down, do your one or two things... get good at that, in fact get so good at that you'll be able to share it with other people in the world. You know, the ones that really "get" you. Then, show them how to find their one or two things, how to slow down... how to tune out the marketing, the unnecessary, the critics.

Do that one or two things you have time for in your 80 or so trips around the sun. Obviously, we'll expect bigger things from you because you can move faster than 1 millimeter per second... but let's keep this relative, OK?

Sure, you can use the tools and technology needed to do your one or two things. The snail used its tools, and whatever technology it was capable of using. Of course, because you're human, and because technology at your disposal is just a little bit more advanced, we'll expect your one or two things to reflect that.

But don't get distracted by unnecessary [upgrading](#) encouraged by marketing [companies](#), don't fall prey to endless emails sitting in your inbox, and shut off the damn phone once in awhile. Don't forget to acknowledge your loved ones, your friends, and enjoy life for what it is (not what marketing makes it to be).

Because in the end, we're all snails in the eyes of the evolved life form that looks at us and our ability to walk about 5 mph, do all this quantum mechanics stuff, and explore less than 4% of space... and thinks...

"Oh they're so cute, those little humans running around acting like they're important. They'll learn soon enough."



You see, the little snail on top of the world in the header graphic, I never wrote the world you see was Earth, did I? It's that *snail's* little world.

Kind of puts *our* world into perspective in the grand scheme of things, doesn't it?

We're just on this [pale blue dot](#), trying to make our way and understand things better. We're trying to explore, engage, connect, work, play, love, etc...

But are we really, truly, deep down doing it the way each of us wants to?

Are we following this snail's example? I mean, they have been on this planet for **over 500 million years**... so I think the snail, this snail, has a lot to teach us... if we bother to slow down enough to learn.



Chapter 3 - Slow Culture

"Slow" Is Not An Excuse

I touched on this in the [Manifesto](#), but here is a deeper explanation of what I mean when I say “slow is not an excuse to/for _____.”

Because I started a blog before I actually published this book, I’ve already gotten email questions like:

- “Joe, won’t ‘going slow’ mean a lack of productivity?”
- “Joe, isn’t this an excuse to be lazy, or an excuse not to get stuff done?”
- “Joe, I don’t want to be one of those people who is thought of as a ‘slowpoke’... so how can I implement the principles of Slow?”

And variations of these types of concerns.

They are valid concerns, for sure... but slow isn’t an excuse to use, it’s more of a **mindset** behind living more *deliberately*, more *consciously*, more *critically*...

... instead of rushing to the next thing in the interest of some society-imposed notion we all have to produce as **much** as we can, as **many** as we can, or as **quickly** as we can.

And that mindset can be extrapolated to mean many things. For example, as it applies to upgrading your technology it can mean thinking and being aware of your need to upgrade, instead of [upgrading for the sake of upgrading](#) (or *worse* because everyone else is doing it, for those Apple fans out there).

It can apply to making products, striving for quality (slow) versus quantity or “mass produced for the masses” (not slow).

And on, and on...

Slow isn’t an excuse for anything, it’s not something you choose to “not do”... instead it’s a methodology, a mindset, for “doing” at a pace where you’re in complete control of the outcome (not marketing, society, emotions etc...).

Be in control of your thinking, eating, upgrading, manufacturing, political views, etc... and don’t let them control you. To do that, **slow down**.

THAT is what slow is.



Forget The News

You've **got** to watch the news each day right?

You **have** to be “informed” right?

WRONG.

News is junk food for the brain. You [should avoid it](#), as much as possible.

Since when was it a requirement to watch it? Who made some “rule” that said you “have to be informed?”

It isn't a requirement, and you don't have to be. Besides, why on earth would you want to be informed about the crap that makes the news anyhow? How has it EVER contributed to your life in a meaningful way?

And finally... what could you do with the hour you waste on watching it each day?

Genuine Connection

I suppose if there was only one overriding principle I have for writing this book “*The Slow Manifesto*”... it’s to once again encourage **genuine connection** between humans.

Genuine connection doesn’t solve all problems, it’s a tall challenge, and requires a MAJOR rethinking of some of our Western traditions, but I think it’s worth it.

And, I like tackling big problems. 😊

So, I think slow technology is a good thing. I like progress, so long as it’s focused, useful for the world, and has minimal side effects for society as a whole.

One side effect of digital technology, for example, is that I see it taking our genuine connections and reducing them down to bite sized “if I have time for it” interactions.

Some might challenge:

“But yeah, I have complete control of the technology I use, and can form genuine relationships when I choose.”

Could you do better if you honestly analyzed your use of technology and focused on deeper and more genuine connection?

In short, no trade off... no “control” of technology needed, you instead focus on deepening your personal, face to face relationships... and completely push the use of your smart phone, the Internet, your tablet etc... into the *background*?

Now how does that “form genuine relationships when I choose” sound? A little different?

And, I’m not, nor would I ever suggest you never use digital technology. In fact, all I’m suggesting is it never becomes your primary focus, that you’re genuine in your claim that you’re in control of it.

Because most people, aren’t. I thought I was until my “awakening” of sorts back in March 2011. I won’t bore you with the details of the awakening itself, but as for my “control” of the use of technology...

Not. Even. Close.

I was online into the wee hours of the night, justifying any use of down time with hours plugging away online... and as Twitter really skyrocketed into popularity, as was Facebook, then Google Plus... let’s just say I was just controlling how many minutes I spent on each.

Not focusing on how much time I spent with the family, my wife, etc... Granted, we didn't have problems, and we were both using technology about the same way, but once we focused on **genuine connection**, our family life got even better.

Have you ever stopped to look at the birds? Not glance at them just to "check it off a list" mind you, but truly stop and look at what kinds of birds fly around your area?

I found quite a few varieties.

Have you ever stopped to think about the [gifts we've already been given](#)? Have you ever enjoyed them? Not just once, or twice, but as a regular part of your life?

This isn't some "checklist item" that you complete to say "I did it!"... no... this is a lifelong process of celebrating your being a human.

Now, what about connecting with other humans... genuine connection?

Genuine connection defined: a connection with another human being where you can comfortably share the intimate details (not necessarily sexual) of your life, and not feel embarrassed. This person reciprocates that same relationship.

Obviously, it's an interesting challenge to have 1500 genuine connections of that nature, right?

Social networks seem to promote "connection" with other people, but I would qualify that as a **superficial connection** at first. Bits and bytes that say you're "connected."

I think we've come to a point where the "genuine" part is being eroded away, not completely mind you, because we will always have close friends and family (if you're close to your family).

I think "genuine" connection is a *much* harder place to get to these days, because of the time and energy (and priority) we're placing on maintaining the more superficial connections. Some might say this has always been the case when new technologies are created (like the telephone, for example)... but I challenge that by saying we have those technologies AND the new ones coming available.

I'm speaking in the sheer volume of ways to connect. The number of choices we have to communicate leaves us texting each other when we're only 50 feet away from each other, for example.

Or, worse... we start prioritizing our connections to fit as many of them as possible into what amounts to a small time frame.

Where is the time to create and develop a genuine connection if you are stuffing emails, texts, phone calls, and all of the little bits of communication into the same 8, 10, 14 or even 20 hours we all have in a day? (20



hours for those that don't sleep much)

If those texts, emails, phone calls etc... all were focused on one connection with someone, this *could* be a good way to use technology to foster genuine connection. But come on now, tell me you do that?

Where does your multitude of daily communications take you? Not towards one, or two people... and the relationship with them... but towards **many** different conversations, **being made shorter** because people have more ways to reach us.

*(BTW, just because they have more ways **to** reach us, doesn't mean we have to **respond** to those ways to reach us, but that's for another post, or perhaps another chapter in the book)*

So, let's use a "get more out of less" approach here...

Let's take each conversation, and relax, slow down, and deepen the connections we have.

Let's focus on those relationships we want to build, but not limit those relationships to texts and Tweets. Have lunch, make it an hour instead of 30 minutes, eat slowly... and most importantly talk face to face instead of in bits and bytes.

Because the next genuine connection could reward you with the richest experience life has to offer. I hope you get to enjoy as many of these as possible.

Slow Environmental Progress

Actually, **stop and reverse** production in oil and other environmental impacts.

“Erinaceous” on Reddit, a very intelligent person, left a rather grim forecast of sorts.

Here’s part of it, with a link to the whole comment directly. If you can read all of this and NOT want to reverse progress, I don’t know what else to say:

The only low hanging fruit left is [degrowth and conservation](#)[1] . Any growth paradigm, even a 100% renewable paradigm leads to overshoot and isn’t remotely possible within our time frame. To stay below 450 ppm/carbon in the atmosphere would require a 130 fold improvement in dollar GDP per gram carbon of emissions. Given that anything that costs a dollar represents roughly 7 MJ of energy there’s basically no way to make those numbers square unless we stop growing the economies and working on poverty reduction, relocalization, ecological agroforestry, rebuilding soil and working less.

That’s kind of the interesting part actually. The way we get out of this mess is by having more time and economies based around art, culture and the humanities ie. the parts of culture that can produce value with very little energy inputs.

What’s the alternative to oil? Local food production based around perennial vegetables and tree crops would require very little energy input and produce as much nutrition per acre as energy intensive agriculture. Plus it would build soil and sequester carbon. This seems like a no brainer. The 500 km salad is gone. I mean it’s gone anyways when oil tops 160-190\$/bbl.

Kill the military. The military uses more oil that the entire civilian domestic consumption. Getting rid of that buys us a few years.

[The whole comment is here.](#)

Slow Consumption

If we keep treating ourselves as a product, companies will have no trouble selling cheap and crappy products to us.

We have to demand more, of them **and** ourselves.

And that brings me to **slow consumption**.

Let me ask you a question...

Do you have a garage or storage unit full of “stuff”? Have you touched that stuff in the last year? Six months?

If you haven't, get rid of it, and most importantly QUIT replacing it. You don't need to buy more stuff, if you're not using the stuff you have.

Keeping it “just in case?” Yeah, I thought you would think that.

How often has “just in case” happened? Yep... my point exactly. And even if it had happened, if “just in case” only happens once a decade (or a little less), could you possibly find a different way to get through the situation?

(No, I'm not talking about “go bags” or emergency kits here, quit trying to make excuses for your laziness)

Slow consumerism (or consumption) is not blindly getting rid of everything, but it's a careful and honest analysis of keeping and using **only** what you need to live comfortably (and being careful about justifying “why” you're keeping stuff, most likely, you need to get rid of it).

Because here's the deal, here's where we have a little honest talk about your stuff...

- Nobody really (deep down) cares what you wear. The latest “fashions” are just marketing designed to get you to buy more clothes.
- Nobody really (deep down) cares if you have the latest iPhone (or other gadget), unless THEY went and upgraded first... then THEY care about themselves, not your upgrade.
- Nobody really cares about whether or not you have the “tool to do the job” buried somewhere in your garage. In fact, how many times have you actually been able to find that tool when you really need it? Thought so.
- And even if you COULD find that tool, by the way, if you only use that tool once every 5 years... why is it taking up space in your garage?
- In short... playing “beat the Jones-es” is a dangerous and expensive game to play, and marketing from



companies is only designed to get you to buy more stuff, **they don't give a shit** about what you have to do to maintain that/store that/replace that stuff later on.

Slow your consumption down people... your wallet, your stress level, and the landfills across our country will thank you.

Plus, maybe those companies would learn a valuable lesson about creating **quality** if us consumers weren't so stupid as to buy their useless crap all the time, right?

We vote with our dollar, so let's vote for the good stuff, and cut out the "mass produced for the masses" stuff OK?

Slow Politics

We rush to our vote every four years we elect a President, I think.

Why?

Because we vote “Republican”... or “Democrat” when we shouldn’t focus on that at all. We need to slow down... and vote for the PERSON we feel is going to lead our country to prosperity, not the corrupted and “paid for” country we have currently.

I’ve said before on other writings, [I’m MyPartisan](#).

But this isn’t about me... this is about you... and going **slow** enough to think about what our vote means.

Bottom line, we need to go slow with our vote, quit listening to the BS on the TV and the media, and make our own fucking decision.

We need to change the idea behind this quote:

“If voting changed anything, they’d make it illegal.”

~Emma Goldman

We need our voting, or whatever we put in place to replace voting... to change something.

Slow down, and think about the politics of your country.

Slow Religion

This is probably going to be a touchy subject.

On top of that, I've been bouncing back and forth between publishing this article, and leaving it unpublished.

It's important to note that NO offense is intended towards **any** set of beliefs here, or the people that believe them etc... and that I **personally** respect **all** opinions on this subject of religion.

For the purposes of this article, I also expect professional and courteous comments/discussion, anything other than that will be deleted (as it applies with any article on this blog).

Let's get to it...

Slow religion means that no matter what you believe, or don't believe... no matter where your faith lies, what book you've read etc...

Slow down.

Our differences do not need to lie in religious (or non-religious) beliefs.

In fact, it seems to me that "religion" is the wrong venue to "be different" on. We need to slow down, and think critically, **before** attacking another person based on their beliefs or religious disposition.

To me, it seems like those that choose to fight (sometimes, wars) based on religious beliefs (or non-religious beliefs) are just... wrong. I understand that might sound discriminatory, but I'm pointing to the *fighting* itself, and the decision to fight against each other (in some extreme cases, killing each other) over what we believe or don't believe religiously.

Seems trivial to me (not the killing and death, the decision and behavior *to* kill). If you like to sit on the couch, because you believe the next episode of *The Tomorrow People* is important, but your neighbor wants to go out and run every day... do we start wars or fight each other over that?

Nope.

I understand that is overly simplified, but...

Haven't we evolved beyond this need to (en)force our beliefs (or non-beliefs) on others, as human beings part of the *same race*?

Nope. Unfortunately we haven't.

And we need to “slow down” as it pertains to religion.

We’re different enough as humans, and we **don’t** know everything about creation, the universe, each other etc... and we need to start acting like it.

Believe what you want to believe...

... but *don’t* force others to change their mind about what they believe...

... and let’s focus on the things that matter in our current form, skin and bones.

The rest will happen according to whatever you believe, but even if it doesn’t, whatever it is **will** happen anyway. We’re too insignificant to control it within the scope of the Universe itself.

For now, we are all going to die at some point, that much is **guaranteed** (although we might extend that in the future). What happens after death, will either happen according to what we believe or it won’t.

But that ISN’T something we need to kill each other for, it **isn’t** something we need to discriminate against each other for, and it certainly *isn’t* something we should be wasting our time arguing about, quite frankly.

There are **much** bigger fish to fry... like learning how to be *humans*. In my opinion, we’re still “rookies” when you consider the big picture.

Slow religion down. Believe if you want to believe, don’t if you don’t want to. But don’t hate or discriminate against another person for what *they* believe. That’s just wrong. We are only a small drop in this huge cosmos called the Universe, no matter who (or what process) created that Universe (or even *how* it was created).

We. Don’t. Matter. In. The. Big. BIG. Picture.

The Universe is going to hum along LONG after we’re gone... regardless of our beliefs or what happens to be “right.”

And just because we might *believe* we have an idea of how such cosmic and universal events (and the people part of those events) have transpired... in the end, in the big picture, we just don’t know. No matter what any books that have been written on religion, or otherwise, might say.

Even our science community itself will never answer all questions, or even a *small portion* of those questions, because there are just WAY too many questions to be asked.

So, let’s slow down religion (and politics, and, and and...) and just enjoy each other’s company in this short ride we call life (whether it ends up being eternal or not).



We only need one “label” for existing on this planet peacefully... that of **Human (and all of the imperfections, good and bad, that come along with being human).**

On Progress

We strive to make more and more **progress** as a society, civilization, whatever.

We must move forward, not backward. We have to upgrade, not remain stable. We must go faster, not slower.

We must stop doing this.

Not just for ourselves, but for the world as a whole. When is it good enough? When do we have “enough” technological progress to say “Hey, let’s stop progressing and use this for awhile.”

There are obvious exceptions to this “slow and stop *all* progress” mindset. We have lives to save, an environment we’ve destroyed (but won’t fully admit to doing so), and a future to think about.

We **can’t** stop every single form of progress in every area of our civilization. It would be foolish to expect that.

But we **can** stop all harmful industry, fuels, energy, greed, “efficiency” (notice the quotes), and on ... and on. We could start the process of actually stopping all of this now, and turn the page to a new era of our civilization.

It will require resisting old, damaging, expensive (in the big picture, not just \$) forms of industry we’ve progressed past for a long time... but we can do it.

We just have to act like we’re capable of as a human civilization. It might be uncomfortable for a little while, but afterwards, we will enter an era of advanced civilization. We might just biologically evolve as humans too.

Slow Privacy

With the recent developments [concerning](#) the [NSA](#)... we have to have a big, unified, and thorough discussion on privacy.

Slow privacy.

The difference between privacy and “slow” privacy lies in how anything concerning the privacy of the citizens of our country is presented.

Take Facebook for example... they push the boundaries of our privacy all the time. They’ll come out with a feature, seemingly wait to get push back on that feature if it violates our idea of privacy... then finally make a change.

It’s a process.

That’s “regular” privacy.

Slow privacy would be the same scenario, but instead of Facebook just pushing out a feature, and trying to push its version of privacy on the world... instead they go more slowly... and *listen* to the community **FIRST**, to see if that feature is even necessary or could be improved in a “beta” mode that doesn’t affect the **1 BILLION** accounts in that community.

Go slowly.

Slow privacy **ALSO** pertains to giving us, the users, the consumers... a means to set boundaries that **ALL** companies, media, Government etc... **MUST** abide by. **A set of “privacy terms” for us as users.**

Because let’s face it, every one of us is different in our expectations of privacy... some people are willing to reveal more, and some less, of ourselves online and offline. These terms would also immediately establish **ownership** of said data (like emails, posts, etc...).

So, these terms would tell other companies **EXACTLY** how they can use our data, if we want to be private... we can be. If we don’t, we don’t have to be.

Just because people want their privacy, [doesn’t mean they](#) want to hide anything, and actually privacy establishes these “terms.”

Slow Society And Our Children

So, as we start to close the book on another year, I want to offer you a thought that might change the way we think about our society and how “evolved” we think we are.

(HINT: We’re not that evolved at all)

I have written about “[how we need to be kids again](#)” in a previous post, but this time, I’m taking issue with our **society** (as a whole, think really big picture).

Society robs us of our most human traits, including the “child” within each of us.

Society “tells” us to act in certain ways, and while everything it “tells” us isn’t necessarily “bad,” if we listen to society too closely ... we get robbed yet again.

Society defined for this article: All of the systems, institutions, media, and even some people who promote one (or a very limited) systematized, homogeneous, particular way of doing something for a number of human beings (in some cases, mindlessly promote).

These systems, institutions, media and people do not change their endless (and mindless) ways of promoting these ideas, even in the face of critical evidence, either “at all” or until a major revolution occurs.

In short, no critical thinking is allowed, nor are individuals who promote alternative viewpoints. The “system” (loosely defined) simply continues to operate.

This “society” is the one that robs us of the “child” inside each of us, aiming instead to produce some ill-defined productive “member of society.”

The “child” within each of us is that never ending curiosity, that [creativity](#), that imagination which allows us to define the world we live in.

Society robs us of that.

Within society, there are concepts known as “[real life](#),” “growing up,” and becoming a “productive member of society.”

Our education system (as a whole, with certain teachers as exceptions) tells us from age 4 (or so) to “sit and behave,” “be good little boys and girls,” and to do things the same way.

It was a system that flourished in an age that needed factory workers for factories, “good little boys and girls” to punch in, do your job, clock out and go home. Repeat the process, over and over again.



The rest of society makes us dependent on that “job,” so dependent that advancing [technology](#) that might replace those jobs freaks people out.

All of that “society” **sterilizes** the child right out of each and every one of us (with a few exceptions). That society teaches us to be “good at school,” good at taking tests and checking boxes, preparing us for life’s “factory.”

(NOTE: “factory” means different things depending on what time context you put it in)

Life goes on and on, we go to school, get a job, perhaps getting buried in debt under the illusion of “secondary education.” We might find someone to love, have a family, get a “good job” (that we hate), and wash, rinse, repeat.

Society’s “machine” just keeps churning out product (that’s you, me, and our children).

“It’s not safe.” Society says. *“There’s a new war.”* Society says. *“Sit and behave.”* Society says.

Society says a lot of things...

- “The new i-Phone 6 came out.”
- “You could win the lottery.”
- “Eat these enormous portions.”
- “Take your pills.”
- “Don’t spank your children.”
- “It’s okay to spank your children.”
- “Get back on the couch and watch our ads!”
- “Get in line.”
- “Yo.”
- And on, and on ... the list is almost endless.

Society is taking the “child” right out of our children.

Once we amass enough “experience,” enough wisdom, enough of societal influence ... the homogenization is complete. We lose that “child” in us, and few are lucky to ever find it again (usually through some traumatic life experience).

Now, don’t get me wrong, I don’t think we can all run around aimlessly ... without focusing our inner child in some fashions. But I don’t think the current version of society is helping us any longer.

It’s outdated, it’s slow, and it’s too rigid, too inflexible.

It doesn’t allow our best traits as humans to shine through (enough), and it suppresses our desires. It uses



fear to herd us like life's cattle towards a completely imaginary barn.

It dictates how we should live. It treats us like sheep.

And we're better than that, don't you think?

We're more intelligent, more connected (although we need to work on the depth of that connection), and have more tools and resources at our fingertips now than at any time in our history.

But that's not good enough.

We need to become kids again, and we need to quit taking the "child" out of our children.

We need to explore more, become more curious, and think more critically.

We need to get our heads out of our gadgets, learn how to connect with each other on a deeper level (digital connection is superficial at best), and quit defining our lives in a binary way.

We need to think for ourselves, learn how to write better again, and quit thinking there is only one right way to do anything.

In short, we need to evolve as humans.

We only have one short experiment to conduct (civilization), and our children are our best shot at success in that experiment.

Let's quit robbing them of that chance at success.

About The Book The Author



My name is **Joseph Ratliff**, author of the book *“The Slow Manifesto – In a world focused on speed, life begins when you slow down”*.

Since 2001, I’ve participated in a number of businesses, worked with hundreds of people, been a part of many teams etc...

I’ve also observed people at a distance, in general, going about their daily lives.

One thing I’ve noticed, is people need to slow down. I was frustrated by my observations to the point where I decided to devote a book to the subject.

And don’t get me wrong, I was “there.” I used to get gadget after gadget, upgrade after upgrade, stuff and more stuff etc...

... I used to eat fast food, watch fast TV, go shopping, had a job in retail etc... etc...

Then 2011 hit... and in March, I got a very BAD norovirus. If you’ve ever gotten it, you know what I’m talking about. After I got better, I had serious digestive problems.

To make a long story short, because of this and other health issues like my weight at the time, some serious life changes were needed. So I decided to make several HUGE life changes, all at once...

- I lost weight (74 lbs in 12 months from March 2011- March 2012). To this day, my weight has been kept off.
- I changed my eating habits, stopping pop, ice cream, cakes, etc... and I made these changes PERMANENTLY.
- I **slowed down** my eating, enjoying the new foods I was eating (more fruit, vegetables, lean meat etc...).
- I **slowed down my life** in general, no more writing “emergency” copy projects, taking life one day at a time, getting plenty of rest etc...



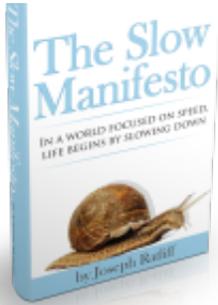
- **I adopted a minimalist mindset.** I'm not an extreme minimalist, with less than 100 things and traveling like a nomad, but I don't shop nearly as much any longer, and I've reduced the "stuff" in my house by at least 70% or more.
- And on, and on...

I tell you this not to brag... but because if I can do it... so can you. And that is what I wrote the book for, to encourage others to do the same.

It's not for everyone.

So that's it... enough about me. What about you? What are you going to do with what you learn about "slow"?

The Book



Right now, we live in a world of “fast.”

You can talk and text at the same time, and according to the TV commercial, that’s a good thing (it isn’t).

You have to eat faster, work longer hours, buy the latest car, the latest computer, the latest cell phone... because you might be “cool” if you do all these things... right? And “not so cool” if you don’t.

Come on, admit it... you go fast, and do all these things, get all these things etc... for status in our society.

That’s where we go wrong.

We need to move **slowly**.

We need to be able to read past page 18 (on average) in a book, we need to slow down and appreciate nature, our resources, our already given riches. We need to live with less stuff, and more enjoyment of each other.

We need not to live life at a pace that gives us heart attacks, that takes our precious attention away from those we love.

And here are the big ones...

We need to slow down and pay attention to what is happening in the world, because those that live in the U.S. (like me) are about to have their country taken away from them by greedy politicians, bankers, and some insane wealthy people.

We need to slow down and think critically, because the future of the world will depend on it. We need to slow down, and quit being lazy, hiding behind our monitors and simply “Tweeting this” and calling it good.

The revolution won’t be tweeted... it needs personal interaction folks, so sitting in your armchair and pushing Tweet buttons won’t cut it (although it does help, a little).



We need to slow down. And that is what “The Slow Manifesto” is all about... how to do just that. Book is now available on [this website](#), free to read (supported by your donations).

Resources

Book resources for [The Slow Manifesto](#) are linked below:

(all links open in a new window)

1. [In Praise of Slowness by Carl Honore](#) – The book that inspired me to write about “slow” and what it means to our lives.
2. You can continue your travels today by reading [this blog post](#) (*opens in a new window*), which inspired my initial investigation into the concept of a slow lifestyle... then I recommend downloading my free short guide titled [“Life As I See It.”](#)
3. I’ve discovered this is a **huge** movement of sorts, from [slow food](#) to different [ways to approach speeding laws](#). You’ll discover, as I did, that we’ve deviated from a much simpler time in our evolution as humans.
4. [The World Institute of Slowness](#) – Exactly what it says.
5. [“Avoid The News” essay by Rolf Dobelli](#) (PDF). News is junk food for the brain, to slow down this part of your life, I highly recommend reading this essay.

More to come as I dive deeper and research the movement itself...