PERSONAL & BUSINESS

The Rising Cost of a Quiet Hour

By **Keith Parsons, CWNE #3** · 2026-07-06 · originally on LinkedIn

The last two months I built a team. But it is still just me.

Working with AI, a set of agents I direct like specialists, I now produce like an entire company. Articles, tools, an app across five platforms, research, graphics, all of it moving at once. What used to take an entire team a week I can get through in a day. It is genuinely thrilling, and I am proud of it.

Here is the part I did not expect.

That same efficiency quietly re-priced the rest of my life. A quiet hour on the couch with my family used to just be a quiet hour. Now, in the back of my head, I know what I could produce in that hour. So the hour costs more. Not less valuable, more expensive. The more efficient I get at the work, the higher the price tag on everything that is not the work.

I will say the uncomfortable part out loud, because I suspect I am not the only one feeling it. I get more satisfaction, and a lot more public credit, from the work than I do from being a good husband and a good dad. The work has a scoreboard. Kudos arrive consistently and often. Being present for my wife and my kids has no scoreboard, no notifications, no round of applause.

I know which one matters more. Yet, I do not always feel it in the moment, and that gap bothers me.

I spent the past two weeks in Peru on a bucket-list vacation with my wife to see Machu Picchu, the floating islands of Lake Titicaca, and the jungle canopy of the Amazon... and it was wonderful. But my greatest satisfaction was working with my team in the hotel at night, or in airport lounges waiting for the next flight. I don't feel truly satisfied with my day unless I can get some work done.

I do NOT have this solved, and I am not going to end with a pithy tidy lesson about balance, because I have not figured that one out yet. The scoreboard is loud and instant. Being a good husband and father is quiet, and it pays out over decades, in people who are not keeping score of you at all. Those are two different things being measured, and the loud one is not the important one.

These tools have made me more capable than I have ever been. They also made me notice, more sharply than ever, what all that capability is supposed to be in service of.

So I will ask the people living some version of this too: how do you keep the quiet hour from feeling expensive?

I would genuinely like to know.

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