

Why You're Tired All the Time

Over a drinking fountain at church, a friend asked me if I was enjoying the summer break from teaching. I had a newly formulated answer for her, after much thought these last few months.

"I love teaching, but I am enjoying the rest from the complexities of the job," I said.

Truth was, I was very sad for the year to come to a close. My students make me smile, and I am driven by my daily goal of becoming an excellent teacher.

But teaching is exhausting work—so difficult. It requires my own mastery of the subject, classroom organization, behavior management, building rapport with students, challenging the high achievers, engaging the students who are bored, setting goals, writing curriculum, creating engaging activities one can't find in a textbook, keeping a long range vision while presenting information in chewable chunks, doing administrative assignments and caring about colleagues.

It is a difficult job, to say the least.

I love it.

It makes me weary and stressed. (And I think it makes my husband weary and stressed.)

But I've been chewing on Malcolm Gladwell's words since I read them last summer, in *Outliers: The Story of Success*. He wrote a fascinating chapter about rice farming. Did you know rice farms put in 3,000 hours a year? Malcolm uses the word "staggering" to describe the amount of work they do. But the whole chapter is about success, and part of rice farming success is because the work is extremely complex and exacting.

My new discovery: There is a deep satisfaction to be found in

doing a complex job.

I think that when we run into something that is exhausting because of its complexity, we feel the fatigue and often react with complaining and longing for the weekend. But toward the end of the year, when I felt worn out by the challenges in my classroom, I stepped back and thought about how rewarding teaching is *because* it is so hard.

Enough about Spanish, though. What I really want you to think about is the complexities of your life. Maybe your job is extremely exacting. For sure your relationships are. Have you ever thought about what a complex task we undertake when we get married? When we parent children? What about when we have more than one child, and each child has their own personality? If you're a homemaker, think about what an incredibly complex job it is to maintain a home and all the relationships within it.

That's why we're tired.

But isn't it awesome? Isn't there deep satisfaction when you start mastering the intricate details of whatever it is you do all day long?

Rice farmers spend 3,000 hours a year to be successful at something that is rewarding—what do you think of that? Moms with little kids are saying, “Try 3,000 hours a week, sister!”

We are instructed in God's word to be thankful people, so I encourage you to look at your challenging job, whatever that is, and thank the Lord when it wears you out. Thank Him for the intricacies of the work He has put in front of you, because in conquering this complex job, you will find a rewarding satisfaction. It's a good kind of tired, don't you think?