

Many DID Die Wishing They Spent More Time At the Office



Two dozen people's last words wishing they had worked or could work more.

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Source: Pexels, Public Domain

It's often been claimed that "No one died wishing they spent more time at the office."

That doesn't comport with some of my friends and colleagues. But that's anecdotal so, for this article, I reviewed all 3,500 entries in the book, [*Last Words of Notable People*](#).

While many people's last words are religious, about their spouse, ending their pain, or that dying feels good, enough speak about wishing they could work more to cast doubt on, "No one died wishing they spent more time at the office."

Whether or not we choose to work more, it certainly seems we should be more accepting of diversity of how people choose to live their lives rather than pathologize work-centric people as "[workaholic](#)" or "out of balance." Indeed, per my anecdotal experience and the names on the following list, many highly contributory people, already lifelong hard workers, wished they had worked more or could work more.

Of course, people with less potential for accomplishment might well feel that work-life balance is wiser.

In any event, here are two dozen people's last words that suggest they wish they had

"spent more time at the office" or at least that work, not pleasure, relationships, nor [spirituality](#), was on their mind at that final moment

Isaac Babel, Russian anti-Stalin activist: "I am only asking for one thing--Let me finish my work."

George Beard, American physician: "I hope others will carry on my work."

Olavo Bilac, Brazilian activist and writer: "Get me coffee. I'm going to write."

Jerry Boyd, U.S. boxer and writer: "Doc, get me a little more time. I gotta finish my book."

Francois-Paul Brueys d'Aigalliers, French admiral: "An admiral ought to die giving orders."

Buddha: "Strive with earnestness."

Robert Burton, Oxford University Vicar: "Be not idle."

George Catlin, American artist: "What will happen to my gallery?"

Jane Arminda Delano, American nurse: "What about my work? I must get back to my work!"

Louis Desaix de Veygoux, French nobleman: "My only regret in dying is to have perished before having done enough to live in the recollection of posterity."

Edith Hamilton, American historian: "I haven't felt up to writing but now I think I am going to finish that book on Plato."

Sidney Herbert, British statesman: "I have not done all I wished..."

Katsushika Hokusai, Japanese artist: "If Heaven had only granted me five more years, I could have become a real painter."

Hubert Humphrey, U.S. Vice President: "I feel I have so much to do yet."

Albert Michelson, American physicist: "The following is a report on the measurement of the velocity of light made at the Irvine..."

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Edmund Husserl, German philosopher: "Oh, I've seen something wonderful. Quick, write it down!"

Guillaume Lekeu, Belgian composer. "So many works unfinished---My quartet!"

Huey Long, Governor of Louisiana: "Don't let me die. I have so much to do."

Maria Montessori, founder of Montessori schools, at 81: "Am I no longer of use?"

Pablo Picasso at 91: "And now I must go back to work." He painted that night until 3 AM and then died.

Pope Pius XI at 82 having been pope for 17 years: "I still have so many things to do."

Charles Sumner, abolitionist: "You must take care of the bill, my bill, the great civil rights bill, and don't let it fail!"

Elisabeth Ten Boom, World War II Dutch resistance figure: "So much work to do."

Osamu Tezuka, Japanese manga artist: "I'm begging you, let me work!"

What do I hope my last words will be? "Barbara, I love you. And keep doing *true* good, lots of true good."