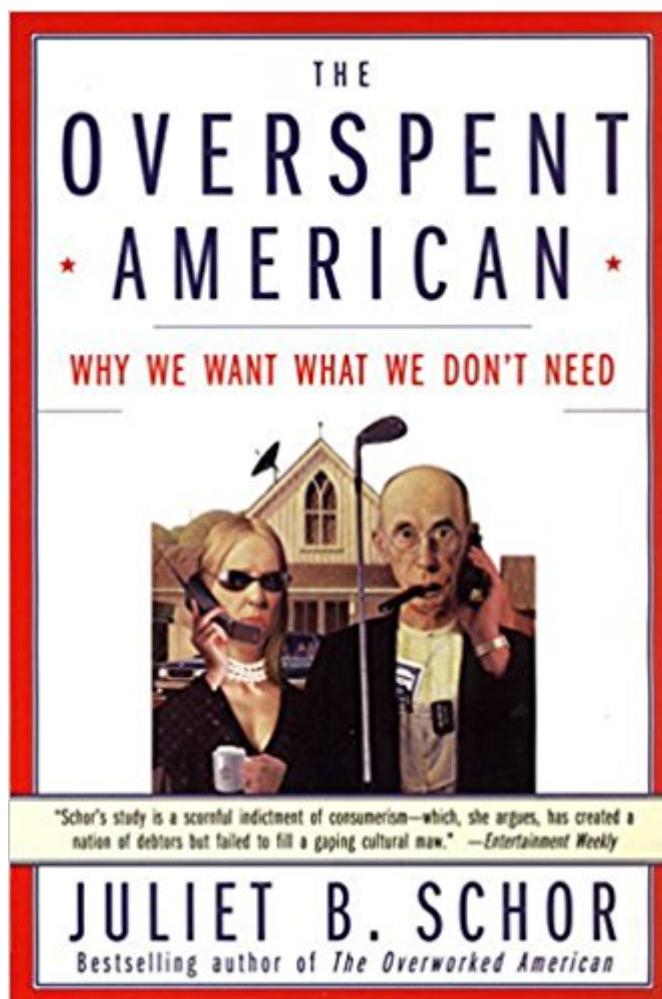


The book was found

The Overspent American: Why We Want What We Don't Need



Synopsis

The Overspent American explores why so many of us feel materially dissatisfied, why we work staggeringly long hours and yet walk around with ever-present mental "wish lists" of things to buy or get, and why Americans save less than virtually anyone in the world. Unlike many experts, Harvard economist Juliet B. Schor does not blame consumers' lack of self-discipline. Nor does she blame advertisers. Instead she analyzes the crisis of the American consumer in a culture where spending has become the ultimate social art.

Book Information

Paperback: 253 pages

Publisher: Harper Perennial; 1st HarperPerennial Ed edition (April 7, 1999)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0060977582

ISBN-13: 978-0060977580

Product Dimensions: 5.3 x 0.6 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.1 out of 5 stars 84 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #37,878 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #12 in Books > Business & Money > Personal Finance > Credit Ratings & Repair #86 in Books > Business & Money > Marketing & Sales > Consumer Behavior #90 in Books > Business & Money > Economics > Microeconomics

Customer Reviews

If getting and spending define our lives, then Juliet Schor now has us covered. Six years ago, her book *The Overworked American* scrutinized the getting part. It focused public attention on the disappearance of leisure and the harmful effects thereof on families and society. It sparked a debate over whether Americans really work as much as we proudly claim. (If so, how to explain the audience for Monday Night Football?) Nevertheless, Schor can take credit for helping push Congress into passing the Family Leave Act in 1993. Now she is back with a critique of our spending. Schor notes that, despite rising wealth and incomes, Americans do not feel any better off. In fact, we tell pollsters we do not have enough money to buy everything we need. And we are almost as likely to say so if we make \$85,000 a year as we are if we make \$35,000. Schor believes that "keeping up with the Joneses" is no longer enough for today's media-savvy office workers. We set our sights on the lifestyles of those higher up the organizational chart. We seek to emulate characters on TV. For teenagers, "enough" is the idle splendor that hardly exists outside of what

MTV un-ironically calls The Real World. Schor offers an original and provocative analysis of why many Americans feel driven and unhappy despite our success. As an alternative, she profiles several "downshifters" who've taken up voluntary simplicity in search of a more satisfying way of life. No policy solutions suggest themselves this time, only a change of heart. --Barry Mitzman --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Whereas Schor's 1992 bestseller, The Overworked American, touched a nerve among all classes of American society, her latest study is geared to middle- and upper-middle-class consumers who, in her diagnosis, are participating in a national orgy of overspending and living beyond their means. She traces this competitive, status-conscious consumption to the diverging income distribution and growing inequality beginning in the 1980s, as increasingly overworked, insecure, dissatisfied consumers, pressured by advertising and television imagery, sought to emulate the upscale lifestyle of the most affluent. An economist and director of women's studies at Harvard, Schor presents her arguable conclusion that the more TV a person watches, the more he or she is likely to spend. In counterbalance, she also reports on her nationwide survey of "downshifters," people who deliberately reduce their hours on the job in exchange for more leisure, time with family or other pursuits. In self-help fashion, she outlines nine steps individuals can take to break free of the cycle of compulsive spending. Although Schor's jeremiad lacks the impact of her earlier book, it offers trenchant commentary on Americans' overspending lifestyle and lack of savings. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

As a young professional who is lucky enough to make more than most people my age, I was perpetually frustrated by my inability to save. When I whine about the vicious work-and-spend way I was living my life, most of my friends would tell me to just shut the hell up because they simply don't understand how someone with my income could have a difficult time "just keeping up." And then I read "the Overspent American." Now everything is starting to come together. I'm no different than most people in my situation. Apparently, the more you make, the more you spend (because those with money are generally more status-oriented, and "status" requires money...lots and lots of money). Couple this with one's general dissatisfaction in the workplace, and spending goes even higher because people with means buy more things to distract themselves from the general unhappiness that is their life.'Lest you think this is a "bleeding heart" book that doesn't put the blame squarely on the shoulders of the irresponsible consumer, let me assure you that this book makes no excuses for our society's poor consumer choices. Like any well-documented social science project,

this book merely explains the new consumerism, based on Schor's studies and interviews with downshifters and overspent consumers. It passes no judgment, but it does not give irresponsible consumers an easy scapegoat for their problems either. On the contrary, I felt like this book was a wake-up call. First, it made me feel better simply to know I wasn't the lone idiot who couldn't get my finances together. But second, and more importantly, this book gave me hope. It talks about downshifters and other individuals who have successfully managed to get their consumerism under control. I am now more determined than ever to crawl out of the credit card existence I've been living somewhat uncomfortably in for the past 8 years. Like my one-line summary of the book suggests, I'm now seriously planning (rather than just hopelessly wishing) to be credit card debt-free in 2003! For anyone who finds themselves living paycheck to paycheck, or struggling just to get by (despite a decent income), this book will shed light on some of the reasons why, and inspire you to make the necessary changes to ensure your long-term financial prosperity and conquer your short-term consumerist impulses. A quick, but powerful, read. Highly, highly recommended.

Really good book, recommend to those taking ECON. I love how each chapter gives you a different view into society's fascination with trying to "look" rich to everyone even while drowning in debt. Anyways, I think everyone should read this at least once. It gives you some insight on how others are able to live at their level rather than try to live up to wealthy status along with those who are struggling.

good condition

As a recovering Shopaholic, this book was a god send. Great analysis on why we spend, why we feel we have to, and just knowing the truth beneath it all, allows you to let go of ever feeling that way again. No more having to 'keep up with the joneses' or feeling like you're not good enough because of the material possessions you have or don't have. An amazing quick and easy read, well written and very helpful. A real eye opener - you will think twice about spending irresponsibly after reading this book! Definitely worth it!

Excellent read! Highly recommended!

Good read. I passed it on so others could be enlightened.

It is a fact today that we Americans are in more personal debt than at any time in our history. When economic times are good we spend more. in the 1980s personal saving was -0.2% meaning we spent more than we actually earned. After the boom of the 90s we are in more debt. Today seniors are in more debt than they ever have been since studies have been conducted. It is mostly cultural. We, as a society are not savers or planners financially. Not good nor bad, just the way things are. We do have a 100% chance of death. Thomas Jefferson, died owing massive amounts of debt. This is an interested read that explains why we do what we do.....Wants are not needs.

The book is an interesting read and prompts a lot of thought. Was shipped and arrived rather promptly! Awesome. A must read.

[Download to continue reading...](#)

The Overspent American: Why We Want What We Don't Need The Overspent American: Upscaling, Downshifting, And The New Consumer The Life-Changing Magic of Not Giving a F*ck: How to Stop Spending Time You Don't Have with People You Don't Like Doing Things You Don't Want to Do The Life-Changing Magic of Not Giving a F*ck: How to Stop Spending Time You Don't Have with People You Don't Like Doing Things You Don't Want to Do (A No F*cks Given Guide) Private Government: How Employers Rule Our Lives (and Why We Don't Talk about It): How Employers Rule Our Lives (and Why We Don't Talk about It) (The University Center for Human Values Series) The Checkbook IRA - Why You Want It, Why You Need It: A private conversation with a top retirement tax attorney (Self-Directed Retirement Plans) (Volume 2) What Men Won't Tell You: Women's Guide to Understanding Men (How to read their minds, what men want, why men cheat, why men won't commit, why men lose interest, how to avoid rejection from men) Don't Know Much About History, Anniversary Edition: Everything You Need to Know About American History but Never Learned (Don't Know Much About Series) If You Ever Want to Bring an Alligator to School, Don't! (Magnolia Says DON'T!) If You Ever Want to Bring a Circus to the Library, Don't! (Magnolia Says DON'T!) I Don't Want To, I Don't Feel Like It: How Resistance Controls Your Life and What to Do About It Don't Trust, Don't Fear, Don't Beg: The Extraordinary Story of the Arctic 30 The Period Book: Everything You Don't Want to Ask (But Need to Know) Why You Shouldn't Eat Your Boogers: Gross but True Things You Don't Want to Know About Your Body You Don't Know What You Don't Know: Everything You Need to Know to Buy or Sell a Business Don't Know Much About Anything Else: Even More Things You Need to Know but Never Learned About People, Places, Events, and More! (Don't Know Much About Series) Why Men Want Sex...And Women Need Love: Solving the Mystery of Attraction Why We Don't Suck: And How All of Us Need

to Stop Being Such Partisan Little B*tches Why You Don't Need A Divorce Attorney: One Paralegal's Take On Divorce, Responsibility And Compromise Why We Don't Suck: And How All of Us Need to Stop Being Such Partisan Little Bitches

[Contact Us](#)

[DMCA](#)

[Privacy](#)

[FAQ & Help](#)