Occupational devotion, as defined by Robert A. Stebbins, is a strong and positive attachment to a form of self-enhancing work, where the sense of achievement is high and the core activity, or set of tasks, is endowed with such intense appeal that the line between work and leisure is virtually erased. This volume examines conditions that attract people to their work in this profound way, and the many exceptional values and intrinsic rewards they realize there.

The author sets out by discussing people who are devoted to their occupations, and describes the kinds of occupations in which such people are found, the nature of their commitment to their work, and the kind of values they strive to realize through work. Stebbins frames occupational devotion in four broad social contexts—history, religion, work, and leisure—then considers the further subdivisions of gender, social class, and social character.

The heart of the book uses research findings on leisure to develop a powerful critique of the “workaholic” model. Stebbins shows instead that deeply felt worker enthusiasm is devoid of addictive or coerced behavior. Stebbins also explores the role of money. How important is it? What happens when money becomes a major if not dominant value, as has happened, for example, in the realm of professional sports? Finally, he examines the social implications of the compatibility of work and serious leisure, using exploratory research to identify their shared motivational factors.

Between Work and Leisure aims to debunk the prevailing myth that work and leisure are wholly separate and, often as not, mutually antagonistic spheres of life. Stebbins shows that a close relationship between leisure and work offers the opportunity for people to find joy in work just as they do in leisure. This volume will be of interest to those interested in work and occupations, as well as those interested in the quality of their own lives.

Robert A. Stebbins is faculty professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of Calgary. Among his many books are New Directions in the Theory and Research of Serious Leisure, Exploratory Research in the Social Sciences, and The Organizational Basis of Leisure Participation. Stebbins is a fellow of the Academy of Leisure Sciences and the Royal Society of Canada.