

Fall 2010

Honey, what did you do at work today?

By David A. Kenny

When I got home yesterday, my wife asked me this question and I thought I would share with you my answer.

I got to work at 8:30 in the morning and I had plans to finish the paper I was working on with Tessa West. It should only take about one hour to finish it and I thought I would be able to get that paper done and sneak away at 3PM and play nine holes of golf before dinner. Walking into my building, I ran into one of my students, Randi Garcia, who reminded me that I had a deadline that day to finish a letter of recommendation for an undergraduate who had worked in my lab. I said, "Sure, I can do that." When I got into my office, I finished that letter. I noticed I had a voicemail and it was from the IRB office (the ethics office) and they told me that my authorization for a study that I was conducting would expire in the next week and I had not asked for a renewal. They told me I had gotten emails, and I did indeed find those emails buried in my spam folder. I revised the IRB form and it was now 9:30AM. I then remembered I had galley proofs from a European publisher that was overdue. I realized that it was 4PM

now in Europe and I proofed the paper and sent it off at 10:00AM. I went to the bathroom and there I met with my department head Skip Lowe and we talked about how Terry Francona, the manager of the baseball team the Red Sox, should have put Papelbon into last night's game in the bottom of the eighth. I returned to my office and I noticed that I had 5 unread emails, one interesting one from a Nigerian banker, but I did not have time to read that one. I did notice that there was one email from my dean asking faculty to provide him, as soon as possible, a list of our most important publications in the last five years and a 100 word description of each. This was needed for a website that was being designed and the deadline was right way. So I did that. I also noticed that there was an email from a student saying that he was having his dissertation defense later today. He said he met Steps 2 and 3 of Baron & Kenny, but not 1 and 4 and did he have mediation? If he did not have mediation he would fail his defense. I wrote and told him he had mediation and he would get his PhD. I then saw that Linda Acitelli had told me on Facebook about a YouTube video I had to watch. I checked it out, and for five minutes watched a spider on drugs.

I noticed now it was 10:45 and I had class in 15 minutes and I had yet to print out the homework assignment. I got that done and literally ran to my class. I lectured until 11:50, and then a student in my class said that he absolutely had to talk to me and could I spare 5 minutes. I said

“Sure.” Forty-five minutes later, after hearing about trips to the vet with his pet dog and problems with his car’s transmission, he finally came to the point and asked for a two-week extension on a paper that was due next week. I said, “Sure you can have the extension.”

Feeling the onset of a headache I went to the front office to get a cup of coffee and saw my secretary Steve Arnold, who took 10 minutes to explain the latest change in foreign travel rules. After that, my department secretary Judy had me sign some “time and effort reports” and I heard about what her children were doing. I then had to tell her about my children and show her a picture of my granddaughter. In the hallway, I ran into another of my undergraduate advisees, and she asked me if I could sign a form, and I said “Sure.” On my way to my office I ran into Garvin Boudle our IT specialist. He told me something about the latest news about Macs. I hate Macs but I know Garvin loves them and I pretend to be interested and keep saying “Sure.”

It was 1:00PM when I returned to my office. I heard my cell phone beep and I noticed I had a text message. It was from my cell phone (mobile) provider who told me that they were offering me a great deal. I erased the message. Just then a publisher’s representative knocked on my door and asked me if I had any book projects. She pretended to be interested as I described in great detail a masterpiece summary of my life’s work that I planned to write. Then she asked me if I had seen the

marvelous new social psychology textbook that her company had provided. I realized that I had gotten the book last week but I had sold it already to a book dealer. I said, “Sure, I got the book and I am considering adopting it.”

Realizing now that it was 2PM and I had not had lunch, I hit the vending machine for a Diet Coke and package of Cheetos. I go back to my office ready to work on Tessa’s paper and I see that Windows is in the middle of installing 14 updates. I wait 10 minutes and then have to reboot my computer. Just then, my next door colleague, Crystal Park, came in and asked if I had time to answer a quick question about mediation. She assured me it would take only 5 minutes. I said “Sure, I can,” and 45 minutes later, she left fully informed about the bootstrapping of indirect effects using the Hayes and Preacher macro.

My work phone then rang and it was the Police Benevolent Society asking me if I wanted to donate to their charity. I told them to send me something in the mail. Needing a sugar boost I went and bought a Snickers candy bar. It was now 3PM and I realized that I would not be able to play golf today, but I would have plenty of time to finish Tessa’s paper. Just then Jim Green knocked on my door and told me there was a crisis in the Quantitative Certificate program. Someone had taken several quantitative classes but not at the University of Connecticut. He wanted to know if they were still eligible for the certificate. I said,

“Sure,” but somehow it took me a half hour to say “Sure,” as we had to discuss the implications of the serious precedent that we were establishing. Just as Jim was leaving, my phone rang and it was my son who lives in Hawaii. He told me he had a friend who had just written an MA thesis on the teaching of martial arts in the schools and my son asked, as a favor to him, could I read it and give his friend feedback. I said, “Sure.”

It was now 4PM and I remembered that I had promised my wife I would get her a birthday card for her sister’s birthday. I ran over to the bookstore and got what I thought was a funny card. I realized I had no cash, so I ran over to the ATM of the bank next door and got some money to pay for the card. I spent about 5 minutes trying to remember my PIN.

I got back to my office, and at my door is my ex-student Kathy LaFontana, who was on campus today to visit a friend of hers. I invited Kathy into my office and we caught up on each other’s lives. Kathy left at 4:45, and I finally went to open Tessa’s paper to work on it. However, I realized that I had three different versions of her paper, TessaLatest.doc, TessaFinal.doc, and TessaCurrent.doc. I saw that TessaLatest was the newest version and I started to edit that paper. However, after doing this for five minutes, I saw that I had the wrong version. The right version was TessaFinal. I closed TessaCurrent and started to edit TessaFinal.

At 5:30, I was just finishing up my editing, somehow getting an hour’s work done in one-half an hour, and I got a phone call from my wife reminding me that we were expected for dinner that night with the Smiths’ at 6:30. As I was talking to her, I absentmindedly closed TessaFinal, and when I was prompted if I wanted to save the changes, I mistakenly checked “no.” I lost all of my changes. I packed up my things to go home, only to see email from Tessa West with the heading: WHERE THE BLEEP IS THE PAPER YOU PROMISED ME TODAY?!?!?

So what did I tell my wife about what I did at work today? I told her the honest truth: “Honey, I SURE got nothing done today.”

