

SUMMARY of the Article “Giving up is good sometimes,” by Rafia Zakaria, Dawn, July 24th, 2024

The article explores the notion of giving up through the lens of President Joe Biden’s decision to not seek re-election for a second term. This surprising move by the leader of the world’s most powerful nation serves as a starting point to discuss the broader theme of relinquishing goals or positions that one has worked for all their life. The piece highlights the rarity of powerful individuals voluntarily stepping down, as such roles often lead to a belief in their own indispensability. The central question revolves around knowing when to hold on and when to let go, even if it seems counterintuitive. People often justify quitting through various rationalizations, but the true challenge lies in recognizing when continuing is futile or harmful. The article uses the example of a neurosurgeon who, despite extensive training and a prestigious career, chose to leave the profession due to the moral injury of failing to relieve patient suffering. This narrative underscores that decisions to quit can be complex and necessitate grace in acknowledging mistaken choices. The author emphasizes the importance of reassessing goals and making choices that align with one’s life purpose and well-being, even if it means abandoning a once-cherished path. Ultimately, the article advocates for the understanding that giving up can be a constructive and necessary decision, reflecting the ongoing nature of personal growth and change.

Easy/Short SUMMARY:

The article talks about President Joe Biden’s decision not to run for a second term and uses it to discuss the idea of giving up. It highlights how hard it is for powerful people to give up their positions. The article explains that sometimes it makes more sense to quit something rather than keep going, especially if it’s no longer fulfilling or causing harm. It gives an example of a neurosurgeon who left



SUMMARY of the Article Giving up is good sometimes, by

Rafia Zakaria

his job because he couldn't help his patients as much as he wanted and felt bad about it. The article encourages readers to reassess their goals and understand that quitting can sometimes be a good and necessary choice.

SOLUTIONS to The Problem:

Educational Programs on Decision Making

Create programs that teach individuals how to make informed decisions about when to continue or quit a pursuit, emphasizing the importance of reassessment and personal well-being.

Professional Counseling Services

Provide access to professional counseling for individuals facing tough career or personal decisions, helping them evaluate their choices and potential impacts on their mental health.

Encouragement of Open Dialogue

Foster an environment where people can openly discuss their struggles and decisions without fear of judgment, promoting understanding and support from peers and mentors.

Promoting Work-Life Balance

Encourage a balanced approach to work and personal life, helping individuals recognize when a career or pursuit is negatively impacting their overall well-being and happiness.

Career Transition Programs

Establish programs to assist professionals in transitioning to new careers or paths, offering training and support to those who decide to leave their current field.

Mental Health Awareness Campaigns

Launch campaigns to raise awareness about the importance of mental health and the potential consequences of staying in harmful situations, encouraging proactive decision-making.

Flexibility in Educational and Professional Goals

Promote flexibility in educational and career planning, allowing individuals to change their paths without stigma or negative repercussions.

Role Modeling by Leaders

Encourage leaders and public figures to share their experiences of quitting or changing paths, helping to normalize these decisions and reduce societal pressure.

Mindfulness and Reflection Practices

Incorporate mindfulness and reflection practices into daily routines, enabling individuals to regularly assess their goals and overall satisfaction.

Support Networks

Develop strong support networks, including family, friends, and professional mentors, who can provide guidance and encouragement when considering major life changes.

IMPORTANT Facts and Figures Given in the Article:

- President Joe Biden decided not to run for a second term.
- The article highlights the rarity of powerful individuals voluntarily stepping down from their positions.
- The decision to quit can sometimes be more beneficial than continuing,



especially if the pursuit causes harm or dissatisfaction.

- Example of a neurosurgeon who left his profession due to moral injury and depression from not being able to help patients effectively.
- Emphasis on reassessing goals and making choices aligned with personal well-being and life purpose.

MCQs from the Article:

1. What decision did President Joe Biden make regarding his political career?

- A. To run for a second term
- B. *To not run for a second term*
- C. To resign immediately
- D. To switch political parties

2. What is a key theme discussed in the article?

- A. The importance of winning at all costs
- B. *Knowing when to give up on a pursuit*
- C. The benefits of staying the course
- D. Strategies for political success

3. What example is used to illustrate the concept of quitting for a good reason?

- A. A famous athlete retiring
- B. A teacher changing schools
- C. *A neurosurgeon leaving his profession*
- D. A businessman selling his company

4. What did the neurosurgeon in the article struggle with?

- A. Financial issues
- B. Lack of recognition
- C. Professional jealousy
- D. *Moral injury and depression*

5. What is the article's stance on giving up?

- A. It is always a sign of weakness
- B. It should be avoided at all costs
- C. It is never justified
- D. It can be a constructive and necessary decision

VOCABULARY:

1. *Relinquished* (تخلي): To give up or abandon.
2. *Voluntarily* (بإرادته): Done by choice or free will.
3. *Particulars* (تفاصيل): Specific details or information.
4. *Intoxication* (سكور): The condition of being mentally or physically excited or stimulated.
5. *Significance* (أهمية): The quality of being important or meaningful.
6. *Counter-intuitive* (متناقض): Contrary to what one would intuitively expect.
7. *Inordinately* (بشكل مفرط): To an unusually or disproportionately large degree.
8. *Curse* (لعنة): To express dissatisfaction or disappointment.
9. *Misconstrued* (مساءة الفهم): Misinterpreted or understood incorrectly.
10. *Conscience* (ضمير): The inner sense of right and wrong that guides behavior.
11. *Sole* (وحيد): The only one.
12. *Breadwinner* (مربح الخبز): The primary person who earns money to support a family.
13. *Moral Injury* (إصابة أخلاقية): Psychological distress caused by actions that violate one's moral or ethical beliefs.
14. *Construe* (تفسير): To interpret or understand in a particular way.
15. *Diligent* (دقيق): Showing careful and persistent effort.
16. *Reassessment* (تقييم جديد): The act of reevaluating or reviewing something.
17. *Constructive* (مفيد): Serving a useful and positive purpose.
18. *Disapproval* (عدم الموافقة): An expression of unfavorable opinion.
19. *Stigma* (وصمة): A mark of disgrace or social disapproval.
20. *Proactive* (استباقي): Taking action in advance to address an expected issue.

☐ Attention Please!

We appreciate your commitment to acquiring knowledge through our summaries. Please be reminded not to remove the attribution label affixed to this article. It is



SUMMARY of the Article Giving up is good sometimes, by

Rafia Zakaria

crucial to acknowledge the source and the effort invested in creating this summary. We discourage any unauthorized distribution without proper credit. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation. □

□ Explore More Summaries, Solutions, and Vocabulary Meanings!

□ Join our WhatsApp Channel for timely and comprehensive summaries of the latest articles, along with well-crafted solutions and helpful vocabulary meanings. Click the link below to join now:

□ [Dawn Article Summaries](#)

WhatsApp Channel Link

<https://whatsapp.com/channel/0029Va7tT3o35fLnJeFbpS2y>

dawn.com

[Giving up is good sometimes](#)

Rafia Zakaria

THIS is not just about the decision of the president of the United States. That is, however, a good place to begin. On Sunday, President Joe Biden decided to forego competing for elections for a second term. Beyond the political strategising, it is a bizarre decision. Here you have a situation where a man elected to the most powerful position in the world, who commands the world's largest and most advanced military and the world's largest economy, has voluntarily relinquished the possibility of doing it again for another four years.

The political particulars of the situation will undoubtedly be discussed at length by any number of analysts and political commentators over the next few weeks. Beyond that, however, is the startling scenario of someone giving up an opportunity or a position that they had worked for all of their lives. As history has long shown, those with the most power are least likely to want to give it up — such is after all the intoxication of great importance that those occupying very high positions began to believe in the myth of their own significance. Those who



can separate the office or position from themselves are extraordinary in every way.

There is also the underlying question of knowing when it makes more sense to give something up rather than to hold on to it, when quitting —counter-intuitive as that is — makes more sense than continuing the course. One reason that this is a tricky issue is that we quit all the time-and most times we are inordinately talented at coming up with reasons that justify doing so. We construct lists of them in our head, share them with those with whom we speak, and so on.

Sometimes we curse the goal itself as not worthy of having been followed — the destination was misunderstood somehow, or other extraneous circumstances justified the abandonment of what was once intended. All of this is normal and a part of the usual circumstances.

The question becomes one of how close we are to fulfilling our life's purpose.

It is also true that we sometimes struggle with giving up things in which we have invested a good bit of our efforts and resources. One example is a person who once he or she begins to read a book or watch a movie feels great pressure, halfway through or even earlier, to complete reading or watching it.

This is true even if the book or the movie is objectively awful — the person is not enjoying it or getting any enrichment at all from the exercise. This means that a large chunk of one's time, even leisure time, is wasted on reading to the end books that one does not like or watching an inane movie until its over. In cases like this, the issue is misconstrued as one of staying the course versus giving up. The actual issue here is of giving oneself grace for having made an incorrect assessment.

It can be illustrated from a much larger example. In recent weeks, a video went viral on YouTube and TikTok. The video features an MIT-trained neurosurgeon who is now unemployed and spending time with his dog hiking in the mountains. In the video, the doctor explains how he spent years and years training to be a brain-spinal cord surgeon. What motivated him, he explained, was the possibility that he could one day relieve human suffering.

However, as he progressed in his field, he found that he was not always able to



SUMMARY of the Article Giving up is good sometimes, by

Rafia Zakaria

relieve his patients' suffering. In fact, he discovered that more often than not he was not able to relieve suffering and sometimes even ended up causing more of it. This was too much of a burden on his conscience and he found that the situation was causing him great moral injury. He was the sole breadwinner and felt that the years of training and the course he had chosen meant that he should stay with it. But his thoughts caused him to sink into a deep depression until ultimately, he decided to quit.

Decisions like this are complicated. Many of us have been or will be in situations where we feel like there are no choices at all or the ones that we have are so constricted and constrained that they are just as good as not having a choice. Here is where the measure of our character lies. Whether it is the case of the American president or a neurosurgeon or one of us, the question becomes one of how close we are to fulfilling our life's purpose and how diligent we are being in avoiding harm to those who are dependent on us.

These considerations are generally good in allowing us to see that not only do we always have the opportunity to make choices but that in some cases, what is best for us and for other people involves giving ourselves the grace to say that we may have misjudged an earlier situation. When we make decisions to pursue a certain course, whether it is to begin or end a relationship, read a book, watch a movie, quit a career or even the American presidency we do it with the information that is best available to us in that moment.

Times change, new challenges arise, people betray us and others join us in our journeys and through all this new information becomes available that requires reassessment. Sometimes, such a reassessment means that we must change course, quit the path that we have been on and begin a new journey. Giving up on some things, some paths, some people is good sometimes because while our choices may not always be good ones, we do always have a choice.

The writer is an attorney teaching constitutional law and political philosophy.

rafia.zakaria@gmail.com

Published in Dawn, July 24th, 2024