

Lying in a hospital bed recovering from heart surgery last year, Bruce Williams had time to reflect on his life, which is busier than a brigadier general's. But Williams, who loves living in fast-forward, wasn't thinking about pressing the pause button. The Lightning McQueen of the golf course maintenance industry was thinking about getting out of the hospital, gassing up and getting on with it. "I couldn't wait to get back to the action," Williams said recently, about a year after his surgery.

If you know Williams, the certified superintendent of the Los Angeles Country Club and one of the most visible men in the business, you assume he must have a clone. He is seemingly everywhere — attending this event, doing that speech and playing in so and so's outing in addition to overseeing 36 holes at a top club.

So when you heard the 56-year-old Williams had a seven-way bypass (yes, *seven*), you figured the stress brought on by his fast and furious lifestyle had finally caught up with him. Maybe you even thought it was a wake-up call for Williams to put his speedy life in park for a while.

While Williams appreciates our concern for his well being, he's not afraid to tell us that we're a bunch of armchair doctors who have misdiagnosed him. Fact is, lying in that hospital bed, one of the things that Williams missed most about his life was the stress of his job.

"That's because I *thrive* on stress," he said.

Williams is the one who wants the ball when his team is down by a point with 2.1 seconds on the clock. Such a scenario represents a burden, all right, but for guys like Williams it's also a rush.

When Williams returned to work after being out for six weeks — the minimum time his doctor ordered him to take off — he felt anew. How good it felt for him to rise and shine at 4:30 in the morning and get ready for work.

"It was a lot more relaxing for me to be back to see my golf courses and push through the paperwork that had piled up," he said.

It was also good to get back on a plane and jet around the country to give a few speeches.

"Some people have hobbies, such as golfing or fishing," Williams said. "My hobby is volunteer-

Glad to be Back to His Stressful Job

BY LARRY AYLWARD



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Williams enjoys being in front of an audience to wax about his experiences in the business. If you've seen him speak, you know he does it well. Williams is a gifted speaker who commands your attention. He's direct, confident and knows what he's talking about. The industry is fortunate to have him on the seminar circuit.

"If I can make people's days brighter and better . . . I think that's why we are put on the earth," Williams says of his pledge to public speaking.

Back to Williams' heart problem. If it wasn't job stress that caused it, then what was it? Well, Williams' father, Bob, had a five-way bypass about 30 years ago, so Bruce believes genetics is a cause. Bruce also admits his cholesterol was too high from eating too many burgers and fries.

Back to Williams living his profession in fast-forward. He says he'll keep moving, but he also realizes he must pace himself better. Let's just say that Williams won't be booking any red-eye flights to make it home from an industry function to get to work in the morning.

While Williams insists his health scare wasn't a wake-up call to ground himself, he does believe it was a sign to stop and smell the freshly cut fairways. "It *was* a wakeup call to have a greater appreciation of the things that surround me," he said, citing his family and, of course, his job.

When I think of Williams' zest for his career, I think of a passage from the book of Ecclesiastes. It reads: "So I saw that there's nothing better for men than that they should be happy in their work, for that is what they are here for. And no one can bring them back to life to enjoy what will be in the future. So let them enjoy it now."

Here's to good health for Williams and all hard-working superintendents.

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