

Take a Break From Everyday Life



By Gayle Crist,
Life Coach,
Healthy Life Planning

It's the "dog days" of summer—the sultry, hot, humid days of August—when we naturally try to slow down to stay cool but also to relax, go on vacation, and take a break from our usual routines. The kids are home from school, the

days are longer, and many of us feel like leaving the mundane behind to do something special or different.

For example, I'm taking a full week away from my businesses to fly to Montana to visit 2 national parks with my best friend—something I don't often treat myself to. Normally, I take several long weekends or 4-day getaways during the year and 5 days off between Christmas and New Year's. Hardly ever a whole 8 days!

That's why I'm really looking forward to getting into an entirely different "zone" on this trip—leaving news headlines, work obligations, and daily life behind to immerse myself in nature's beauty, hiking, exploring new places, and having extended quality time with my friend. It'll be bliss.

In our workaholic country, though, where many of us don't even take the vacation time our employers offer, the 1-week "no technology" getaway is rare. Imagine not answering emails. Not hearing all the bad news on regular or social media. Not waking to an alarm clock. Not having any schedule or must-do list for 8 days! Don't we all deserve to unplug and unwind from everyday life occasionally?

Absolutely! Which is why, as a life coach, I always ask my clients what they do for fun...how much they prioritize recreation...what they do in their spare time...and what the "energy boosters" are in their lives, as opposed to the energy drainers they come to me complaining about.

Gayle Crist, M.S., is a life coach based in Ambler. She helps people create healthier, happier lives; find more life balance; navigate life transitions such as separation/divorce; start a business; get organized to complete an important project; write/edit their first book, or follow through on other life goals. Gayle is also a writer, editor, and proofreader (www.cristeditorialservices.com) and the author of How I Met My Second Husband Online at Age 50. Information about her life coaching services is at www.healthylifeplanning.com, and her life coaching blog is found at <https://gayle4244.wixsite.com/website/blog>. Contact Gayle at 267-245-3023 or coach@healthylifeplanning.com.

An energy booster is something or someone in your life that revs you up, makes you feel more alive, and gives you more energy. Webster's dictionary defines vacation as a "respite" or "intermission" from regular activities. And a vacation designed to provide that intermission and time for renewal, rejuvenation, and restoration of the balance in your life is the perfect energy booster.

To design such a vacation, you have to:

- Avoid planning or doing too much each day you're away
- Take things slow, letting each day unfold, so you feel that sense of relaxation and renewal that's so restorative
- Switch your mind-set into "discovery mode" so you're open to new, fun experiences during your vacation
- Leave time at the end of every day to reflect on what you saw and did, so you can truly absorb and enjoy the positive effects; chatting with your trip companions in front of a campfire, over a meal, or sitting around together before bedtime are great ways to do that.

Ideally, if you have that kind of vacation, you'll come home calm, relaxed, energized, and ready to face the challenges of your daily life again. A good goal to have, right?

That's exactly what happened when my partner's daughter and her husband and 2 kids (ages 9 and 2) recently spent 2 nights in a cabin at a nearby state park with no cell service or electricity. The kids took a few

hours to get used to having no TV or iPads, but soon they began enjoying chasing tadpoles at a nearby stream, listening to the echoes in the underground cave they explored, fishing, walking their dog on the park trails, playing board games, singing together, tossing a ball around in the field next to their cabin, and catching fireflies at night.

In short, they made new memories together as a family unlike those they typically make at home. And they're still having fun looking at the photos and videos they took on their trip—reliving the good times that made them feel so connected. Isn't it interesting how we sometimes have to disconnect from some things (like the electronic devices we've gotten obsessed with) in order to reconnect with other things (like the hobbies and humans we love)?

When my kids were young (probably 6 and 11 years old), I used to host a "no electricity night" once a month—where they weren't allowed to play video games, watch TV, or even use electric lights. Instead, I asked them to think of fun things to do by candlelight for a few hours. I look back on those evenings of card games, hide-and-seek, flashlight tag, and shadow puppets with much fondness—and I think they do too.

So, how are you unwinding and relaxing this summer? Need a break from the tedium and boredom of daily living? Vacate the "same-old-same-old" and replace it—even if only for a day or two—with something new and exciting. I'd be happy to help you dream something up!

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