

Seize the Day...and Make Your Own Fun NOW!



By Gayle Crist,
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It's almost summer, and many of us are thinking about carving out time for rest, relaxation, and "fun in the sun". Even though often-workaholic Americans are far less likely to take extended vacations

than folks from other countries, there are times where we use an occasion like a milestone birthday, important anniversary, family reunion, or "girls getaway" to take off work for more than a week, WITHOUT—amazingly—feeling guilty about it.

On a flight to see my son and new granddaughter in California this week, I met a young woman who was recently back from her honeymoon and now embarking on a trip with friends to Aruba. You go, girl! She said she felt she earned it by working double shifts at her nursing job. She was ready to party!

I was a lot older than her when I finally gave myself permission to start globe-trotting! In fact, it wasn't until I was in my 50s that I began planning overseas trips to places I'd been dreaming of for years. Before my second honeymoon, my husband-to-be asked where I wanted to go. I didn't hesitate. Italy was my request, and three months later we were off to Venice, Verona, Milan, and more. Soon, the poem I'd written at age 17 about drifting in a gondola with a handsome gondolier was coming true!

For years, I'd let worries about the cost of taking time off work for long trips hold me back. As a self-employed person (with no paid vacation), I couldn't reconcile the idea of spending money while I wasn't making money. It seemed crazy. But the older I got, the more I realized that time was ticking

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away, and my opportunities to fly to fun faraway destinations was dwindling. Who knew how long I'd be healthy and able enough to hop a plane, walk for hours in foreign cities, be okay with sleeping away from home, etc. Last year, at age 70, I set my mind to booking at least one overseas trip a year. That one was a Viking cruise to the Greek Isles. This year, it's Ireland. And next year, I hope to finally get to London and Paris.

How about you? Have you been putting off adventures, fun, and relaxation for far too long? Is life passing you by? Do you wonder whether you'll ever be able to make your dream adventures a reality? I hear you! I've been there. But, as we all know, all work with no play is not good for anyone. Especially for us moms, wives, career women who have so much on our plates that we can barely find time for a quick nap, much less a good night's sleep.

It's time to take your dreams off the back burner and make your fun a priority!

Yes, I know you have a long list of what you feel are legitimate reasons you can't get away for an adventure. But—be honest with yourself—are these good reasons or just excuses? Is it totally impossible for you to take 10 days off or could you find a way to do that if you really put your mind to it?

I remember when my kids were ages 5 and 10 and I wanted to take a long weekend trip

with my husband. Luckily, I was part of a babysitting co-op at the time (where parents swapped babysitting with other parents). Our kids stayed with that family while we were away, and then we watched their kids so they could travel. It was great because the kids already knew each other from other babysitting experiences they'd had in the co-op, so we felt totally comfortable leaving them for three days. Other families have grandparents willing to help when the parents vacation. Whatever works. The point is you can probably figure out a way to go on a kid-free adventure occasionally.

If money is your excuse for not going, maybe you can work a few more hours and save a bit more for a few months so you can afford a vacation—just like the young nurse I met.

You could also do what my son does: plan a trip with your best friends who have kids the same age. You split the cost of lodging, take turns cooking to save money on restaurants, and let each couple have a night out alone during the trip while the other couple babysits.

There are lots of possibilities! Where there's a will, there's a way! Sometimes, all it takes is a brainstorming partner to help you imagine the options, discuss the steps needed to bring them to fruition, and then hold you accountable for taking those steps. A session with a life coach could help you get the ball rolling on your plans for fun. Let's talk!

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