



Things to Think About!



By Brandan Atkin

For more information on how to “recharge your batteries”, refer to some of the links below.

<http://www.careerjournal.com/myc/workfamily/20030710-opdyke.html>

http://healing.about.com/od/uc_directory/a/takeabreak.htm

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Moms (and Dads) Need Time-Out Too!

By Linda Jorgensen

Have you ever been so tired you can't even think straight? So tired you can't remember where the last week, or the last month went? If you have, join the club. I sat down and tried to think of what I had done for *me* lately and the sad thing was, I couldn't come up with anything other than reading one page of my long standing novel. I've been reading this one so long I can't remember the plot any more (I'm thinking it's time to start over).

Parents who run a household, work, parent, run kids here, there and everywhere, deal with medical issues, billing problems, volunteer, go to school, help friends, help neighbors, help elderly parents, and keep their marriage together will run out of gas after a while. Toss in a child with chronic illnesses or disabilities and your time is spread thinner than the best crust on a thin crust pizza.

Even the most dedicated of parents must take some rest time. And making that time must become a priority.

Making a Plan

I used to find myself not making time for me. Mopping floors or folding laundry because I “couldn't think of anything better to do”, happened quite often. Enjoyable time out is important. It was time to come up with a plan.

Armed with the family master calendar and a pencil I sit down with my husband once a month and we schedule dating time for us as a couple and personal alone time. Granted we have had to bump some outside activities such as extra volunteering but the benefits of rested, healthy, happy parents far outweigh the few activities we'll be missing.

Making an Activity List

The calendar is already set. The next step is to identify activities I can schedule or do as the mood strikes me or an opportunity arises. Make a list of activities you would like to do and post it next to your calendar.

Here are a few suggestions to help get you started.

- Schedule a haircut and color. Let someone else do it for a change.
- Turn off the news or the computer. Read a good book or take a long nap instead.
- Spend more time playing with your children. Do things you really *LIKE* to do, not what you *HAVE* to do with them for an afternoon.
- Sign up for a class. Art, quilting, fly-tying, anything you find interesting.
- Take a long walk.
- Join a monthly book club then make time to read the book.
- Schedule a massage. If you can't afford a spa massage look for a school of massage therapy in your area. Many schools offer massages at a discounted rate.
- Rent a new release and watch a movie for an afternoon. Let the dishes sit. They'll still be there when you're ready.

When it comes to Date Nights we do the same thing. Make a list, post it by the calendar and then see what we can do when the chance arises.

Here are some of our favorite strategies:

- Choose a set day and keep it routine.
- Hire a babysitter or arrange for a Respite Provider to stay with your child.
- Just say no to meetings or other events you don't really have to attend which may interfere. This is *YOUR* time with your spouse.

- Find an activity you both enjoy.
- If you can't find a sitter or Respite Provider rent a movie, grab a pizza or your favorite take-out and watch a good movie together after the children are in bed.
- Take a break from the news, the phone and your computer. Spend some time in regular conversation with your spouse.
- Take a drive in the country and blow out the cobwebs gathering in your brain. Relax for an afternoon.

Execute Your Plan ~(*Just do it!*)

Remember. If you are not adequately rested, you can't take care of someone else. And if you become ill that makes TWO of you to take care of. If you don't take care of yourself, who will?

Be sure both you and your spouse take a break at least once a week or more; get some rest and a change of scenery. You'll be glad you did.

