

LifeSkills: How to stop being too busy

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Being constantly busy helps us feel involved and relevant, which is nice up to a point.

This point is, for many of us, reached quite quickly. We may not even realize we're too busy until we can't stand it anymore.

Do you feel trapped in a frenzy of activity? Here is some information on about how good it is to include periods of solitude.

Have you thought of this?

You won't stop feeling too busy until you plan for—and deliberately take—time for solitude. Taking time for solitude. . . . Reading those words—just thinking of solitude—may help you relax. But, you may also wonder how on earth to achieve that goal. This synopsis will give you some suggestions, but they won't be any use unless you seize each occasion you can to give yourself time for solitude. You're more likely to do this if you recognize how good it is for you to have these moments.

Consider the following reflections:

It's easy to get caught up in a self-propelling whirlwind, powered by the expectations of our culture. Does living in a busy frenzy prove you're valuable and in demand? Many people make a lot of demands on other people, and many of us make heavy demands on ourselves. It's seen as a sign of success to always be busy. Consider how even children, especially children of active parents, go from one scheduled activity to another, leaving scant time for breaks, either for themselves or for their parents.

Frenzy is learned. Frenzy may be part of our culture, but it's not a constituent of all cultures. Since many of us have grown up with it, frenzy has become part of us. The good news is that since we learned our frenzy, we can also learn other ways to live. We've known for centuries that it's healthy to have quiet times for solitude. Ancient civilizations realized the benefits of meditation. Oriental and European meditative practices have long histories. Now, scientists have shown meditation can counter the physiological effects of stress. Creative things happen when people are quiet. You've probably heard stories of how imagination and creativity emerge from fallow times. An understanding of gravity came to Newton as he lounged under a tree. Einstein had the idea for his theory of relativity during a dream.

You might think of examples from your experience of good ideas you've had when you were alone and relaxed. Recall the feeling of solitude and special places that enable it. Build a mental file of your own great moments of solitude. Many places in nature inspire us with a profound feeling of solitude. Think of what it is like to walk on a beach without

expectations. Do you remember the stillness of a forest, or the freshness of a flower garden? Perhaps you recall sitting in a park and watching the squirrels. Some people also experience very peaceful moments in houses of worship. You must change the things you do before you can expect to change the way you feel. If you crave more solitude in your life, plan the changes you want, then make them. Everyone is unique, so you should personalize the strategies you chose and persevere in applying those you find that work well for you.