

How to keep the 'feel-good' impact of your holiday for longer

Robyn Pearce



Have you ever returned to work after a holiday vowing to maintain the sense of wellbeing? And then you've found yourself sliding back into overload and ridiculous busyness?

Try some of the following tips to help you keep the benefits of the holiday for longer.

- Does it need to be your problem? Let others do the worrying
- Step away for a moment. This might be a mental step rather than physical – even a mental disconnect gives us space to notice what's happening
- Remember to breathe. Take a few deep breaths down into your abdomen and consciously breathe out, noticing the breath pass your upper lip
- Ask yourself 'Will it matter in five years' time?'
- Work with your body rhythms, not against them
- If you're really tired – stop. Don't keep pushing against what your body tells you – or you *will* get sick.
- Become a power-napper
- Have regular 'do nothing' weekends – about every month to six weeks. Take no work home and give yourself a complete break from work-related activities and commitments.
- Be like a little child – live in the 'now'.

Stretch time – live in the 'now'

Consider how often we say to ourselves: "When holidays come, when the kids get older, when I get a raise, when I lose weight, when we get that new house, ...I'll be happy, successful, content..."

It's taken me a lot of years to get beyond this kind of thinking. The fascinating thing is, once we learn to live moment by moment, truly experiencing the joy of each large and small

event, time expands. Moving at top speed all the time is not living, nor is it efficient. Instead, it's a recipe for burnout and exhaustion.

Let others do the worrying

When I invited input for *About Time for Teaching – 120 Tips For Teachers and Those Who Support Them*, a number of tips on how to avoid burnout were received. Don Dickins, Faculty of Business & Information Technology, Avondale, NSW, Australia and an ex-principal, had this to say:

'Whether you are driving to work, eating your lunch, at the photocopier, preparing classes, or talking to kids and parents, relax. Let them do the worrying.'

No matter what your role (or even what industry) – this is good advice. However, if you tend to be a worry-wart, you'll know that it's hard to achieve. Try asking yourself questions such as:

- Whose problem is this – really?
- What will be achieved by me worrying?
- In a few weeks, who will remember this incident?

Will it matter in five years' time?

As we learn to notice our posture, the tension in our shoulders, the depth or otherwise of our breathing, the wrinkling on our brow as we begin to frown, it becomes easier and faster to pick up the signals. As soon as we become aware of a build-up of tension, even a simple deep breath can shift our mental and physical state. It can be a trigger to help you change your physiology.

Work with your energy flow

From another contributor: *'Make best use of your prime times to do difficult jobs that require thought and concentration.'*

For many, our best concentration is some time in the morning, but you might be different. Notice your most productive time and try to avoid meetings (unless they require your highest level of attention), interruptions and low-level work at those peak times. Where possible, block out your most productive time as appointments with yourself, or 'Red Time', where you don't take phone calls or interruptions.

Take a nap when you need it

When your body says 'I'm really tired' – stop. This is a hard one for many of us. If we go into 'get out the whip and push harder' mode when work still waits but we're tired, are we really effective? Have you noticed the consequence? Keep pushing your body too far and you'll eventually get sick or burn out.

As I boarded a plane a few weeks ago I noticed the gentleman beside me had his eyes shut. A few minutes after take-off he opened them, stretched, and said: "Done my power nap." Turns out he is the Chief Instructor for the NZ Defence Force Health School, based at Burnham in Christchurch. As a regular routine he takes micro-naps.

"Even a couple of minutes at my desk are enough to recharge me", he said.

I'm so glad to hear others beating that particular drum. I regularly share the concept of power napping with my audiences – and practice it myself. For example, I was doing some of this article in a café yesterday. I was tired. Next thing I noticed I'd read the same lines five times.

"Stop, Robyn," I said to myself. I packed up the laptop, headed down the road to a nearby quiet park and had 15 minutes' nap under a shady tree before heading off to the next appointment. Sure I

didn't get the article finished yesterday, but fighting the tiredness wasn't going to achieve a satisfactory outcome anyway. By taking the brief power nap I was refreshed enough to enjoy the next events and still be safe to drive home at the end of a long day.

There is huge historical precedent for the value of power napping. Think of Winston Churchill, Margaret Thatcher, Leonardo da Vinci, Thomas Edison, Albert Einstein, Bill Clinton, Eleanor Roosevelt – and that's just for starters.

Teachers obviously can't power nap when the children are still around, but what do you do once the school grounds have emptied out? Before you say you can't, you might like look at how you can!

To summarise – pace yourself, listen to your body, don't waste energy on unnecessary worrying, step away – and become a power napper. **ET**



Robyn Pearce is a Certified Speaking Professional. Check the resources on her website www.gettingagrip.com including a free report for you: *How to Master Time in Only 90 Seconds.*

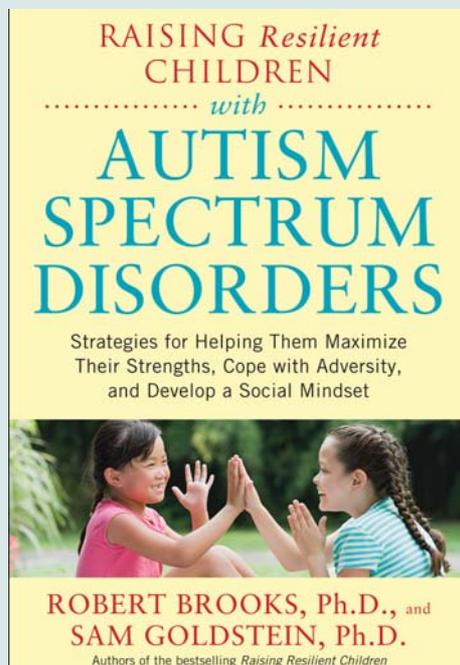
Raising Resilient Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Robert Brooks and Sam Goldstein
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From the authors of the bestselling *Raising Resilient Children* this book explores using positive psychology to help children with any of the autism spectrum disorders

While the genetic basis of ASD cannot be minimised, one must never underestimate the influence of parents in determining the outcome of a child's life with ASD. The takeaway message is that genetics or biology is not destiny. The role of parents in raising children with ASD and the family life they create can and does make a powerful difference in the expression of this condition throughout childhood and likely into adulthood" Brooks and Goldstein.

What do we know about Autism Spectrum Disorder? What have we yet to learn? Psychologists Brooks and Goldstein turn theory into practice and think critically on what we know, do not know, and what we can learn about autism. Brooks and Goldstein discuss strategies to nurture a "social resilient



Nurture a "social resilient mindset" in your child

mindset" in your child

Through their research, they teach the importance of resilience to parents, making it palatable, practical, and effective for the long term, rather than short-term fixes. *Raising*

Resilient Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders will guide parents in developing the strategies and mindset necessary to help children with autism spectrum disorders to develop strength, hope, and optimism.

The authors

Sam Goldstein Ph.D is an assistant clinical instructor at the University of Utah School of Medicine. He is the clinical director of the Neurology Learning and Behavior Center where he conducts evaluations and consultations as well as providing treatment services to hundreds of children with ASD each year. He currently serves as Editor in Chief of the *Journal of Attention Disorders* and sits on the editorial boards of six peer review journals. He has authored or co-authored 36 books.

Robert Brooks PhD is a member of the faculty of Harvard Medical School and has served as director of the Department of Psychology at McLean Hospital. He has also served as a consultant for *Sesame Street Parents' Magazine* and on the Professional Advisory Boards of a number of organisations devoted to helping children and adults with learning and behavioural challenges. He has authored or co-authored 15 books.