



When was the last time you took a real break? And by "break", I mean a physical, intellectual & emotional break from work.

Just about everyone I know is SO BUSY these days. I have friends who are working full time, looking after kids, helping their aging parents, volunteering, exercising...the list goes on and on.

So what's a busy *Chief Paradise Officer* to do to stay in Personal & Professional Paradise (AKA - *engaged at work and in life*) when leaving town just isn't an option??

Take a break!!

You've most likely heard the metaphor about putting on your own oxygen mask first and then assisting others. I hear this all the time on airplanes. On a plane, this directive is a matter of survival in an emergency.

Now is your chance to see the value of this lesson BEFORE the emergency (illness, accident, bad mood, whining, complaining...) happens in your life.

This month I'll share 2 ideas for taking a "Break-ation" (*rhymes with vacation*).

1. **Meditate** (*Okay skeptics...no eye rolling please - it really works*)

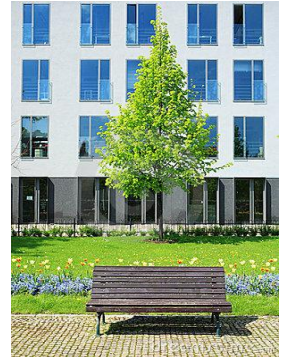
There are many ways to meditate and most all of the "main stream" varieties (guided; transcendental; Buddhist; etc) are found to produce great benefits in many areas.

In a 2009 study reported on by the American Heart Association, scientists said, "...the high-risk patients who meditated cut their risk of heart attacks, strokes and deaths from all causes roughly in half compared with a group of similar patients who were given more conventional education about healthy diet and lifestyle." Another study conducted on college students reported similar benefits. Many people think meditation is hard. It's NOT! For tips on how to get started, visit <http://www.how-to-meditate.org/>.



2. Commune with Nature

Ahh, the delight of sitting on a bench outside listening to birds chirp, watching puffy clouds float by and feeling the breeze on your face. If you work in a city, find a nearby park. If you are in a suburban office park, look for the green spaces. And if you work in a hospital, seek out healing gardens or outdoor areas. There are no fancy skills needed here. Just leave your phone inside and head outside to sit for 10 minutes (at least). Don't talk, just sit and enjoy.



Cynthia Perkins, M.Ed. shares that *"On the biochemical level, spending time with nature stimulates our feel good neurotransmitters like dopamine, serotonin and endorphins and turns off the sympathetic nervous system, improving our moods and brain function, decreasing pain, heightening feelings of well-being and connectedness and reducing stress. Thus, communing with nature on a regular basis is a supreme method for nourishing and renewing ourselves and optimizing our mental, physical and spiritual health."*
(<http://www.holistichelp.net/back-to-nature.html>)

That's it for this month. Be sure to check out next month's edition where I'll share two more ideas for Break-ations which involve Laughter & Gratitude Triggers.

I'm committed to engaging with YOU every step of the way!

Vicki Hess