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"Quotes"

"The ant is knowing and wise, but he doesn't know enough to take a vacation."
~Clarence Day

"Creativity involves breaking out of established patterns in order to look at things in a different way."
~Edward de Bono

"I've lost perspective on what I'm doing. I think it's good for me to take a break and reassess why I'm doing it and how I'm doing it."
~Ryan Gosling

"If you nurture your mind, body, and spirit, your time will expand. You will gain a new perspective that will allow you to accomplish much more."
~Brian Koslow

"Rest when you're weary. Refresh and renew yourself, your body, your mind, your spirit. Then get back to work."
~Ralph Marston

"I just want people to take a step back, take a deep breath and actually look at something with a different perspective."
~Brian McKnight

"I take conscious breaks for myself 'cause I like to rejuvenate and get my creative juices"

You Need a Nap

My husband and I share a favorite video. It's of a brother, about age 5, and his little sister, probably about age 3. The little girl is whining and whimpering incessantly. Her wise big brother looks over at her and begins a conversation that goes something like this:

Brother (with irritation): *Did you have your nap today?*
Sister (whining): *Nooooo*
Brother (emphatically): *Well, you need one!*

Out of the mouths of babes...

Although we're not 3 any longer, a lot of us live each day much like that little girl. We're tired. We're grumpy. We're being ineffective. And if the truth be told, we're sapping the fun and peace from any space into which we happen to land. The cause is not rocket science...WE NEED SOME REST!

So, join me for this month's edition of **EA Insights**. Let's take a look at three ways that a good rest ultimately will improve both who we are and what we're able to do.

I hope that, when you're finished, you'll be inspired to go take a nap!

All the best,

June

June Melvin Mickens
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Isn't It Time for CPR?

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I've got a question for you: When's the last time you gave yourself CPR?

No, I haven't lost it. I know that, when most of us think of CPR, the mental picture is of an unconscious soul on the ground, desperately being ministered to with breaths of life. In that picture, it's impossible for CPR to be self-administered. After all, the person needing help is...*unconscious!*



If you think about CPR in those terms, you're right; self-administration is an impossible feat. For a few moments, though, I want you to consider an alternative vision of CPR -- one that not only *can*, but that actually *must*, be self-applied.

How is the life-saving breath to be given in this alternative view? It happens through vacation -- through time away and rest.

I read an article recently about the huge number of vacation hours that American workers hand back to their employers each year. Oh, the reasons for doing so are well-known and even persuasive: too much work, a fast-paced culture, with constant critical deadlines, that just doesn't allow for time away, the lack of qualified stand-ins to carry on in one's absence, or fear that people will realize how well they can carry on in one's absence. The reasons -- often good ones -- to keep plowing through, without a break, abound.

However, as I work with companies and executives daily, helping them to grapple with how to achieve peak performance, one of the key inhibitors to them reaching personal or organizational visions of success often becomes crystal clear. A lot of people are tired! Like a car with its gas meter teetering on "E", they're running on fumes. And, while there are a number of strategies we work on to address the peak performance issue, one of them usually involves targeting ways for everyone to have a break from time-to-time for CPR purposes.

What's the connection between breaks from work and CPR?

Creativity -- No one can be inspired 24/7. Creativity of some sort is required of us all -- problem-solving; innovation; product, design, or idea development; and so on. Yet, what we often miss is that the continual, unbroken push of that inventiveness muscle actually results in diminished, not increased, creativity.

By taking time away, however, we're able to replenish the idea bank and its flow. A change of environment, different experiences, rest, and/or some fun yields a clearer head. That break from work allows us to come back and resume our creative responsibilities in a fresh way.

Perspective -- There's an old saying about a person who's in so deep that he can't see the forest for the trees. Well, it's possible to work so much, so long, to the exclusion of virtually all else, that perspective is lost.

Let me use another car analogy here. Have you ever been stuck in the mud? The last thing you want to do, when that happens, is to gun the engine and spin the tires. Instead of propelling you out of a jam, that action only digs you deeper. The churning and churning and churning that many of us do with work is similar. Don't get me wrong; tenacity certainly is a valued quality. On the other hand, that "keep your head to the grindstone mindset", when not practiced in a balanced manner, can have an unintended effect. It can obscure your ability to see other views or to grasp the big picture because your focus has become narrow or your experience routine. So, time away can expand the perspective you bring to your job.

Restoration -- Many of us like to think of ourselves as walking, talking Energizer Bunnies. I hate to break it to you...it just ain't so! These bodies of ours are not machines. They are not meant to go and go and go without rest.

We need to unplug -- or, at least, disconnect at points for several days -- in order to refresh. We need time apart from the pressures of work in order to experience restoration. If you want to be most productive when you *are* at work, be sure to combine periods of good, hard work with periods of much-needed rest. Your body, your mind, and the people around you will thank you for it!

So, when's the last time you gave yourself CPR? If it's been too long, isn't it time? Trust me, the time away will offer new inspiration as you come back and tackle all that lies ahead.

Sometimes figuring out how to position yourself and others so that you can take time away can be difficult. For leaders, sometimes determining how to achieve peak performance from the members of your team can be a challenge. Don't feel that you must go it alone. Just call on Executive Advantage. Let us join you in developing and implementing a strategy that moves you from just surviving to thriving.

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flowing. I also like to take my time with my creativity; I think it's important."

~Brandy Norwood

"The breaks you take from work pay you back manifold when you return because you come back with a fresher mind and newer thinking. Some of your best ideas come when you're on vacation."

~Gautam Singhania

"We all get so caught up in the moment of what we're doing every day, it's hard to hit that reset button and get pulled away from all that and see life from a different perspective."

~Tony Stewart

"Creativity is not just for artists. It's for businesspeople looking for a new way to close a sale; it's for engineers trying to solve a problem; it's for parents who want their children to see the world in more than one way."

~Twyla Tharp

"Work less than you think you should. It took me a while to realize there was a point each day when my creativity ran out and I was just producing words -- usually lousy ones -- for their own sake. And nap: it helps to refresh the brain, at least mine."

~Amy Waldman