

Don't Become a Statistic: Take A Vacation

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According to a recent study conducted by Harris Interactive only 14% of Americans, plan to take a two-week vacation. This is down from 16% in 2006 and a full one-third of American workers don't use all their vacation time!

All too often we allow demands at work to interfere with our taking time for our self and our family. Granted, the demands at work are intense, but we don't have to adopt the mentality to just keep on working. I recently gave a presentation at a Fortune 500 corporation and after the program a woman came up to me and said, "I can't even consider taking a vacation because I'll be flooded with work when I return."

Many people are simply taking a long weekend and calling that their vacation, but that isn't enough. A few days off isn't enough time to disconnect from the demands of work and daily life and to fully relax and recharge your battery. Think about it, it usually takes at least a couple of days to just distress. You need a good stretch of time to truly unwind and nurture yourself.

Americans are suffering from The Shrinking Vacation Syndrome. This has become so bad that PricewaterhouseCoopers has decided to close its entire national operation

twice a year to guarantee that their employees stop working. Now that the 29,000 employees take a vacation the company is seeing positive results.

You need to take breaks from your work to rejuvenate yourself. Your personal and professional lives will be enhanced when you do. The truth is that when you return from vacation, you are a better more productive employee.

Here are some Sanity Saving Solutions for Ensuring Your Vacation is Truly a Vacation:

Set Limits: Let your employer know that you are not going to check email or call into the office during your vacation. Keep in mind that it's rare that something is so important that it can't wait until your return to the office or be handled by one of your colleagues.

Fully Disconnect: Leave your BlackBerry at home. Don't allow yourself to be distracted or concerned about what is going on at work while you are away. Don't check messages or call the office either! I know, this requires self-discipline, but you can do it. In fact, you must.

Delegate Your Responsibilities: Make sure that your tasks and responsibilities are covered by a colleague or colleagues so that you can fully relax and enjoy your time away

In our 24/7 society it's all too easy to allow the busyness of life to consume us. But, if you're running on empty you're not doing anyone any good, not your spouse, children, company and certainly not yourself. When you take time off you return to work more focused and productive and in a better frame of mind. So don't become a statistic, take a vacation.

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