Allow Yourself To Rest

Take a break from endless productivity.

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In modern society, it sometimes seems like we value productivity above all else. This can become exhausting, ultimately leading to burnout or even total breakdown. To balance this bias toward productivity, it's important to give yourself permission to take a break every now and then.

Ultimately, life is about more than what we create, and some of the most important elements of being human can't be measured and optimized. By taking an occasional break from the pressure to produce, you can open up space to nurture relationships with yourself and others and feel more complete and rounded.

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- Nourish the capacity to be present and experience a non-goal-oriented approach to reality.
- Often, we're more creative following a period of rest and recharging.

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- We may feel guilty about not achieving enough or fear missing deadlines if we take time off.

Application

In a world that seems to be constantly pressuring us to do more, we often find that the only way to secure free time is to give ourselves permission to schedule it into our calendars.

Choose a date (maybe a recurring weekly or monthly slot in your calendar) and block out at least a couple of hours. Decide not to schedule anything during this time; simply allow yourself to rest and rejuvenate.

How exactly you do this is up to you. You may wish to set a timer and meditate, which can be very refreshing (see Tool 6.1: Meditation). Alternatively, you may enjoy taking a walk, napping, or calling a friend to chat about whatever you feel like. Some people enjoy exercising or playing a social sport. If this is you, be sure you're approaching these activities with the mindset of taking time off, as opposed to pushing yourself to succeed.

While none of these activities are directly productive, ironically, you may find that when you do return to work, you'll be both physically and mentally refreshed, with a clearer mind and a greater drive to succeed.