

Contents >> Mental Health

The “Quiet Retreat”: Tips to Create Your Personal Sanctuary

Pat Heydlauff

Women are workaholics! They tend to over-commit their time and over-extend personal energy but never take time for themselves to relax, regenerate or re-connect. They are constantly on the run, whether it is to work, help a child or spouse, assist a friend, do volunteer work, or run errands.

You do not need to have a full-time job or work out of the house to be faced with the onslaught of overwhelming fatigue, plus mental and spiritual exhaustion. Many women complain about always being tired, having little or no resistance to the latest flu bug or simply running low on energy. You cannot take care of yourself, if you do not plan for it. You may work out, have regular medical checkups and feed your body the best food and nutritional supplements, yet those are no replacement for truly relaxing and regenerating downtime. What you need is your own personal sanctuary for your downtime.

While you may agree that downtime is important for women, you might already be thinking: “I have no place to go! There simply isn’t a good spot for a personal sanctuary in my house.” That’s where you are wrong. Whether you are at home, work or even traveling, you can always create a personal sanctuary or a “Quiet Retreat” area.

Here are a few steps to help you find downtime and create a personal space, no matter where you go or how hectic life gets:

1. Plan for downtime.

So, what is downtime? And what do you have to do to achieve pure, unadulterated, regenerating downtime? Downtime is a period where you can rest your racing thoughts and restless body in the safety and calm of your personal sanctuary. Start by setting an appointment for your “Quiet Retreat” on a regular basis. Don’t miss your

appointments with you – treat them as if you were visiting your doctor, meeting a friend or heading to an important client meeting.

If you are wondering, “How much time do I need?” The answer depends on how depleted your energy is. For some people, it can be as little as an hour per week, but for others it could require several hours per month. Decide when you are going to give yourself this much-deserved downtime, then do it. Schedule at least one hour per week for re-energizing downtime in the beginning and monthly thereafter.

2. Select an area for your personal sanctuary.

Choose a quiet, peaceful space or area in your home where you can be totally alone. It can be the corner of a bedroom, the patio, a loft or wherever your heart leads you in your home. It must be a place where you feel safe and secure. If your space is inside, make sure there is a comfortable chair for sitting, perhaps a pad and paper to jot down your thoughts, and a candle in a safe container. If you choose to use a candle, light it every time you enter your sanctuary for downtime.

You may add a couple of other personal items, and play quiet meditative music. If the space is outside, such as your patio, be sure to have a comfortable and secluded place that is quiet and in the shade – away from traffic, noise and people. Make sure your family, friends, roommates or others living with you understand you are not to be disturbed for this one hour while in your sanctuary.

3. Use your downtime to re-charge and grow.

During your downtime, in this lovely sanctuary you have created, the goal is to do absolutely nothing. Yes, that’s right – **nothing**. The more nothing you can do, the better it will be for re-energizing your mind, body and spirit. If your mind wanders, gently bring it back to nothing. If you hear noises or music, that’s OK. Just keep your mind focused on nothing. Let it daydream or visualize pretty things, or remember very peaceful times in your life, but nothing in particular. This will be the best part of your week once you get the hang of it.

When you are ready to leave your “Quiet Retreat,” take a deep breath and blow it out slowly, extinguish your candle and jot down a sentence or two about what you experienced or what enlightened thoughts came to you.

4. Make your “Quiet Retreat” part of your schedule

Use your sanctuary at least twice a week in the beginning, then once a week. Each time you visit, everything must be very quiet so you can hear yourself think and let your subconscious mind communicate with you. It can be hard at first, to be so still and to have your thoughts flow quietly and freely, but soon you will relax and enjoy this time alone. During your visits, write down any new thoughts or ideas that are filled with positive energy that you should act on. Then do it. Those very thoughts will lead you to making every day count.

It is so very important for women to create a “Quiet Retreat.” Downtime means no work, no thinking and no interaction with others. It is complete and utter absorption in doing nothing but letting your body and mind completely rest, regenerate and re-energize. Creating your “Quiet Retreat” and spending ample time there is the best form of gift of uplifting, positive energy you can give yourself. You will feel energized, refreshed, relaxed and re-connected.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Pat Heydlauff, president of Energy Design, uses Feng Shui design principles to eliminate chaos and stress at home and within oneself. More than a Feng Shui expert, Pat is a consultant and speaker who helps remove clutter and negativity while encouraging personal growth, improved relationships and prosperity. Her forthcoming book, "Feng Shui: So Easy a Child Can Do It" shows how small changes can lead to a big improvement in one's personal and professional success. For information on her consulting, speaking and artwork, visit: www.Energy-by-Design.com.