



## Live Your Strengths

Welcome to the July 2009 edition of *Live Your Strengths*, the monthly e-newsletter from In Search of Excellence.

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### ***The Rejuvenation Project***

Summer is typically the time when most people try to take time off from their work. Whether they go away on vacation or stay around home and relax, people usually rely on this time to recharge their batteries and start the Fall with renewed energy.

This summer, however, I am seeing a worrying trend. More and more people are not taking any kind of break for themselves. Some have mentioned worries about the economy; others feel they are just too busy this year.

This concern has prompted me to make a case for the lost art of rejuvenation and to urge you to create your own *rejuvenation project* this summer.

On some logical level, we all know that people need to take breaks to recharge and function at peak performance. However, many people too readily deny their own need for rejuvenation because of immediate, short-term urgencies that require their attention.

While short periods of intense work and stress can be managed (and in some cases are desirable), over the long run, stress and overwork lead to less efficiency and, eventually, burnout. As the great Leonardo da Vinci noted, "*The greatest geniuses sometimes accomplish more when they work less.*"

So what is a rejuvenation project? It is a chance for you to start carving out some time to do the things that re-energize you, so that little by little you revitalize your mind, body and soul. Your rejuvenation project need not be expensive or time-consuming; in fact you may start by committing just a few minutes each day. However, it will require some dedication and the commitment to make yourself a priority.

Where do you begin on your own rejuvenation project? Start by defining what rejuvenation means to you. Many people have even lost touch with some of the basics of how to feel energized and full of vitality. Consider these questions:

- If you had a magic wand and could instantly make changes that would leave you feeling totally rejuvenated, what would be different? How would you feel?
- What are some activities that consistently increase your energy levels?

- Who are the people that give you more energy, just by talking with them?
- Where do you get your best ideas? Most people have either a location or an activity that stimulates their creativity and innovation. Think back to your own great ideas from the past – where were you when these ideas took shape? (Hint: for most people, their great inspirations didn't occur while sitting at their desks.)
- What physical activities give you energy? Put aside all the 'shoulds' that you may have about exercising and think about what's fun for you. Maybe it's walking to a park to eat your lunch, maybe it's swimming in a local pool with your children. What are activities you enjoy that will get some more oxygen into your body?

These questions are just the beginning – your goal is to identify the people, places and activities that energize you and start to incorporate them into your life every day, even if only for a few minutes.

The rejuvenation project will start to take shape as you find the key 'energy-giving habits' you want to incorporate into each day. For some people this may mean taking 15 minutes out of your afternoon to work on a crossword puzzle. For others, it may mean taking a short catnap in the middle of the day: NASA found that a short, 40-minute nap improved performance by an average of 34% and alertness by 100%.

Even Winston Churchill agreed about the importance of naps throughout the day: *"Don't think you will be doing less work because you sleep during the day. That's a foolish notion held by people who have no imagination. You will accomplish more."*

Treat your rejuvenation project in the same manner as the other important projects you are working on. Schedule the time for your new habits into your dayplanner and keep those dates with yourself as if they were with your most important client.

As you begin to see the payback in terms of energy, creativity, well-being and focus from these short rejuvenation breaks, schedule them more frequently throughout the day or for longer periods at a time. These small actions, done consistently, will add more vitality into your days.

Eventually you will feel a greater comfort in taking larger relaxation periods away from work with the knowledge that your productivity on the job (and overall wellbeing) will be vastly improved when you return.

The Oxford Dictionary defines rejuvenation as the *"injection of new vigour or liveliness."* Wouldn't it be great to wake up each morning filled with vigour and zest for life? Could you use some guidance getting started on your own rejuvenation project? Call Denise for a free 30-minute coaching session to make 2009 your best year yet!

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### ***Managing Stress Workshop – last chance to register!***

Join a fantastic group of women for the last workshop in our popular *Women Entrepreneur Series*.

Imagine spending a relaxing Friday afternoon at a local winery enjoying good food and fine wine, sharing experiences with other women entrepreneurs, and learning how to stay focused and productive as we enter the busy Fall season.

This meeting will focus on managing your own stress and helping others respond to their stress productively.

Join us Friday, August 14 from 11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

For more information, or to secure your spot, contact Denise Cornfield-Furlong at 519-923-9968 or [denise@insearchofexcellence.ca](mailto:denise@insearchofexcellence.ca)

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Cheers,

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"Creating the Path to Your Potential"

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