

# WE DESERVE TO REST



By  
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It's finally Friday, and after a long week, the weekend is here. It's been busy with work, projects, meal planning, kids activities (if applicable) and so much more. As the week dragged its feet, there is relief in knowing the weekend is upon us for a chance to rest.

But what was supposed to be a weekend of relaxing ends up being filled up: social events, errands, housework, engagements and home projects that "needed" to get done. With the endless to-do lists and activities, the two days we were looking forward to the most ended up flying by the fastest.

Before we realize it, Monday arrives again. The early week morning greetings of "How are you? How was your weekend?" surround you. "I'm tired" or "I'm fine" becomes a typical answer as you manage to share the quick details of that fabulous dinner at the new hot spot in town. As excited as you may seem on the outside, you are hoping for a slower day because on the inside... you are still tired.

This was my life for many years... running the rat race of life, wondering why I felt so mentally (and physically) exhausted all the time and, yet, did nothing different to change the trajectory. When I had a "break," I'd fill it with endless lists, get sucked into the social media vortex and/or lose track of time temporarily while I distracted myself.

I would always be worried or thinking of a time that was not in the present: either the guilt of the past or the anxiety of the future. This state of mind left me moving through my daily life remembering very little about what I was experiencing.

If you relate to this, you are not alone. As a "Dental entrepreneur Woman," each one of us has so many responsibilities, goals and dreams that manifest with our hard work and dedication. It can be overconsuming and take over our entire mindset. But what if we decided to not wait until all those plans were fulfilled to feel happy? The reality is, if we put off being relaxed until we finish our plans, we won't be happy for most of our lives!

As an emotional intelligence coach, DeW, and human that has been handed a tough set of cards to navigate life, I've realized through many mistakes and errors that we, as a society, negate the need for true rest. When our peers are bragging about how much they got done or what they did to get ahead, we can oversee our fundamental human need of rest. This includes our mental and physical rest to maximize our energy and well-being. Both symbiotically function best when they are placed as a priority.

We were never meant to go at the pace many of us do... we stay in a constant state of heightened stress and distraction, multitasking our way through life. And although we may build our resume skills immensely by doing so, we are draining our gas tank on the other end by not refueling the way we need to.

What would it take for us to feel like we *DESERVE* rest?

**Let's break down the two most common objections to avoiding mental rest:**

We don't have time. This idea that we don't have time is the shift in priority. We make the time to run full speed on ambitious tasks, endless plans and distractions. If we can fly down the social media vortex, we can make the

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time for ourselves to cultivate a few minutes to refuel. It's a matter of desire and prioritization.

We don't deserve rest. This idea that we don't "deserve" rest is one I often encounter as an emotional intelligence coach. We may not realize this holds us back, but society doesn't praise the concept of replenishment. If we think about our goals and dreams, they all come from a place of productivity; and somewhere along the way we have decided that rest is a "luxury," not a necessity. But with burnout, depression and anxiety on the rise, I can't help but wonder if we have created our own microcosm of depletion without realizing the function of our bodies and minds. Questioning this self-talk of deserving rest was a game changer for me, realizing that I am more efficient when I rest and ultimately happier when I do.

The physical benefits of rest are many and include reduced anxiety, reduced stress levels, increased well-being, increased immune function, increased levels of happiness, increased ability to create emotional memories and increased boosts in well-being. We physically feel better when we mentally recharge!

When we shift our mindset to one of deserving rest, we look forward to doing it. The guilt melts away, and we embrace the fresh perspective our minds take when we feel the effects of true rest.

**Here are my top tips for cultivating mental and mindset REST into our lives:**

**Understand the need.** As mentioned earlier, if we don't believe it's important, we won't make the effort to interrupt our feedback programming loop of being busy. Learning to rest may sound like a waste of time, but it's a fundamental need to rest physically and mentally.

**Grow gratitude for yourself.** When I wake up in the morning (before jumping out of bed, checking the phone or allowing myself to think about my to-dos), I bring awareness to my body. I repeat thoughts of gratitude for my breath, my senses and my body to be able to do what

it can. This simple act of mindful gratitude has motivated me to rest (because I deserve it!) and keeps me in check with my physical/mental goals that benefit me, like consistency at the gym and meditating.

**Cultivate silence.** Turn off the distractions; turn off the phone; turn off your screens. In our digital age of distraction, it becomes easier to fall into a default of being in front of a screen. We think we are resting when we plop down for a Netflix marathon, when, in reality, the therapeutic effect of relaxation in front of a screen is only 40 minutes. After that we are simply zoned out. Checking social media is NOT rest because being bombarded with notifications and engaging with the digital world actually instigates our stress response. So, what do we do? Start by sitting for a few minutes daily without any distractions. Simply work on "BE"ing, not doing. It will feel odd at first if you are not used to it, so observe any thoughts/judgement that come up. If our brains are used to distraction, it may take consistency over time for our minds to understand the feeling of rest. I have found it easier to do this in the morning, but it is the most necessary in the evening to actually "empty" my mind. I'll even make a to-do list before sitting to "be" in the evening so I am less distracted.

**Find your flow and creativity.** Ever lose track of time doing a puzzle, playing an instrument, baking, doing art or another activity? This is a state of flow. Exercising our innate creative needs (even if it's just a crossword puzzle) allows us to refocus on a non-goal-oriented activity which can refuel us. Doing this consistently can refuel our mental energy.

**Cultivate mindful activity.** Get time outside. Put the housework/errands aside, and get some fresh air. A simple awareness walk (with the phone away) can help us stay in the moment of mindfulness, along with increasing our oxygen capacity and, more importantly, refuel our spirit. Even a short run, yoga or gentle exercise can help refuel our mental energy tank!

Hack your vagal responses. Ever wonder why meditation



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and yoga are so beneficial? When we stimulate the vagal nerve, its branches that traverse from our gut to our brain, it allows the parasympathetic function of relaxation. A simple mindful breathing exercise for a few minutes, meditation, visualization, guided imagery or even humming can stimulate this nerve. It's a great hack for those overwhelming moments when you feel depleted, since it biologically stimulates the relaxation phase.

So, get off that treadmill of that endless productivity list! The list will never end because there will always be one more thing to add. If we choose to place ourselves as a priority, we will. Rest is a fundamental need for our mind, body and spirit to function from a place of purpose and intention. Making the effort to cultivate rest pays off in the long run as we enjoy the experience that is our journey of life. With as many hats as we wear in life, we can choose to be happy and focus on our well-being. Ultimately, we all deserve to rest.

### *About the author:*

*Dr. Shakila Angadi is a dentist turned certified social and emotional intelligence coach and chronic pain advocate. Through her journey of expanding her mindset to find happiness, she enjoys helping humans sharpen their emotional intelligence and mindfulness skills to live a more purposeful, resilient and balanced life. Through her platform, The Inspired Dentist, she is involved with multiple projects including speaking, writing and engaging in her coaching programs. Connect with her on Facebook @theinspireddentist and with her personal journey on IG @shakilaangadi. www.theinspireddentist.com.*