

Podcast Episode #030

Five Startling Reasons Why You Need to Take a Break

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Pamela Mitchell: Hi and welcome to The LiftOff Project. I'm Pamela Mitchell, your host and your coach. This is the podcast devoted to helping you mold your professional self and your personal self into an enhanced version of your best self. My goal is to help you take control of your work and your life, feel more relaxed and confident, and experience the satisfaction and fulfillment of a sustainable, successful life.

Today's topic is Five Startling Reasons Why You Need to Take a Break. You guys, I am doing this a little differently today because guess what? I need a break. Now, I came up with this topic probably seven or eight weeks ago, really not realizing how essential it was going to be for me to listen to this at this moment or to do this research at this moment.

I'm just going to chat with you about this whole topic and then I'm going to sign off because guess what? I'm going to be taking a break from the podcast. We are going to run encore episodes through the month of August, through Labor Day. We will be back to you right after Labor Day and we're going to mix things up a little bit after Labor Day. That's one of the real benefits of taking a break. It's because our brains need that downtime.

Now, what's happened to me is that I basically wore myself out. I have been in a flat out works man for the past few months. Even though I went away last week for my birthday and had a lovely time on Bumblebee Flower Farm, shout out to Sandy for the amazing flower lessons, that was the only day that I actually took off in that five days that I went to visit my mom.

I ended up wearing myself out. I came back from that trip feeling even more tired. That's how I talk to you today, kind of tired. Forgive me if there are lots of ands, and uhms, and



all that because literally, I'm not going to edit this at all. It's just going to be put out to you guys. All right, let's talk about this topic!

The first thing is that there is so much data that is being thrown to us on a daily basis. Basically, I found some really interesting stats on that. Facebook Messenger users share over two hundred thousand photos per minute. That's a lot of photos and cat videos to be looking at! And there are four hundred hours of new video uploaded on Youtube every day. We are in the midst of an information firehose, which just creates a lot of information for our brains to process.

I found this great article on Scientific Americans website. Although, I don't know, it's not there anymore. I don't know if I can link to it for you guys, but at any rate, it was a really interesting article and the term that they use in it was called cerebral congestion, which is brain overload. I loved that term because that's exactly what it feels like, this cerebral congestion: like my brain cannot take one more piece of information stuffed into it.

That often happens because in our culture, we connote business with productivity. There's a way in which we have that link like, "I'm really busy, so I'm really productive," and we don't pay attention to the fact that there is a point at which being busy delivers diminishing returns and, in fact, hampers our productivity.

The thing that we need to know, and this is another interesting data point, is that our brain is actually productive during downtime, but in a different way. It's a state of brain activity called default mode network and it's one of five different resting state networks in our brain. But there's some important things happening during our default mode network. This is when our brain is synthesizing. It's drawing connections based upon information that we've taken in.

If we never allow ourselves to be in default mode network, we are missing a very important piece of how our brain can put together information. Now, how do we know we are in default mode network when our brain is at rest? What rest means is disengaging from externally oriented, goal-directed behavior. That is like a formal way of saying it.

What I like about that is the "goal-directed behavior" because my mistake this past weekend was that I decided that I was going to sit and look at some software for my business that I wanted to learn. I like software. It's fun for me, but the problem was that it was goal-directed behavior. It really wasn't creative. There was an end goal to it and because of that, what I thought was restful, in fact, turned out not to be restful.

We really need to be able to turn our minds off from that goal-directed behavior and allow our mind to wander. That's what research has shown: when our mind is wandering,



that facilitates creative incubation and we need that state. We need to be able to tap in to that creativity. Our mind obliquely solves tough challenges while we're daydreaming.

Again, that default mode network is integrating information that we've taken in during that time. That's often times when we have those epiphany moments in the shower, that's what's going on. We have to give our brain a break from all of that.

When we're not in that learning, goal-directed mode, our brain actually consolidates recently accumulated data. There is activity happening in all of this, but we need that, that memory consolidation when those new pathways are being built. All of that is essential to performing NRP level and being as productive as possible.

As I said, I've learned my lesson for creating brain overload and I'm going to be taking a break. Not only just for these four weeks, but I want to start to make sure that I take days off during the week, which you know, as an entrepreneur, I tend not to.

I encourage you to think about what kind of breaks you need to be taking on a daily basis, on a weekly basis, and on a monthly basis to give yourself time. What is your default mode network where you can just allow space, not be goal-directed? Even if you're doing a hobby, but if there's a goal associated with it, that taps in to that same part of your brain.

Even when you're doing something fun: a minute of enjoyment allows your brain and your mind to wander. Give your brain a rest.

That's it for this segment of The LiftOff Project. Be sure to visit our website, theliftoffproject.com/podcast, where you can download a transcript of today's episode. If you have a question for an upcoming segment of Ask Coach Pamela, go to theliftoffproject.com/question and leave me a voice mail. If I answer your question in a future episode, I'll send you a free deck of reinvention cards as a gift.

Even though I'm gone for the next four weeks, leave me a voice mail with a question anyway and I will be back to you in September. You can also connect with me on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram @thecoachpamela. And if you enjoyed this episode, please leave a review for us on iTunes. Your feedback truly does make a difference!

Today's LiftOff inspiration comes from Alan Cohen, who says, "There is virtue in work and there is virtue in rest. Use both and overlook neither." I am going to be taking that advice. I hope you take that advice. Have an amazing four weeks and I will see you when I am back. Have a great day! Take one small step this week and this month to lift your life. Bye for now!



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