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**Proven activities for increasing your confidence, focus,**

**and inner zeal for accomplishing your dreams!**

**By Ana Tampanna, MFA, CPC**

These top 7 activities will make such a difference in your workday and in your life. You will stay mentally alert and focused, plus you will create a zeal inside yourself. The bigger the piles, and the more intense the stress, the more important it is to incorporate these 7 activities. This is part of investing in yourself with extreme self-care. After all, YOU are the only one who can take care of THIS race horse!

1. **Begin your day being really centered…12 minutes (but oh, so worth it!)**

Whether you meditate or not, this 12-minute guided meditation will give you a beautiful context for your day. Download the free app: Insight Timer. Search for **“Making your Life Sacred,”** by Sarah Blondin. Enjoy! Creating the context for your day is like choosing the air you breathe and the water you swim in. This will nurture your spirit every time.

1. **Cuddle … a few seconds of heaven!**

I’m not kidding. If you do not have a cuddling partner, consider an animal. I have a chihuahua (one that doesn’t yelp.) She is quiet, **unconditionally loving**, and is attached to me even as I write this. I get a million dollar welcome ***every*** time I walk in the door! Does that fill my emotional tank? You betcha! If you refuse to have an animal, and there are no human hugs available on a regular basis, then become the best client for a massage therapist!

1. **Exercise will give you confidence! 20-30 minutes**

Building muscle builds something internally as well. There’s nothing that beats the “runner’s high.” I run 4 times a week.

I just began running, at the age of 67! It requires good shoes and a sports bra. I googled “stretches for runners and stretches for post run.” There is a great free app called “From couch to 5K.” You start out walking, then run only a little bit, then walk some more. I also registered for a 5 K four months later. My friend, a 4-star general, insisted the 5K was important. He was right. It gave me a reason not to quit and something to prepare for. (Remember, in a 5K race, you do NOT have to win, or even run the whole way! Just finish!) This will give you more energy, a sense of accomplishment, the stress that lives between your shoulder blades will vanish.

1. **Spend time with other visionary leaders. 60 minutes, once a week or once a month.**

Other than your firm! Leaders feed each other emotionally, share resources, and inspire each other’s visions. Consider joining your local chapter of NOW, or Leadership program in your city. (Leadership Winston-Salem, for example.)

1. **Play Minimum of 6 hours a month!**

Schedule family playtime, camping trips, outings with girlfriends, or romantic fun. Having playtime is a key part of life balance so you can work with focus and energy. Playtime will activate your creativity and give you relief from daily pressures. You will return with a whole new perspective and have something to talk about! (I will confess, sometimes I combine # 5 and # 6 with this one, because I love #5 and #6 so much.

1. **Indulge your senses**

**Immerse yourself.** Symphony? Jazz? Art? Dance? It nurtures a whole other part of you. This is a key part of refueling. There has been scientific research regarding the impact of the arts on learning, memory retention, and other aspects of brain function and emotional well-being.

“Creativity is a natural extension of our enthusiasm.” **Earl Nightingale**

1. **Watch a great film or read a stimulating book!**

Here are some great documentaries… real game changers. You can’t help but see things differently after you watch them.

* **Equal Means Equal-** available as a download, this is an intense documentary about women’s issues in America today.
* **Chairman Jones-** a daughter’s documentary about her father’s amazing leadership journey from uneducated share cropper to chairman of the school board. You might explore your own family legacy in a new light. Google it.
* **An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power-**Yep, Al Gore’s movie. If you haven’t seen it, get on board!
* **And a quickie: the Michael Jordan Nike commercial on failure. (30 seconds**) I keep this one handy!  **click here:** <https://youtu.be/45mMioJ5szc>

When we are overloaded with piles and piles of stuff to do, the tendency is to hunker down and do it. This is counter intuitive. How often have you “bribed yourself” with snacks or even alcohol to continue working? Then you wake up at night, remember the stack of work, and dread going to work the next day. Or you find yourself refusing invitations with friends and family members or worse, working through holidays! That is no way to live. These 7 tips will create a zest for life, a wider perspective, and keep you in touch with your love for justice.