

Is life running out while you're running down?

Do you long for peace in the midst of the madness?

By the time you get to "enough" is it already too much?

This book is for all who feel trapped by the pace and pressure of 21st century living. Life balance strategist Patricia Katz understands these feelings and offers 64 sanity-saving solutions.

Press Pause . . . Press On delivers strategies for restoring a rhythm of renewal to work and life. No more crash and burn. No more blur and endure. Just 64 ways to find perspective, productivity, and peace of mind.

- Learn why pausing is productive and lingering is not lazy.
- Find relief in 'unitasking' and 'simplicizing'.
- Set sanity policies and enjoy more 'wabi sabi' moments.
- Gauge your Plimsoll Line and curb artificial urgency.
- Make peace with the fact that you'll never be done again.

Shift from a pressure-cooker world that's nonstop, worried, techno-driven, stressful, hectic, frantic, frenzied, frazzled, busy, busy, busy to a world that's graceful . . . relaxed . . . healthy . . . productive . . . purposeful . . . focused . . . profitable . . . connected . . . appreciative . . . and . . . calm.

Pause fans say:

Thought provoking • A breath of fresh air • Sane and solid advice

Timeless nuggets of wisdom • Great for gaining perspective

Refreshing, encouraging, soulful • A calming influence in a crazy world



Patricia Katz, MCE, has over 20 years of experience as a speaker and author on work-life balance and productivity issues. She has inspired thousands to create more thoughtful, appreciative, relaxed worlds, both in their workplaces and their homes. Patricia is a Past President of the Canadian Association of Professional Speakers.

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PRESS PAUSE ... PRESS ON



*Bringing Balance & Perspective
To Work & Life*

BY PATRICIA KATZ

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Introduction

Skyrocketing expectations and accelerated speed drive many of us around the bend and out of control. Recurring cycles of crash and burn take a huge toll on our health, wellness, and productivity. The numbing daily experience of blur and endure flat-out demoralizes us.

When we stretch ... and stretch ... and stretch ... without relief ... we snap! The astounding human and organizational costs of exhaustion, absenteeism, depression, and declining performance continue to soar.

All this is neither news nor a surprise. What is news is that the first line of defense against this dis-ease is a remedy that's so simple and readily available: Giving ourselves and each other Permission to Pause.

The concept is simple, but I promise you it won't be easy.

"Slow down and everything you are chasing will come around and catch you."

- John de Paola

Pausing begins with a shift in mindset that permits a shift of habits. At its root is an invitation to challenge the "don't stop till you drop"

imperative - to instead become more thoughtful, reflective, and appreciative in the face of the nonstop pressures of a hurried world. It's a decision you make that it's okay to stop - if just for a moment. In fact, pausing is essential. Our workloads are often so full that even if we ran nonstop for the rest of our lives, we would never be done again.

In the pursuit of further and faster, we've discarded the habit of renewal. Sure, we're great at "pressing for performance." But the art of "pausing for renewal" is buried deep under a mountain of lists and schedules ... and the technology that supports it all.

Individuals, relationships, and organizations can't be sustained without embracing the habits of rejuvenation and renewal. Endless exhaustion is not an option.

Taking momentary pauses in our busy days creates opportunities (both as individuals and as organizations) to:

- Refresh our perspective
- Realign our values
- Rediscover our purpose
- Recall our intentions
- Refocus our priorities
- Reframe our problems
- Rethink our options
- Reconnect our relationships
- Refuel our bodies
- Rebuild our capacity
- Reclaim delight

It's only by pressing the pause button in our lives that we can restore balance, productivity, and perspective to life and work.

This book features a collection of 64 concepts, prompts, and word cues designed to reinforce your best practices, challenge your thinking, and, where necessary, reset your mindset. It's based on my weekly e-zine, *Pause, A Voice of Sanity in a Speed-Crazed World*, read by thousands of subscribers worldwide.

As I've put my ideas out there, readers have responded. Each concept presented here is supplemented by real-life experiences that *Pause* readers have shared. You'll be inspired by their stories and reassured to learn that you aren't alone.

It's time to give ourselves and each other permission to balance the "press for performance" with a "pause for renewal" - and restore that natural rhythm of renewal to work and life.

Welcome to the world of renewal. Press pause ... press on.

Warmly,

Patricia

You'll Never Be Done Again

Take a close look at your to-do list and a quick glance at the piles on the corner of your desk. How much of a backlog do you see? Chances are good that it's a sizeable heap.

According to research reported by David Beardley¹, the average business person faces a backlog of 200 to 300 hours of uncompleted work. That's four to six weeks of slogging; and that number doesn't even begin to consider the projects waiting for us at home or in our communities. It's little wonder you might feel overwhelmed and overloaded on any given day.

"When I stop caring about the quality of what I'm doing and focus on just getting it done, I know it's time to take a break and come back to the task when I can give it the attention it deserves."

— Teresa Herd

If you find you are disappointed in your performance at the end of every day, stop giving yourself grief because you're not caught up on all of your projects. It isn't going to happen!

In fact, getting to the end of your list or reaching the bottom of your pile is an abnormal, extraordinary, and other-worldly experience. Look in the mirror and remind yourself, "You'll never be done again!"

Then check today's to-do list and actions against the backlog to be sure you're acting on what matters most. Credit yourself for the valued tasks you do tackle and complete.

Learn to see a sizeable backlog as a normal fact of life rather than an Everest summit you must conquer every day. ☺

I'm currently on spring break from teaching. Before the break, I organized a pile of work to catch up on during the break. As I left for my break, my principal took my keys away. He told me to go and enjoy my break because I had worked hard these past few weeks. At first I was frustrated and worried about all the files that were due. Now I'm grateful. I feel refreshed and know I'll be a better teacher when I return!

— Renee L.

As a psychologist, I often recommend people slow down in their stressed-out lives, but I realize I don't practice what I preach. Why do we feel as though we need to get everything done in a day? I've decided the only person who's going to take care of me is me, so I'm incorporating brief pauses into my days such as having a cup of coffee and really tasting it, or looking at a picture and really seeing it. I feel a difference already.

— Tania B.



White Space

Ask people about their most satisfying experiences with time. You might be surprised by their answers. Yes, the pleasure of accomplishment - getting projects done and checking tasks off lists - ranks high. However, you'll find that the experience of unstructured, wide-open chunks of time with no planned activities consistently tops the list.

It's refreshing to have an hour, an afternoon, or a day to putter and ramble - to go where the spirit moves you, not feeling pressured to be anywhere or do anything in particular. Think of this as white space on your calendar - a wide-open chunk of time with no special commitments or duties.

"Will I remember that the hammock looked good hanging on the front porch or that the garden looked good from the hammock?"

- LuAnn Brandsen

It's a time when you could invite that new colleague for coffee and conversation or dip into the professional reading that's been piling up in the corner of your office. You might lean over the fence and visit

with the neighbors. You could play a round of Monopoly with the kids or snuggle up on the couch with your partner. You could curl up in a hammock with a good book. Or you could simply do nothing at all.

In traditional religious practice, the keeping of the Sabbath assures this recurring openness of time and space. The Sabbath is unique because you don't earn it. It rolls around whether you're ready for it or not.

You can build white space into your work and personal life - for rest, renewal, relationship, or adventure - whether or not it's part of your own tradition. Set a policy of an hour, an afternoon, or an evening each week as open time with no commitments. See what unfolds and develops. Soak up the joy and sense of ease you reap from the experience. 🌿

Because my life seems to be so scheduled with deadlines and dates, I find my most satisfying experiences come when I have blocks in which time doesn't matter - like a day I can do what I feel like doing when I want or a vacation with no structure at all. During these times, I enjoy breaking the 'rules' of time. If I want to walk in my garden in my pajamas at 2:00 in the afternoon, I do it, and I relish the fact that I'm breaking a 'rule.' If I want to build a sandcastle at 7:00 in the morning I will, and I dare anyone to tell me it's too early to play on the beach! I'll even work on my stained-glass project until 4:00 in the morning because it's my time.

- Dani V.D.

Late one windless night, with the clear sky brimming with stars, I sat by the barbeque roasting red peppers, a relaxing, carefree release from the norm. Feeling something odd, I noticed there wasn't a sound except the gentle hissing of the barbeque and the popping of the peppers. In our increasingly noisy lives, it was enchanting, peaceful, and somewhat scary to feel and hear the sound of silence.

- Gregg H.



Badges of Honor

From time to time, I have worked with colleagues who sparred for credit by quizzing each other about a variety of issues: How late did your meeting run last night? How many weekends were you on the road? How many vacation days did you carry over? How many miles did you clock on the company car or add to your frequent flyer plan? How many emails were waiting after you returned from vacation? How many minutes did you rack up on your cell phone?

"If we want our world to be different, our first act needs to be reclaiming time to think. Nothing will change for the better until we do that."

- Margaret Wheatley

At a seminar, I listened to a panel of work-life balance experts discuss their successes and failures in balancing their own

busy lives. They admitted they were challenged to live up to the goals they'd set for themselves. That's true for all of us. Still, the tone of their responses suggested it was okay for their lives to be out of whack because they were doing such important work.

This panel discussion took me back to other conversations in which coworkers measured professional or personal successes in terms of load, distance, sacrifice, and face time. This scale pays little attention to results and none at all to balance.

Eavesdrop on the tone of your own conversations with friends and colleagues when you talk about work-life balance. Is there genuine concern? Do you find and offer support for creative choices, thoughtful boundaries, and sanity-preserving limits? Or do you give lip service to issues of workload, accompanied by a subtle wink-wink-nudge-nudge understanding that important people don't have time for balance and we ought to all just get back to work?

Stars on the epaulettes. Stripes on the shoulders. Pins on the lapels. What badges of honor really matter to you? In our society, what gets honored gets attention. Let's make sure we're tending to the right issues. ☺

We work at jobs that are, at times, highly stressed and quickly changing. We've agreed as a group to look after one another. This is as simple as inviting someone who's feeling snowed under to take a break.

- Lee F.

I gain tremendous satisfaction from my busyness. I love the feeling of contributing and developing personally along the way. When I had down time, I used to fear I was losing my enthusiasm, my spirit. Now in my down time I realize I'm pausing - consciously taking time to think freely about things. I encourage my children to realize the benefit of quiet time when they feel overwhelmed, and I encourage them to pause. I tell them this means 'stop everything' and look, listen, hear, touch, and feel. It's a tool for them and a gift from me.

- Cheryl D.



Less Flap... More Focus

Why did the chicken cross the road? Could it be that in her efforts to lay more eggs, the poor bird found herself spinning out of control? Caught up in a frenzy of flapping and fussing, she flew the coop and hit the highway - losing both her why and her way!

It happens. The flying feathers scenario reminds me of a cartoon that features an old-time manager mentoring a newcomer on the need to look busy in the workplace. The old-timer schools the novice in the fine art of rushing and paper-carrying, stressing both are vital to success in the ultramodern, ultrabusy workplace.

Given this mindset, it's not surprising that Bruch & Goshal's³ study of managerial effectiveness concluded that only 10 percent of the managers they studied spent their time in committed, purposeful, and reflective ways. Yikes!

According to these researchers, managerial effectiveness needs two things: (1) focus (targeted action and follow through) partnered with (2) energy (the vigor that comes with strong personal commitment). Distracted managers who pour great gobs

"There are some things I accomplish not by doing but by stopping doing. Creativity, intimacy, growing, and awareness, for example, will not emerge unless I take time out from many of the activities that keep me so busy."

- Anne Wilson Schaef

of energy into poorly focused tasks confuse a frenzy of activity - such as briskly carrying papers - with purposeful action.

If you, like the poor misguided chicken or the managers studied by Bruch & Goshal, find yourself running off in all directions with little to show for it, flapping harder may not be your best approach. Slow down, check your position, consult your plan, and rethink your intentions.

Just those simple actions will help you avoid a chicken-with-its-head-cut-off approach to life. All flap, no focus! All fuss, no egg!

My daughter, Chelsea, worked for a fast-food restaurant. She's a cool, young lady who does what she needs to without fanfare. She's efficient and a quick learner. When it came time for her first evaluation, she was shocked to discover she wasn't going to get a raise. The reason? She didn't look busy enough. She didn't rush about; she walked instead of ran. Fortunately, she had another job, so she quit. With her dignity intact, she went to work for an employer interested in her output rather than her perceived activity level. How many workers did that restaurant train to look busy rather than be efficient and stay cool?

- Kathy L.

