

20 Little Ways to Stop and Smell the Roses



**A guide to less stress
and more joy everyday.**

**by Joann Javons
www.peoplepoems.com**

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Do you ever feel frustrated by the frantic pace of your life? Feel like you have more to do and not enough time? Ever wish you could make time stand still, even for a few minutes? I do. Did I hear you say "yes", too? This ebook focuses on the many little ways you can stop, refresh, and de-stress every day. You'll discover little ways that don't take much time but will pay you big dividends.

The key word here is 'stop'. Stop to recharge, replenish, and rejuvenate. Stop to de-stress. Stop to become more energized and more productive. Stop to make time for yourself. I realized that those times that I tell myself 'but I have to do this...' are the very times that I need to 'stop and smell the roses'. So here are 20 little ways that you, too, can make time stand still for you!



I asked small business owners, web business owners, parents and others just how they do it. A warm 'thank you' to each of the contributors in this ebook.

Their ideas and tips made writing this a joy. Here are their answers:

1. Take 5 Vacations A Day

Anything that removes you from the scene, even for 5 minutes, will rejuvenate and refresh you, leaving you more clearheaded, energetic and productive. Take 5 minutes several times a day to recharge and refresh.

When I feel a need for an energizer, I walk out to my garden patio and inhale everything in sight! The beauty of nature, the colors, the visual feast all combine to zap my senses to a new level.

Shelbra Brinkman, owner of Shelbra Brinkman & Associates, a change management firm, also re-charges by connecting to nature. "I tend to my potted plants outside, water them, pull off dead blooms, smell them. Or I visit the basil, cilantro and chives growing in my garden. I love to smell them too, eat a bite or two, water them." And adds Shelbra, "Another thing I do is go to the roof where I can see and hear the ocean...the waves mesmerize me and it's a great place to just breathe deeply and relax."



Shelbra consults with Fortune 1000 companies on 'Making Change Work', an outstanding change management program. She lives in Long Beach, CA with her husband and two cats. Contact her at Shelbra@earthlink.net or call 562-439-3000.

Viki Nygaard, owner of Mount Evans Designs, is lucky enough to live and work at 9000 feet altitude in the beautiful Rocky Mountains of Colorado. "I like to go outside on the deck, sit in the sun and feel the warmth of the sun shining on my face and breathe in the fresh mountain air. Doing this uplifts my spirits and revitalizes so that I feel ready to face the next series of challenges in my day", says Viki.

Viki is the exceptionally creative, talented, and thoughtful designer for <http://www.PeoplePoems.com>. When she isn't designing Web sites or in school learning more about Web site design, she loves to make various arts and crafts and most of all, spend time with her two sons. Contact her at Viki@mountevansdesigns.com or learn more about her work at <http://www.mountevansdesigns.com>.

Joseph Petrashek of Starscapes International has discovered an automated way to 'take a vacation' on a regular basis. "I've started using a special computer program called "It's Time!" that forces you to take time off at any interval you like. Mine is set for every 60 minutes. It was designed for folks with carpal tendencies to relax their hands every once in a while." Note: this program is freeware available from <http://www.edienske.homepage.com>.

You can gaze under the stars (and have them in your home, too!) by visiting Joseph Petrashek's site at <http://www.starscapes.com> or contact him at voyager@starscapes.com.



2. Stop The Clutter

One of my favorite breaks is to fill an empty box I keep near the door, in a closet, with things I really don't want or need anymore. Just 5 minutes of going through your house will yield clutter that someone else will treasure. When the box is full, I take it to a donation store when I'm out on other errands. An easy way to let go of that clutter!

Getting things out of your mind and on paper can help stop 'mental clutter'. Karon Thackston, president of KT & Associates says, "Often when I'm feeling stressed it's because my mental 'to do' list seems to have gotten out of hand. If I stop for just 10 minutes and jot down a physical 'to



do' list, things seem to fall into perspective. Once I see my agenda on paper, I'm almost always relieved to find I don't have as much to do as I thought. Organization de-stresses me because it allows me to get a handle on my sometimes out-of-control work schedule. It also allows me the comfort of knowing I won't forget to do anything because I have it down on paper."

KT & Associates specializes in helping small businesses attract and keep more customers and Karon really knows her business! She has done copywriting for <http://www.PeoplePoems.com> and does wonderful work. Visit KT & Associates at <http://www.attractandkeepcustomers.com>. Karon lives in South Carolina in a little log cabin on four acres with her wonderful husband, eight cats, and two dogs.

Taking a few moments to get things back in order can make you feel more in control and feel less 'stressed out'. Marie Williams, publisher of Absolute Ezines in Cambridgeshire, UK says, "A great tonic for a cluttered mind is to spend just a few moments getting things back in order. Since I work online, my email box gets out of hand quickly! I take 5 minutes a day to "stash" or "trash" to lick it into shape. I find that these few minutes to organize reward me with more quality time, increased efficiency, and a whole lot less stress!"

Marie Williams is an acclaimed ezine publisher with two outstanding award-winning ezines. "Absolute Ezines" tells you everything you need to know to build your own terrific online newsletter plus it offers lots of free resources to help you do it. "Write Advice" helps you develop your writing skills in creative ways as you write your way to success. Both of these outstanding ezines can be accessed at <http://www.writead.com>. Marie produces these ezines in her spare time when she's not out earning some pennies (she's British) or indulging in her many other creative pursuits. Contact her at marie@writead.com.

And you can now breathe a sigh of relief. There is a simple way to help you stay super organized so that you no longer have to remember all those important dates for every single thing in your busy life. You can get reminders on everything from when to change the oil in your car to the best date to cover your roses before the first frost to tips on choosing the best preschool for your 3-year old son to your cousin's birthday. Loaded with other tips that you won't find elsewhere, **LifeMinders Personal Events is FREE and terrific. [FREE Birthday, Anniversary and other event reminders. Click now for a chance to win \\$5000!](#)**

3. Get Wet



Water has been known for centuries to have a soothing effect. The Romans knew it, the Greeks knew it. Remember how relaxing a nice long soak in the tub is? Gee, it wasn't that long ago since you did that, was it?

Or take a few minutes to look at your favorite pictures of water. I love to look through a wonderful book, "Taking The Waters", which is filled with beautiful pictures of Roman and Greek baths, historical notes about them and information on bath rituals. It's those soothing pictures that immediately relax me!

And if you're able to carve out a whole hour or so, give yourself a mini-vacation at a day spa. I've done this many times and discovered that 1-2 hours at a day spa, getting a massage, relaxing in the sauna or jacuzzi totally rejuvenates me and makes me feel like I really have been on a vacation! It's a small investment in time for a terrific return. You'll get all these benefits and more at Spawish, <http://www.spawish.com>.



I have a friend who keeps a fish tank in her office and says "those fish help me relax...all I have to do is watch them quietly swimming through the water and I feel better." My doctor keeps a bubbling water fountain on his desk at his office that quietly hums away as he's working and it always relaxes me when I'm there!

Ellen Scholl owns several clothing stores and has an online boutique of unique clothing designs and accessories. Ellen lives at Conneaut Lake, PA and says "Travel for me means going to my window or door and just looking out at that serene lake, an instant de-stresser. In summer, I take many evening boat rides around the lake. These are the best stress relievers in the whole world for me."

Ellen lives at Conneaut Lake, PA with her husband, two dogs and five cats. Visit Ellen's boutique at [http:// www.ellenonline.com](http://www.ellenonline.com) or contact her at ellens@toolcity.net.

4. Take A Meditation Walk

A meditation walk is different from an exercise walk, although you still get health benefits. The purpose of a meditation walk is to connect to nature, inhale through your senses, and enjoy all that is around you. You will return feeling a whole lot better, more appreciative of 'what is' and gain a sense of renewal.

A meditation walk can be done in 5 or 10 minutes, around your block, down the street, over to your neighbor's home. And who can't take a walk for 5 or 10 minutes? So, even if you didn't get in your 20-30 minute exercise walk (good for you if you do more!) today, you still got your meditation walk!

While my meditation walks are always 5 -10 minutes, Betty Carlisle, president of Carlisle & Company, a management consulting firm in Northridge, CA. takes a 2-mile meditation walk every day at dawn. "Although I follow essentially the same route every day, the world is a new experience each time I sally forth to meet the dawn", says Betty. "This is an opportunity to experience the bounty of my life and express gratitude for this beautiful world in which I live."

Carlisle & Company specializes in working with clients on improving individual, team, and business performance. Contact Betty Carlisle at carcom@ix.netcom.com. Betty lives in a charming home surrounded by a lovely garden that she has created. She has one very special cat, Miss Morgan.

5. Turn On The Music

I always play music in the background while I'm working. My favorite music is "Watermark" by Enya, a lovely meditative piece and Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony. I find that the right kind of background music helps me stay calm and focused while I'm working. And if you'd like to listen to "Watermark" or other soul-soothing music by Enya, you can get her CD's for 20% off at [Quick Music, Music for the World](#).



Michael Baroff, author, speaker, and coach says, "I take 10 minutes to listen to a deep relaxation audiotape and just lie down with the headphones, absorbing the music." For a more complete rejuvenation, Michael takes "... free-form ecstatic dance classes, allowing music to move my body to clear my mind and allow me to connect with spirit."



Michael has published a wonderful series of easy to use, self-guided coaching books to help others become more effective in their work. Visit his site, <http://www.innerworkcoaching.com> or contact Mbaroff@aol.com. Michael lives in Santa Monica, CA and recently performed with his 10 year-old daughter, Anya, as members of a choreographed modern dance ensemble called "Father/Daughter Dances".

Rebecca Game is the owner of Digital-Women.com, "women with their modems running", an online business that provides vital information for women in business. "I have a special song on CD that I sit back, close my eyes and listen to without letting in any outside noises. This always helps me to de-stress", says Rebecca. She also has created her own meditative spot in her home that has about 50 different candles in all shapes and sizes that she lights up to help her relax.



Rebecca publishes the digital woman newsletter which is always full of exceptionally helpful and useful tips for women in business. This site is a treasure! Visit <http://www.digital-women.com> for terrific information and resources to help you run your online business. Rebecca lives in Aledo, Texas with her husband and eight cats.

Gib Kerr, a certified financial planner in Sherman Oaks, CA, found a unique way to make music a part of his workday. "I built an electric piano into a drawer in my desk. When things get too intense, I just open the drawer and play the piano! It does wonders to clear the brain for productive work", says Gib.



Gib offers financial planning information at his website as well as his free downloadable "one lesson only complete guitar course". Visit <http://www.gibkerr@gibkerr.com> for more information or call him at 818-788-3504.

6. Dream, Dream, Dream



A few minutes dreaming takes your mind off the moment and transports you to another place, an instant way to rejuvenate.

I like to take a few minutes to re-live a wonderful experience, a precious moment with someone, or a beautiful place I've been to. If lying in the warm sand at the beach, smelling the ocean air, looking at the serene blue water, basking in the warmth of the sun's rays, listening to the waves lap against the shore (are you there now?) relaxes and refreshes you, then 'see' yourself there

again. Or you might have a favorite spot you love in the mountains, surrounded by lush trees and hummingbirds on a warm spring day...well, you get the idea. You don't have to drive there to be there!

Terri McCabe works out of her home, juggling her time with her job and two small children at home. "I love to spread out a blanket in the backyard, lie down with the children and just look at the clouds. Much like we used to do when we were children, it's fun to see what each person sees in the cloud pictures. It's so relaxing and gives all of us a chance to use our imaginations."

Terri lives in Woodbridge, Virginia with her two sons and is a project manager for a website company.

7. Write 'Stream of Consciousness'

This is one of my all-time favorites! Just get out a piece of paper and write down whatever comes to mind: no analysis, no censoring, no editing. Just let it flow, even if what is coming out is 'gee, this seems like a silly thing to do.' Write for 5 minutes, without lifting pen or pencil from the paper. While this technique is often used to break through 'writer's block', it is also a wonderful way to empty your mind so that you can move forward in a lighter and more productive way.



8. Read An Inspirational Verse

Read something inspiring to you. It can set the tone of your day, help you refocus, and move you in the right direction. I like to read daily sections from "**Simple Abundance**" by Sarah Ban Breathnach or inspirational verse from a little meditation book or some of my favorite poems by other poets.

9. Love Those Pets

Remember the wonderful stories about Lassie? A recent Disney re-run on TV prompted me to tape some Lassie shows and watching them always warms my heart. Another favorite pet video is "Homeward Bound", a charming story of two dogs and one cat who get lost and finally find their way home. This wonderful story always brings tears of joy to my eyes!



Mia is my 18 month-old kitty with a roaring purr so I take a break by holding her on my lap and listen to her loud, happy little purr...I can feel my muscles relax when I do this.



Phil Humbert, author, speaker, and coach says his pets "force" him take mini-breaks. With tongue-in-cheek humor, Phil says..."I'd get a lot more work done if my blankety-blank dogs would just leave me alone! They're always interrupting my carefully focused, efficiently planned and supremely tuned workday with their obnoxious demands: "Take me outside!, "Get me some water!", "Rub my ears", "Move over and let me crawl under your desk...outta the way you poorly trained human!" And so we go for walks in the sun or I give them biscuits and anything else they want!".

Phil lives in Oregon with his wife, three dogs, and two cats. He publishes a newsletter chock full of resources to help you be more successful in your life. You can reach him at Resources For Success, <http://www.philiphumbert.com> or Coach@philiphumbert.com.

And you can get some great deals for your special pooch at <http://www.SitStay.com>.



10. Breathe 7

This is another of my all-time favorites! I have yet to find a more relaxing and re-energizing breath than this ancient yoga breathing technique. And it's simple. But please, move away from your desk, sit somewhere where you can relax your body. Ready? Inhale slowly to the count of 7, hold your breath to the count of 7, then slowly exhale to the count of 7. Repeat this process until you start to feel the effect. Usually it's 3 times for me but sometimes I like to keep doing it anyway because it just gets better!

11. Write Poetry



I'm not talking about Shakespeare here, just a few lines about what you see right in front of you. And the lines don't have to rhyme and nobody is going to read them. Your lines could be about your dog crawling under your desk, the view from your office window, the children playing outside. When it pops into your head, write it. It will take your mind off what you're doing and you'll return more focused.

12. Get Ready For Sleepy Time

Try to get your mind into a relaxing state before bedtime. Bedtime rituals (turning off the TV early, making a hot cup of tea before bedtime, or light reading) all help you create a transition zone to bedtime so you can get your mind off the events of the day and sleep well. Al Montero, publisher of ZeroCost Digest says "To make sure I sleep well at night, I read for 30 or 45 minutes before going to bed. It helps me avoid falling asleep thinking about the challenges I had that day or will have the next."



Al publishes ZeroCost Digest, an ezine that reprints top marketing and advertising articles. You can subscribe and get lots of great marketing information at <http://www.zerocost.com>. Al lives happily in North Carolina with his wife and son.

13. Be A Kid Or Borrow Your Kids' Fun Things

Kids always know how to play! Take a short 'play break' with your kids...go outside to watch the cloud pictures, make up stories together, play a game. A friend of mine likes to pop in the VCR one of her kids' Mr. Rogers videos when she starts to feel 'stressed out'. "I love to watch it when the kids are napping, there's something so soothing about Mr. Rogers' comfortable slippers". Another friend loves to watch "Teletubbies on TV for her re-charge time from her demanding at-home business.

14. Laugh Yourself Silly

Go ahead, rent that silly video! Watch that funny TV show! Laughter has long been known to release lots of stress and enhance our well being. Norman Cousins is famous for healing himself with laughter and even lectured at medical schools on the healing benefits of laughter. Have you laughed today?



Pamela Heywood , owner of TuCats-Design says, "Laughter helps me keep things in perspective. When things go wrong and life seems to be against me, I try to remember that a scant six months after the last disaster, I couldn't think why I worried about it so much and I just had to laugh at myself! I try to remember that this time won't be any different so I might just as well laugh now! I have an ability to see the funny side of everything and I do feel that it's my defense against the world when things go wrong."

In addition to using laughter to keep things in perspective, Pamela uses her voice in another way to de-stress: "My biggest therapy is singing. Just being able to make that much noise is a great way to let out all the tensions."

Pamela is owner of <http://www.tucats-design.com>, a wonderful site with great information and resources to help you build your web business. She lives in an unspoiled and barely accessible valley north of the island of Tenerife in the Canary Islands, Spain where she works full-time from her home which she shares with one dog and three cats. Originally a British journalist, Pamela moved to the island in 1992 to get away from the "corporate machine" and made a pact with herself never to take the island's awe-inspiring beauty for granted.

15. Arrange Flowers



Pick or buy some lovely flowers and arrange them in a way that pleases your eye. For me, this is a meditative act. My mind is only on the beauty of the flowers and I'm mentally transported to their beauty, colors, textures, and fragrance.

16. Talk To Your Neighbors

When was the last time you talked to your neighbors? Too many of us don't even speak to the people who live near us. Human contact, no matter how brief, takes our attention off our own busy-ness. It actually can be more stressful not to talk with your neighbors because human contact is vital for us. So talk to the mother across the street with three kids or the widow next door or the elderly couple out taking a walk.



17. Put The Puzzle Together

Some people like to do crossword puzzles but Betty Carlisle from Carlisle & Company finds that the real thing gets her re-focused. Betty dumps the pieces of a 7" x 7" puzzle onto a serving tray or any flat tray and then starts putting the puzzle together. "Being able to focus, seeing how things fit together and making progress in producing a finished puzzle are very positive experiences. Working on a puzzle helps clear my brain and gives me a genuine feeling of accomplishment", says Betty.

18. Light Up

Light up those candles to lighten up! 5 or 10 minutes of soft candle glow and deep breathing works wonders. Add a few neck rolls and eye rolls to help you relax, drop your shoulders and you'll feel more energized.



Candles come in every imaginable fragrance as well as size, shape, and color, delighting the senses in so many ways. And who said candles have to be expensive? You can get all the candles you want at up to 70% off retail at www.candlemart.com an online store built on the notion that "quality doesn't have to be expensive" and they prove it!



19. Do Something Sweet For Someone

If your life seems frantic, distract yourself by thinking of someone else. Leave a 'love note' for someone...a neighbor, a friend, your spouse. Tuck it under their door, under a dinner plate or on the bathroom mirror. Do something for a loved one that you don't usually do...like bringing him his slippers. Or leave a 'just thinking about you' voice mail message for someone you haven't talked with for a while or send a funny email card to someone who needs some cheer.



20. Stretch Out

How about stretching those limbs? Up in the air with your arms, add a few leg stretches. I always like to do neck rolls to release the tension in my back and neck from sitting at my desk. Combine this with the Breathe 7 technique described in this e-book and you'll feel relaxed and rejuvenated in just a few minutes!

Keeping physically active has positive benefits for both the mind and the body at any age. Al Mierau learned years ago that water sports helped him cope with the pressures of his career. "Wind surfing and sailing are great stress relievers for me," says Al. "In 1984 when I was 45 and my two sons were in their senior year of high school, we agreed to try wind surfing. We took lessons from a professional who happened to be here from South Africa and we've never looked back. Doing this gave me the opportunity to chum around with my sons and nephews until they finished their higher educational studies and all moved away. I still windsurf and instruct to this day. We also learned how to sail and I sail my 18-foot catamaran as often as the short season allows. These two sports have another positive benefit. I tend to hang around with folks much younger than my age which keeps me young at heart and more physically fit than I could ever imagine." Al also does oil painting, photography and builds lovely rustic willow furniture.



Al Mierau is at the top of the A+ list for his expertise in getting web sites ranked on the major search engines and all of his clients benefit. His sites are <http://www.enginepositioning.com/sailing> and <http://members.home.net/al.mierau/>

Do you have a little way to 'stop and smell the roses' that you would like to share?

Send it to us for review for our next update to this ebook at

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