

Take a pause to read this

WORK-LIFE BALANCE: Avoid the crash-and-burn scenario by relaxing

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CANWEST NEWS SERVICE

Don't be a pause-a-phobic. Take a break. It's good for you. Taking time to pause is crucial, explains a Saskatchewan-based life-balance and renewal strategist.

Pausing shouldn't be considered a reward, insists Patricia Katz of Saskatoon. "It's an investment."

So, give yourself permission to pause, recommends Katz, author of *Press Pause ... Press On: Bringing Balance & Perspective To Work & Life* (Optimus, \$19.95).

Katz's 134-page paperback is based on her free weekly online newsletter titled *Pause* (www.pauseworks.com).

Katz's previous four books focused on time, stress, organization and life balance.

After years of helping people enhance productivity, Katz decided to shift her focus and investigate the concept of time starvation.

"The work and the study led me to focus on balance — helping individuals and organizations restore a rhythm of renewal. Balancing the press for performance with an equally critical pause for renewal," she said.

Katz noticed people weren't harvesting much satisfaction from the things that were being accomplished. She said people appeared to be doing one of two things. Either they were in a crash-and-burn scenario, which is when you



The key to bringing balance and perspective to work and life is to give yourself permission to pause. — CANWEST

run hard and fast until you fall over. And then you get a rest because you can't possibly do anything more.

"But that only gets you back to zero in terms of energy. And that's debilitating," Katz said.

"What I also saw happening was what I call blur and endure . . . that no matter how much you've done, there is always something more waiting."

Neither approach is healthy, profitable or sustainable, Katz said. So she turned her attention to exploring ways of "helping overextended mid-lifers take a break and get a grip."

"There's a need for us to counter off that pushing and pressing for performance

with pauses for renewal," Katz said.

The answer lies in striking a healthy balance between the two.

Sometimes we can renew physically, Katz said, by taking time for a 10- or 15-minute walk.

Pauses can also be a time to reconnect and build relationships.

And sometimes, we just need to pause and do nothing, Katz said.

Katz started looking at work-life balance solutions, and exploring why people weren't embracing them. Some, she discovered, resist because they're convinced they can't stop because they'll just get further behind. Or, they recognize

the importance of taking a break, but don't want to take one until they're caught up.

"The nature of our work these days is that it's highly unlikely that you'll ever be caught up," Katz said.

It's important to understand that even if we manage our time well and are organized, in all likelihood we still won't get to the end of our to-do list.

She stressed the importance "to get real, and to speak up about issues of [work]load."

"If we don't learn to set boundaries and limits and negotiate those for ourselves, our body will do it on our behalf and it won't be pretty," she said.

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