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## In Defense of Doing Nothing

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## In Defense of Doing Nothing

By Bree Watson  
UCF Forum columnist  
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A day without plans or obligations was everything I needed to rest and reset..



A whole day of nothing. Doesn't it sound grand? (Photo by CnOra on iStock)

Are you always doing something? Always working, studying, reading, writing, clicking, typing, teaching, meeting, Zooming, cooking, cleaning, washing, wiping, folding, planning, prepping or just plain worrying?

I know I am. And it was time to do nothing about it!

So I took a day off. I wasn't going on vacation. I didn't have a doctor's appointment or need to care for a sick child. And I wasn't taking my car in for service.

I had no to-do list. No home repair to tackle. Nothing.

I was a stick on a river called Nothing and I let it take me for a ride.

I just took a day off.

"I did nothing. I did absolutely nothing, and it was everything that I thought it could be."

Film fans may recognize that line from Office Space. In the dark comedy, the main character, Peter, is asked what he would do if he had a million dollars. He says he would do nothing — and soon after, he does exactly that. A whole day of nothing. Doesn't it sound grand?

Doing nothing, so to speak, is still doing something, just as avoiding a decision is still a decision. But on my day off — on Nothing Day — I had nothing planned, and it was everything I needed to reset and reenergize.

So, yes, I did do something on Nothing Day. But I did it all on my time, without any distractions. Even household chores felt relaxing without the constraints of a schedule or clingy children. I washed a load of towels, vacuumed the house and happily put away a basket of folded laundry that had been perched on the dining room table for days, silently taunting me every time I passed by. (I see you, baby clothes! And I will put you away whenever I feel like it! You're not the boss of me!)

I got takeout from a new spot. Played with our pups in the backyard. And soaked up an audiobook uninterrupted.

I also listened to big band jazz as I leisurely prepared dinner, a refreshing change from the hastily thrown-together meals I concoct on most evenings. And I successfully took a short nap, which, for my anxious mind, is quite a feat.

I was a stick on a river called Nothing and I let it take me for a ride.

Between kids and work and chores and more, there's always some to-do list lingering and lurking in the back of my brain.

Don't forget dog food. Need a new rug. Mail that birthday card. Call a plumber. Update the sprinkler timer. Buy more toddler socks. Try to decipher the size charts to transition from toddler socks to children's socks. Ponder the great expanse of the universe and assume it's where all the toddler socks go.

But not today. Not on Nothing Day.

In a sense, it took a pandemic for me to take a day for myself. With my COVID-19 vaccination the day before, I requested this otherwise random Tuesday off in case my side effects were difficult to work around.

Fortunately, other than a tender arm, I felt a lot like I normally do — tired, sore and a bit run-down. You know, like a working mom with two young kids. Like most people these days. Like you, perhaps?

It's funny to think about, but I actually had to make a plan to do nothing. I used to do nothing on a regular basis. Nothing and I were good friends. But this was back when email was exciting not exhausting and shopping resembled a saunter rather than Supermarket Sweep.

These days, it seems there's always something and no time for nothing. We fill every bit of free time, every moment of silence with scrolling and swiping and streaming on a variety of glowing screens.

But if all the somethings are leaving you with nothing, it's time to unplan, unplug and unwind, just for a bit.

I recognize there are different jobs, different life situations and even different personalities that make it easier or more difficult to enjoy a Nothing Day. But I hope that no matter who you are and what you do for a living, you can find time to pause, take a deep breath and take a day or an hour or just a few minutes away from your worries to do a whole lot of nothing.

Take a walk. Take a nap. Take the long way home. Just take a break! Turn nothing into something. You deserve it.

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