

# TAKE SOME TIME TO RETREAT

“For each of us. . . there is a deep place within, where hidden and growing our true spirit rises. . . Within these deep places, each one holds an incredible reserve of creativity and power, of unexamined and unrecorded emotion and feeling.” Does this statement by Audre Lorde ring true to you; does it leave you with the idea that, yes, it has been too long since you have touched upon the deep place within you? One of the problems in today’s chaotic, carpooling, over-achieving world is that we do not spend time discovering ourselves. We continuously change so shouldn’t we continuously rediscover?<sup>1</sup>

So, when was the last time you peeled back the layers of pretense, compliance, and accommodation to ask, “Who am I?” I know, I know, for some, even an hour alone in the bathtub feels like a hopeless desire. It can take a great deal of courage to believe that you deserve and must have time for solitude. As Jennifer Louden suggests, in *A Woman’s Retreat*, you must have “time to muse, to fling open your dusty hope chest crammed with notions, recollections, fancies. To picture your future. To pore over and release the past. To retreat.”

You can put on your coat, pick up your purse, and say as you shut the door, “You’ll be fine without me.” (Or, you could take off your coat, put down your purse, and say the same as you shut your bedroom or bathroom door.) So go. Claim your right. Carve out the time—just for you. In *Gift from the Sea*, Anne Morrow Lindbergh brings the scope of solitude down to size. “Total retirement is not possible. I cannot shed my responsibilities. I cannot permanently inhabit a desert island. . . . I must find a balance somewhere between. . . a swinging pendulum between solitude and communion, between retreat and return.”

## QUOTABLE QUOTES

“To be rooted is perhaps the **most important** and least recognized **need** of the human soul.”

...Simone Weil

“To speak gratitude is courteous and pleasant, to enact gratitude is generous and noble, but to **live**

**gratitude** is to touch Heaven.”

...Johannes A. Gaertner

“**Live the questions now**. Perhaps then, someday far in the future, you will gradually without even noticing it, live your way into the answer.”

...Rainer Maria Rilke

## TAKE SOME TIME--Just for You

Rent a romantic movie—the kind that makes you laugh and doesn’t require too much thought. In *Anatomy of an Illness*, Norman Cousins watched funny movies by the hour to recover from a degenerative arthritic disease. He called laughter “internal jogging.” Since the publication of Mr. Cousins book in 1979, many scientists have investigated the healing powers of laughter. They have found that humor decreases hormones we release when

we're under stress; it also tunes up the activity of the immune system's natural killer cells, which defend the body against disease.

How about a massage? In a 1996 study at the University of Miami's Touch Research Institute, 26 subjects received a massage in a chair twice a week while another 24 people were told just to relax for 15 minutes. After five weeks, the massaged subjects scored significantly lower on tests for depression and job stress.

Talk to your dog. Pets let us express emotions we may be too inhibited to share with humans. They quietly listen as they go about the business of watering the neighbors geraniums.

Zone into a meditative state with gong music and aromatherapy. According to "the gong" web-site at <http://www.devyaworld.com> this music "speaks to the body in vibrational language that balances and relaxes the body while it activates brain waves that stimulate creativity. Add the calming scent of essential oils wafting from a ceramic diffuser and you'll definitely soothe your soul and restore your energy.

Try the basic meditations at <http://www.meditationcenter.com> or light a virtual candle for peace at <http://www.gratefulness.org>. If you have to be at your computer, why not escape to soothing landscapes with the calming sounds of wind and water at <http://www.unwind.com>?

## **NEVER THOUGHT OF THAT**

Are you pulling out your white athletic shoes from last summer and finding they are not so white anymore. Try cleaning them with whitewall tire cleaner. Working outdoors, apply the cleaner, let sit for a few minutes, then wipe dry with paper towels or a soft rag. If your summer shoes are white canvas, apply a paste of automatic dishwasher detergent and hot water. Let sit for 30 minutes, then scrub the surface with a toothbrush. Rinse well and let dry out of the sun.

Plant your summer salad in a window box or deck container. Try adding edible flowers like tuberous begonias, calendulas, violas, chives, French marigolds, nasturtiums and pansies.

Flaxseed is a great food topping with a healthy benefit. Shown to help reduce cholesterol levels and aid digestion, flaxseed may also help prevent cancer. The silky brown seed, which has a mild, nutty flavor, is available at most health-food stores. The daily recommendation of one tablespoon can be easily worked into your diet. Buy whole flax seed and grind it fresh in a coffee bean grinder. Dress up a sandwich, add a tablespoon to your favorite hot or cold cereal, and sprinkle over fresh fruit or your favorite green salad.

---

<sup>1</sup>Louden, Jennifer. *A Woman's Retreat*, Harper Collins 1997.