

BEFORE YOU LEAVE

A REFLECTIVE GUIDE FOR BUSY PROFESSIONALS
ENTERING VACATION SEASON



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SUMMER ARRIVES QUICKLY

Memorial Day weekend often arrives carrying a quiet promise: that summer might finally bring some relief. Calendars begin filling with vacations, long weekends, shore trips, weddings, delayed plans, and out-of-office messages. The season changes, and with it comes the hope that perhaps we will, too. And yet many people enter summer already exhausted. Some people spend vacations photographing moments they barely paused long enough to experience. Others spend the first two days away simply trying to slow themselves down. A vacation can change our location without changing our internal pace.

**"Many people are not only hoping for rest.
They are hoping to feel present inside their own lives again."**



WHAT ARE YOU CARRYING INTO VACATION?

Before stepping away, it can be useful to notice what your current pace has been demanding from you. Without overanalyzing your responses, reflect on the questions below.

What pace have you been operating at recently?

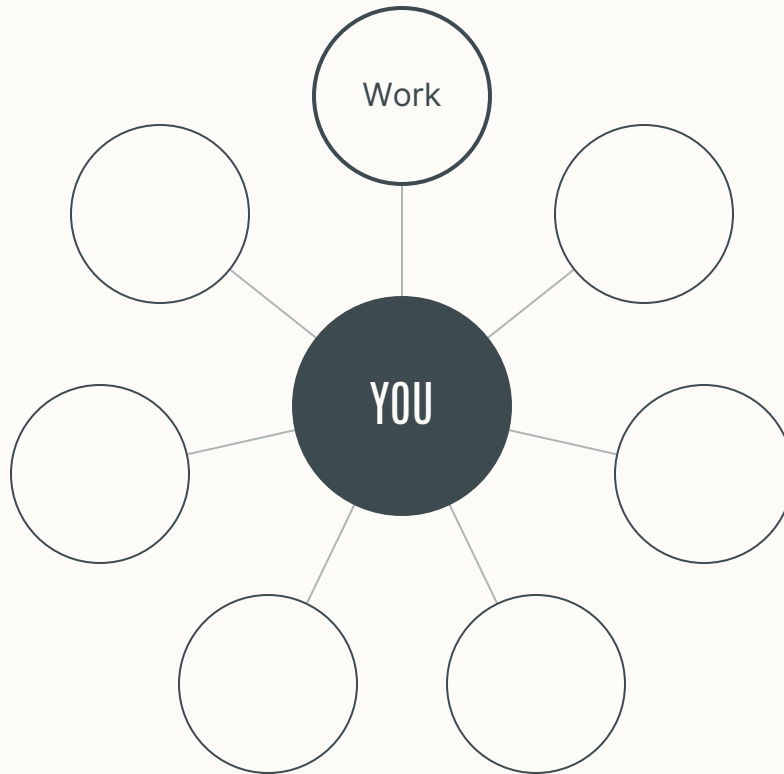
What has been costing you more energy than you realized?

What would make this vacation feel genuinely restorative?



ATTENTION LANDSCAPE

Imagine your current attention as a landscape. In the space below, sketch or map where your energy has been going recently.



Map where your attention goes. Write what claims your energy in each circle. Make the circles bigger or smaller to show how much space each one takes. (Example: "Work" is filled in above to get you started.)

Which areas feel overfed? Which feel neglected?

Many people know how to leave. Fewer know how to arrive.

Researchers studying occupational recovery have found that restoration depends not only on time away, but on our ability to mentally disengage from work while we are gone. Rest is not simply about distance.

Create a Transition Ritual

Many people leave physically while remaining mentally connected to work. Before entering vacation, consider creating a small ritual that signals a transition between responsibility and rest.

- Closing your laptop intentionally instead of abruptly
- Journaling before departure
- Taking a quiet walk on your first evening away
- Reflecting on what you want to temporarily leave behind

Reduce Fragmented Attention

Constant interruption makes restoration difficult. Even brief periods of uninterrupted attention can help the nervous system slow down.

- Taking one walk without your phone
- Eating one meal without multitasking
- Allowing yourself to experience something before capturing it

Reflect Before Returning

Before returning home, consider asking:

- What felt genuinely restorative?
- What pace do I not want to immediately resume?
- What felt most present or meaningful?
- What do I want to carry forward into daily life?

Restoration is not something we passively receive from time away.

It is something we participate in through attention.

**Summer does not always change our lives.
But sometimes it gives us enough distance
to finally see them more clearly.**

Thank you for taking this pause.



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