

time... the ultimate luxury

Something most of us don't have enough of these days, time is today's ultimate luxury. As working days get longer and longer and time out has to take a back seat, it is our wellbeing that is taking the rap, and if we're not careful it can result in a serious physical, mental and emotional crash.

In this wellbeing series, Judy Chapman first traces how valuable time for the self has become in healing the body mind and soul and then, for those who simply can't manage quantity, in Express Wellness she also discovers that there is still plenty of benefit to be had from scheduling short, regular bites of relaxation into your weeks, a little paying back big time in terms of stress relief and physical maintenance.

We meet Raewyn McBain, a former journalist and businesswoman who experienced first hand the meaning of burning out, and took years to recover from Chronic Fatigue Syndrome. She fought back, rebuilding her health and her personal and working life, to write a book to help others going through the same "To Hell and Back" nightmare.

And finally, our "How To girl" Lucy Lord takes us, and herself, step by step through managing our days, to help us create quality time to spend on the things that are important to us: time with family and friends, tempting spa visits, Internet blogging and – ahem – bottles of wine...?

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Consumerism is out and time for self is in. According to world experts it's all about slowing down and creating more meaning in our lives. Indeed spas of the future will be commercial-free zones where it's not about escaping to another world – rather returning to oneself.

writer **Judy Chapman**

STRESSING ABOUT NOT HAVING ENOUGH TIME in the day used to be something I'd only hear others complain about. Today, however, the message about how a fast paced life affects the body is clear. Even the image of the laid back Aussie has become a myth with Australians reportedly now working the longest hours in the developed world. Has time for rest become the most luxurious experience of all?

It's not easy to take time out. Author of *Affluenza – when too much is never enough* is Dr. Clive Hamilton, who says that self-deception or 'deferred happiness syndrome,' is when people persist with the belief that the sacrifice (work, stress, etc.) will pay off in the long run.

But there is good news. Hamilton says that it's spending more time with our families, friends and communities that ultimately makes us happier, and workplaces of the future will be reshaped to allow us to reclaim our time.

According to Mark Wuttke, Principal of the Wuttke Group and speaker at Turning Point Seminar (www.turningpoint.com.sg), there is a new phenomenon and it's called slow soul consumerism. He says more time for me is the way to synergistically thrive and flourish within the fast pace of living today. It's about creating more time, purpose and meaning in our lives that encourages us to purchase authentic experiences rather than more things.

“Consciously exchanging quantity for quality, success for significance and things for experience is how many of us are choosing to create more time, balance, purpose and meaning in our lives,” says Wuttke. He adds that this is not determined by salary, race, religion or politics, but rather space and time. “Meaning is the new money,” he says.

Wuttke adds that gross materialism and invasive crass status displays can be perceived by some as a wonderful thing, but at some point we wake up.

“We know that we cannot continue the same level of consump-

tion as it is not sustainable, nor does it buy us anything that really lasts or adds any real incremental contribution to our lives.” He believes that taking time out for yourself will result in better health, more productivity in whatever you choose to do and put you in a place where work, meaning and happiness can merge.

Certainly there are shifts in mindsets that can be seen in our global travel and spa industry. According to recent research even the most affluent travellers now want life-changing and emotionally rich experiences over luxury goods. As well, there are the emerging trends of Volun-tourism and Eco-tourism that show that, as Wuttke says, meaning *is* the new money.

The spa environment offers us an amazing opportunity to take time out for self and connect with others. And spas don't have to cost a fortune. Whether your choice is to bathe in hot sulphur spring in Japan with girlfriends or zone out at a yoga retreat with your mother or daughter, the choices are many. Single and family spas are becoming popular, as are teenage spas that provide a place where families and younger friends can take time to connect. As well there are more destination spas offering, for example, mother and daughter programs that help deepen relationships.

Ultimately it is taking the time to relax that allows us to come back to center. In these sacred moments we have time to alter our perception of events and the world around us, that are often the cause of our stress in the first place. From here a sense of gratitude spreads through our body giving our immune system a boost – and any anxiousness about what we think don't have or are missing in our lives easily melts away.

And for those of you still concerned that there's not enough time in the day then read *Express Wellness* (p74) and look out for treatments where you can get a pedicure, manicure and facial all under an hour or dream about spas that offer to send out your dry cleaning while you take a massage!



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FAMILY TIME

If we have less time to spend with each other, then why not pack the whole family on your next spa adventure? Spas that cater to families are a growing trend. The Mandarin Oriental in Macau has Kids Co. – a fun-orientated learning center for children aged 3-12 with everything from playground to Playstation. Bring the family together through activities like rock climbing, the flying trapeze, a tightrope-walking workshop and other team building activities.

www.mandarinoriental.com

TREKKING TIME

There are few experiences so majestic as spending time in nature. Aman Resorts have created a superb seven-day trek through the Kingdom of Bhutan where you stay in various lodges each night while exploring sacred monasteries and villages during the day. Return to Amanparo in the evening and sink into a traditional Bhutanese Hot Stone Bath and contemplate the beauty of life. www.amanresorts.com

Another is an 8-day Bhutan experience with Christopher Walker over the Christmas period staying at the luxurious Uma Paro. This powerful journey includes daily walks to monasteries, meditation, yoga and of course relaxing spa treatments.

www.walkerinternational.com

TIME FOR SELF

Meditation, yoga, martial arts are Eastern derived modalities that serve to unite our mind and body into balance and you'll find these disciplines on the menu at most spa resorts these days. For those who really want to shut the door to the external world for a while then try The Vipassana Retreats that are offered at meditation centers all over the world – a space where you reconnect with your internal self. The day starts at 4am and includes up to eight hours of meditation each day. A discourse is held every evening and lights out at 9.30pm. Stay in dorm style accommodation – there is no TV or computer or any other so-called distractions. www.dhamma.org

TREATMENT TIME

RECONNECT

Bathe in absolute privacy where the spa experience is delivered in-room. At the newly opened Quan Spa at the Renaissance Koh Samui, bath blends 'Dream' or 'Contemplate' are offered. Soak in a warm pool of aromatic salts and oils and float...dream...reconnect. Water is still the root of all the best spas in the world and any spa that offers harmonious water-inspired experiences deserves a visit. www.renaissancehotels.com/USMBR, www.marriott.com

TIME RITUALS

Time Rituals offered at select Mandarin Oriental spas are blocks of time booked rather than the choice of treatment. After a quick consultation, the therapist will recommend a sequence of treatments perfect for how you are feeling on the day. As well, at some of their locations like The Landmark Hong Kong, they offer an area where guests can immerse in a variety of European inspired water therapies prior to treatment – all complimentary! www.mandarinoriental.com

TIME FOR CONNECTING

In the same style that mother and daughter trot off to the hairdressers together to celebrate the teenager's coming of age with her first pedicure, The Golden Door in the US offers programs especially for mother and daughters – as well as women only and men only weeks held throughout the year. www.goldendoor.com

the meaning of wellbeing

Wellbeing comes from having a web of relationships and interests, family and friends, work, leisure activities and spiritual beliefs. The intimacy, the sense of belonging and the support offered by close personal relationships are of great importance.

Throughout history sages have counseled that happiness is not a goal but rather a consequence of how we live and that it comes from being content with what we have. Today, we are sold a different message – that we will be happy only if we have more money and more of the things that money buys. Human experiences and scientific research do not support this belief.

Source *Affluenza – when too much is never enough* Dr. Clive Hamilton (Allen & Unwin, 2005).