

Thank God It's Monday!

By Kim Dannies

Are you glad to get back to a more predictable routine after a crazy summer of kids, camp schedules, vacations, and colleagues gone AWOL? You're not alone if you find solace in the coziness of your cubicle and relief in routine, but for those of us still sniffing the last fumes of summer, thinking about Monday morning makes us about as happy as Dick Cheney at a Jon Stewart performance.

Do you crave more weekend and less Monday but find yourself eclipsed by the hyper folk who crank up work anxiety long before the actual weekend is over? If that was you with the blinking headset at your child's bowling alley birthday party on Saturday, I have a question: was that conference call really necessary? And all those bowed heads at worship services— are those folks truly praying, or, as I recently witnessed, blackberrying!? And while we're at it, I'm declaring it PC to knock any and all cellphone squawkers off of sunny chairlifts— you're killing my buzz. A preoccupation with work is unhealthy on so many levels, but none more so than for our kids and partners and friends, who are robbed of our focused attention.

If you do feel a case of the Sunday blues settling in— a little disappointment that the weekend is over already, a flutter of anxiety about the week to come, or an urgent need to blow off storytime in favor of a spreadsheet, you can take a Valium, or you can take a look at four empowering steps that will help you to reclaim the beauty of a weekend and boost your productivity on Mondays.

1. Be a Weekend Warrior. Take the last hour on Friday to reflect on your weeks' work effort and to plan the upcoming week with clearly written goals and action plans. Schedule all details into your time planner. You will leave work feeling acknowledged and in control, and you can let your hair down free of any preoccupation about the coming demands of Monday. Leave a "hotsheet" of activities you will begin as soon as you return. Time management experts often suggest knocking off the easiest tasks first, and overachievers often attack the toughest item first. Each of these approaches misses the mark and may facilitate being busy at the expense of being productive. The distinction between busy and productive is a critical one. Busy is full of activity or cluttered detail, while productive brings tangibles into existence by way of a mental or physical effort. Start each day with the most important task. It may be an email that takes 3 minutes or a marketing project

continued...

that requires 6 hours; once that task is accomplished, though, the day has, by definition, been productive despite any crises that may arise. The next step? Nail the second most important task.

2. Schedule Smart. Did you really want to book that high-pressure meeting for first thing Monday morning? What about commitments after work? It's a good idea to soft schedule Mondays by breaking tasks down into very manageable portions. Focus on one step at a time rather than tackling a huge project and feeling overwhelmed. Schedule classes on alternate evenings.

3. Dude, Don't Forget the Gratitude. Instead of focusing on what you don't like about work, be mindful to what you do like. Think of at least three things you look forward to and enjoy about your work. Is it your Clients? Creative tasks? Colleagues? Travel? Routine? If you cannot come up with something that makes you feel lucky, that makes you feel proud to be a part of your team, then you owe it to everyone in your work community to find another job. Discover a goal or a personal challenge that inspires you. This makes work more interesting and easier to come back to. If you don't have one declared, find one and incorporate it so that you are more engaged in your work and look forward to your job.

4. Celebrate Sundays. If you find yourself starting to think about work and you'd rather stay in weekend mode a bit longer, then plan a special activity that you will enjoy on Sunday evenings. A casual supper with family or friends; a get-together to watch a favorite show or video; a trip to the gym, bookstore, or someplace to indulge a hobby are all fun ideas. The goal is to plan something that will keep you engaged in the pleasure mode and your mind off work for the last few hours of the weekend. Choose it with a mindful intention and enjoy every moment, right to the end!

BRAINTRUST

BUSINESS CONSULTING LLC

286 College Street

Burlington, Vermont 05401

802.238.8586

www.braintrustconsulting.net

BrainStorm ©2007 by Kim Dannies. I work with corporate and private individuals who want to explore new business possibilities, refine work/life models, and generate rewarding change. For more information about success strategies visit my website: www.braintrustconsulting.net or call 802.238.8586.