

The importance of getting away

Some of you regular readers may have noticed that I was late last week -- I was on vacation.

Yes, vacation -- that time of year when you get away, live out of a suitcase, and come out of it with no money at all -- that's where I was, and that's why I was late posting last week's entry.

I never have done vacations well. We're going through a real economic slump, right now, and a lot of people don't have a job to take a vacation from -- or the money to make it work.

But even then, it's important to get away from worries or work for a while, even if you just stick around the house and mend the window screens.

Vacation, after all, is more a state of mind than a different location. It's a break in the current routine, and a chance to recast yourself in a new mold -- at least for a while.

In our case, we drove almost 3000 miles to Northern California and back. We looked at the beach, we took a tour of a horticultural garden, we drove on roads that twisted and turned so much that you sort of felt you were on a roller coaster. But more than anything else, we broke with the norm -- we changed what we were doing, at least for a week, and in the process, changed, at least slightly, the way we were looking at life.

It's so easy to get caught up in the everyday grind of business, or in the challenges of home and family. It's altogether too easy to never let yourself have time to heal a bit -- to never take the time to do something different.

As humans, we tend to fall into patterns -- we drive the same way to work every day, we usually eat at the same places, or eat the same food from a sack lunch or a vending machine. Most of us eat the same sorts of things for dinner -- in most cases, there are a limited number of meals that we tend to rotate through. That's part of home, family, and business, and those are all good -- many of those things form the glue that holds us together in times of trial, and keeps us going with family traditions and memories.

But it's altogether too easy to fall into the constant habits, and then let those habits rule you for the worse.

A vacation -- whether it be a trip somewhere else, or just a determined desire to change your personal routines for a couple of weeks -- gives our minds a chance to rest from the routine, and find new ways of doing things.

After all, we all need a little variety.

Your vacation this year might be just a few days -- I never took more than four days vacation until I was 25 years old. Or it might be something more exotic, something you've been saving for all of your life. It might be a trip somewhere special, or it might just be a few days' worth of watching DVD movies together as a family. Whatever it is, even if you're going through hard times, take some time to recast yourself into a new set of experiences.

Within a few weeks, my week-long trip to California will fade, and I'll likely get back to many of the same habits and routines that I have adopted over the years. We'll tend to eat the same things, and maybe go the same places.

But each change we can make to get away, no matter how fleeting, and even if it's just mentally removing ourselves from the everyday worries of life, can help our spirits mend from the trials and travails of daily life.

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