



PERSPECTIVE

LEAVE ME ALONE DURING DOWNTIME!

How many days are there in a week, seven? No, there are only six days — at least that's what I would like to tell everyone who tries to hijack my day off. It's downtime after all!

You work hard five days a week; a day should be reserved for catching up with friends and running errands. And then, the one remaining day of the week is downtime: the peaceful time spent doing nothing, or doing anything that does not make your grey cells work that much, or anything that makes you the happiest! Especially in this era of constant noise, pretence, and tension, this is necessary.

So, what do we do during downtime? That, of course, depends on your idea of Zen. The guitar you have given up on could be brought out for some jamming. The PlayStation that has been crying for your attention could finally be fired up, whilst dropping yourself on the couch. Or you could catch up on the latest flicks, shuffle through your vintage LPs, or revisit your die-cast car collection.

Or, do nothing. That's my pick. Do absolutely nothing! I spend hours staring aimlessly at the ceiling. I watch long YouTube videos that hold no direct meaning for me, except perhaps for intrigue and curiosity — wristwatch repair videos, solo vlogs on tranquil camping sites, walking tours at random places around the world, and so on.

What underlying theme is simple: shut off your brain, do nothing!

I will admit that it was a shock for my wife to see how a man can sit in a place without moving at all, with a blank look on his face, just munching away one snack after another.

There are indeed naysayers. For example, an overenthusiastic co-worker from the office may disturb your peace during downtime. Unless there is an emergency, no self-respecting colleague should contact his/her

teammates during the weekend.

In a world where overwork is admirable and the rat race gets brutal, I dare say that one needs a day in a week to be lazy and unproductive.

If your holiday is productive, you haven't lived.

The day should start lazily. There should not be any hurry or fuss about getting out of bed. The mild weather makes you want to stay longer under the blanket. Sure, go ahead! Sleep is downtime's best friend.

On the other

hand, I dread when someone even remotely starts making plans. Is just a day for yourself and your family once a week too much to ask for? Fine, have a few friends or cousins over — those you love dearly — but a bigger party spells crowd. It is work, and work is something one should actively avoid during downtime!

Let's say there is a 'dawat' at night. People say, "Just come by for dinner. You have the whole day to take rest; that should be enough."

Sorry, that will not be enough. Perhaps my introversion makes me avoid gatherings as much as possible. Everyone's idea of downtime is different, and that's perfectly alright, as long as you do not break that one

rule: your brain should be at rest, you should be at peace.

It is Thursday evening when I am writing this. Tomorrow is my downtime, which means it is now 'Downtime Eve', an occasion of much joy. For many people, the night before the day off is more fun than the day off itself. This is because you are excited that you get a break and that there is no work tomorrow. The idea that you do not have anything to do the next day is exciting in its own right!

I am a simple man. I enjoy the simple joys of life. And one of the purest sources of bliss is going to bed without setting the alarm clock, without having to worry about the next day. Let's cherish that!

Photo: LS Archive/ Sazzad Ibne Sayed

