

## **Don't waste half the weekend worrying about the week ahead! Here's how to beat the Sunday blues.**

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Even if you love your job, you might still wake up on Sunday mornings with a feeling of dread and spend the evening in a total state of anxiety simply because there are so many pressures associated with teaching. Here are 7 tips to help you relax, enjoy your time off, AND be more productive:

### **1. Don't leave school on Friday until you've prepared for Monday morning.**

It's tempting to run out of the classroom as soon as possible before the weekend, but you'll enjoy your time off so much more if you make Monday's photocopies, set up the supplies you need for projects, and get your classroom in a reasonably neat and organized state before heading out the door. Knowing that you're not returning to a messy classroom and huge list of things to do before students arrive on Monday will give you some peace over the weekend.

### **2. Wait until Sunday morning to decide how much time you're going to allot to school work.**

I don't like to make that decision in advance because things pop up at the last minute and then I feel stressed if my plans get messed up. Waiting until Sunday morning to decide allows me to roll with the punches if I'm not feeling well or if an opportunity to do something fun arises.

### **3. Choose an amount of time that fits your life don't base it on how much work needs to get done.**

Teaching is a never ending job and there will always be something more that you could do, so there's no point in trying to work until it's all finished. Unless you have a special deadline (like report cards are due or it's the end of the quarter), try to choose how much of your free time on the weekend you're willing to dedicate to your work. Can you steal two hours while your little one naps? Can you squeeze in an hour before the family wakes up and another after they go to bed? Figure out what will make a dent in your workload in order to make Monday go more smoothly, and do only that amount. It's more possible than you think, if you...

### **4. Make your work time a true work only period.**

If you choose to dedicate the hours of 2-5 pm to grading papers, do it whole heartedly. Don't check Facebook, text a friend, and watch TV at the same time. I'm speaking from experience here: that will only prolong the amount of time you perceive yourself as working. Before you know it, the whole day will be gone and you'll be moaning about how all you did was work when the truth is that you only truly worked for an hour or two. Staying focused is tough, but it's a lot easier for me if I know that I'm sticking to the time I allotted if I'm really going to put away the work at 5 pm, I don't have time to peruse Pinterest...and I know that I can go on Pinterest guilt free afterward.

### **5. Set a time frame for thinking about school on Sunday.**

Part of the reason why Sunday is so stressful is that our minds are constantly wandering into the future, running through the list of things we still need to get done and worrying about what the week will hold. You can limit this by giving yourself 5-15 minutes to think about the week ahead:

I like to have a short time for this in the morning before I do the day's work, and then again after I finish the work to give myself some closure. Plan out strategies for dealing with challenging issues. Write down any additional tasks you need to complete. Daydream about activities you want to do with your students, and envision yourself having a successful week.

#### **6. Train yourself not to think about school outside of the time you allotted.**

*In Awakened: Change Your Mindset to Transform Your Teaching*, I share four mental strategies for dealing with unwanted thoughts: dismiss, distract, reject, and replace. That's what you need to do when you're supposed to be relaxing and your mind keeps returning to all the pressures of teaching. Tell yourself, I am rejecting these thoughts about school because they're not productive. I'm

choosing to replace them with the thought that when Monday morning comes, I can trust myself to know what to do, so I don't need to think about it right now. Then distract yourself by doing something more enjoyable, and dismiss any thoughts about school that continue to arise. It takes awhile to discipline your mind to stay in the present moment, but each time you do it, you're breaking those unhealthy habits and making it easier for you to be mindful next time.

#### **7. Give yourself at least one thing to look forward to on Monday.**

Is there a student who always makes you laugh? A fun colleague you'll have lunch with? A lesson you particularly enjoy teaching? A project you know you'll get to complete? If you can't think of anything, create something to look forward to! One year when I had a particularly challenging class, I built a little bright spot into my daily schedule for each day of the week. On Mondays, a co-worker and I took turns bringing breakfast to school and we ate together in her classroom and chatted about our weekend before our workday hours officially started. On Tuesdays, I enrolled my students in a virtual class that was taught by the school district remotely, giving me an extra break for 30 minutes. On Wednesdays, I team taught a reading lesson with an enthusiastic coworker who always got me excited about our work. So, whenever I started to feel dread about going into school the next day, I remembered the fun activity I had planned and stayed focused on that, instead of whatever was stressing me out.

Remember--you're not alone in this!

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