

IT'S SUMMER

Be like a turtle, not a grasshopper



By Leslie J. O'Connell, ACC, Executive Coach



Have you ever thought of your calendar as a tidal wave of emotions? A welling up of joyful anticipation – milestone celebrations; long-awaited travel; treasured reunions with family and friends; maybe a move; new job; or even retirement. At the same time, it triggers daunting overwhelm – the shackles of relentless meetings, deadlines, have to's – commitments you naively made when distant dates looked free. Reality check. Because you've said yes, yes and yes, your calendar is now plump with nonstop go, go, go, go and go.

Calendars can be intoxicating. Whether digital or on paper, our calendars capture life's convergence. It's the mashup of everything everywhere all at once.

We look ahead to summer -- thinking wistfully that the pace will dial down. And, well . . . does it ever really?

Only if we make it so. I invite us to collectively exhale. Breathe in, deep breath.

Breathe out. Let it all go. Graciously give yourself a pass. Hands off the wheel. It is summer. Right now.

We spend so many months being grasshoppers – jumping from thing to thing. Yes, it's energizing for a time – until obligations tip past the tipping point. The grind gets old – leaving us depleted and drained. It's time for rest – inner rest. Right now, I'm feeling the call to be like a turtle. How about you?

Replenish and Renew

I'm no turtle expert (aka herpetologist), but I like what I see. Around a pond, I watch turtles lazily lounge on a limb in the water, basking in the sun. If disturbed, they just dip underwater for a swim. Or, if threatened, they duck inside their armored shell for protection. In some cultures, turtles are regarded as a symbol of spiritual rebirth and transformation.

We're in the heart of summer – and that's enticing. And summer never lasts long enough. Let's not forget that this is a fleeting time to replenish and renew.

Use Your Power to Choose

A Zen teacher and speaker I've followed – Marc Lesser -- observed that we often give away our power. He speaks of it not in the sense of a towering power over others or craving the power of the egotistical spotlight. Rather, he refers to our power for good -- for nourishment and well-being.

It strikes me that we all have the power of:

- **Choice** – how we use our time, mind space, and talent
- **Listening** – to our gut – the guidance of our intuition and inner voice
- **Prioritizing** – graciously saying “no” when tempted to say “yes” out of habit or guilty obligation
- **Connection** – accepting or asking for help with gratitude, instead of going it alone
- **Replenishing** – craving, and then taking time for our well-being -- to just “be” instead of “do”

Let’s not give away that power. Summer is a gift of time – time to make more space to do less – to be like the turtle. Replenish and renew you.

“Try to be like the turtle – at ease in your own shell.”

– Bill Copeland