

Teachers, Don't Spend All Summer in PD; Practice Some Self-Care

Educator Barnes – 6/30/18

Earlier this month, I had the opportunity to travel to Atlanta, Georgia for the first time. My boys really love aquariums, so we had planned to travel to Atlanta at some point to visit the Georgia Aquarium. When I heard about the [Teacher Self Care Conference](#) taking place in Atlanta, it was an opportunity to kill two birds with one stone. While my sons and husband were visiting the Georgia Aquarium and exploring the city, I learned the importance of taking care of myself especially after hearing story after story from educators who found out the hard way what can happen when you don't.

Summer is a perfect opportunity to take care of yourself, but many educators use most of the summer as a time to do more work. Yes, I understand at some point you will need to get those lesson plans together for next school year, but do you really need to start working on them right after the school year ends? Here are some ways you can practice self-care this summer.

Try something new.

I have never had my makeup done by another person. Actually, I'm not really good with make-up at all and rarely wear it except during date night with my hubby or for the school picture. I typically dab some foundation on my face, attempt to draw a straight line with eyeliner, put on some eyeshadow and if I really want to get fancy, I'll put on some lipstick. My friend had offered to do my makeup and to teach me a thing or two about how to go beyond my pitiful routine. It was great to try something new, so if there is something you have done before, such as learn a new skill or try a new experience, get out there and do it.

Have lunch with your spouse or a friend.

My husband is a database administrator and he works in downtown Indy at the government center. There are tons of places to eat within walking distance of his job. A few times during summer, I will have lunch with him. Sometimes I will bring our boys and sometimes I'll go alone. I also schedule lunch dates with family and friends I have struggled to stay in contact with during the busy school year. I caution you about hanging out with teacher friends. You don't want to get into a vent fest about the last school year or into a debate about what might happen during the next school year.

Be a couch potato.

My sons love reading mystery and scary stories at the moment. Right now, they love the [Library of Doom](#) series. They asked me if I liked scary stories too and I mentioned

how I used to watch a show called *Are You Afraid of the Dark?* We ordered the DVDs from Amazon and we have a day each week where we just binge watch a part of a season and it is so fun. Find an activity you can do that requires little effort where you can kick back and relax.

Pay for a service

Yes, I'm aware this profession doesn't pay well, but there are some services you can afford if you plan for it. I'm a gardener and I just want to worry about taking care of my fruit, veggies, and herbs. I don't, nor does my husband, want to cut the grass, so we pay someone else. I also don't feel like cleaning any toilets during my summer break, so I also budgeted for a housekeeper to come a few times. Check out Groupon for a few deals and shop around. Many services that will offer you convenience aren't as expensive as you might think. There is nothing better than having work done and you didn't have to do the work.

Take a break from all kids, including your own.

I have mentioned my boys a few times in this article, but when you are a teacher and a parent, you work with kids all day at school and then you are with your kids when you come home. When summer break comes, not only are you out of school, your kids are too. As much as we love children, even teachers need a break from children including their own. My sons have spent some meaningful weeks with their grandparents already this summer. Don't let your children guilt you into picking them up early. I face timed my children and one said, "I miss you. I'm bored and want to come home." I was already ready with the comeback, "I miss you too, but I'm sure tomorrow will be a better day." If you don't have kids, don't agree to watch someone else's kids all summer long either. This is a perfect opportunity to learn how to practice saying, "No."

Take a staycation or a vacation

It surprises me how many people don't do the obvious and go somewhere, anywhere besides their school or to a PD or they just stay at their house. Join online groups or newsletters to learn about fun activities in your city. I subscribe to [Visit Indiana](#). The newsletter keeps me up to date about festivals and activities across the state. I also subscribe to newsletters from other states to learn about other options that are only a short drive away. Recently, my family attended the Italian Street Festival in Indianapolis. It was free to enter and there was free entertainment; you just had to pay for all the wonderful Italian food and spirits. You don't have to go broke to have fun and fun many times is in your own backyard.

Educators, what are you doing to take care of yourself? What would you add to this list?