



[How To Slow Down—And Why It's Critical](#)

Three Month Vacation Podcast

Sean: Hi. This is Sean D'Souza from psychotactics.com, and you're listening to the [Three-Month Vacation Podcast](#). This podcast isn't some magic trick about working less. Instead, it's about how to really enjoy your work and enjoy your vacation time.

Did you know that "medication" sounds a lot like "meditation"? Well, I didn't know that, and I've been playing around with it in my head, "Medication, meditation. Medication, medication, meditation."

When we talk about the three-month vacation, it's very easy to just think of going away; but as you know, we don't have to leave the desk to go away. We could just be here. Should we go away, or should we stay? Do we really have to choose? As you know, it's summer in December here in New Zealand, and there's a lot of time because we take time-off around December the 20th, and then we don't get back to work till almost February, and this is pretty much the whole country. Imagine the entire country going on vacation.

As you walk around on the streets of Auckland, well, there are no people around or very few people around. My wife, Renuka and I, we never go away when everyone else is going away because what's the point? Everything is more expensive, there are bigger crowds, you have to wait a long time in restaurants, so we stay back and we sit on the deck, get some beer. We have a good time, and we read. When I was reading, I ran into this book by author/speaker Pico Iyer. First, just to backtrack, before I ran into the book, I ran into his TEDTalk.

In the TEDTalk, he was talking about how he started to meditate, how he started to relax. In his talk, he gets you to imagine going to the doctor, and the doctor is saying, "Well, your cholesterol is up. Your blood sugar is up, etcetera, and you've got to exercise." He says, "Most of us will go to the gym. Most of us would go for a walk. Most of us would do stuff like that, but imagine the doctor said, 'You need to slow down. You need to take time off and meditate. Take about half an hour, maybe meditate.'" It's unlikely that any of us would feel the urgency to meditate, would we? I mean, we have so many things to do already. Really, that's what I'm going to talk about today. Three things, meditation, relaxation, and vacation. All the "tions" together.



Now, of all these three, mediation is probably the weirdest of them all, because it seems like you have to sit in one place or stay in one place, and then just be quiet; and so what I'd do is I'd go for a walk, and I'd hum the same song over and over again, almost like a chant. I was happy doing that, and I thought, "Well, that's meditation;" and it probably is. I don't know, but I found that with an app, it was much easier to do this, and that is to just clear your head of all the thoughts. I'm not very ambitious to begin with, and I don't suggest you get too ambitious because it's very, very hard to meditate.

If you've ever tried meditating, you know exactly what I mean. It is extremely hard. The moment you decide, "Well, I'm going to be very quiet and clear my mind of all the thoughts," every single thought comes rushing through. It's like as if you opened the door and started screaming, "Come on, guys. Bring in all the thoughts." That's how meditation is. It's so weird, and yet time and time again, you read about it, and you're not sure how to go about it. I ran into this website at Calm.com. That's C-A-L-M-.com. They had a lovely app. It's free, and they also have a website.

You don't need to have the app. You can just have your computer on, and they take you through a guided meditation. It's very hard at first. It's just this emptying out of your brain. Not sleeping, not dreaming, not doing anything, just completely blank. Just like looking at the clouds, one cloud after another, after another. Just completely blank, and so I'd recommend that you start there. What I started doing was every day, before I go for a walk, I meditate for 10 minutes. I just lie on the floor, and I go for 10 minutes. Then, I go to the café, and my wife started this. She says, "Okay, let's be quiet for two minutes." We close our eyes and sit at the café, and you can hear the coffee.

When your mind is that quiet, you can hear everything. It just screams through, and it filters out those thoughts. It's very cool because in a day that's completely chaotic, we need to have these moments of meditation, and it's good for your brain. I mean, this is about business, but it's also about taking that time off, just those few minutes in a day. That brings us to the end of the first part which is meditation. It takes us to the second part which is relaxation.

When you think of relaxation, you probably think, "Okay. I'm just going to lie on the bed, or I'm just going to lie on the sofa and read a book, and relax." That's nice, but what it doesn't do is it doesn't take you out of the house. What I found is that as long as you're in the house, you're not as relaxed as you could be. What we started doing was taking a day or two away. We don't go very far. We could go just half an hour away from where we live, but we go away from our home, and this is very important.



Once you go away from home, everything about your home is left behind like the clothes that needed to be folded, the garbage that needs to be taken out, the coffee blender that needs fixing, the ... Whatever issues you have, and there are many of these issues. The moment you leave home, those issues stay behind. Suddenly, you start to relax, and you find that this level of relaxation starts the moment you head away from home. What we found is that in about 24 hours, we feel like we've been away for a week.

By the time you're away for a couple of days, it seems like you've been away forever, and most of don't do that. In fact, right after we got married, we didn't go anywhere. We didn't go anywhere for a long time, and then we decided that's what we're going to do. A lot of these comes from planning. All of your work comes from planning, but even the vacation, the time away, the meditation, the relaxation. Everything comes from planning. It doesn't just show up like that. We have to sit down at the start of the year and work out when do we have these bouts of relaxation away from home and when we do we have the vacation which is a long way from home?

The thing about relaxation is that those 48 hours can change the way you continue to work, the way you work with your clients, the way you deal with issues when you go back, and so having those little spots makes a big difference. Like for instance right now, we have the article writing course, and this is the toughest writing course in the world. It is very demanding for both the students and for me. You can be sure that once four weeks have passed, I'm going to need a couple of days off.

It's very easy to say, "No, no, no. We don't have that kind of time." Just like we do with meditation, "We don't have that kind of time. We don't have two days off. We have to do this, and we have to do that." The moment you allocate that time, it changes everything. The funny thing is that it changes your mindset even if you're on vacation. This summer, we started out not checking email, not doing all those kinds of things, and you would think, "Well, it will take a few days, and you'll be fine." It wasn't fine.

A week passed, and I was still waking up at 4:30 in the morning. I like to sleep a lot in the afternoons, especially on vacation. I'll sleep two, three hours even, and I wasn't able to sleep more than half an hour. I was still wound up, and it's only when I got to Waipu, which is about a couple of hours from here that I relaxed.



Two weeks into a vacation, the moment I stepped away from home, and I think the same thing applies to you as well. What we need to do really is stuff for ourselves because we're always doing stuff, but it's not stuff for ourselves, and it's definitely not this relaxation that we desperately need. This takes us to the third part which is vacation.

Vacation has always been a big part of my life, but planning the vacation was what I learned from my friend Julia. What Julia would do was she'd book the vacation at the start of the year, and then they had to go. Everything was booked.

I remember the year that we went to Japan, the year they had the tsunami, and I wasn't keen on going there even though we were going several months after the tsunami; but it was booked, so we went. We had a really good time. We learned so much about a different culture, ate different foods. Something I might not have done if we hadn't booked everything in advance.

Here I am, preaching to the choir as it were. We already know that meditation, that relaxation and vacation are good for us. We know that, so why doesn't it work for everyone? Why don't we end up feeling on top of the world? Why is it that we feel like we're more tired than ever before? There are reasons why it doesn't work, and the first reason and probably the most important reason of all is email. I have a friend, and she goes on vacation, and she says, "Well, I only check email and work for three hours in a day."

No, no, no, no, no. You can't do that. Vacation is nothing. It's like meditation, nothing. It's like relaxation, nothing. No email. Get someone else to check your email. You're not that important. That brings us to the second point, of course, which is, "I'm the most important person here. Nothing can happen without me." I have a very simple philosophy, and that is, "I can spend time at the beach or spend time in hospital," and I choose to spend time at the beach. Sure, you're important, but why are you earning all this money? Why are you doing all these stuff? It is to enjoy yourself.

If you're going to have this self-importance that no one else can do the job you're supposed to be doing, well, you're a bit in trouble, and you need that vacation. Of course, the third one is the most obvious of all which is too much activity. You can't go on vacation and see 300 cathedrals. You just cannot. They're boring after a while, and they all will start to look the same. We have a vacation philosophy, "We're called the five-monument people." That means we look at five monuments or five places we're interested, and we're done.



If we go to Istanbul, five things, and we're done. If we go to Washington D.C., five things, and we're done. Friends who know us, they will drive us prast on some of these monuments and go, "There you go. One, two, three, four, five. We're done. Let's go to eat." Of course, that is crazy, but you get the point. You don't want to have too much activity. If you have all of these stuff packed back to back, you never get relaxed. You never get to nothingness. Nothingness is amazing, but only once you start to get a hold of it.

To me, a three-month vacation, not all three months together, one month at a time is part of my work. It helps my work get better. It helps me relax. It makes me want to do better stuff. I think that if there's one thing that we could do today is to meditate. That's one thing you can do at your desk.

Go to that website, Calm.com, C-A-L-M-.com. Download the app or just listen to it on your computer. I think that will make a big difference. Five minutes, you can start off with five minutes. You can go with 10 minutes, 20 minutes. It's up to you. It's a much easier way to meditate.

I think the second thing, and here I am breaking my own rules saying one thing and telling you about two things. The second thing is just book a couple of days somewhere close by, 20 minutes away, 30 minutes away. Just go. Leave home. Leave the garbage. Leave the coffee grinder. Leave all that stuff home. Of course, leave your email for two days. I'm sure someone can manage it, and you will find that while you may not, at least at this point, make a three-month vacation a reality, that's where you're headed. You want to start right now. You want to start today, and you want to relax.

That brings us to the end of this podcast. Before we go, where are we headed for our monthly vacation? We're going to Sardinia, Italy. We've been to the mainland before, and I know Italy is a big place. You can never get enough of Italy, but Sardinia seems to be a completely different space altogether. We're going from one island to another island. We hope the coffee is good. Before that, we have the [info-product workshop](#), and that is in Silver Spring, just outside of Washington, D.C.

It's about information products. It is how to create powerful information products, whether it'd be a webinar, or a workshop, or a presentation, a book. The reason why it's so important today is because there's so much junk out there. This workshop isn't about showing you how to write or create that presentation. It is the structure of what makes compelling information, how do you put everything together, so that customers go from one end right to the other end, and then come back for more.



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