



Did You Plan Your Summer Vacation?

by GAIL M. CARROLL

The countdown is on to summer vacation. This is the time of year when the crunch to the finish line has our adrenaline pumping. What plans have you made for your summer vacation? It is important to make some plans as July and August can slip away very quickly. If you don't plan, you can be at risk of going back to work unrefreshed from the summer off. According to Teach Hub, many teachers use their summer breaks to take courses, work a second job, plan for their classroom for the next school year, and do some private tutoring, coach sports teams or travel with students.

Here are a few reasons why it is important to make plans for that precious time off:

- Teachers need a real break to prevent burnout and to take care of their own physical and mental health.
- Planning a vacation builds anticipation and excitement and gives you something to look forward to. Sometimes this can fuel our energy to keep going to make it to the finish line!
- Planning a real vacation is a present you give to yourself. It's a special time to unhook from the regular world, let go and have some fun and relaxation.
- It says "I matter!" and helps you keep your perspective about your life and making your own health and happiness a priority. Don't delay your happiness or wait for next year or for retirement. Put you first, along with your health, well-being and happiness and plan!

With these thoughts in mind, what will you do? Where will you go?

- Decide that you are going to do something and/or go somewhere. Plan to make the time.
- Move from your thoughts to developing an actual plan.
- Plan where you would like to go, what your budget will be and how long you would like to go.
- Planning early will allow you to take advantage of seat sales, cheaper rates for hotels or cottages, vacation packages and prime selection of dates. This

will be of significant help, especially if you are planning within a budget.

- Commit the time and the money.
- Remember that you don't have to go far to have fun and enjoy a true vacation. There are lots of great places to explore within our own province.
- Remember to plan a vacation that you can afford. This will keep your stress in check. Look at various options: some people put a little money away each month towards their annual vacation. Others look at flexible payment options. Some travel agencies offer you the ability to pay for your trip in installments and that way you don't have to hand over all of the funds at once.

If you choose a staycation, make sure you put plans in place that will truly allow you to unhook. For those of you who like to stay at home, consider making some plans around your days:

- Avoid checking emails and messages.
- Plan local day trips such as a picnic at the beach or a local park or go to local festivals.
- Take in nature through a wonderful scenic hike and build a picnic into your plan.
- Take a boat tour.
- Pretend to be a tourist in your own community. What would you like to do but never get the chance? Do it and forget that you live here. Take it in with fresh eyes. I spent a summer one year hiking locally and doing picnics. I truly felt like a tourist and could not believe that there was so much about where I lived that I did not know or had not experienced before. I felt truly refreshed after this vacation.
- Go canoeing.
- Take a risk and go for a natural high by going kayaking in the ocean or zip lining.
- Remember that the fun can be in the planning, and that way you can avoid letting the summer slip away without doing some things that will be fun for you.

Sometimes life presents us with other challenges outside of our work life, i.e., a sick family member, elder

care or simply not feeling well enough to travel yourself, or other personal challenges. If you should find yourself in this position you can still find joy in each day and find relaxation and escape though getting some fresh air and reading your way through exotic locales. Why not travel to:

- Another **Galaxy** through *A Wrinkle in Time* by Madeline L'Engle – You can read your way through the galaxy of time travel and then for fun make a date to see the movie!
- **England and New York City** by reading *Still Me* by Jojo Moyes – Join Louisa Clark as she continues her life journey from the original book, *Me Before You* and *After You*. This time her journey takes her on a new adventure from England to New York City. Her story is witty and fun and challenges us to think about what we might do if we were not so afraid to reach outside of our comfort zone.
- **Rural Ireland** through *The Irish Country Doctor Series* by Patrick Taylor – This author is from Belfast, Ireland but his career has been in Victoria, B.C. This is a fun series of lighthearted good Irish humour and tales of rural Ireland in various time periods.
- **India, Ethiopia** and modern-day **New York City** through *Cutting for Stone* by Abraham Verghese – Travel from the jungles of Africa to modern-day America and the history of medicine and the many lives that are intertwined in this passionate and exciting adventure.
- **Mumbai, India** through *Shantaram* by Gregory David Roberts – The story takes you on a journey through the rich and diverse culture of Mumbai. It is a true adventure that is rich with human experiences.
- **France** through *Finding Me in France* by Newfoundland's own Bobbi French – This book started off as a Blog when Bobbi French, a pediatric psychiatrist, decided to sell everything she owns to live in rural France. Filled with wonderfully true stories, great humour and wonderful photos.

Whatever you decide to do, remember that the effort it takes to plan is totally worth it. Whatever you choose to do, I wish you a wonderful summer filled with relaxation and fun. Now it's up to you. Get planning and count down to a wonderful summer!

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References:

www.teachhub.com
<https://on.bluecross.ca>

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