

Can America Revive the Idea of a Day of Rest?

I was a bit of a workaholic in college. I studied hard, got my assignments in on time, and did my best to get the highest grades possible.

But at the beginning of college, I instituted a practice which seemingly went against my hyper-intensive approach to school: I took a weekly day of rest. No paper writing. No textbook reading. No email checking.

As remarkable as it may sound, it didn't hurt my grades a bit. In fact, that weekly chance to step away from the grind of daily life may have actually improved them.

According to a [recent article](#) in *The Boston Globe*, more and more individuals are realizing how essential it is to take a weekly day to rest and unplug from life:

"Jeremy Burton, executive director of the Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Boston, said he has noticed over the last decade an increasing number of liberal Jews making a practice of turning off their cellphones on Friday evenings, when Shabbat begins. And in his interfaith work, Burton fields questions from his Christian and Muslim colleagues about what it's like to disconnect from the digital world for 25 hours every week.

It's profoundly restorative, he tells them; 'a huge part of my own personal sanity.'"

Unfortunately, there's one major problem with this quest to restore sanity through rest. Religion professor Nancy Ammerman explains in *The Boston Globe*:

"Once we say to people, you know, it would be a really good

thing to have some sacred time, you choose when it is.... It's the kind of thing that sounds perfect, it's so American, design your own Sabbath. But that kind of discipline and observance is extremely difficult, done individually, or even just as a family."

In recent years, we've shunned any religiously-affiliated reasons for rest – Sundays and holidays are for shopping, after all! But would we all benefit from returning to such a weekly day of rest?

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