



Time to Play!

I'm telling myself that late is better than never for this month's newsletter! We moved in June and are finally settling into our new house that we are so blessed to have built. But I have a confession to make. I've been in a bit of a funk and it took me a while to figure out why. Apart from being a little sleep deprived, I had done a pretty good job of attending to my wellness during the move. I was eating healthy, continuing to exercise, staying connected with others at least via technology, practicing yoga, etc. so it took some reflection. **Have you ever felt that way? You were doing all the "right" things you were supposed to be doing but something still felt like it was missing?** My "ah ha" moment came when I realized what had been missing from my life was fun. Sounds weird for adults, but we need our "play" time too! In fact, one of my favorite quotes relates to play.

"We are never more fully alive, more completely ourselves, or more deeply engrossed in anything than when we are playing." – Charles Schaefer

Play brings out the best in us. It draws out our true nature that we don't have to work to create, it's just innate. When you're playing there is a sense of ease and relaxed focus.

I think as adults sometimes we get so caught up in the roles that we fill and what we think we should do within those roles, that we lose sight of who we truly are! It's easy to get caught up in our "to do" lists (guilty as charged!) or sense of obligation. We often feel like fun/play is a luxury we can't afford. And yet the ironic thing is if we carve out some time to play, we might find we are energized and recharged by the experience. So much so, that our productivity and efficiency increases; thereby actually creating more time for ourselves. Not to mention that when we're playing, we're probably a lot more fun to be around and more likely to have positive interactions with others. Create time to play, and you nurture your own wellness.

Ready to reconnect with that part of yourself that may have been lying dormant for a while? Then go out and play! Here are some tips to get started:

1. Give yourself permission to play!

Go ahead, step away from that "to do" list. Know you're doing something good for yourself so that you can show up in bigger and better ways in other areas of your life.

2. Create time to play.

I'm all for being spontaneously fun, but for most of us we will need to be intentional about creating "play time". Pull out your calendar. Block out some time – whether it's on a daily or weekly basis - that you dedicate purely to having fun.

3. Think back to when you were a kid growing up. Create a list of your favorite, most fun memories. What were you doing? Who were you with?

Can you recreate those now? If not the whole experience, then portions of it? Loved to lip sync to your favorite song or dance around your room? Maybe you played ghost in the graveyard, were in a band, or played soccer. Personally I loved to dance growing up and now I find it so much fun to play Just Dance on the Wii or go out dancing with girlfriends on our annual trip to Chicago. Try something from your list and see if it still gives you the same thrill. Don't worry about how you look or if you're "too old" (I hate that expression!). Do you think kids worry about how they look when they're having fun? NO! They approach the activity with whole-hearted abandon and glee. Which leads me to...

4. Observe children at play to get some ideas.

Play can be simple. It doesn't have to involve complex scheduling schemes, elaborate parties or trips. It can be simply riding your bike as fast as you can to feel the wind whip your face. It can be making a sandcastle at the beach. It can be hanging out with friends and talking or bird watching. Sometimes the simpler, the better. Tonight I observed my daughter squealing and running through the sprinkler. I remember those days now! Cheap, easy, and right at home. See? Fun doesn't have to be complicated.

5. Reflect on times when you have been so completely engaged in something that you lost all concept of time passing. Create a list of what you were doing at those times.

There's actually a psychological term for that state, and it's called "flow". Some of us may be lucky enough to have jobs where we experience flow, but we can also experience this state of time standing still when we're at play. For me I find that happens when I'm taking a good yoga class, going out with girlfriends, or delving into a great book. Time passes quickly, I'm focused, and I come out feeling energized. You may get some ideas for play from that list. Notice anything familiar? If you're like me, play also boosts my spirit (see the May newsletter on my website).

6. Enlist support

Some of us may need to enlist the support of others to create time for us to play. If you're a parent perhaps your significant other or a friend can take your kids for 30 minutes so you can have some "play" time. Or at work perhaps you approach your boss about flex time. And while it's fun to have solitary play time, sometimes things are just

more fun with others – so have people join you! **If you tend to be a slave to the “to do” list, then encouragement from others to take that time can be really key.** This is actually an area that I work on quite a bit with my coaching clients. They find it liberating to set a goal related to fun, and having the accountability that coaching provides insures that they actually follow through with their goal.

I hope these ideas have inspired you to include a little more fun in your life this month. So in the spirit of this newsletter, I’m going to keep things short and sweet so I can go out and play! I’ve spent a small fortune on sod at my new house and have been running the sprinkler frequently. While “turn off the sprinkler” is on my “to do” list tonight, you might just find me running through it first with delight.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Shelly". The signature is written in a dark color, possibly black or dark grey, and is centered within a light-colored rectangular box.

Live with Intention, Love Yourself, Create Balance, Fulfill Your Purpose & Thrive!