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# Zero-Tasking Day

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## **Zero Tasking Day - What you should do when you do nothing?**

When I started my research for this article, I discovered there is not much written material about zero tasking. Most of humanity focus its research on multitasking, important tasking, and the efficiency of tasking. Not a lot is written about non tasking. So, as the serious person that i am, i decided the best way to learn is by doing and i started planning my fun, spoiling, zero tasking days. I had NO IDEA at the time how wildly this can go wrong!

Before I started my zero-tasking journey, I had to set some ground rule: I needed to define what counts as "Zero tasking". I wanted my non-tasking to feel like a day of pleasure and a day of boredom. Hence, I defined some activities as non-activities.



The rules were the following: if it's at home and if it's not a chore, then it's not a task and I'm allowed to do it. Also, I dedicated half a day for my non-tasking day experience, terrified from the idea of giving away a whole day without exploiting it to get something done.

Here's what happened:

Non-task #1: Watching tv - ok that was super fun. I relaxed and watched a good movie. I enjoyed it, and forgot my every day tasks, responsibilities, and worries. If you have spare time and you have the time to relax for half a day, a great movie is a great way to use this time if you ask me.

Non-task #2: painting my nails – I was debating whether painting my nails was considered a task. Anyway, I did it. It was ok, not as relaxing and fun as watching television, but ok.

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Non-task #3: taking a nap - I cheated a bit for my non-tasking day and answered emails. These tasks did their job and made me nervous. I was stressed out from thinking about all the jobs and tasks I had left and ironically, I was mostly stressed out from knowing I shouldn't stress out. I felt this whole day did not fulfil its goal. The exact feeling was: "I need to make an immediate change and I need to make it now." So, I fell on to my bed and just lied down and stared at the ceiling. Then, I fell asleep. I continued napping for 3 hours, and it was magical. Even better than watching a movie. Apparently, a noon nap is a great idea for a non-tasking day.



Non-task #4: cooking lunch - if I was debating about painting my nails, then cooking lunch is most certainly against the rules. But on the other hand, even during non-tasking days you should eat. So, I started cooking lunch. While I made lunch, I broke my nail, and that's how the two tasks that were not supposed to be done because they are tasks went wrong.

How come this beautiful day of doing nothing go wrong? After all, we all need a vacation. Most of the cultures I know have vacation built-in to their routine. Most of the religions I know have a vacation built-in to their routine. In Judaism, we celebrate Shabbat as a day of peace, quiet and rest. The Muslims celebrate Friday as a day of rest and the Christians celebrate Sunday. All these religions have this idea of zero-tasking going on so well, why I didn't manage to create such a day myself?

So, I came up with a few reasons:

1 - Company: What's beautiful about days of rest is that they involve the community. During those days, you enjoy the company of your beloved people. Whether it's a vacation, Shabbat, or holy day, it involves other people that share this day with you. Maybe when I decided to make zero-tasking day by myself, I destroyed the whole idea of this day. Just like a balance between doing and resting is great, also the balance between individualism and society. At Model UN we make our speeches alone and pass the resolutions with two third majority, at life we move ahead in our careers alone and pass our zero-tasking days with the with the people that would make it fun.

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2 - It's not a task, it's a routine: in the well known book "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer" there's a scene where Tom must paint his fence. Since he didn't want to do it, he made others do it. You'd think he do that by paying them, but no! He asked them for money in exchange for the pleasure of painting the fence! For Tom, painting the fence was a task, and so he didn't want to do it, but for those who paid for it, it was a pleasure.

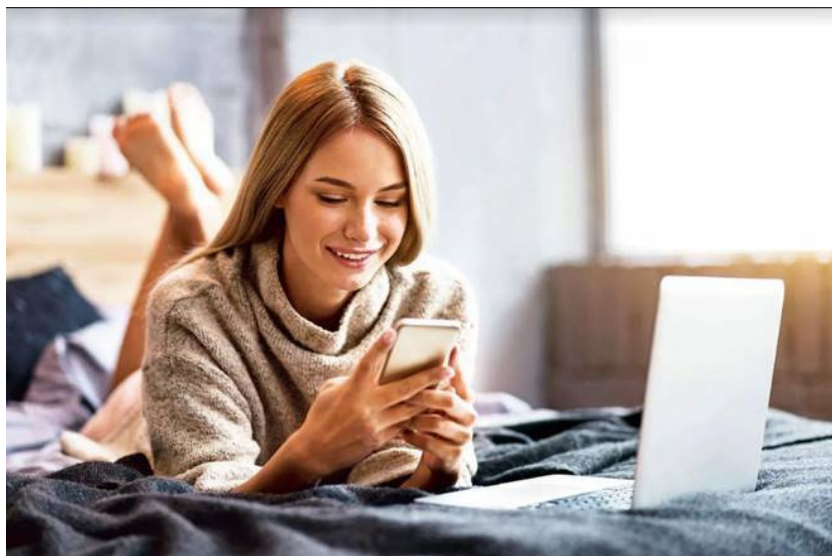


Zero-tasking is, by definition, a day of fun. And yet, it was no fun for me once I saw it as a task. How do avoid it? Make a routine with the

zero-tasking built in. In this way it's not a task, it's a routine, and you won't have to make time for it, because the time for the resting is already scheduled. Maybe that's the zero-tasking day has a specific day on the calendar.

3 – No cheating! Since I made half a day and even then, some of my activities were tasks, the day didn't fulfill its goal. Make sure you zero task, that is what makes it work. In most cultures, the days of rest mean complete rest.

As youth leaders and young diplomats, you are about to encounter many cultures, and you should be very empathic to all of them. Make sure you respect the days of rest of each culture you meet, and make sure you have such a day as well.





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