

## The Busy Person's Sabbath

In my job at Trinity Church, I'm a person who thrives on interaction with others. My life is all about multi-tasking and managing a number of projects and people at once. I'm responsible for keeping the energy of a group in motion. I move fast, and I am the first to admit there is little downtime in my life. But that's okay. I like it that way.



So here's my confession: I have Sabbath anxiety. I see the appeal, but the thought of actually keeping a Sabbath routine has the same attraction to me as keeping a dentist appointment. While some might draw energy from doing nothing, being quiet, and staying in one place, I fear that complete cessation of activity just might result in my complete collapse.

Or so I thought.

Several years ago, my husband, Jeff, introduced me to a new way of "doing Sabbath." It worked for me, and I'll bet it would work for other Type-As of the world. For that matter, it might be a good idea for anyone involved in work projects that seem never-ending. All you need is solitude and a single task. The busy-person's Sabbath is all about honing our energy and motion to a different effect.

Here's how it works: you focus your energy on an activity that has a beginning, a middle, and a distinct end; an activity that results in a product you can see, touch, and treasure. It should involve a physical skill that uses your hands.

On my first "Sabbath vacation," Jeff and I went to a rustic cabin in the Adirondack woods (realtors would say "charming"). Contact with the outside world was kept to a rational minimum. There was a telephone and little else. Jeff said to bring a project to work on, because there was not much else to do. I brought fabric, a sewing machine, and some quilting needles. He brought a collection of used boat oars, driftwood, and a toolbox. We spent the week working from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., side by side. There were no meetings, e-mails, or project schedules. We spoke very little while working, taking a midday break for lunch and a swim. At the end of the week, I had made a quilt and he had made a love seat.

But I had much more. I'd had a Sabbath when I'd said it couldn't be done. It was the stillness of the setting and the busyness of my hands. My mind and spirit were released to wander, to rest, and to eventually find a deep focus. Today, as I look over the items we created over several Sabbath vacations, I see quilts, love seats, benches and chairs, each piece so much more than the sum of their parts, holding a memory of Sabbath wisdom learned.

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