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# Time Off For Good Behavior: How Hardworking Women Can Take A Break And Change Their Lives

How Hardworking Women Can  
Take a Break and Change Their Lives



## Synopsis

Have you ever fantasized about taking time away from your overworked life? Nights uninterrupted by email? Days to pursue set-aside dreams? Do you promise yourself that “someday” you will get a break? Mary Lou Quinlan had those “someday” thoughts. But her hard-earned job as CEO of a New York advertising agency claimed most of her waking hours. Exhausted and losing motivation, she was so desperate she perversely imagined breaking her leg to get some time alone. Then, she declared a brief timeout. During her time off, she slept late, took walks, danced the salsa, kept a journal and ultimately, uncovered the roots of a new business. In the process, she rediscovered herself. Time Off for Good Behavior is the result of listening to women like her, who realized enough was enough. Quinlan tells no-holds-barred stories of dozens of women who sacrificed their health, relationships, their good humor and a good night’s sleep until they found the courage to ask themselves if they were happy with the life they were living and made the decisions to take life-saving breaks. Mary Lou Quinlan explores the factors that compel you to work so hard and examines how to take back control of your life. She explores our unwillingness to give ourselves permission to rest so that we can re-imagine our futures. And she shows the powerful, self-fulfilling changes that can occur when we do decide to take that rest. Whether you contemplate leaving a career that took years to build or just need a long vacation to assess what you want next, you’ll find practical tools and bolstering advice throughout. Each chapter ends with provocative questions to help you plan your good behavior reprieve. Specific exercises on financial planning, advice for negotiating time off, and tools to uncover your passions make this a must-read for women who are ready for “someday.” Time off for Good Behavior ultimately shows that stepping away from everything—even for a short while—often means ending up with so much more.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

When I purchased the book I was in the process of planning for a 6 week sabbatical. The book description sounded perfect. I'm Type A, and the author is a self-described Type A as well so I figured it would be a good fit. I definitely found the book interesting, but it was more of a post-reflection memoir including stories from women she met. I was looking for something to match my type A personality that was more list-like. Action planning, etc. Now that I'm one week into my sabbatical, I can understand how quickly you move from list-girl to trying to tap into your emotions (since I neglect them in my working life). I've decided to blog about my experience of taking six weeks off as well if you're interested. [...]

Read this if you are inspired in any way to make a change in your career and life. It gets a little dry with all the stories and quotes from other women, but funny and inspiring overall.

As I was reading this book, I felt like I had met my soul mate. I, too, am a Type-A "good girl." ("You need this report by Friday, would Thursday be better?") Fortunately for me, I was forced into a sabbatical before I really knew that I needed one (and then, of course, spent the next two years struggling with the fact that I had my entire identity wrapped up in my job/career, that only now am I beginning to enjoy life). I was floored when Mary Lou wrote about being so tired that incurring enough injuries to require a stay in the hospital (without being life-threatening) seemed an attractive way to take a break from the craziness. That thought had crossed my mind more times than I would like to admit. If you're thinking about taking time off, or are so tired that you can't even think, then you might want to pick this book up. Even if you can't financially swing a sabbatical, it's helpful to understand that you are not alone in feeling overwhelmed with your life.

At 49 years old, I realized that my daily routine was really getting me down. I couldn't figure out what was wrong. So I reduced my work day to 4 days a week and took a 20% pay cut. The first couple of weeks I was anxious about my expenses and then one day, I discovered Mary Lou's book. It confirmed that I did the right thing. Now I'm thinking of how to go into 2 days off a week, and then a 3 month break and return refreshed to a new career or my own business. This book is very encouraging and uplifting. It's a must read for women (and men) who lack the courage to take the plunge towards taking care of themselves after years of excessive focus on work that resulted in burn out. A great alternative to stress reducing medications!!!

Mary Lou Quinlan has written a book that touches a chord in so many overscheduled lives today --not just those of women. I loved the combination of fact and anecdote that she has woven throughout. And yes, all her characters are women, but I think anyone who finds themselves living the kind of life she describes -- mired in appointments, trying to be in three places at once, trying to please three or four different masters, etc -- that's the person who will get a lot out of this book. I find myself thinking of one or another anecdote, as it occurs in my work place, almost every day. And once you start to see the absurdity of what you're doing, you're on the road to recovery. I know I am!

I can say no less about this book than it is a gift to anyone who reads it-- Type A burned out female exec, their children, their friends, their mothers, their employers, just about anyone who's been in life's express lane or been along for the ride, and feels like they deserve to exit. I may be a bit biased given that I am profiled in the book, and am at this very juncture finally getting my time off for good behavior after one failed effort last year. I can tell power of a book by the number of times I want to grab a pen to underline passages or dog ear the pages. This bit of wisdom from Mary Lou sticks with me today... "We are often our worst bosses, because as much as we expect of the world, it's nothing compared to what we expect from ourselves." So give yourself a break, read this book, and enjoy every moment

This is a great read for anyone who might have forgotten there are roses out there - let alone take the time to smell them. Mary Lou Quinlan's writing style is so conversational, it's like you're having a cup of coffee with a friend. She takes you into her own life as well as into the lives of many others, which ultimately becomes an invitation to take a nice, fresh look inward. The book is filled with great anecdotes and experiences, poignant and pointed advice - and is even interactive. It offers you

opportunities to explore, to create, and to examine life - your life - so that you can be inspired to live it fully and joyfully.

I thought this book was great. I loved the different perspectives that were woven into it -- including the psychology behind type A's, the variety of women's issues that were presented relating to work, life stage and lifestyle choices, and the impact this has on corporations. The actionable exercises at the end of the chapters were a great idea and can help women take the first steps towards assessing their own situations. Most of all, Mary Lou Quinlan acknowledged "taking time off for good behavior" was not easy, but the sharing of her own stories and her heartfelt honesty really makes this book a winner.

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