

Need renewal? Stop resisting a rest

**BY THE REV. DR.
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Spirit of Life

Summer has never been my favorite season. Mostly, that's because I am not "built for heat." I grew up knowing humidity, and I looked forward to the bonus of more mild weather after moving to Maine. This week, my hopes are not necessarily dashed, but severely wilted. At the same time, I am part of a faith tradition that treats Summer as a special opportunity for rest and renewal, both practically and spiritually. It's refreshing! In preparation for our Summer season, we've been focused on the theme of Renewal this month.

I don't know about you, but I sense a near desperation for renewal on the part of so many individuals, families, organizations, and nations, not to mention our terribly fragile planet. Every single one of us requires regular rest and renewal, yet many of us struggle to prioritize it. For children, this often manifests in resistance to sleep. Those who have been with kids at naptime or bedtime have heard these refrains: "No, I'm

not going night-night!" or "Gimme just one more minute!" This behavior, which I like to call "Resisting a Rest," is not limited to children. While some adults may have outgrown tantrums over naptime, many of us still wrestle internally with the urge to keep working or pushing ourselves beyond healthy human limits.

The Rev. Tricia Hersey, who founded the Nap Ministry in 2016, is one of the contemporary sages encouraging people to re-prioritize rest and re-orient ourselves to new ways of being human together. Initially intrigued by its catchy title, I soon discovered that the heart of this ministry that prioritizes rest as spiritual practice is quite profound. Hersey advocates "Rest as Resistance" against what she terms "Grind Culture"—the relentless pace driven by the evil combination of capitalism and white supremacy. Hersey frames rest not as a personal indulgence, but as a radical act of self-care and societal change. Especially for people from historically marginalized identities, this is a revolution-

ary re-framing.

Rest isn't only about taking a break, getting sleep, or going on vacation (though all of these may help). Rest is also, according to Hersey, about the more significant purpose of reclaiming one's inherent worthiness, and creating space in life for true justice and liberation. Hersey invites us to imagine a world where collective rest fuels collective action toward a more balanced and just existence for all.

So, I'm curious. Do you have a plan for rest and renewal this Summer? Have you been able to pause and reflect on the state of your life (and spirit) these days? Have you set aside some time to be present and patient with your own vulnerable soul? Have you heard it whisper to you what it most needs right now to replenish its vital energies? If not, it's never too late — in fact, this could be the moment to begin that reflection right now.

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