



IN Focus

RELAX → REFRESH → REJUVENATE RESTORE

After an exhausting 2nd term, the fast-paced culmination of yet another academic year, meeting so many faces and talking so much every single day . . . teachers and school leaders owe their mental and physical health a good **wind down**. Going by the definition, **winding down** means different things to people & across different contexts (*here are some in the box on the right*).

As a Teacher / School Leader, you know that feeling when you're lying on your couch after a busy term / year, trying to relax, and anxiety suddenly fills your mind? Your thoughts race; mental steam builds as you dwell on everything that worried you, all the things you didn't

get done and now have to worry about including them all in the plans for the coming year & term!

Now, that's certainly NOT winding down, for sure!

Winding down matters (a lot!) because setting the tone for a relaxing vacation is essential to a *healthy* you. After all, it's crucial for mindfulness, stress management, and paving the way for a good restoration routine. It involves 4 steps - **Relax**: doing nothing that has an agenda, **Refresh**: doing things one likes, but hasn't had time for; **Rejuvenate**: improving one's holistic self; **Restore**: emerging as a better YOU!

The June 2023 theme is - **Futuristic Education**

Please send your contributions of an effective classroom strategy / class humour / vocab word / a featured article / book titles, to - team@qedrak.com

WONDER WORD

Winding Down

There are many meanings of the term **Winding Down**. You can relate to one or more, based on the stage YOU are in!

- relax after stress or excitement
- breathe, ease off, mellow out, recuperate, relax, and rest
- gradually relax after doing something that has made one tired or worried
- put one's feet up, take it easy, slow down
- de-stress, decompress, decelerate
- to end gradually or in stages, or to cause something to do this
- chill-out, mellow-out, unbutton, hang loose
- draw gradually to a close

“As important as it is to have a plan for doing work,
it is perhaps more important to plan for rest, relaxation, self-care, and sleep.”

— Akiroq Brost

QED Talk

The importance of **RELAXATION** for Mental & Physical Health of Educators

DR. REENA BHATT

Homeopathy practitioner, Health & Wellness Promoter
- for Corporates, Women and Children
Certified by WHO, British School of Yoga (London)



■ **Some say - "8 hrs of sleep is enough to rejuvenate." If that be so, then is 'winding down' a hyped-up term or is it truly necessary for our health?**

It's not about how *much* but it's about how *qualitatively good* your sleep has been. Remember, sleep should not be measured in quantity like 8 hours or 5 hours; it is more about how much more *refreshing, relaxing and rejuvenating* you *feel* when you get up. You should feel energetic whether you get up may be after 5 hours, or 8 hours of sleep. Sleep is a time when our body does all the repairing and healing work. If you don't get quality sleep then there is a high probability of feeling unwell or even getting diseased. Whatever else that is *good* you do for your body and overall health, remember ... everything will work **only when you sleep well**.

What is 'winding down'? Well, it is a gradual reduction in activity. It is not a hyped-up term but **truly needed in today's world**. It's necessary for any individual of any age, whether child, young, adult or elderly. Our lifestyles are such that we have multiple stimulations around us that keep us alert and active constantly, at the mental and emotional levels. Our physical body may be tired and worn out but our mind and emotions may not be letting us fully relax. So, **winding down is a must**. Just as one prepares one's self for a party, or a presentation, or meeting, or festival, or work/study, or travelling, in the same way, one must prepare for ensuring good quality rest.

■ **What in your opinion are the main sources of stress & anxiety, especially for people working in the education field?**

According to a survey by WHO, 74% Indians suffer from *Stress* and about 88% of Indians suffer from *Anxiety*. **Stress** is an unusual biological response, that could be physical, mental or emotional - where the person cannot cope with the situation or demand placed on the physical body or brain. **Anxiety**, on the other hand is a feeling of fear, worry, unease which is not good in the interest of one's health and well-being. The Education field involves the type of work in which one has to be physically fit to cope with long working hours, mostly in the standing posture, with overuse of one's voice, at times incorrect body posture while working at a desk or on screens and excessive eye strain. Not to forget, mentally switching between multiple tasks, multiple audiences, multiple levels of academic delivery, etc. So the **first type of stress** here is the **work stress**. At the same time, upskilling and training add additional mental stress to the person; the pressure of keeping abreast with & upgrading one's knowledge; like the stress we give students with the once a week/month tests! But here, a teacher takes a test practically in every class. The **second source of stress** is the **work - home balance stress**. It is a tough call for women, since much of the home chores, responsibilities and duties continue to be performed by women, in addition to the demands of the school / college routines. If this remains out of balance for long, it could lead to another mental health disorder - **Depression** (1 out of 3 Indians suffer from it!) is the most common and serious medical condition that affects the way one feels, thinks and acts; with frequent feelings of sadness, ineptitude, loss, anger and mood disorder.

■ **What is your opinion regarding regular relaxation routines; should it be daily? weekly? monthly? how frequent?**

It's a *must* to chill out and take some time to relax. Research clearly indicates that there are **many positive effects of relaxation** on the body, mind and emotions. One should form a habit of relaxing from time to time - set daily, weekly, monthly and yearly plans for relaxing breaks. This will help one in unwinding and calming down the mind and body, which is very essential to rejuvenate. Frankly, relaxation breathing techniques should be practiced for five minutes every hour! It may seem impossible, but teachers should find time to do it between classes, or while in the staff-room, or library, or canteen, just about anywhere. Just 5 mins! Not impossible!

”

Our physical, emotional, and spiritual health requires rest. We need to take a break. We need to nurture ourselves. To take time out to refuel, rejuvenate, and revive ourselves.

— Dana Arcuri



■ *Can Teachers be role models for students in acquiring winding down habits?*

The role of a Teacher is assumed first by Parents in the home, and later by Educators in the School. They are **Gurus** for children; so anything that is observed in them, seen being done by them, spoken, or taught by them would naturally be sacrosanct and get emulated by children. In the present times, we know that stress, anxiety and depression are not *adult* issues any more - in fact, we have seen an explosion of these conditions in children as well. So yes! Teachers can be role models for helping children to learn how to *wind-down*, by '**Walking the Talk**'.

■ *Please suggest some simple tips for Teachers and School Leaders to practice during the vacation to relax and refresh themselves ?*

Well there are many ways to refresh one's self, but since this feature is for **teachers** and **specifically for the vacation time**, I shall begin with that and then suggest some tips for long term; my insights stem from **rootedness in India**.

- 1) Start with **Digital Detox** - reduce work-related tasks and screentime. The constant pressure on your mind, eyes and fingers handling gadgets, scrolling through volumes of information must be stopped, *if you wish to really unwind*.
- 2) **Be one with nature** - go for long walks, tend to plants, play with natural soil/mud, paint a scenery, be creative. This will help you to feel *rooted & relax!*
- 3) **Refresh your mind** - read a good book, listen to soothing music / motivational speeches / spiritual discourses that YOU connect with. These will support your mental health by *reflecting & lending a fresh perspective* on life.
- 4) **Try a Thought Bank** - take a piggy bank and place a notepad with coloured pens near it. As soon as you get a negative thought, pen it down on a chit - with one colour (blue or green). Then, look at the thought, reflect upon it and cancel it out with the other colour (red works best!). Fold the paper and drop it into the bank. By doing this, your negative thoughts will gradually get erased and positivity will increase.
- 5) **Practice progressive muscle relaxation techniques** - in the *Savasana* position on a yoga mat; start with your toes - tighten a specific group of muscles, hold for a while and then completely relax the muscles - continue this process, working all the way upwards, across your entire body.
- 6) Try **meditation, mindful breathing, music therapy** or even a **massage**.
- 7) **Avoid Fight 'n Flight situations; talk to someone**. Try to think - speak - do **positive** things; be **social** and believe that **you are special**, confident and that you make a difference!

■ *What in your opinion is the place of oral medication for winding down?*

In my opinion, in most cases, the **power of the mind** is underrated, and it IS the **best medicine**. Some *herbs* are recommended for mental health like - *tulsi, gotukola, ashwangandha, bacopa, turmeric, guduchi, shakshpuspi, brahmi, amla*. Some additional supplements can also help like, Omega 3, Multi-vitamins with B6, Minerals, Vit D3, Probiotics, Folic Acid, Magnesium.

■ *Your final words...*

Stress is part and parcel of our life, it is one's reactions and responses to the situation that matter the most. Having said that, I do believe that a little stress is *good* for motivation and growth. So, **take it as a positive boost** and go ahead in life with balance. *Balancing* the mind-body-soul is the ultimate *mantra*. ***

A few moments of calmness, in the 'just be' state gives more answers, clarity, wisdom and solutions than hours of mind chatter.

- Shivangi Singh

”

READ TO SUCCEED

FOR TEACHERS

DO NOTHING - *How to break away from overworking, overdoing & underliving*
- by **Celeste Headlee**

Do Nothing (2020) argues that our obsession with efficiency and productivity has led us to underestimate the power of leisure. Tracing the rise of efficiency in previous centuries, as well as the present-day consequences of stretching ourselves too thin, author *Celeste Headlee* claims that we need to begin to allow ourselves to experience the true joy of pure *idleness*.



FOR STUDENTS

MY FAMILY VACATION

- by **Dayal Kaur Khalsa**

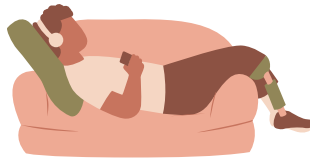
A warm, nostalgic tale with the author's brilliantly colored paintings evoke a real sense of time, place and family fun that children and parents alike will find irresistible. It is about May and her family who set off to Florida - May's first vacation far from home! A vacation with new adventures, unexpected pleasures that bring May and her brother closer together. And when they get home, her Florida vacation is a happy memory for a lifetime!

What does VACATION mean to you?

Teaching demands a lot! So, when teachers get a break from *business as usual*, they long for the opposite of what the normal workday provides. In place of the noise, chaos, and warp-speed multitasking, here's what they look forward to...

TEACHERS' responses:

“ Vacation means recharging, to continue shaping young minds.
- **Shachi Pathak**



“ Vacation is a much-awaited time to unwind, focus on self-care, catch up with family, visit new places, learn new things, ...not to forget upgrading myself professionally. - **Supriya Rao**

“ Vacation means a leisure break before new beginnings.
- **Pooja Ved**

For me, vacation means . . . to relax, refresh, rejuvenate and rejoin for a smooth new academic year. - **Padmini Tilwankar**

“ Vacation means spending leisure time with family and enjoying various activities. - **Reena Jain**



Vacation means having FUN TIMES with the family. - **Vibha Shukla**

Vacation times are for spending time with the family, exploring new places & rejuvenating ourselves. - **Divya Prashant**

“ Vacation . . . getting recharged for the upcoming academic year, which is a *sprint race* that starts in June and ends in April, with lots of learning and fun! - **Ritu Sharma**

Vacation means travelling to new places, pursuing my hobbies and spending quality time with my family. - **Deepa Sukumaran**



“ Vacation time is the best time when we can enjoy *ME-time* as well as family time, and get recharged for the next academic year positively. - **Shweta Pathak**

“ Vacation is a time to unwind, relax, relearn a few things... in order keep abreast and to give 100% post this *recharge period*.
- **Preeti Bhalerao**



Read and share with students : **How kids can utilise their summer vacation**, by **Ms. Sunita George**, Principal of Bombay Scottish School, Mahim.
<https://www.indiatoday.in/india-today-insight/story/ask-an-expert-how-kids-can-utilise-their-summer-vacation-1806398-2021-05-24>



Winding Down

DURING THE VACATION

Vacation time is the light at the end of the proverbial tunnel, a hard-earned academic *interlude* that benefits everyone. Students and educators alike, need to kickback and recharge their batteries, and that's what vacation is all about! While students usually can't wait to spend their break staying up late and hanging out with friends, *a teacher's perspective* of vacation time well spent, can be summed up in three words: **Leave. Me. Alone.** While parents and students might think teachers spend each day of their vacation, tediously planning future lessons, that's not true!

Here is how some teachers truly relax, refresh, rejuvenate and restore themselves:

Sleep - ahh...the luxury of not hearing the alarm; of not jack-knifing out of bed into an array of mechanical, programmed tasks. Instead, just sleeping-in and drifting into dreams!



Travel - Sometimes teachers just need to get away from it all, a complete change of scene, routine, weather, task! It doesn't matter if one flies to a different state / country or stays in a resort an hour from home. Travel allows teachers to see new places, make new friends, and enjoy life with family, fun food and fun activities. All these can rejuvenate and recharge educators.



Pampering - Vacation time is the best time to pamper one's *physical* being. The perfect time to take care of those battered nails, messed-up hair, aching muscles, dull skin and dark under-eyes.



Add to that some *retail therapy* - *shop till you drop*, for the adrenaline rush, getting a fresh set of clothes for the new year!



Other cool ways for **Winding Down** include - enjoying a PJ day, walking / cycling, yoga, reading fiction/spiritual books, *binge-watching* TV serials, and getting social at new *eat-outs*. ***

OVERHEARD IN A



Teachers' Staff Room

English Teacher: It's Summer Break Time finally, teachers! It's time to relax. Let's go get some ice-cream! Or let's go cycling. Vacation is here so let's relax... Anybody got any ideas on relaxation?

Physics Teacher: Relaxation? Oh you mean - the return of a system to equilibrium after a displacement from this state.

English Teacher: No, I meant..

Hindi Teacher: Kya hai yeh sab relaxation ki baatein. Lesson Planning khatam karte hai, kya aapne suna nahi hai... काल करेसो आज कर, आज करेसो अब । पल मेंपरलय होगी, बहुरि करेगा कब ॥

Physics Teacher: The simplest theoretical description of relaxation as a function of time t is an exponential law $\exp(-t/\tau)$...

Maths Teacher: No. A method by which errors resulting from an approximation are reduced by using new approximations - that's the true meaning of relaxation.

Biology Teacher: Please stop this Physics and Maths nonsense. Relaxation is actually that phase of a muscle twitch during which a muscle returns to a resting position.

English Teacher: Actually, what I meant is...

Social Science Teacher: Relaxation is not a good habit. Aurangzeb was relaxed about his succession and a mighty empire disintegrated.

Sanskrit Teacher: Humein relaxation kam, aur mehnat zyada karni chahiye, kyunki.. यथा होकेन चक्रेण न रथस्य गति भवर्भत्। एवंपरुषकारेण वि ना दैवं सि द्ध्यति ॥

English Teacher: I think we are deviating.. What I was trying to say is...

PE Teacher: You know teachers, relaxation is a must after Yoga Sessions, only then students can truly benefit from it.

Geography Teacher: I heard some talk on relaxation. What is it? Is there going to be a relaxation in any school rules? Or leave rules?

English Teacher: Never mind.

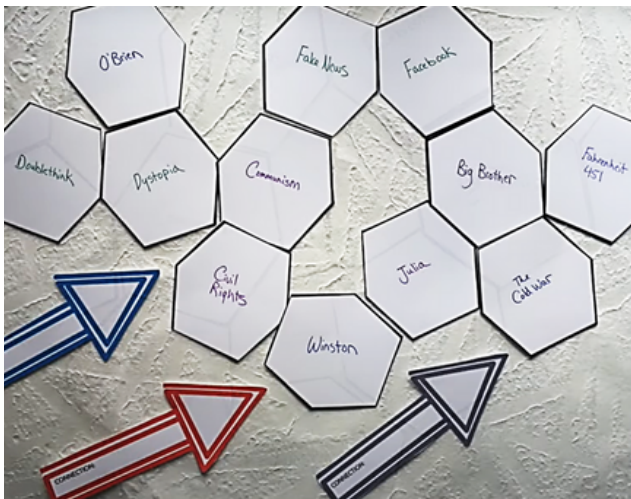
- Ms Vidya Mishra,
Nalanda International School, Vadodara

HEXAGONAL THINKING

Hexagonal thinking is a rich new way to inspire discussion. It's about **connecting the dots between ideas and finding the correlation between those connections**. While *hexagonal thinking* is *not* new in the world of business and innovation, it is **now widely used in classrooms**, and is equally effective, irrespective of the medium of instruction.



Whether online or offline, hexagonal thinking can help students develop **critical thinking, creative thinking, decision-making** and aids **engagement** in the classroom. When you give students a series of ideas on hexagons, and ask them to connect the cards into a web with clear reasons for each connection, you get them thinking critically, debating, giving evidence, and basically, **lighting up a whole bunch of parts of their brain**. Concepts are placed on hexagons, and then moved around to build a web of connected ideas. The most interesting part comes in the debate about *where* to connect *what*, and *why*. In the classroom, students can build hexagonal webs in *groups* or *alone, online* or *offline*. No two webs will ever look the same, and neither will the explanations of the connections students have made, whether given in writing or aloud.



How it works :

To do a **hexagonal thinking** activity, you need to have a series of hexagon-shaped cards featuring ideas OR for older kids, blank ones with the potential to have ideas written on them by students.

1) Begin by **choosing key ideas** from a reading or unit and adding them to your hexagons. From there, branch out into related concepts from other disciplines, the news, or modern culture. Now you have an **idea deck**.

2) To **create your hexagons**, you can cut up single-side used rough paper OR use a free online generator OR pick up a free digital tool kit with tons of templates.

3) **Share your deck with students in groups**. You can hand them a set of printed cards or direct them to their own copies of your digital deck on Google Slides.

4) **Ask them to connect the concepts** by lining up the sides of different hexagons with related ideas. Each card can connect to up to six others, but might only connect to one. They want to make the strongest connections they can. This will lead to a lot of debate. Remind them that there's no right answer for how to connect the cards, and that they should push themselves to **provide evidence for the strength of their ideas** as they argue productively and kindly.

5) Finally, students will have a web of strong connections laid out. Have them write about several of their **most interesting intersection points**—why they've connected several hexagons in this way. At this point they can share their thinking back to the class.

- **In the physical classroom**, students can present aloud and gallery walk to see each other's work.
- **Online**, you can have students save their webs and drop them into a collaborative gallery on *Google Slides*, report back on Zoom, and/or record a video about their web on *Screencastify* or *Flipgrid*.

6) When the work is done, **snap a photo of each group's web**. Let everyone circulate. Perhaps, ask each group to share several of their most intriguing connections. You could use this as a springboard to a writing project or a class discussion the next day. ***

This strategy can be appreciated further with this video : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sC2I8N66KIU&t=32s>

NALANDA INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

Vadodara

DAY 1



DAY 2



DAY 3



TEACHER TRAINING

The month of April felt like the proverbial *last burst of the candle flame* prior to subsiding. Some schools sought to empower their teachers with **CPD sessions** just before the summer break; probably to give them time for rumination and reflection on the new learning. The workshops included digital presentations, kinesthetic and verbal interactivity, group tasks for hands-on experience and showcasing.

Nalanda International School, Vadodara : Some associations develop into a *much-awaited habit* (for both the recipients of training as well as the trainers)! That was the mood when Bhavna T & Ishita V (Team QEDRAK) revisited NIS over (19th, 20th, 21st April, 2023); 3 full-day workshops on:

- 6Cs in Education
- NEP compliant Digital Lesson Planning
- NCF for Foundational Stage

RIB TICKLERS

Elaine: Where do eggs go on summer vacation?

Peter: I don't know.

Elaine: *New York City!*

Jake: What did the bread do on vacation?

Drake: What?

Jake: *It loafed around.*

Teacher: Johnny, please use the words "letter carrier" in a sentence.

Johnny: Yes, ma'am. *"My dad said that after seeing how many things my mom was bringing on vacation, he would rather letter carrier own luggage."*

Myles: Why didn't the elephant buy a suitcase for his vacation?

Henry: Why?

Myles: *Because he already had a trunk!*

<https://scoutlife.org/features/142568/21-funny-summer-vacation-jokes/>

Arts Integration

Schools are now getting ready to comply with **NEP 2020's** focus on **Integration**. Team QEDRAK brought the relevant topic of **Art Integration** to the - Primary & Middle School teachers. Led by QEDRAK resource member **Malavika Rajnarayan**, the workshop was spread over 2 full days, covering - art **appreciation**, art **for** curriculum and art **in** curriculum.

DAY 1



DAY 2



**RESOURCES AND
KNOWLEDGEWARE**

Quintessential EDucational Resources And Knowledgeware

 info@qedrak.com

 www.qedrak.com

 [/qedrak](https://www.facebook.com/qedrak)

 [/qedrak](https://www.instagram.com/qedrak)