

**Jerry Weissman** Contributor*I write about the universal aspect of all human communications.*

Opinions expressed by Forbes Contributors are their own.

LEADERSHIP 8/11/2014 @ 5:14PM | 208 views

Vacation for Your Brain

[Comment Now](#)

Timed for these dog days of summer, the weekend edition of the *New York Times* ran an [article](#) by Dr. Daniel J. Levitin, a neuroscientist at McGill University, in which he promotes the virtues of allowing ourselves to “hit the reset button” in our brains; to give them a break from the incessant bombardment of information coming from our mobile devices and computers. In his forthcoming book, “The Organized Mind: Thinking Straight in the Age of Information Overload,” Dr. Levitin says that the break, “provides much needed perspective on what you’re doing. Daydreaming leads to creativity.”

In discussing the active and passive states of the brain, Dr. Levitin describes its two dominant modes: “the task-positive network and the task-negative network,” the former for thinking, the latter for daydreaming. These two modes relate to the two basic principles of learning theory known as “[spaced and massed learning](#),” the latter also known as “cramming.”

The process of pausing is also a staple in all forms of creativity, particularly writing, which includes fiction at the high end, ranges through presentations, and down to email at the low end. I learned this lesson many years ago when I was writing “The Zodiac Killer,” a paperback novel for Pinnacle Books. My editor advised that I should pause at the end of a chapter or a page and set it aside for a few minutes or a few hours. And that whenever I return to the passage, I would see it with fresh eyes.

Today I apply the same advice to emails. If I have to write an email of any substance—even one sentence—I always put it aside as a draft and then return to it after a few minutes or a few hours. Inevitably, I make a change.

Dr. Levitin advises, “[e]mail, too, should be done at designated times.”

Imagine what pausing can do for your presentations. Forget the 11th hour scramble for slides. Start early and hit your reset button often.