

Just Between Us

Julia James and The Mini-Retreat Solution

Alfred DePew | Posted: Jan 8th, 2010



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Julia James holds a copy of her book

When Julia James was working on her Masters Thesis in Physical Geography at UBC, she noticed that most of her best ideas came to her when she got up to use the washroom. A different quality of thought was available when she wasn't trying to think at all. She was aware of "the bigger picture, concepts, a shift in perspective."

Later, when she became a life coach, she noticed that her clients—busy professionals—almost never took breaks.

"They didn't relax at all—they were so restless," she says. "They were highly educated, excited and passionate about their careers, constantly going, and they'd lose their sense of direction—where they were headed in all this going."

Which is often why they hired James as their coach in the first place.

Along with helping her clients to set and reach their goals, James began to suggest ways in which they could renew their energy right on the job.

She developed and produced a series of CDs to help her clients to relax, but, she says, "the step to actually using the tool was too big—so a how to book was needed to coach them through the steps to take that space and time to retreat in their day."

And so [The Mini-Retreat Solution](#) was born. The book's subtitle says it all: How to Relax & Refresh Anytime, Anywhere.

Even in traffic.



Alfred DePew

Alfred DePew's day job consists of training executive leaders and their organizations in change management, emotional intelligence, conflict resolution, diversity, non-toxic communication, and...

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One of her personal favorite mini-retreats is called "Red Light Relaxation." Instead of feeling stressed about wasted time, James invites us to recognize our stops at a red light as "a quick time-out to relax."

Then there's "Sing at the Top of Your Lungs." I love this one. Imagine a summer's day, car windows open, no more oppressive boom box beat, but, Cole Porter, Ethel Merman, and rousing songs from the International Workers of the World Songbook ... Well that's what I imagine, but I guess it could turn out to be most anything.

"It's the feeling of freedom that you can use your voice," says James.

Another useful feature of the book is a Stress Test in the beginning. Not quite a fortnight after my own extended retreat over Christmas, and already my score indicates that my "warning lights are flashing." Time for a mini-retreat!

"Most of us don't know how stressed we are," says James. "When people are diagnosed with serious illness, it's often a surprise—they didn't see it coming. The Stress Test is a way to check back in to see how your stress level has actually shifted. It's a great tool for evaluation and a gage for the impact of mini retreats."

Julia James' best hope for the book?

"That the book will be used a lot and look really used." And for readers to come up with their own mini-retreats.

For more information about mini-retreats or to order a copy visit Julia James' website: <http://www.juliajames.ca>

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