

71. How to Use Rest to Fuel Your Efficiency

SPEAKERS

Vanessa

Vanessa 00:00

Welcome to coaching for Latina leaders, the only podcast dedicated to the advancement of Latinas at every level of life with your host, Dr. Vanessa Calderon, a Latina with over 20 years of leadership experience, Harvard grad physician and mother of two.

Vanessa 00:19

Hello, my friends, welcome back to the podcast. So the title of this week's podcast is how to use rest to fuel your efficiency. So if this is a new concept for you, then you are in for a treat. And I cannot wait to teach you and I'm going to teach you today. But before I go on, I want to remind you about the life and leadership accelerator coaching program, which is my favorite place in the world. And it is this awesome program where you get to come in and be in community with other really amazing human beings that care about your success just as much as you do. So the program was created for really busy professionals that are always on the go. And what I help you do inside the program is teach you how to be your most effective self, how to get more done in less time, and how to have more time for the things that actually matter. The program is centered around you using your brain to its highest capacity, how to increase your performance, your focus, and really how to be an all around better, more intentional human being.

Vanessa 01:25

Because at the end of our lives, what will matter, it won't matter of how much money you made, it won't matter, you know, your accolades or the degrees or your credentials. What will matter is that you spent your time doing what mattered to you, you spent your time aligned with your values. And that's what we teach you how to do in the Life and Leadership accelerator program. So it's a professional development program and coaching. And it is awesome. I want to encourage you to check it out.

VanessaCalderonmd.com/join VanessaCalderonmd.com/join, check out the program read all about it. And one of the biggest perks is we just made the program lifetime access, which means you join once, and you get access for the rest of your life. So any additions, any changes, any edits, any updates to the program, you have access for the rest of your life. And let me tell you, I'm always adding super fun things inside of the program. So you get access to that forever. So go and check it out. Again, VanessaCalderonmd.com/join

Vanessa 02:28

Okay, let's come back to the episode today where I am teaching you how to use rest to fuel your efficiency. All right, let me see if any of you resonate with this, how many of you have been, you know,

at work, it's sort of towards the end of your workday at about three o'clock. And you really want to get in that last one or two hours of work before you close out your day before you go pick up your kids or do whatever you do after work. But instead of being really productive, you catch yourself scrolling through Instagram, or checking out the latest homes on redfin, then what happens, then you get mad at yourself for not being focused on productivity. Listen up, my friends, this is normal. And the problem is not that you lost focus. The problem is that you are judging yourself for it. But the thing is that you are not a robot, you are a beautiful human with a complex human brain that needs rest. So instead of being in reactive mode, and beating yourself up when you lose focus, I want you to be proactive instead and plan to use strategic rest breaks. So a strategic rest break is exactly what it sounds like. It's a time that you choose and set aside to give your brain time to decompress.

Vanessa 03:47

Now, there are two types of strategic rest breaks or SRBs. There are short ones, and there are longer ones. So the reason why we use them is for this purpose. Number one, most of us are unable to focus for long periods of time, on average, the human brain can focus for about 45 minutes. And this again is a neurotypical brain. So this can be you know, as short as 30 minutes or as long as 75 minutes depending on the type of brain that you were blessed with. It also depends on the task at hand. So if you are someone that gets in a flow state, when you do something creative, like create a piece of music or are writing something, then you might be able to focus for longer than the average time. But there might be other activities which really hurt your brain and you're not able to focus as long. If you are not sure what your ideal focus time is, I want you to get really intimate with your brain this week and start to notice when you're losing focus, is it 20 minutes, is it 45 minutes, try to figure out when you're losing focus.

Vanessa 04:52

Okay, so let's talk about short strategic breaks first. So short SRBs are perfect for middle-of-the-day activities. So let's say that you have a project or a task that you need to complete and you have about three hours to get it done. Your ideal focus time is about 45 minutes. So instead of trying to push through those entire two and a half hours to get this done, what you want to do instead is you want to say, Okay, I know, I know I can be really focused and get a lot done in 45 minutes. So I'm going to set a timer for 45 minutes. And at 45 minutes when my timer goes off, I'm going to finish the sentence I'm working on and I'm going to take a break away from my screen, that's your strategic rest break, your break away from your screen, and what I do is I set that timer for me, it's about 30 to 40 minutes just depends on the task. I'll set a timer for five minutes after my 45-minute break goes off. So I have five minutes to get away from a screen and take a quick break. You can do whatever you want on your break as long as you're up off of your chair and away from your screen. Don't use your strategic rest break time to go and finish some emails or to go and do something else that requires your brain you want to get away from your screen. So for me, for example, I'll use it to go and get a fill up my water bottle or get a cup of tea. And I often use my breaks to just kind of like release some endorphins in my body. So I'll do a really quick ab workout if I'm at home or some a few vinyasa, vinyasa yoga flows. And they sometimes even play some fun music to put me up when I'm getting my little break. And so you do what works for you. And if a timer makes sense for you set a timer, get away from your screen and try it out, you will see that when you come back, you are way more productive and able to focus for a longer period of time. Okay, so those are short strategic rest breaks.

Vanessa 06:45

Now there are longer strategic rest breaks. And these are super important for us for the midday low. Now most of us will have that moment in the day when our brain feels totally tired. It's usually at about 1pm or 4pm, something like that. Ideally, our workdays would end at this time. And if you are someone that has the flexibility to end your workday when your brain starts feeling fried, then I celebrate you, I want you to consider figuring out a way to do that and end your workday because you are no longer going to be productive after that. So if you can do that, that's awesome. But the majority of us, don't have that flexibility. So for the rest of us, if you still have another, you know, a half day of work to go after you hit that midday low, I want you to be really kind to yourself and plan a long strategic rest break. Because let me tell you, the human brain was not created to sit and focus for eight or nine hours at a time, you need that break in between doesn't matter how many cups of coffee you have, or if you're a smoker if you go out and smoke. And by the way, I am not at all advocating for smoking, I'm a physician. And I do not believe that that is at all good for your health or anyone else's health around you that has to breathe in that smoke. But if you're using that, because you think it gives you energy, there is diminishing returns on all of those kinds of external things that you take to try to increase your focus and productivity.

Vanessa 08:11

But what really works is a long strategic rest break, so long as our bees can be anywhere from about 30 minutes to 60 minutes, okay. And you can use this time to have a nice long lunch, you know, healthy whole foods that aren't going to drag you down, you can go for a power walk, you can take a nap. If you're in a place where you can take a nap, read a book outdoors, go and get a good workout. Use them for whatever makes sense for you that is not in front of your screen. Because let me tell you, when you do this, it actually increases your productivity on the back end, your brain is able to be more effective after you take this break, then if you try to push through this, once you learn this concept of strategic rest breaks and start to put it into practice, you will be amazed at how much more efficient you can be. It's really incredible.

Vanessa 09:03

So again, strategic rest breaks we use to give our brain our brains time to focus and decompress. Okay, so you use the shorter strategic rest breaks for your sort of like middle of the day activities because your brains can focus for on average about 45 minutes at a time and you want to give yourself about five-minute breaks in between your ideal focus time and your longer strategic rest breaks you take in the middle of the day when you have that midday low. You still have probably a whole nother half day of work left to go. And for both of those you want to get away from your screen.

Vanessa 09:37

You want to get up go for a walk. Do a little vinyasa yoga flows, if that serves you some ab workouts, a power walk outdoors, maybe if you're in an office setting, maybe you can go run the stairs in the hallway up and down the stairs. If that serves you go for a nice you know long lunch with a friend maybe I sometimes just go outside and get some sun and read a book or I take a nap so do Whatever serves you, because strategic rest breaks again, they're backed by science, and they're the kindest

way for you to improve your efficiency. I want you to try it for yourself and you will notice how your efficiency skyrockets. Okay my friends, I will see you next week adios!

Vanessa 10:24

Hey, if you love what you're learning, then you've got to check out my free Ultimate Guide to stop people pleasing, where I teach you a simple five step process to stop saying yes. When you really want to say No, you'll be so glad that you did. There's a link to the guide in the show notes. I'll see you next time.