

# Welcome Spontaneity, Challenge Feelings of Loneliness and Isolation

I am a planner. Always have been, always will be. Now, I don't keep an agenda like most planners—I make detailed lists instead, outlining my days, my weeks, sometimes my months. The idea is that I need to know what's going to happen before it actually happens... or at the very least I need a general idea.

This comes with some pros and some cons. Because I like to plan, I'm really great about following a routine. And I've come up with the perfect daily routine for me, one that helps to keep me happy and healthy. But here's where the downfall comes in: I'm not so great about deviating from that routine. And a happy, healthy life rarely exists without a little spice.

## Challenge Your Norm

Every morning, I wake up at 6:15 on the dot. I get ready for work, eat breakfast, and then I'm out the door by 7:15. I make it to work by 8, and then I'm there for the next nine hours. The latter part of my day is a little less methodical—but I'm sure to pencil in dinner, a workout, and me-time. This doesn't leave a whole lot of room for, well, anything. And sometimes it leads to these strange feelings of [loneliness](#) and isolation. I find myself saying no to friends and adventures, when I want to say yes, and then I'm overwhelmed with FOMO (or fear of missing out, for those of you who aren't hip to the lingo).

The bottom line is that it's nice to know exactly what my day's looking like,

but planning too much or being too strict with these plans can cause some damage. And I've learned that making room for spontaneity is absolutely essential. But you can't plan and be spontaneous at the same time... can you? Okay, no, you can't really plan for a spur-of-the-moment adventure. That would ruin the whole "spur-of-the-moment" idea. But you can make it your mission to step outside of your comfort zone—to push your limits and do something that makes you a little uncomfortable every once in a while. Additionally, when a spontaneous moment does present itself or you get a random impulse to do something crazy, welcome it. Excuse yourself from whatever you had in your calendar or jotted down on your to-do list. Doing so will keep you from feeling isolated and ultimately help you live a healthier, happier life.

## Stepping Outside Your Bubble: 4 To-Dos

"It is essential to take time to step outside of our lives, to do something out of the ordinary and reconnect with who we are," [Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist Merle Yost](#) further emphasizes. But doing so isn't always easy. He and I both understand this. You're probably thinking: *Where do I begin?* Well, we're going to give you a few ideas for spending meaningful time outside of your bubble:

### 1) Spend some time under the sun.

His first recommendation is to spend some valuable time outside. "Take ten minutes, an hour, or the whole afternoon to visit a park, a beach, a forest; someplace that is connected to nature," he says. "Just BE there. You absolutely have to put down the phone, tablet, and computer; keep them turned off and out of sight. Just be present in that moment. Take in the beauty of the world around you and feel both our smallness and our connectedness to the earth."

## **2) Take a well-deserved vacation or weekend getaway.**

You can also benefit from a relaxing vacay or even a short weekend trip, whether you go solo or bring along some loved ones. “There is nothing more recharging than going on a long weekend getaway,” Yost says. “While staycations are popular, we need to get out of our routine. Get away from the endless to-do list at home. Let the mind and the body relax. If you do it with someone special, then there is the added benefit of some extra attention as well.”

## **3) Let your inner child out to play.**

Yost suggests you also take the time to connect with your “inner child,” as many of us rarely fulfill our fun, silly sides. “Depending on where you live, go to an amusement park. Not with kids, just yourself,” he says. “It does not have to be Disneyland, but someplace you can let the inner child come out to play. It could be as simple as miniature golf or a small carnival in town. Look for anything different, silly or out of the ordinary to force you to let your adult life go for a few minutes. You’ll have a better night’s sleep, and a more focused day tomorrow.”

## **4) Pause and reflect on this crazy thing we call life.**

And most importantly, spend meaningful time reflecting on your life and the world around you. “The real spice of life comes from stopping, breathing, remembering who you are and what you really want in life,” Yost explains. “We need to quiet down all that chatter in our minds, as we live in a fast-paced world, with no signs of it slowing down.”