CREATING SPACIOUSNESS

The habits of social justice activists (and of contemporary living) to abandon, deny, or repress self needs in sacrifice to the collective mission only serve to deny movements of their most important resource -- the “people part” of people power. Self-care is foundational to our power, our resilience, our creativity, our health and our collective impact. Just as a fire needs breathing space between the logs to burn, we need spaciousness in our days to be impactful and sustainable. Below are practical tips for how to incorporate spaciousness into your daily practice.

Spaciousness is a breath, an interval, a moment to consider or to reconsider. Spaciousness is needed for sustainability and often creativity. Tensions ease with space; renewal and restoration takes time. We know this, and yet, spaciousness makes us anxious. If there is “extra time,” we try and fill it. We feel guilty about stopping, even if we are s-o-o-o tired and burnt out.

- **20-20-20.** When you are working at a computer, pause every 20 minutes and look 20 feet away for 20 seconds. This will allow your eyes to re-lubricate, and give your spinning mind a chance to reboot. Don’t worry, you won’t forget anything.

- **Turn off the electronics...once in a while.** Try it out! “Unplugging” 30 minutes before sleeping will help you sleep better. Try unplugging while you’re eating a meal, or taking a bathroom break. Don’t read email while you’re on the phone. Consider really indulging, by taking a screen-free weekend vacation.

- **Leave the building. Take a (very short) walk in the sun.** Ironically, smokers get the benefit of this practice by regularly taking smoking breaks outside. We recommend reaping the benefits of a short break outside. Repeat after me, “I deserve a fresh-air break.”

- **During intense work sessions, schedule regular (short) breaks.** It seems counter intuitive, but we actually work better if we take breaks. As a general rule, take a break of at least 10 to 15 minutes for every 90 minutes of intensive work.