



## Take Time To Play

By Joan Courtney

Ouch! Summer is wrapping up and it's time to check: have you had your summertime fun yet? Amusement and play shouldn't end with childhood. And this season is the time for travel, vacations and time out. Time to play. But, you tell yourself, "It's been so long since I've had any fun, since I played. I'm stuck and don't know how to play anymore. And I still have to mop the floor, arrange the pantry, do the laundry and (fill in the blank)." How about scheduling in some time for play? For fun? Or is that a foreign notion?

There is a certain feeling with play. And yes, if it's been a while since you played, that feeling might be distant. One way to get into the "play state of being" is to journey back to a time when you did have fun, perhaps as a child. Remember that field trip when you were a kid? Or bicycling to the local A and W root beer stand for a Very Small Glass of that bubbly beverage? Or lying on the grass and looking up at the stars? Or the warmth of the ocean breeze off the Baja Coast in Mexico? The common denominator to these memories is play and fun.

Stumped for ideas? Want to have some fun before summer ends? Here's a few starters:

- **Decide what fun means for you now.** Perhaps you can't even remember what you liked to do. Or you've outgrown those old activities like a child in a growth spurt. Google "bucket list ideas" or "fun things for adults". You're looking for ideas on what would appeal to you at this point in your life. Highlight the ones that sound the most interesting to you.
- **Pencil yourself in.** Once you've jotted down these "idea starters" for your adult self, watch the magic unfold. Set a goal to pencil YOURSELF into your already busy schedule. Some even say they "take themselves on a date." You'll be surprised by what happens (and how you feel).
- **Make up a play box.** Kids have toy boxes for their playthings, don't they? You too can create a drawer for play when you want a break or feel the need to be silly for a time. What can you put in there? Let's see: jigsaw puzzles, coloring books for adults (these treasures are skyrocketing on Amazon), model airplanes, a harmonica or even a cook book.

If you allow yourself to play, what's in it for you? Here are just a few benefits you'll reap:

- **Activate your mind and boost creativity.** Just like a child, when you make a task fun, you are in a more playful mood. New strategies and other options develop from fresh perspectives.
- **Relieve that stress!** Remember the difference between going to the gym for exercise and going with friends? The difference is in your attitude, fired up by those feel-good endorphins. Go for it!
- **Feel young and energetic.** Ever known a 93-year-old with the mindset of a 20 year old? I have a friend who continues to travel and explore the world at that elderly age. She even told me not to call except on Thursday evenings. She'd be out and about, having fun.

**I'm curious: how do you plan on having fun as summer draws to a close? Will it be a solo jaunt? Or with friends? Let me know how it works out. I'd love to hear.**

I hope I have opened the door to enjoying the little things on the Mountain...and in your life.