



The Three Rs for Summer

I recently attended graduation ceremonies for my nursing students. My fabulous and spectacularly brilliant niece, Christina, who was a pink bundle of beauty in the newborn nursery only 10

minutes ago, also has just graduated from college. So, I am feeling reflective. I love graduation ceremonies because they can be so inspirational. One of the most unique graduation speeches that I have heard retold was by the late Bob Hope, who stood up to address the crowd and said “Graduates, it’s a cruel world out there—don’t go.” He then sat down (Moyers, 2005).

Well, most of us would like a bit more guidance in a commencement address. For me, the fact that graduations often immediately precede summer is significant timing. The feeling of excitement that the approach of summer brings undoubtedly comes from our elementary school days. The thought of three months of freedom was too tantalizing for words.

What is it about summer that is so refreshing? And why are graduation ceremonies so inspirational? I believe it is because they both cause us to sit back, take a deep breath, and ponder a bit. Here is my prescription for you: Get a comfy chaise lounge, and set it up on a pretty beach. Bring along a fresh fruit salad and a long, cool drink. Stare into space. Take some time in the remaining days of summer to concentrate on the “Three Rs” for grown-ups: reinvigorate, reward, and rededicate.

Reinvigorate: We all are working much too hard. Sometimes, I am convinced that if I squish one more activity into my week, then

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my personal digital assistant will burst into flames. After a while, we can become disinterested and cranky. Turn off your computer, shut off your cell phone, take off your headphones, and enjoy the silence. Of course, I have to leave New York City to do this, but it is a sacrifice that I am willing to make! Working all the time is just not healthy. Only by getting away from it all can you have fresh insight.

Reward: I am pretty good at rewarding myself, and I hope that you are, too. If not, why not? You deserve to be treated well by others and, most importantly, yourself. I have been feeling swamped lately, and this is starting to affect my ever-so-cheery persona. So, I am trotting off to a spa where I will spend a few days hiking in the mountains and swimming. I am bringing along nothing that requires a plug or charger. Just a pen and a few good books. None of those books will contain words such as neutropenia, thrombocytopenia, or cytokine. I am sorry to tell you that your manuscripts will be staying at home also.

Rededicate: Without a question in my mind, I love nursing and nurses. I have wanted to be a nurse since I was a young girl and hooked on Sue Barton and Cherry Ames books. My need to reinvigorate and reward myself is not to escape from nursing but



rather to take some time to think, stop talking and typing, and remember why I do what I do. The book that I am currently reading, *Speaking of Nursing: Narratives of Practice, Research, Policy and the Profession*, by Donna Diers, RN, PhD, FAAN, is a wonderful medium

for rededicating ourselves to our patients and profession. This thoughtful and insightful book is a compilation of essays and editorials written by Diers (2005) when she was editor of the *Journal of Nursing Scholarship* (formerly known as *Image*) and addresses she has given as dean of the School of Nursing at Yale University. She is a beautiful writer, and reading this book is truly rewarding.

I hope that you will take some time for yourself, read a few good books, and relax this summer. You deserve it, and your patients will benefit from your brief respite. Then you can sit back down at your computer and send a manuscript to me. I’ll be ready for you.

Diers, D. (2005). *Speaking of nursing: Narratives of practice, research, policy and the profession*. Sudbury, MA: Jones and Bartlett.

Moyers, B. (2005, May 26). The Graduate Center of the City University of New York commencement address [Press release]. Retrieved June 3, 2005, from http://www.gc.cuny.edu/press_information/current_releases/May_2005_Moyers.htm

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