

What island will you visit soon?

Life can get mundane and boring. Planning enjoyable things to look forward to is one way to put a sense of anticipation and excitement into your life. Some people think of this as building islands of rest, recreation, or fun. These are islands to look forward to so that the future doesn't seem so predictable and routine.

We all need to have 'Islands' in our schedule. The island may be something we look forward to. A place we may go to. A visit to an inspiring location. A night or weekend away or trip to a faraway place.

Day by day, we reflect on how good it will be to go there and be there. The anticipation releases exciting and hopeful chemicals in our brains. We go there mentally in anticipation.

It lifts us from our daily routines and the things that are difficult in our lives here.

Thinking of your island is not avoiding reality or responsibility. It is allowing ourselves to imagine enjoyment, which is healthy. Our minds can get stuck in the negatives of our lives. The mundane can dominate our consciousness and create a boring outlook. We need to not only find things in our daily schedules that can motivate us to being mentally healthy and physically well, but also things we can look forward to.

It's amazing how a planned getaway or visit, even if it's just for a day, can put us in a positive hopeful mental state.

Our schedules need to have planned getaways. The islands don't need to be extravagant things. They can be things like:

- Going out to eat
- Visiting an old friend
- Having a special date with your partner
- Going to a play or a concert
- Attending a sporting event
- Visiting relatives
- Taking a day off work
- Going out of town for a 3-day weekend
- Planning a vacation

As you begin to go on these outings, your motivation to go somewhere else will increase momentum and you can begin to also put into your schedule monthly, quarterly and annual things.

In actuality, this reflects a balanced lifestyle that also has healthy physical activity, building relationships with significant people, hobbies that keep our passion developing, among other priorities.

So where would you like to go to? Maybe it's a place you used to visit and enjoy but haven't been in along time. Even if it's just a few hours, that works. If none of these suggested islands are happening in your life, then start small and go somewhere interesting for a few hours and build out your schedule from there.

We all need an island to visit, explore, have fun and be at rest upon.

Dr Greg Allen is a therapist practicing in Palos Verdes and San Pedro. He is also Founder and Director of 2 Non-Profit Youth organizations. Freedom4U (freedomcommunity.com) and Hearts Respond (heartsrespond.com). These organizations identify, develop and release the passion and purpose in youth, thereby reducing risky lifestyles. Programs focus on creative arts, life skills, leadership and service learning.