

Gearing up for the **BACK TO WORK & SCHOOL SEASON**



As summer winds down and vacations come to a close, most people are gearing up for going back to school or work. While many are excited about the prospect of returning to work and study, the transition from vacation to work—especially if you are starting a new job or school year can spark feelings of worry. If you are experiencing a sense of dread about the back to work or school season or are simply wanting to start off the new season on a good note, the tips below might help.

The time of New Beginnings

Going back to work or school is a transitional phase or a time of new beginnings for many. We might be starting a new school year, work position, or simply be committed to making positive changes at work. According to author, Janice Van Dyck, and psychologist, Susan Krauss, there are various types of beginnings and each of them affects us differently.

"The I Can't Wait" beginning

This is when we are excited about the changes coming up. An example is when we are excited about going back to work or when students are eager to start the new school year.

"The I Know I Have to" beginning

While we may not be excited about this particular change in our life, we voluntarily commit ourselves to this experience. For instance, we realize the importance of going to school or work despite of feeling a certain degree of resistance towards it.

"The Please Don't Make Me" beginning

This type of beginning provokes a significant amount of resistance in us. An example might be when we lose a job, are required to take a job that we aren't keen on (possibly due to circumstances that are out of our control), or join a new school against our wishes.

Preparing ourselves for going back to work or school

Regardless of how you are feeling about going back to work or school, the tips below can relieve some of your back to work/school jitters as well as help prepare for success in the coming season.

Reframe the change in a positive way

Let's be honest. Many of us would gladly be holidaying for the rest of our lives if that was a feasible option. However, focussing just on our unwillingness to go back to work or school will do more damage than good. Krauss therefore recommends thinking about the positive impacts of the new change. Think about some of the reasons for why going to work or school are important to you and try to refocus on those reasons whenever you start to feel overwhelmed with negative emotions or thoughts.



Plan/organize in advance

Kathryn Dill at Forbes suggests returning home from vacation a few days early as opposed to the night before. It might also be a good idea to have a preliminary plan in place in regard to what tasks will be your biggest priorities upon your return. Doing this a day or two days before returning to work can also help to gradually transition you from the vacation mode to work mode.

Making a career/school plan

If you are feeling an excessive amount of dread about going back, it is important to make note of why that might be the case. Even if you are excited about going back to work, it still is a good idea to think about your career goals—both long-term and short-term. Is your career not going in the direction that you want it to? What kind of goals do you have for the next few months? What about the next few years? Setting realistic, meaningful goals are central to feeling motivated about work.

Kids on the other hand might need some guidance from their parents/guardians to set goals for the coming school year. Instead of just focusing on academic or future career goals, parents should also encourage young people to think about what their personal goals are, which can include friendships, extra-curricular activities, and self-care.



Prioritizing life

Leadership coach, Anna Rasmussen, believes that prioritizing well-being is also important to career success. In order to do so, make a list of things—outside of work and perhaps even work-related—that you like to do and make those a priority in your everyday life.

Call your EFAP if you need additional support in managing your stress about going back to work or school.