



Donuts

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Donuts

Imagine winning one million dollars! The terms and conditions allow you to use your winnings for as many adventures or experiences as you like but you will not own anything after spending the money. What would you do?

The immediate temptation is to do everything, to go crazy like kids running into a candy store with a handful of money mesmerised by all the delights, and not being able to make a single decision. There are always competing options; liquorice is nice but liquorice-all-sorts are better. Cream caramels are even better, but then again, toffees last longer. The whole thing can become quite strategic. In the end, once the frenzy and excitement has passed, most kids will have come up with the best bang for their buck and after a while, perhaps some buyer's remorse. "I told you toffees lasted longer!"

So back to the question, what would you do if you had \$ 1 000 000 worth of crispy banknotes to spend?

What about a journey? There are a lot of experiences to choose from: a cruise on the QE 2, a transcontinental rail trip like The Ghan, or sailing around the Maldives?

What about a destination? Perhaps visit The Great Wall of China, the pyramids in Egypt, or the wonders of Rome?

What about an experience? Snorkelling in an underwater world of iridescent fish at Lady Elliot Island, experiencing the sights and sounds of a moving Broadway musical, or strolling through the ancient art-museums of Europe? What about spending a fast-paced day driving around in a Ferrari?

The opportunities are endless, but for most of us, it won't happen unless we want it to.

While the promise of free money allows us to imagine, it is not the lack of money that limits us having fun and adventure. It is the lack of permission. In the humdrum of life, we rarely give ourselves permission to have fun. Apart from an occasional holiday, it is always much the same: there always seems something to do, there is always another task, another batch of washing to iron, pile of dishes to wash, strip of lawn to mow, or to tidy up for the next day.

Here are our tips for having fun on a shoestring budget:

Give yourself permission to have fun.

"I can't afford it. There is not enough time. We have too many medical appointments." And the reasons go on and on. Our fun will only begin when we stop making excuses.

Make a commitment to take time out every day to do something you really enjoy. I enjoy eating donuts. I know they are not healthy. I know they cost money, and I know that I should not eat too many of them, but for me an occasional donut with a cup of coffee is pleasure time. It is me time! Having a donut is an achievable goal and I allow myself to have this moment of enjoyment occasionally. It is even more special when I am sharing the moment with someone I love.

All that is necessary in taking time out to enjoy moments like these is saying "Yes" to yourself. The lawn can wait, the washing won't get any drier, and the car can be dirty for another day. Giving yourself permission to have moments of fun in every day can be some of the best medicine you'll get.

Be strategic.

I cannot have a donut every day. It is not good for me, and I know that the deliciousness of donuts won't be the same if I have them too often. My strategy is to shift enjoyment opportunities around like pieces on a chess board. Perhaps it's a donut today or a pizza tomorrow (by now you know I like eating). But I also enjoy going to the movies. I enjoy walking and being in nature, I like going to the beach or hanging out with good friends. I do these things strategically.

Don't burn yourself out, don't blow your budget, don't go to the beach when it's raining.

Make time.

If you don't make time, there will never be enough time. The busyness of life steals time, so you have to take it back. Clear your diary for the last weekend in April. Plan for a big party at the end of August. Book a snorkelling experience for next month. Make time in your busy everyday schedule to do something fun.

Book it, set it, and forget it. And when the time comes, you will be so pleased you did. It may be as simple as setting the first 15 minutes aside each day for you time. It's your time — use it well.

Think about the money.

Don't spend what you don't have, get someone else to spend it instead. I follow the amazing organisation, Camp Quality. They offer extraordinary experiences for children whose lives are ending. These are sponsored experiences and they are invaluable to the children. But why should children have all the fun? Adults are also often in a precarious situation at the end of life, and they may also have an unfulfilled dream.

Perhaps you or someone you know is at the end of life and has an unfulfilled dream. There may be time left for the one last big adventure. Why not help someone achieve this or if you need to get away, why not ask for crowd funding?

You may be surprised what will happen if you, or someone else, sets the vision and puts it out there for others to latch onto allowing your dream to become a reality. They may even share in the experience with you making it all the more enjoyable. There may yet be an opportunity to make a trip to the distilleries in Scotland or swim with the whales or go visit a close relative living overseas. People are generous and they want to help, so why not ask for some help.

Who knows? If you never ask you will never know.

Cash is not king!

If there is not enough money in the bank do something outrageous, do something that is extraordinary on a shoestring budget. If you live in Australia, go camping at The Jump Up in Winton Qld where light pollution is almost non-existent, allowing spectacular views of the evening sky and the Milky-Way. Visit the Carlo blowhole at Rainbow Beach when the sun is rising and enjoy the beauty as the sun reflects its colours on the sand. Drive to the Daintree and walk through the towering ancient forests. You may be surprised to find many free experiences in nature near to where you live. Make use of the opportunities around you. Don't forget to take a donut with you to enjoy along the way.

Make it your experience.

In the animated movie The Jungle Book, there is a scene where the vultures get caught in a loop of asking, "Well what do you want to do?" The answer is, "I don't know? What do you want to do?" And around and around it goes.

We can be like that.

When it comes to experiences, do something YOU want to do and not what someone else wants to do. It is your donut, pick the one you like and eat it the way you like.

Enjoy the moment.

A staggering thing to observe is seeing how people miss enjoying a moment due to the scramble of recording the moment. They will be so busy photographing The Eiffel Tower or The Grand Canyon, or jostling for the best place to photograph Venice, that they forget to enjoy the moment.

Whatever you do, whatever you experience, STOP, and take time out to enjoy it. Smell all the fragrances, listen to the sounds, feel the breeze, and enjoy the experience. Record the moment in your soul rather than your phone. If you're able to, remember to write down the experience, recording how it made you feel. These journal entries will be far more valuable than just another photo on your phone.

The moment does not have to be big or extraordinary for us to enjoy it. We can and should stop to smell the roses, enjoy and savour a good cup of tea, listen to the fresh sound of the morning or the early chorus of insects in the evening. Sunsets and sunrises are all free gifts each day if we stop long enough to enjoy them.

Share.

We enjoy experiences so much more when we share them with others. As a traveller to an occasional overseas conference, I can assure you that eating breakfast alone is not fun, regardless of how magnificent the setting may be.

Not all experiences need to be shared, sometimes the solitude and peace we experience being on our own is invaluable. But sometimes donuts are better when we share them. Sometimes we need to share our experiences, so why not tell us about your experience. We are more than happy to publish it, with your permission. It may just be someone else's inspiration to think and live bigger.

Life is full of good and bad experiences. We can become trapped in a bad experience loop when our days are filled with medication, doctors' appointments, and pain. Even in these difficult circumstances I encourage you to find a way to enjoy something on your terms.

Enjoy life, your life. It is the only one you have.