Take a Break

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Abstract

"Take a break" is a term that all of us have heard, but how many of us have thought about what it means or dared to go as far as to implement it in our lives. A Lot of questions pop to mind while reading this phrase, like how to take a break, for how long, or maybe why taking one in the first place is necessary. And to top it all off, why is something like this even relevant to be known by an educational institution and all the people associated with it? Because it seems like a pretty simple and straightforward five-lettered word, nothing that an "amateur" student or a group of intellectuals can't decode, yet its true understanding or essence is very much lacking from our educational system. This paper discusses what a break means not only in general use of the term in everyday life but also in terms of what taking a break means for students , teachers as well as what changes are required at an institutional level to actually implement it.

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So, for starters, what is a break? Well, it can mean quite a few different things. For some, it could be to work on oneself and have ME time, not worry about anything, or think about what you must do next. Others define it as activities they like to do if they want to take a break, like listening to music, drawing, or travelling. Sometimes there is no clear distinction between a break and a hobby because many people define taking a break in terms of their hobbies or the things they like to do. Even if someone loves what they do, like an artist, they also need a break from their work.

Often when people use this phrase, it is to denote that you need to step back momentarily from whatever you are doing and not necessarily detach yourself, as it means not feeling personally involved in something and reflecting on things which may be of past or present. This may lead to clearing your head from the task at hand, looking at things from a fresh perspective by having a relaxed state of mind or evaluating the progress of the work. Here the intent is that we must constantly strive towards an objective and assess and judge our progress. It almost seems like we look at the break as a form of escape. However, a break doesn't have a fixed time duration, ranging from a few minutes to hours or even days.

Another way break is looked at is in terms of taking a break from something. This something ranges right from our families and society to sometimes even ourselves. These may be rooted in the expectations that we carry for ourselves or what others expect of us, or simply in what they are. The things that we feel we are obligated to do sometimes, even when we don't want to.

Like when you are little, you go to preschool, then school begins at class 1, and before you know it, you are in 12th. Then comes the pressure to quickly fill out college forms, and at 18, you are supposed to have your life career figured out. Nowhere do you take a break to figure out what you really want. Even in the so-called breaks during the school year, you have to do holiday homework and projects, and the time before starting new classes, so many students start studying for the next standard. Even if someone takes a year off after 12th, it is only to study to clear the entrance test. Then, when you finally get into college, you study and clear the examinations and get the degree, after which you either start working or you study further to ultimately get a job. Where in all of this do you get a break to figure out what you really want to do?

Taking a break from yourself is probably the hardest, and from your own thoughts that constantly remind you of all the things that you have to do. Also, just being idle is looked down upon in our society. Or maybe just connected with the notion that the only things worth having are through hard work, it seems to propagate the idea that taking a break is terrible. So what is wrong with wanting or getting something with the so-called "easy way"?

Such a mindset gets instilled in us at a young age and is propagated from the fact that the very concept of break seems to be absent from school in totality, wherein the teachers need to understand that students need a break from the everyday homework, tests, activities, etc. which keep them occupied even after school-leaving very little time for themselves which is necessary for them do things which they really want to do. Even the so-called "fun" activities that students are made to engage in might not be what they really want to do as even such activities have an agenda behind them, that is, to make the students good or reflective citizens. Even during break time, they are made to follow the rules and regulations.

A break is just as necessary for a teacher as it is for a student; however, in our classrooms, there is limited or next to nil space for emotions to be expressed other than "being happy". This is very necessary for the teachers because they aren't allowed to display "bad emotions" like being sad, angry, frustrated, etc., which isn't really possible realistically, making teaching one of the hardest professions. If a teacher doesn't get to take a break from time to time, it will eventually lead to a lack of motivation and burnout, which can even start affecting their personal life. This is also a very popular area of study in research in recent times, especially after COVID-19, wherein the personal and private lives of the teachers became intertwined, and they did not get a break for teaching even in those times. Moreover, when the students get holidays or breaks, it isn't the same for the teachers who have to come before the students to prepare everything and stay overtime.

School takes up a major chunk of the initial years in a child's life, also referred to as the "building years" in one's life, so why shouldn't a child be "taught" the value of slowing down or slowing down, taking rest? Why should it be such that every moment spent in the schools needs to be constructive or building up on one thing or the other? It is just as necessary to take a break as it is to be productive.

This shows a systematic cultural problem in our schools as an institution. Instead, teachers and students should have a certain amount of time in the school timetable wherein they can take a break without any 'educational' aim to achieve or fulfil, as recess time isn't enough. This way, the students can also get more moments to cherish and express their emotions, which are ignored and undermined throughout school life. There is a need to acknowledge the same and change the structure to make space for the same.

Even when NCF 2005 it talks about inclusion of co curricular activities in the timetable it may seem like a break from the academics but in reality those also have certain objectives to be fulfilled where in they want a holistic development of the child because if they didn't, they wouldn't have been graded components in the curriculum. The idea of a break may not be art , sports or music for every child, although it might be for a few but for some it is just like a task which has to be done as enforced by the school and curriculum at large.

Which brings us to an important question, why is taking a break so important? Because it helps us to feel refreshed and recharged to deal with daily life, to work on ourselves and discover something new along the way about ourselves. Even to stop to think and reflect on things, decisions, choices, etc. Moreover, it is proven that taking a break can help increase productivity and prevent burnout due to the daily monotony of life. Plus, taking a break can help lead to better stress management. Although this isn't the final goal or achievement of taking a break. What is important is how a break helps you step away from the task.

There isn't any fixed guideline on how an individual can take a break. In our fast paced

world there are hundreds of articles which talk about how to increase the productivity but none talk how to slow down neither is there any theory which talks about the same which brings us to another question.

Then, how to take a break? Well, there is no prescribed set of things to do, as only some things will work out for everyone. For some people, it could be playing a musical instrument, reading a quantum physics book, or even just going to sleep for a few minutes. You don't have

to worry whether you are being productive while taking a break or doing what you must do. Taking a break gives you a sense of peace where you can just be. If this article made you stop and think when was the last time when you actually took a break or makes you want to take one then the purpose of this this article is fulfilled.