

# Faculty Development

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### Getting Organized

An e-newsletter of organizing tips for faculty members. January, 2008.

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*We do not stop playing because we grow old.  
 We grow old because we stop playing.*

— Anonymous

→ Some pages will open in a new browser window. M. D. Anderson does not endorse external sites.

Get a hobby. It can improve your mood, mind-set, and outlook on work, according to an article in the New York Times. In the article, Carol Kauffman, a Harvard Medical School assistant professor, says, "Hobbies can enhance your creativity, help you think more clearly and sharpen your focus. When you're really engaged in a hobby you love, you lose your sense of time and enter what's called a flow state, and that restores your mind and energy." That flow gives you a heightened sense of concentration, releases endorphins to give you energy, and increases your creative and positive thinking.

By increasing self-esteem and self-confidence, a hobby can save you from job burnout, the article says. A hobby allows you not to feel defined by your job, and even if you're happy at work, you still need that boost a hobby gives you.

Schedule time for your hobby. Squeeze it in somewhere and don't feel guilty about doing something you love. Even spending a few minutes on your hobby helps, the article said. If traveling is your hobby, reading a few pages of a travel book or magazine will do the trick to boost your mood. You don't have to wait until retirement to pick up a hobby or two.

Some people like to get out of town to work on their hobbies. Several women I know who love to scrapbook gather up their scrapbooking friends and take off for the weekend. They hole up in a hotel suite, talk, giggle, and of course, scrapbook like mad. It's a break from their work and families and gives them a chance to finish scrapbooking projects. Some hobbies even have their own conferences. For example, Houston usually hosts an international quilting festival each year, and one of my friends even flew from Germany to attend one year. These gatherings are a great way to meet fellow enthusiasts, find new materials, and see what's new in your hobby.

If you want to find a hobby but are not sure which one, check out the [About.com's](#) page on hobbies. They can help you get started with about any hobby you're interested in. To figure out what you're interested in, ask yourself: What makes you happy? What kind of interests do you have? Was there any hobby you had as a kid or young adult that you really enjoyed and miss?

To road test some hobbies and interests, Leisure Learning, Rice University's Glasscock School of Continuing Studies and other programs have classes for everything from dancing and photography to wine-tasting and pottery-making. Signing up for a class (and forking over money for registration fees) is one way to commit yourself to developing a hobby or to simply try something new.

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### **The House Fairy**

Here's another tool in your parental arsenal. An organizing client told me about the [House Fairy](#), a website devoted to encouraging children to clean their rooms and be helpful to their parents. The House Fairy is Santa's sister, who wanted to be a Tooth Fairy, but her grades weren't good enough for Tooth Fairy College. Her brother Santa tapped her to help him make sure boys and girls were good all year long by becoming The House Fairy. The House Fairy leaves the occasional treats for children who have cleaned their rooms and listened to their parents

For a yearly subscription of \$10, you will receive CDs, certificates signed by The House Fair, a letter from The House Fairy, a guidebook for parents, and other items.

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### **Are You a Mouse Potato?**

I came across this little gem on the [apprentice-writer.blogspot.com](#) website: Mouse Potato (n): a person as attached to their computer as a couch potato is to their couch. Genius!!! So many of us are mouse potatoes. Since e-mail and the Internet can eat up time, know when to step away from the mouse and give yourself a break. Talking to a real person face-to-face is a good way to reconnect with the world.

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### **NAPO-Houston Organizing Seminar**

A seminar on Getting Organized will be presented from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. Jan. 26th at the Doubletree Downtown. The afternoon features several speakers, including yours truly, and a vendor expo. For more information, visit the website at [www.napohouston.com](#). For those interested in the field of professional organizing, a regional conference will be held on Friday, Jan. 25 through noon on Saturday, Jan. 26th at the Doubletree Downtown. Registration information is also on the NAPO-Houston website.

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### **Got Clutter?**

I have developed 15-minute, 30-minute and 45-minute presentations on organizing, time management, and productivity. Moving to a new building? I also have a 15-minute presentation on preparing for a move for your department. I also do one-on-one sessions in your office and help you come up with a solution to your organizing problems. To schedule a presentation or a one-on-one appointment, call (713) 792-8061 or e-mail [Janice Simon](#) ([jsimon@mdanderson.org](mailto:jsimon@mdanderson.org)).

To subscribe to this newsletter, e-mail [Janice Simon](#) ([jsimon@mdanderson.org](mailto:jsimon@mdanderson.org)).

*Happy Organizing!*

-- Janice

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