



As a child, I would think nothing of spending the day inside a good book. Hours would pass, pages would turn, the sun would rise and set. I was there for the adventure, to be transported to a magical, long-gone, or far-off place. A realm where I might be a seamstress sneaking into a dragon's lair, or a girl disguising herself as a boy to become a knight in a medieval kingdom. Or perhaps I would be a redheaded orphan who found a home at Green Gables. In those days, I was innocently oblivious to how these stories (and the paper and ink form I read them upon) were nurturing me.

Books ensured I was no stranger to humanity, empathy and compassion. My mind would file away vocabulary, grammar and language skills. I allowed stories to spark self-reflection, my creativity and curiosity. From an early age, I had found a way to travel no matter the circumstances. I do not mean

to say that books taught me these things single-handedly nor that every book I have ever read has provided such rich nourishment. But I do believe that books are valuable life tools I cannot imagine doing without and fortunately, have never had to.

Nowadays (with responsibilities) reading continues to be a huge part of my life. I usually aim to spend a minimum of 20 minutes reading from a book per day, either after lunch or before lights out and sleep. During the day, it helps me clear my head and reenergise. At night, it helps me to wind down for a restful sleep. And I still do read an entire book in a single day when in the mood and opportunity strikes.

Reading all day long is a day retreat taken without ever having to leave my home. It's a break from reality without losing touch with myself. By dedicating my attention, so often split every which way across a busy schedule, wholly to the book in my hands, I

A One-Day Journey to Inner Peace

In this article, Zara reveals her unique method to revitalising mind, body and soul with just one day and a good book.

by Zara Adcock

Lifestyle

am able to refocus my brain, feel relaxed, healed and revitalised.

If any of the above sounds like an experience you would like for yourself, then I hope the following advice will help you arrange your own one-day journey to inner peace.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

ONE DAY OF SOLITUDE

A suggested minimum time spent reading is 6 hours, so make sure you have time and solitude (one room will do) on your hands. Be willing to clear your schedule and keep it cleared, in order to rest and relax fully. Make sure you stay hydrated throughout the day, and that you stretch and change positions at regular intervals. Enjoy each moment.

ONE PRINTED BOOK

Be sure to read a hardback or paperback book, as the printed book is easier to absorb and recall in detail, and facilitates intellectual, creative, and deep thinking.

PENCIL & PAPER

Keep a pencil and some paper at hand to write notes on things you want to research or look up later. If you have a printed dictionary, keep it handy, too.

PREPARATION

FOOD

Think about what you would like to eat (e.g. fresh fruit and vegetable juices, salads, wholegrain sandwiches, easy oven roast dinner) ahead of time and prepare foodstuffs the day before or morning of to make mealtimes more leisurely between reading.

DISCONNECT

Turn off all electronic devices, phones included. If you need to keep a phone on for emergency calls and don't have a landline, set your mobile phone aside in a separate area, e.g. the kitchen. Be sure to turn off the internet/wi-fi also. In addition to being beneficial for your health, being un-contactable will help your day run more smoothly.

AMBIENCE

Try to make your environment as soothing as possible. Opt for open windows and fans over air-conditioning if able to, so that sunlight, natural



breezes and sounds fill your home. You might like to light some pure beeswax candles or put on an essential oil burner.

HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT BOOK

For your one-day journey I recommend the celebrated novel, preferably about 300 pages long. Novels provide the required escapade without the need to process factual information, as is the case with non-fiction.

When selecting a book from a shelf, look for a book you would describe as a page-turner. Read the blurb first (this can usually be found on the back cover of a paperback or on the inside front cover of a hardback). If it sounds like a story you are interested in, flip through randomly to check that the storytelling engages you. Next, read the first chapter. Ask yourself: Do I find this book easy to read? Is the storyline compelling? If you want to know what happens next, keep reading. For further help, try the following suggestions:

A BOOK BY AN AUTHOR YOU TRUST

You may like to choose a book you have not yet read by an author whose work you know you like. Aim for a book that is either the next in a series you are reading by this author, or in the same genre as the books you have previously read by this author.

RE-READING

Revisiting a book you have previously enjoyed is an interesting way to explore a book now that you already know the story.

GRAPHIC NOVEL

An excellent choice for those who prefer pictures over words or who find too many words off-putting.

NOVEL-IN-VERSE

If it is poetry that speaks to you best, then why not try a novel-in-verse? As a story told in a series of poems, they are usually shorter than your average novel and great for your day trip.

Note: *Not everyone enjoys reading. That's okay. I do believe that there is a book (books!) out there for everyone, though it can be hard to find. To practice reading as a regular habit, try different kinds of books to discover your preferences. Read for a minimum of twenty uninterrupted minutes daily, at whatever time you best feel able to focus on nothing but the words on the page.*

YOUR ONE-DAY TO INNER PEACE CHECKLIST:

- ✓ One printed book
- ✓ One day of quiet and solitude
- ✓ Advance preparations for meals
- ✓ Plenty of water
- ✓ Phones, devices, and internet/wi-fi off
- ✓ Soothing ambience (e.g. open windows, beeswax candles, oil burners.)
- ✓ Pencil and paper and/or printed dictionary