

Think, Dream and Do

By Michelle LaBrosse, PMP®, Chief Cheetah, Cheetah Learning

Ahhhh summer time. It's that season that conjures up our youth and returns us to a simpler, more idyllic time before our responsible "adult life" took hold. I remember the magic of being on the ocean with my family and being outside in my neighborhood as the dew fell on freshly cut grass. Now, when I think of that time, I realize the key is to bring that kind of magic along with us every day and cultivate it in any season and at all ages.

So, as you plan for your summer vacation this year, pack more than your favorite book. Save a little space for thinking, dreaming and doing the things you love.

Here are my eight tips for making your own magic in any season.

Making Your Own Magic

- 1. Find your focus.** One of the things I love about vacation is that I often find that's when I get an "ah-ha" moment or find the answer to something I've been thinking about. It's hard to find your focus when you're answering 200 e-mails in a day, and you're surrounded by information overload. However, when you're kayaking on a quiet pond, it's much easier to answer the tough, big questions in life. There's a reason Thoreau went to Walden Pond. Even then, there was "too much noise" in his regular life to answer the existential questions that he wanted to ponder. It doesn't matter what your questions are, the only thing that matters is you give yourself the space and time to answer them.
- 2. Do what you love.** This phrase often scares people. They think they have to directly translate a passion like movies into a Hollywood career. Instead, you need to make time for whatever you love. Whether it is fly-fishing, yodeling or hiking, what really makes your heart sing? It doesn't have to be your day job, but it should be a regular part of your life. Don't relegate joy to a few times a year.
- 3. Build on your strengths.** When it comes to your livelihood, how would it feel if you could spend more of your day doing what you're really good at? Many of us spend our days focusing on our weaknesses, instead of building on our strengths. Think about how you spend your working day. How could you make it more aligned with where you really rock? It's a great feeling to build a muscle. Build yours.
- 4. Giggle again.** Listen to a group of three- and four-year-olds playing. They always giggle at their own jokes. It doesn't matter if it's funny to anyone else or not. They are still in that place where they know how great it feels to giggle. We need to get back to that place. If there's a giggler on your team, encourage that spirit. Laughter is not only contagious; it's

hopeful and uplifting. Get your giggle in gear and watch situations change around you when you can laugh at the things that are not important.

5. **Put everything in perspective.** When you look at what causes most people stress, it's often the things they can't change. So, when you feel your blood pressure rising, ask yourself what you can change to make the situation more positive. Don't waste your energy on things you can't control.
6. **Have a mood changer ready to go.** What are the things that can change your mood? For some people, it's a quick walk or a run to burn off some steam. For others, it's a favorite CD or a song. I have a friend who keeps an iTunes mix on her computer that is called "The Happy Mix." Whenever she needs a mood change, she fires up her Happy Mix, steps away from the computer, stretches, dances a little, sings off-key and finds that after seven minutes of the Happy Mix, she has a huge grin on her face.
7. **Have a few cool "To Dos."** Nothing is more of a bummer than a long list of To Dos that are all drudgery. What about your cool To Dos? Some of those things that you've been wanting to do, but never have. Ride in a hot-air balloon? Visit the Grand Canyon? Dreams are always To Dos; don't forget to put them on your list, too.
8. **Live an attitude of gratitude.** When you look at people who are the happiest, it's not those who seemingly have "everything." Instead, it's those people who recognize what they do have and are grateful for it. Gratitude is powerful at home and at work because we all like to be thanked, and we also like to feel like we are contributing to the world around us. When you appreciate others and live in an "attitude of gratitude," you create energy on your team and in your family that makes other people feel good about life.

So, no matter where you are in the world or what season you're in today, build a little magic into every day.

Carpe Diem!

About the Know How Network and Cheetah Learning

The Know How Network is a monthly column written by Michelle LaBrosse, the founder and Chief Cheetah of Cheetah Learning. Distributed to hundreds of newsletters and media outlets around the world, the Know How Network brings the promise, purpose and passion of Project Management to people everywhere. Visit www.cheetahlearning.com to learn more about Cheetah PM, the fastest way to learn about Project Management and get your PMP. You can also get your career in gear with CheetahWare, free Project Management tools from Cheetah Learning.

About the Author



Michelle LaBrosse, PMP, is the founder of Cheetah Learning, and author of *Cheetah Negotiations* and *Cheetah Project Management*. The Project Management Institute, www.pmi.org, recently selected Michelle as one of the 25 Most Influential Women in Project Management in the World, and only one of two women selected from the training and education industry. She is a graduate of the Harvard Business School's Owner President Managers (OPM) program and also holds engineering degrees from Syracuse University and the University of Dayton. Cheetah Learning is a virtual company and has 100 employees, contractors, and licensees worldwide.

Her articles have appeared in over 100 publications from around the world. Her monthly column, the Know How Network is carried by 400 publications, and her monthly newsletter subscription list includes more than 50,000 people. To date, more than 30,000 people have become "Cheetahs" using Cheetah Learning's innovative Project Management and accelerated learning techniques.

Michelle has been running her company virtually for the past 20 years. She has grown the company 100 fold in the past 20 years, and she credits her success to using the Cheetah Project Management method to better manage both people and technology. Michelle's mission is to help people achieve great results, FAST, by making it fast, easy and fun to learn and do Project Management.

She lives in Nevada with her family and likes to rejuvenate in Alaska where you'll often find her kayaking, golfing or hiking.