



## Quick Links

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## Quarterly Quote:

*"There shall be eternal summer in the grateful heart."*

*-Celia Thaxter*

## Great Link!

*Noticing the extraordinary*

This is a fun, uplifting clip to get you geared up for some time away. Dare you to sing along and laugh! (1:31 minutes)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=120qaVqqeN4>

Greetings!

With long, beautiful days, summer barbeques and vacation plans on the calendar, I've been thinking a lot about how to recapture some of the essence of summer from my childhood - short trips for berry picking, a backyard game of catch with my girls or even taking a nap in the sun outside (OK- my goal is to do at least one nap outside in the shade this summer!)

What's on your "fun things to do list" this summer? Can you give that the same attention as the work and house projects list? What will bring some delight to you this summer? Hope to see you at the ice cream stand!

Warmly,  
Kerry



## Increasing Productivity: Work vs. Vacation *A Distinction*

Studies show vacations are good for you. "Taking a vacation is not a luxury — it's a necessity," says Dr. Kathleen Hall, founder of The Stress Institute in Atlanta. One study showed that men who didn't take annual vacations had a 21% higher risk of death from all causes, and were 32% more likely to die of a heart attack. Some companies are beginning to realize the benefits of vacations for their burned out employees — fewer sick days, smaller health care bills and a more energized workforce.

Yet American business culture has not worked in that paradigm. In an annual survey of by Expedia, Americans reported the fewest number of vacation days per year, earning only 14 days versus 24 days in Great Britain, 26 days in Germany, 30 days in Spain and 36 days in France. Yet our productivity is not correspondingly higher. Further, a recent study by Hudson North America found that 56% of the American workers do not take advantage of all their vacation time. And when they get away, 35% of managers check in with the office frequently, often daily.

If the research shows that substantial vacation time (a week or two minimum, not just a three- day weekend) increases both happiness and productivity, why aren't we doing it? What gets in the way of really unplugging in order to relax, enjoy and re-energize? And when we're away physically, how can we minimize or eliminate the mental engagement with work by checking our email, text messages and cell phones?

Wallace Huffman, an economics professor at Iowa State University has found that productivity increases by up to 60 percent for employees in the month or two following a good vacation. Something to consider if you tell yourself there's just too much to do and you can't get away. In other words, fully embrace your vacation, guilt-free!

## Reflection Exercise

### *Moving from Theory to Action*

To support you in preparing for a meaningful and relaxing vacation, take just a few minutes to reflect upon and answer the following questions:

- What activities will help me to relax, enjoy and re-energize this vacation (lounging by a pool with a book, take up a new hobby, have special time with loved ones)?
- What typically gets in the way of me fully enjoying my vacation time? What could I do differently in order to minimize these roadblocks?
- What do I need to do at work to fully prepare myself to unhook? (For tips, check out this Business Week article "How To Take A Vacation": [www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/05\\_40/b3953611.htm](http://www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/05_40/b3953611.htm))
- With what level of communication, under what circumstances, and in what ways (email, cell) will I be available to the office while on vacation? Can I go completely off-line?
- What structures/approach would I like to take in order to re-enter work after vacation with less stress?

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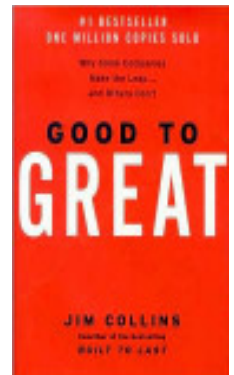
## Book Review

### Good To Great

by Jim Collins

I was reminded what an important classic this 2001 bestseller has become when working with a client recently who chose to use this book as a focus for a management retreat. This book describes how average companies can become great and why some fail to make the transition. "Greatness" in this context is financial performance several multiples better than the market average over a sustained period of time. Through a five-year, in-depth study, "great" companies are compared to similar companies that didn't have such strong results.

From the research, Collins distinguishes seven main determinants of greatness, and illustrates it with compelling stories from the field. The concepts presented are applicable to both smaller organizations as well as large companies.



Kerry Secrest is a leadership coach for individuals and organizations who inspires the best in individual and organizational performance. For more about Kerry, see: [www.watershedcoachingllc.com/about.html](http://www.watershedcoachingllc.com/about.html).

Please feel free to contact me with comments, questions or to find out how I can help you or your organization!

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## Reviews

"My leadership coaching work with Kerry is proving extremely beneficial to my business, and it was also very enjoyable!"

– Small Business Owner,  
Information Technology

## Your Thoughts?

*Engaging in dialogue*

I'd love to hear your reactions and thoughts to this newsletter. To drop a note, email:

[kerry@watershedcoachingllc.com](mailto:kerry@watershedcoachingllc.com)

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