

A scenic view of a forested valley with a river and a bridge, overlaid with a semi-transparent text box. The background shows a lush green forest with a river flowing through it, and a bridge spanning across the river in the distance. The text is centered within the semi-transparent box.

Trailblazer  
Interview:  
*Mara Glatzel,  
The Illusion of  
Rest & Finding  
Restoration*

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## Transcript

Grace: Can you talk to us about rest and what is rest? The context I asked around that is a lot of people watching and listening may have chronic illness and I know I also have to have fatigue and I know have your own experiences.

Sometimes rest can be such a continuous issue. It's such a charged word like you are forced to rest because you can't do things. Since it's just so much that we know we need to so much just around. I'd love to get your take on it.

Mara: Yes. I think that the biggest thing that I think about when I think about rest is that it is a universal need that all humans have and that is not something that makes us weak or makes us less deserving or not productive.

All of those things that we tend to tell ourselves about rest because for myself and for the women that I worked with it seems like we think that our need for a rest is something that we're supposed to be getting over or getting away from or harnessing our ability to do without rest.

Like it's some sort of badge of honor and really reframing that so that we think about it in a way that it's less of— its hindrance, to our ambition or to our dreams or to our lives as we may want them. Rather the thing that allows to show up in the world the way that we want to.

If we think about it more like a cycle that rest really allows us to show up and to create and to produce and be ourselves and shine the way that we are have relationships the way that we want to.

Then those things drain us and then we need rest again. It is a natural cycle of things and not something that we need to be embarrassed about, not something that we need to apologize for. But rather that we all need it and that's coming from me from a place of having been to some spot of significant burn out in my life.

You know, realizing that if I was going to continue to show up in a world the way that I want to that I was going to have to find a way to live more sustainably.

Maybe I am not getting everything, everything done today but I also then don't have to take all of this time off on the other side to recover when I get to that place of really deep burn out. Instead to create

something— I think balance is such a loaded term but something that's a little bit more cohesive.

Grace: Yes. I'm getting shivers just listening...It's yes, I'm so so there with you. I'm creating something that's more sustainable rather than the boom and bust pattern patterns or doing all the things.

Everything we talked about quite a lot with my coaching class. Somebody has a good day when they are living with chronic illness or pain and they have like a good day as in a day in which— I like saying good because if we divide days with lots of painful symptoms and days without lots of painful symptoms with the good and bad then that's quite difficult because then you might have mostly bad days and that's really, really hard.

When people have a day where their symptoms are lesser, it can just got to extend them on the edge of freedom. It's like, "Yes, I want to do all the things and that becomes— if I can just make that forever." That is the way to go.

That is what people are thinking and I feel like there's something around this idea that success comes from hustle and that hustle is polarized against rest and you're either like you rest and you're inefficient or you will hustle and then you're in a hustle and then you just you do this stuff and it hurts. But it doesn't truly damage your body or life at any level. You are kind of like a superhero - you just recharge, just naturally. If you do it right, it just comes.

I've never known anybody who's actually like that. I've never known that to exist in a human.

It's just hard to say because I think I spent a lot of time trying to be that person. I wrote an article recently which is something like I'm sorry to break into you but you're not a robot and nor am I.

Mara: Exactly. It can be really difficult. It's something that I have experienced at my whole life. At the moment, I'm eight and a half months pregnant I'm experiencing it in a whole new way. Some days I have a lot of energy but if I do too much without energy then it will be a week and a half before it comes back or longer.

Finding those ways to really be kind to yourself. Sometimes it's hard because I'm really ambitious person and I want to do all of the things,

always. I always wanted to do all of the things but giving myself that permission in something that I love to do is to write all of the things down.

It feels like my ideas have a— there's a catch all for them. That is a little bit more safe to ease because part of it is like that forensic energy if I might forget or somebody else is going to have that idea or what if I don't get it all done.

Having a place like a receptacle to put all of those good ideas so that you can get to them in your own right timing. Helps with that that forensic energy around production.

Grace: Totally. I think for me looking at other ways that people engage about rest, like it's somebody how interpret rest, they are listening to you discussing it here or us discussing it here. I think that coming so important because you're feeding yourself, nourishing alternative narratives about rest, which aren't the status quo of hustle, hustle, hustle and you can rest when you retire.

I know you've written a little bit about the illusion of rest but what you so eloquently called junk food rest. Do you want to talk a little bit about that?

Mara: Yes. I think that there's a lot of times where we are giving ourselves what we may think of as an acceptable form of rest, which is different than the rest of we actually crave.

It's a lot of scrolling for me, scrolling thru Facebook, scrolling thru Instagram, scrolling, scrolling, and scrolling. It's like I know myself well enough to know that if I'm scrolling what I actually need is a nap. What I actually need is to check on my computer and go outside.

There's something about sitting at my computer that feels a little bit productive. Feels a little bit like something that's more acceptable to me. There's something about just laying down or going outside it feels really blasphemous. I couldn't just do that. That's too restful.

These ways that we tried to nourish ourselves with these junk food rest, we're never full. Then we have this full sense of an idea of ourselves that well it doesn't matter if I rest anyway because it never fulfills me. I never feel satiated.

Yes, Netflix binge or scrolling through your Facebook or sitting on your couch with your computer open may not fulfill you but that doesn't mean that you cannot be fulfilled.

Kind of paying attention to that because I think for everybody we have this part way to rest. Things that we do which is almost like as much we can allow ourselves but it doesn't actually feel good. It doesn't actually feel like it feels us backed up.

For me, that's the definition that I use for rest. It's something that fills me up when I'm doing it energetically. It could be a lot of different kinds of things. Noticing those things that are suddenly draining that seem like they should be nourishing or that we tell ourselves that they are nourishing.

So those are those kinds of, it's like the difference between eating some junk food versus eating like a really good meal and then you're full. You're really full. Just being in that conversation with you, which is not about judgment but it's just about noticing like, "Wow, I tried to do that for myself and it didn't feel good. It didn't feel like anything, really. What else could I do instead?"

Grace: I loved so much, I want to listen to what you've just said, listen to it back right now to kind of dig in to it more because there's so much there. I think there's so much about I love what you said at the beginning about noticing that when you're scrolling that means for you that's like a behavior that you can notice and you can act when I'm doing this. I probably actually need to go and do something else.

It's like we find ourselves doing certain illusions of rest. We know that this is actually a sign I need to go and do something else and I love working with because I've worked with, interviewed people eating disorders and all that.

We try not to do good and bad or allowed and not allowed, it feels very polarised, it's not a helpful dialogue. Instead, I work with optimum and non-optimum. Optimum makes us feel at our optimum. In our optimum, doesn't make us feel as good but we can still do it because we are adults and we get that choice. We can choose to do what we want to do.

That is okay. Maybe you'll choose to do it. Maybe you'll enjoy it and maybe you won't enjoy it and that's okay too. But you can notice some

things well within this time that I have available, do I want to do something which feels non-optimum but I can rationalize or do I actually want to do something that makes me feel at my optimum and then notice and kind of step up sometimes. But I think you can just notice and it's so important.

Mara: Absolutely. I agree. We are adults and that's the best thing that we have that choice. I can totally choose to sit here and watch TV and I can totally choose to scroll through Facebook. Even just noticing and having you because sometimes it's different from day to day.

An activity will be rest for one day and not the next. Being really present I think is always so important. It's like the presence and then plus the permission because I used to think my work was so important that I didn't have time to go outside for even 20 minutes.

I started to just get myself to go outside, go for a walk on the block, and shut everything down. It was like lo and behold the world didn't end when I walked out my front door.

Sometimes it's like we need to encourage ourselves a little bit to take those extra steps to do the things that feel uncomfortable. It's like, can I really allow myself to shut everything down and take a nap like an actual real life nap.

Then when you do it you get to realize you have that visceral like bodied experience like, "Okay, well, I went outside" or "I took a nap," or "I took the afternoon off" or "I shut off my phone and my business didn't break, my relationship isn't over, my life is still relatively intact."

All of those things that really help us because when you feel it in your body then you know that it's true, then you know that it's possible.

Grace: Totally. I think I'd like to add a little 'p' to that list, potentially, which isn't actually potentially because it's pre-symptoms because I'm wondering about— I don't know if you do this but I and my own thing is that I will be working or doing something. I get to the point where I need to rest.

Actually, I have a time where my computer tells me that I need to rest and tells me to close the computer and do eye exercises and get up to move around and stop just being at the computer.

It's really easy to do. It's got to the point where I need to rest that I'm already so fatigued. That actually getting off the sofa or the chair or I often work on exercise ball from sitting down, which is why I kind of shake around a little bit. It's good for my back, my pelvis, it's really good.

I'm kind of stuck because I'm already so tired that actually getting up and engaging in optimum rest, it feels too hard. It's like perhaps I just look on the internet for a while because apparently that's so appealing for me, which it isn't. Of course, it isn't. It's more screen time. It's not doing that for me. It can be feeling consciously but and I wonder if noticing the things that happen, which mean I'm soon going to need a rest.

Then, setting up the rest like I'm in my studio at the moment which is where I see clients. Actually, you can see the camera but I have a day bed. So that's set up. I didn't even have to have one.

It used to be that if I wanted to rest I have to go and move everything and set everything up to built and lie down, which is just a huge amount of work to do when you're already tired.

I kind of noticing what I need to be able to get the rest and set things up because personally it made a huge difference to me in terms of resting.

Mara: Absolutely. I love that. I think that anyway that we can support ourselves to get that rest or to just be comfortable on our environment is so important because you are so right. It's like I always think about it like a little kid, like a three year old. When they get past the point of their nap time, like they're just melting down completely.

I see it in myself. It's like if I have to push it and I push it and I push it then I'm just resisting and melting down and just it's like now I don't want to rest. Now, I'm completely irrational.

Grace: I'm not tired. I'm not going to bed. I'm staying up. No bed.

Mara: I'm scrolling, I'm scrolling.

Grace: I can do this.

Mara: That's why I love having those ways like sort of a setting up a timer on your computer, that's awesome idea. I should use that myself.

Grace: It's actually I put it on it the interior it's called eyeCare, it's a free Chrome extension. You can set it in every 20 minutes. It blanks out your screen and it has a little message for you. Mine says something like, "Hello, beautiful. Take care of you. Like future you, thanks you." and it's a lot of fun and it has a little thing that comes up and tells you what eye exercises to do and it tells you to get us move around. It's like five steps and you have to go through each step at every 20 minutes.

When you're working, I'm just like, "Darn it, message, I don't want to rest my eyes right now." But every time I do it, it makes a huge— what it says actually is very true because your eyes are already sore because they're tired from staring at the screen for this long but you haven't realized yet. You've got some wisdom chrome extension, that's true.

Mara: It is true. When I was in graduate school I go this thing that happened with my eyes where they got really red and they got really inflamed. All of a sudden woke up and I had a really reduced vision in one of my eyes. I couldn't wear my contact lenses for a very long time. It was so painful and was so disorienting. The whole thing was just from looking at my computer screen because I was in school and I was also running my business. I was on my computer all the time.

It's true. Your eyes are sore and you don't think about things like that or your muscles just from sitting. I have an exercise ball too that really helps me. But you know, your muscles just from sitting or whatever it might be, your physical body needs that rest so that you can keep doing it because we're not these renewable energy creators.

We have to attend to ourselves so that we can have that energy and be able to keep doing the things that we wanted to do. It is really important even when you're saying like, "I do not want to do my eye exercises right now. I don't want to get up and go outside," or whatever it might be.

For me, it helps so much to reframe it from like there's something wrong with me that I can't keep working the way other people can or that I'm not as productive as somebody else might be to because I'm invested and living my life this way to joining up and being whole and doing this work. I have to take care of myself so that I can keep doing that.

Grace: I think that's a top tip for anybody who's watching or listening who is an entrepreneur or running their own business or working especially while living with an illness or disability or wanting to heal. It's such a narrative



for all of us, ill, non-ill, disabled or non-disabled around— I don't know. To me, a lot of it's seems quite capitalist. It's like, "Let's go and let's—"

I always remember my chinese medical qi gong teacher, Sue Weston, talked about the heart. She said that we always think about the heart, as it never stops. It never sleeps and it keeps going. It's the hardest working organ. I'm sure it is.

It rests because it beats and it stops, it beats and it rests. She said that when we were learning more about the workings of the heart it so become more well known in society especially at that time. It was at the same as Industrial Revolution. We kind of conflicted those two together and thought like heart, industry, factories, workers and it all kind of got mixed up. Whereas actually I look at factories and workers and everything keeping going, keep on going. Now I look at how my dog is and the therapeutic courses, and the garden and outside.

I think, well, that doesn't work without stopping. When we try and make the earth work without stopping we end up with some real problems like the intensive farming and everything.

Do I think I'm so separate from the Earth I can make myself work the entire time and never ever rest and that will have no impact on the body of me whatsoever just as it has an impact on the body of the earth.

Mara: Absolutely. For me too like thinking about like the heart pumping and to rest.

Just think about it and in that way, it just normalizes it so much. Because we do live in this capitalist society where the internet doesn't sleep. People are working themselves so hard and wearing that is a badge of honor.

To be putting yourself outside of that system can feel so uncomfortable. Anyway, that you can normalize that whether that that's having likeminded friends or reading things that make you feel inspired or even thinking of the idea that cyclical idea that we can't just keep going all the time.

It's like bears hibernate. The ocean ebbs and flows. The tides comes in and out. It's like we have all of these example in the natural world around us. The fact that you can't just keep going all the time and you know that it's not because there's something wrong with you particularly

or me particularly or any of us but that was just part of that natural system around us and That system include rest.

Grace: Totally, totally. Grateful for this conversation. It's so healing for me to hear this, too. I wanted to ask if you could ask people watching or listening, because we talked about different things for options if they could do one thing to begin what might that be.

Mara: I think my favorite thing, my favorite practice of all practices is to even in the morning I don't usually do a lot of lying in bed because it's really quick. I just ask myself what do I need today and it's just an initiation to tune in to my body in this exact moment.

It might be that I'm feeling a little dehydrated or a little anxious or a little tired. Asking ourselves that question everyday and being present to what our physical capacity is for the day leads us to have that greater relationship with ourselves, have that greater conversation.

I think there's self-care. It's like a huge conversation that so many things you can do. But just having a three minute chat with yourself in the morning, "What do I need today?" Then trying to prioritize that like do I need a little extra water? Sure. Do I need to be a little bit more compassionate with myself today? Okay and to tune in to the actual what is actually going around in your body in this exact moment because we have a tendency to think about ourselves.

It's like well I always need these things or I always need whatever. It's not true because our needs change from day to day so even just asking that question and allowing yourself to feel into your own skin. It's like maybe I'm a little dehydrated. I need a little bit more water today.

Maybe I'm a little bit tired. I need to move at a slower pace. I'm feeling a little tender. I need some extra affirmation or compassion at work. We can give ourselves those things. It doesn't take a long time. It's not a huge process. Just starting by asking yourself that one question in the morning so you can be present to your own skin, that you can be present to what your needs are for this day. You can be that much closer to meeting them and also remembering that it's a practice. It does need to be perfect.

It's simply an attempt to take care of yourself and to be present to knowing that from day to the next our needs vary and that we're allowed to have those needs met no matter what they are.

Grace: So beautiful. Thank you. I will certainly be doing that. Thank you so much for joining us today. Just remind everybody where they can find you online and where they can engage with your amazing work.

Mara: You can find me at [maraglatzel.com](http://maraglatzel.com). As far I'm hanging out all the time, but the best place to really be in any kind of conversation with me is I have a weekly newsletter. It goes out Wednesday mornings and it's my favorite place to hang out.

I would love it if you want to come and hang out with me there. I talk about all of these kinds of things every week so I would love to hang out with you over there. You can find it in my website over in the top bar under the Newsletter.

Grace: Fantastic. I'm sure everybody would be joining you there. I know I'm very happy to be there.

Thank you. We will look forward to speaking to you soon. Thank you for joining us.

Mara: Fantastic. Thank you so much, Grace.

Grace: My pleasure. Bye. Thank you. I'm pretty fortunate for listening. Keep going back to [gracequantock.com](http://gracequantock.com) for more Trailblazer interviews. Thank you, I think you're awesome. Bye.