

# Your Summer Permission Slip

Six permissions for the summer you actually want



Hi-

This is not a summer plan. It's not a list of habits to install by Labor Day, or a guide to having a more intentional summer, or six things you should be doing more of.

It's the opposite of that.

Most of us are heading into summer with a certain sense of pressure we didn't ask for. There's an itinerary somewhere. There's the trip we said yes to. There's the version of summer everyone in Instagram seems to be having. And underneath all of it, there's a small, tired voice that just wants to be in this summer instead of optimizing it.

So, I made you Six Permission Slips. One for each of the things we most often need permission for in summer, but rarely give ourselves. Read them in any order. Print one and tape it to your fridge if you want. Or just read them once, on a porch somewhere, and let the permission settle in.

There's nothing to be done here. That's the whole point.

Warmly,  
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Create a life you love.

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No. 1

## Permission to skip the plan

Somewhere in May, you started feeling it, the pressure to make this a good summer. Plan something. Book something. Have something tell people about in August, when they ask how the summer is going..

Here's the thing nobody says out loud: some of the best summers of your life have been the ones with the least plan. The summer you stayed home and rediscovered your own neighborhood. The summer the trip fell through and you sat on the back step in the evenings, instead. The summer where the calendar was almost empty and you didn't realize until October how much you'd liked it.

A summer without a plan is not a wasted summer. It's just a summer that belongs to you.

You don't owe anyone a highlight reel.



## No. 2

### Permission to say no to one summer thing

There is one thing on your summer list right now that you don't want to do.

You know which one. The trip you agreed to before you remembered how much you actually have to do beforehand. The gathering at the friend-of-a-friend's lake house. The event that sounded fine in April, and now feels like a weight. The thing you said yes to out of love, or guilt, or the brief delusion that future-you would somehow have the energy that present-you, doesn't.

You can say no to one of them. Not all. Just one.

The world will not collapse. The friendship will not end. The summer you actually have, will fit a little better.

Pick the one. Say no kindly. Take back the weekend.

### No. 3

#### Permission to read anything, or nothing

Somewhere along the way, reading became another thing to optimize. Books-per-year goals. A stack you're supposed to be working through. A literary podcast you feel behind on.

Summer is the season to forget all of that.

Take one book outside. The novel you've started three times. The book of essays you keep meaning to finish. The thing that's been on your nightstand since March, looking at you. Read three pages. Or read forty. Read the same chapter twice because the porch is nice and the light is good. Stop reading it for a week and come back. Or don't.

The point isn't to finish. The point is to be a woman reading a book outside on a summer afternoon, which is one of the oldest pleasures there is. Or don't. Stare at the clouds instead.

No one is grading you.

## No. 4

### Permission to be bored in the afternoon

There's a particular kind of summer afternoon, usually around 2:30, sometimes 3:00, when nothing is happening. The light is too strong to be productive. It's too early for dinner. The day has gone all soft on you.

Most of us reach for our phones. Or we manufacture a task. An errand, a load of laundry, an email that could have waited. We treat the afternoon like a problem to solve.

It isn't. It's a gift from the season.

Sit somewhere shaded. Stare at the trees. Drink something cold. Let the afternoon be exactly as boring as it is. The boredom is what childhood summers were made of, and it's still in there somewhere. That particular quality of time when nothing is happening and nothing needs to.

You don't have to fill it.



## No. 5

### Permission to skip one tradition

Every family has them. The annual cookout. The Fourth of July at someone's lake. The trip you've been making for fifteen summers because you started making it once and now it's the thing you do. The picnic. The fireworks. The drive.

Some of these traditions still work for you. Some of them stopped working for you years ago and you've never said so.

You don't have to burn down a tradition. You don't have to announce anything. You just have to give yourself permission, this one summer, to skip one of them. To spend that day on your own porch, or in your own kitchen, or doing something that nobody's expecting.

Traditions stay alive when the people participating in them still want to be there. Sometimes skipping a year is what saves it.

## No. 6

### Permission to not optimize this one

There will be other seasons to set goals. To make plans. To reorganize the routines. Spring is for that. Fall is for that. January, certainly.

This one isn't.

Summer is the season you're meant to be in. your life, not reorganizing it. The season of long evenings on the back step. Of meals eaten outside without ceremony. Of the friend you finally see in person. Of the swim, the porch, the warm dusk, the slow walk home.

There is nothing to improve here. Nothing to optimize. No system to install before September.

Just the actual summer, happening around you, right now. Be in it. The rest can wait.

## That's all

Really, that's all.

Tape one of these to your fridge. Forward one to a friend who needs it. Or just close this and go sit outside for a while, knowing you have permission.

On Thursdays, I write a short, friendly note called Thursday Things. A spark of inspiration, something to think about, something small to try. And often something that makes you breathe a little deeper. It's not preachy. And it's the closest thing to a porch conversation I know how to send through an email.

Until then, find some afternoon light. Be in the summer that's already found you.

Warmly, Susan

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