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# Repack: How Changing Habits Leads You to a Better Life

As you work toward achieving your goals, you have to give something to get something, but that doesn't mean you have to take a loss.



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by RICH FELLER

It's a hard truth, but you won't get anywhere until you accept it: Achieving a goal requires you to give something up. Think of it this way: accepting a tradeoff is part of achieving what's most important to you. As an adult, you get to decide what to "repack." Repacking identifies what's worth stepping away from, and what makes stepping away worthwhile. Cleaning things out, breaking bad habits, and forming new perspectives is how you repack for what you want.

So ask yourself these questions: What are you carrying around that limits you? What weighs you down? What can you toss to make the load manageable? These questions are excruciating only if you mislead yourself into believing you can have it all. Instead, remember that carrying all your experiences, relationships, roles and emotions leaves you precious little room to grow. The more you keep, the more difficult it becomes to work toward your goals.

**What are you carrying around that limits you? What weighs you down? What can you toss to make the load manageable?**



Repacking signifies more than deciding what you should give up. You also have to consider the why. Why are you carrying certain things with you, and why for so very long? Because something is a "tradition," "expected," or "you've always done it that way" is the very reason you should re-evaluate, and repack what's weighing you down.

### What Maria Traded for Better Health

When Maria was diagnosed with diabetes, she wept. "All I could see in front of me was restriction." Fortunately, her doctor understood Maria's fears. "She helped me see what I really wanted: a long, [healthy life](#). My doctor reminded me of the big picture, so I could find the energy to make some important changes in my diet and lifestyle."

Keeping her eye on her grandchildren's milestones—birthdays, school events, holidays—made Maria's priority crystal clear. She wanted to invest in longevity and vitality. She monitored her food intake and dedicated herself to a fitness routine. By doing so, she lost 20 pounds and was able to control her diabetes without medication. "I still eat cake," says Maria, "but only on special occasions. I can say no at other times because I want to say yes to everything else in my life."

Trade-offs can be daunting. The mere idea of giving something up can send you into a downward spiral, but remember—compromises don't always indicate that you've taken a wrong turn. In actuality, tradeoffs are a way of taking control and repacking is a role that becomes easier with practice.

The person you live with leaves dirty laundry on the floor (literally and figuratively). The smoke detector batteries beep incessantly until you get a ladder that reaches the cathedral ceiling. It rains for half of your beach vacation. Your start-up loses a major contract. You pull a hamstring training for a 5K. Life isn't always rosy and blissful. As you encounter bumps on the road to [your goals](#), you have an opportunity to lighten the load by practicing repacking. Keep these four tactics in mind:

1. Keep your eye on the goal, and break it down into small doable pieces.
2. Anticipate and plan for obstacles by changing your mindset about your ability to control other people or events.
3. Build in structure and accountability for practicing micro-repacks rather than major rebuilds.
4. Commit to sacrifice knowing that repacking requires saying no to autopilot or unconscious habits.



Repacking your bags and embracing unexpected transitions can require eliminating things you held dear. [Losing a job](#) or friend, ending a relationship or role, or an unexpected move can create a very heavy bag to carry. Repacking lightens that load by eliminating what's not useful for the journey. It can erase a lot of "shoulds" such as...

- I should own a vacation home (because all of my friends do).
- I should make as much money as I can (because then I'll be happy).
- I should keep things as they are (because that's what responsible people do).
- I should go to the gym five days a week (because that's how you lose weight).
- I'm the wrong age to date or change jobs (because I should act my age).

Repacking makes room to reimagine possibilities about what you WANT for your days ahead. What fulfills you rather than simply fills your time, space and view? Repacking gives you permission to step away from the past to embrace the new, and step away from the SHOULDs to embrace your WANTS. You get to consider what's best, most fulfilling and necessary for what's next. Repacking is about you, for you.

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