Down Time

February 24, 2012 By Hydeia Broadbent

Yes, it's true. I've been silent for the past few months. But it's not because I didn't have anything to say. I've missed doing my blog, but because I became ill I had to take some time off from everything. Life was moving super fast and I needed to rest my mind, body, and soul, so I simply did nothing and it was wonderful!

When a person is living with AIDS they must always make sure they take care of themselves. This may mean doing just what I did: I cut everyone and everything off and let go of any stress while I rested. I'd ask you to forgive me, but I'm entitled to my rest as are we all, so let's be kind and understand one another.

Actually, during my time off, I was able to stay somewhat connected through Facebook and Twitter. (Oh the joys of owning a cell phone!)

But while on these social sites, I noticed a lot of people were pushing condoms. I think that's great. Why? Because safe sex is always the best sex. But then I thought, what about no sex?

Call it abstinence or celibacy or, maybe, "down time," when I mentor young women I tell them that at their age sex should not be the only thing on their minds. What I say is that this is their time to discover themselves as young women. It's a time to figure out what they stand for and what they may want out of life. It's a time for them to ask themselves what their goals are.

But when I shared this on the Internet two things surprised me. The first was that young girls didn't even think of abstinence as an option. Well, okay, I can understand that because sex is everywhere. But people's second reaction really surprised me. It came from other activists and women who literally jumped down my throat for telling people it's OK not to have sex. What I heard was that everyone is doing it and I'm wrong if I'm not indulging myself.

Well, by no means am I a virgin. But at the age of 27 I have begun to practice abstinence After some bad relationships, I addressed my low self-esteem. What I'd noticed was that I'd placed too much energy on sex and it truly got in the way of my life's goals. Therefore, I made the choice to put sex off until I met someone who was truly worth giving myself to.

As I shared my personal story, I noticed a lot of young women who contracted HIV or an STD revealed that low self-esteem played a big role in why they became infected. This is why I believe that as women we must take the time to mentor other women. As a mentor, one of the things we

can do for other young women is to help save them from harmful choices.

How? Well, if you help a young woman figure out her goals you can give her something to reach for, something that will take up her time and will give her life meaning. In addition, it's important to help young girls learn self-love so that they don't have to go someplace unhealthy looking for someone to value them in this way.

Hey, I know what I'm talking about. A mentor saved my life. She helped to turn me around and encouraged me to discover who I was as a person and what I wanted out of life.

My teen years were very troubled. I was dealing with issues at home that trickled down to my relationships with guys. I was very much lost for a period of time. A woman whose name you would not even know helped save me. Believe me, you don't have to be famous or rich to make a difference in someone's life.

What I've noticed is that so many young girls and boys are truly in need of a mentor. They are lost and in today world that's probably not surprising.

What I want to say to any woman who may be feeling empty inside is this: Take the time to discover who you are as person. If you're looking for love, try being alone for six months to a year. Learn how to love yourself because if you don't know how to love yourself first, you can't expect anyone else to love you. If you can't stand to be alone with yourself, how do you expect your future mate to want to be alone with you?

Believe this. There is nothing wrong with being single. And it's also okay not to have sex with every person you date. Take the time to get to know the people you see. What you might learn is you really don't like them at all and they are not worth your "cookies." (Yes, I said cookies!)

Perhaps, you're saying to yourself, 'What no sex?' But do this for me. Think about your exes. How many of them can you stand? How many of us wish we'd never given ourselves to these former boyfriends or dates? Often, none of them are worth just one small piece of you!

They say when you know better you do better. I sincerely hope you give what I've said some thought.

Oh, yes, and always give yourself "down time."

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.