
From the Board Chair: The Power of the Pause



August reminds us that the rhythm of the world is not always set to urgency.

In much of Europe and parts of Latin America, August is a time when whole countries seem to exhale. Offices shutter. Cities slow down. Out-of-office messages appear with unapologetic clarity: “On holiday. Back in September.” There’s something profoundly human about this cultural commitment to rest. It’s not about escape—it’s about rhythm. About recognizing that we cannot operate at full intensity all year long and expect ourselves—or our teams—to thrive.

As facilitators, we are often the ones helping others move forward. We design the agenda, hold the space, track the energy, guide the group, resolve the tension, summarize the outcome. The work is active, present, and deeply others-focused. And yet, in our dedication to supporting momentum, we rarely talk about the value of stillness.

This month, I want to invite you to reflect on **the power of the pause**.

Not just the pause in the room (though we know how transformational that can be). But the pause *outside* the room. The one we create for ourselves. The one we give to others. The pause that isn't waiting for the next thing—but making space for no thing. For rest. For clarity. For integration.

Rest is not absence—it is presence of a different kind.

We live in a culture, particularly in North America, that treats rest as a reward for productivity—or worse, as a sign of laziness. But in the work of facilitation, we know that insight often arises not in the doing, but in the space between the doing. The magic happens when the room is quiet. When a silence stretches just long enough that someone speaks what really needs to be said. When a breath is taken instead of a reaction. When we slow down just enough for something real to emerge.

That same wisdom applies to our lives as professionals.

When we don't rest, we lose the edge that makes us effective. We become mechanical. We default to patterns. We reach for templates instead of intuition. Our presence dims, even if our calendars are full. And perhaps most dangerous of all—we stop seeing the system clearly. We become part of the noise instead of the container that holds it.

August is a beautiful invitation to reset.

Even if you're not in a country that formally takes a break, there's something about this time of year—between the frantic push of Q2 and the gearing up of September—that naturally asks us to pause. The days are longer. The pace is slower. The pressure to “perform” is softened, just slightly. And within that softness, we can choose presence over productivity.

This isn't about taking a sabbatical or booking a two-week holiday (though if you can, please do!). It's about micro-moments of intentional disengagement. Taking a walk without headphones. Putting your phone in another room for an hour. Saying no to one more meeting so you can sit with your own thoughts. Letting ideas simmer instead of forcing conclusions.

Great facilitation doesn't come from constant motion. It comes from clarity, discernment, and the ability to read the energy in a room. And we can't do that if we're running on empty.

This month, I'm offering you three gentle invitations:

1. Pause to reflect.

What have you been carrying, consciously or unconsciously, that needs to be set down? What do you need to process before you take on more?

2. Pause to reset.

Is your facilitation style still serving you—or are you relying on habits that once worked but may now limit your growth? Are you taking time to replenish your own creativity, confidence, and perspective?

3. Pause to connect.

Reach out to a fellow facilitator. Not for a project, not for advice, but for connection. A real

conversation. A reminder that you are not doing this work alone.

At INIFAC, we believe facilitation is more than a toolkit—it's a way of being. And part of that way is honoring the cycles that make high-quality presence possible. We want our members to lead rooms with skill *and* sustainability. To hold space for others without losing their own grounding. To model a pace that invites wisdom, not just speed.

Rest is not indulgence. It's what makes transformation possible—because it gives us the inner spaciousness to listen, adapt, and respond.

So wherever you are this August—on a beach, in an office, in transition, in between—I hope you'll find time to pause. Even for a moment. Even for a breath.

The work will be waiting. But you will meet it differently.

With respect, renewal, and gratitude,

Diana Mastel Gurwicz

Chair of the Board

INIFAC – Institute for International Facilitation



Sustainable presence isn't about being perfectly calm all the time; it's about building the muscles of awareness and intentionality

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