

The Present Moment

Where do you find yourself engaged in the moment, then 'checking out' temporarily? Do you ever catch yourself in a conversation with someone and then all of a sudden you've 'left' the conversation for a few moments only to 'come back' and not know what the other person has just said? What is it that has you 'leave'? Where do you go? What are the other situations you find yourself in that you struggle to stay present to? Is it boredom? Is it fear? Why is it that we have such a hard time staying present all the time? Furthermore, why is it important to stay present?

Life happens in the present moment. That's all there really is. When our attention is not on the present moment, we are either caught up in judgments about the past or in fear about the future. When we focus on the past, regret grows and the "would've, could've, should've" voices come into play and we begin asking ourselves questions we cannot answer. This typically shows up through complaint and negativity.

If we aren't here now, we miss it and aren't available to consciously live, create and choose. Most important our connection to our highest self, God, Divine Guidance (or any other name you choose to call it) is lost because we are distracted with past or future worries. When you are connected to this guidance you tap into a place of power, peace, joy and creativity. This is where the magic of life happens!

We all resist being present, whether consciously or unconsciously. However, the value of learning to be present is extraordinary. We can either fight it or surrender to it. The choice is ours ALWAYS.

"... the only time you ever have in which to learn anything or see anything or feel anything, or express any feeling or emotion, or respond to an event, or grow, or heal, is this moment, because this is the only moment any of us ever gets. You're only here now; you're only alive in this moment."

~ Jon Kabat-Zinn

Developing the practice of being present

Anything we want to master takes practice. From athletes to job skills, to cooking, to being a great friend – it all takes practice. Practice is simply doing the same thing over and over again with the intention of mastering the activity. Practice allows you to deepen your experience of something. A doctor, for example, 'practices medicine' and thus gets more adept at helping patients.

I challenge you to pick one of your normal, everyday activities and practice being present for a whole week. I encourage you to notice where you check out and notice what brings you back to being present. See what begins to shift for you as a result of your new practice of presence in this area of your life.

Here are 5 tips to mastering the practice of being present:

1. Engage the senses:

Notice what you see, hear, feel, smell and taste – RIGHT NOW.

2. Feel the gratitude and appreciation:

What do you appreciate right here, right now?

3. Connect to something outside of yourself:

Feel a connection to whatever is around you – the sunset, the children playing nearby, a friend talking to you – engage in the connection.

4. Embrace reality:

Accept your reality just the way it is – right now, without resistance to it. Notice the imperfections and brilliance of reality. Just be present with reality – whatever is happening right now. All is well, isn't it?

5. Connect to the body and self:

Focus internally- connecting with your breath is a great place to start. Feel the insides of your entire body. Connecting with your body is a great way to feel more grounded and centered.

Practice enjoying the moment, starting NOW!