

THE BODY GROUP

P H Y S I O P L U S

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Be still and witness the pause

Do you ever wake up feeling frustrated, anxious and fearful? How about being engaged in a phone call without being fully present? The last time you got injured, was it something that you could possibly avoid? If all of the above answers are yes, perhaps we need to learn to appreciate a slight pause in our lives.

We live in a busy city, hectic lifestyles, life on blackberry, lunch on the go, talking on the phone 24/7, surrounded by noise. These outward experiences have an internal affects on us, on our nervous and emotional systems, making us feel impatient, always in a rush, exasperated by our boss and families. Often these internal feelings manifest themselves as fear, anxiety, worry, frustration and others. We don't know why we get these feelings and it's not a popular topic of discussion. Overtime, we continue to indulge ourselves with our packed schedules, too busy to slow down, no time to pause and we overlook how we really feel. A little pressure from our ego keeps us moving: "*I must do this*", we think, "*I must multitask to show that I am capable*", "*I must do it better and faster*" and then what? Before we know it, our lives are engulfed with negative energy created by our constant pressure of "needing to be" and "must have done".

For many years, I dreaded myself in this influx of emotions without knowing how I got them or how to get rid of them. Curiosity exposed me to the study of life through yoga, meditation, Jungian psychology and Zen Buddhism. After many trials and errors, I discovered what I needed to break this cycle of suffering is to embrace and practice stillness – the slight pause in-between the transition from one moment to another. Usually you can find it between an ending and a beginning of something and vice versa.

You are at work deep in thought and the phone rings. Naturally you pick up the phone with your hand while still looking at the monitor, you respond to form a sort of conversation but your mind is neither completely with the person nor the computer. You hang up the phone and continue on with the task at hand as if the conversation never took place. Our physical and mental transition is seamless from one task to the other. How many of you would say that you are almost always fully present with a call like that? My guess is that the majority of us are not always fully present, that includes me. Most of the time, we let our mind drifts from one moment to another without an intention (in this case, right before picking up the call versus actual answering it). Sometimes, we neglect how we feel in between the two states.

We have so many thoughts flowing in our minds that sometimes it seems almost impossible to control and slow them down. When we engage in any activities without being fully present, we can hurt ourselves without knowing it until the feelings manifest into different emotions. Think about the last time you had an injury. Were you fully aware of it happening or was your mind drifted somewhere else?

Witnessing the pause in this in-between state is a moment of self-discovery. When we move from moment to moment, we want to move with awareness and knowing the intention of our actions. Rather than ignoring these moments, we pause and observe with our hearts. We invite space for us to feel and re-center before moving on.

Through simple awareness of our intention, we begin a process of acknowledging our weaknesses and cravings. We become aware of the different states of feeling in us such as wanting, confusion, fear, selfishness and anger. When we know what states our heart is in, we have a choice about the patterns we want to follow and co-create. Pausing in life brings us clarity, keeps us grounded, and cultivates profound calmness and awareness that nourish our mind, heart and body. By practicing this in our daily ritual we begin to be very honest with ourselves, less self-deceptive and more patient. We make the choice to be fully here, moment by moment. Allow us to catch and break our habitual patterns. It is important to know and become intimate with your "in-between state". Otherwise we will keep moving forward, get caught up and not freed. Resting here completely brings clarity of the present moment.

Next time when there is a phone call, try taking a deep breathe, gather your thoughts and notice the pause before you answer it. Earlier this year, I had a chance to study with Sally Kempton, formerly known as Swami Durgananda, at a meditation workshop. She taught us to find the arch of breathe in between each inhalation and exhalation. See if you can catch the slight pause at the end of your inhale and just before you exhale and vice versa. Just notice the pause and let it go. See how that affects your body and mind.

The truth is, we are always in transition. Life continually goes up and down with or without your control, so relax, be still and observe. Your mind changes moment to moment. When we pause, it allows us clear seeing, exploring our emotional distress and attention to present moment. When you simply witness your feelings instead of reacting to them, you allow your life to unfold organically and you open a doorway to greater sympathy and understanding. Most importantly, you develop your capacity to be free in an often challenging and turbulent world. Being mindful though is not about controlling the world. It is essentially about the quality of awareness that you bring to each moment.

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