



"We must not allow the clock and the calendar to blind us to the fact that each moment of life is a miracle and mystery."

- H. G. Wells

Today, summer arrived in the Pacific Northwest. Weeks have gone by where hopes were raised as the sunshine icon shone out at us from iphones & daily papers – and then were dashed when reports were downgraded to “clouds with occasional sun.” (Meaning cold and still grey!) But today arrived as a glorious, perfect summer day; rustling breeze, 87 degrees and sparkling with promise. The perfect day to practice and write about something new I am learning - living in the NOW. This requires a new level of mindfulness for me. Seems I’m hard-wired to think about the future, imagine the future, worry about the future and oh, yes; all too often fret about the past! The “now” often escapes me.

Funny how some serious tread on the tires of my life forces reflection on the truth that the present is fragile and precious. I have been examining how my mental models often inhibit my ability to “be here NOW.” Yes, it’s true that some of it is temperament. When teaching personality type to clients, I share the example that in 9th grade I was writing away for college catalogues. Most experience that as weird – though the other planner types in the room nod and smile! As long as I can remember, I had a 10 or even 20 year plan. But, temperament aside, the deeper paradigm that blocks my ability to live in the present is the illusion of control, often liberally seasoned with anxiety. This combination inhibits the ability to savor the gift of life in the now.

My friend, Caroline Arends, a Canadian singer/song writer/author and story teller says it well in the chorus of her song “Seize the Day.”

*“Seize the day; seize whatever you can
'Cause life slips away just like hourglass sand
Seize the day, pray for grace from God's hand
then nothing will stand in your way
Seize the day”*

Some of you might be thinking – “Yeah right. Everyone knows this!” But the gap between knowledge and practice is wide. Here are a few tips that are enriching my experience of life, stimulating creativity and helping me embrace all that is beautiful in a moment, an hour, and a day.

1. Create regular rituals that bring you to the NOW.

Regular activities that bring you into the here and now are so useful.



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Prayer, meditation, music, walking; something that alerts you to an over focus on the past or the future and ushers you into the moment. Many of my friends, family and clients find yoga and cycling an excellent practice for this. Try various approaches until you land on something that fits you and your lifestyle. (Not everyone wants to or can do an 80 mile bike ride like my brother in law, Chris!)

1. Partner up with an “awareness buddy”.

It could be your friend, a spouse, a work colleague. Commit to gently reminding one another to be in the now. Meet regularly to read something inspiring. Many words of Jesus are rich reminders to me that being “present” creates a healthy, aligned life. “Do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink, or about your body and what you will wear. Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?”

Address and release mistakes.

It is simply human nature to ruminate at times on where we’ve missed the mark, done something stupid or destructive or wish we could just press “rewind” on our choices and behaviors. We’ve had some extra challenges in our family lately that sucked me into that vortex for too long. But of course, it’s wasted energy. Sometimes it requires some professional assistance – other times just some journaling or a safe friend to “spit it out,” helping us to examine the futility of this thinking and then release it forever.

2. Reflect at the end of the day on your process.

Sometimes we are too tired at the end of the day to practice this. So try the morning if that is a better time. But the cycle of reflection (see my previous article entitled “Reflect” on our website) is the best way for adults to learn. Ask yourself a few simple questions such as, “When was I totally in the moment today?” “What helped me make that decision?” “What was the benefit I experienced?” “Where did I succumb to being out of touch with the present?” “What triggered this?” “What was the impact of my choices?” “What could I try next time to create a different outcome?”

A final thought –

*“Yesterday is a cancelled check;
Tomorrow is a promissory note;
Today is the only cash you have,
so spend it wisely.”*

- Kim Lyons