

POWER OF THE PAUSE

How to find relief with moments of mindfulness



Many of us want to—and even intend to—slow down every day. And yet, life moves at an ever-changing pace, and we’re often left feeling like there’s not enough time to act on that intention.

Sometimes that even results in feeling regret, mild disappointment, or complete avoidance of whatever distressing emotions may surface when we’ve “failed” again at checking in with ourselves. Does that ring true for you?

First of all: you’re not alone in feeling that way.

And second: you may be surprised to learn that one of the most effective strategies to help you return to your intention is to simply take a pause.

I use this all the time—and you can, too. This incredibly powerful tool is frequently overlooked. It creates just enough space to disconnect from the busyness of your day and helps you reconnect with yourself to determine what you truly need, or what’s truly going to be helpful to you.

There are numerous neurological benefits of taking a pause, like increasing the brain’s capacity for learning and memory. So, trust me when I say: that pause isn’t just good for reconnecting to what matters most to you in a moment—it’s also good for your brain!

Here’s an example of the power of the pause in my own personal life. When I leave my office, grab the kids from school, and get home, I shift into autopilot. I’m focused on prepping dinner, checking homework, extracurricular schedules, returning emails, or jumping on a late-night conference call. Seems effortless, multitasking, getting things done at lightning speed, responding to questions, nodding in agreement when my kids are talking. However, I’m not fully attending to anything. What that means is my level of true and complete engagement is much lower than it could be.

When I take a pause—even just for a second or two—to check in with myself, I realize that I’ve only half or a quarter listened to the conversation with my children. I don’t feel committed to, nor do I have any clue what mattered to me during those moments of running on autopilot.

The power of the pause is like getting your car re-aligned. When you can tell your vehicle starts veering a bit off course, a pause offers the chance for realignment when you want to return to being fully present and engaged.

So how can you intentionally pause when you’ve got a lot on your mind? For me, I check in with my body and notice if I’m feeling jittery, frustrated, or like something might be a bit “off.” I link my need for the pause to those feelings of discomfort or when my mind races. That experience becomes my clue to stop what I’m doing for a few moments, close my eyes, take a deep breath from down in my belly, and recognize what I need.

When I do, I discover not only what I need, but the action I may need to take to get back to me. Sometimes that looks like putting on one of my favorite songs to take a quick dance break and re-energize. Sometimes it means leaving my phone in another room so I can be present with my kids.

What could it look like for you to tap into the power of the pause and reconnect with your intention?



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