

The Power of Pause



A Zen teacher once shared the following analogy.

The mind is like a glass of sandy water, the particles of sand representing our thoughts. As it's swirling around, the water is murky and cloudy, which is much like the condition of the human mind.

One of the most common misconceptions about meditation is that there is a goal to empty the mind, and until you do, you aren't doing it "right". Many will resolve that the way to clarity would be to remove the sand, and will fight their mind in the pursuit of this.

But what happens if we simply set the glass of water down? The sand would eventually sink to the bottom of the glass and the water would become clear.

It seems so simple, but yet, many give up on meditation in the early stages, prematurely concluding that it doesn't work for them.

The notion that we must remove all thoughts from our mind to find clarity and peace is incorrect. The belief that we must have to struggle, or learn complicated techniques, or have extensive experience before we can "get there", all stop us from opening to the *possibilities* in meditation- or worse yet, keep us from even starting.



What if all we need to do is stop long enough to let the sand settle?

What if meditation is perfect, however it shows up for us day to day. What if we just committed to being in stillness each day with no expectations of the outcome? This is where the magic happens. In the power of pause.

This translates to all aspects of conscious living. From decision making to communication, to leadership, to self-care. Can you imagine what life would be like if we paused more often?

What would our life purpose, our relationship with self and others, and our perception of the world, be like?

What if we paused more often to ask ourselves “how do I want to experience life”? and before every decision, action or interaction, decide which choice aligns with that very experience?

Consider the time and energy we could conserve when we are no longer reactive to situations, at times regretting words, actions and decisions, and having to choose again to right our path.

What’s more, how can we embrace the rare opportunities when life itself seems to press the pause button and interrupt our comfortable routines? How can we uncover the gifts in such an interruption of the status quo?

Pausing brings us into the present moment. The only moment that exists, as the past and future exist only in our minds. The eternal moment of now is the only moment where we have creative power.

It is when the sand settles that we have space and clarity to see the truth and realize “aha” moments.

What Lao Tzu, the ancient Chinese philosopher, and writer refers to as “non-doing” may be seemingly unproductive to the general population. Yet somehow it is the most productive of all, as it brings us into full awareness of ourselves, leads us to create rather than react, and inspires conscious right-doing, or right action.

So if we were to embrace the power of pause....how would we love, lead, inspire, and show up for our life?