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# Making the Time to Be More Present in Your Life

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We are creatures of habit. We love routine and we go on autopilot without even being aware of it. The car knows how to get you to work, you turn the kettle on for a cuppa at 11:00am and you look for snacks at 3pm. Before you know it, it is time to pick up the kids, make dinner and another day is over.

When we work on automatic, we get tangled up in the doings of the day and disconnected from being present in the moment. We also find that the day flies past, without taking a few precious moments to disconnect from what is going on around us and reconnect to our hearts. I say to my clients, “you will not get the time to do this; you have to make the time. It does not just happen by itself.”

When we work on automatic, we become disconnected from ourselves and can be working at 30% of our potential. It is like being on daydream mode all the time and when we make choices while we are working on automatic, we are not fully aware of the consequences of these choices until too late. Does this resonate?

“Mindfulness” and “self-care” are much more commonly heard these days, but actually practicing self-care or mindfulness requires being, instead of doing.

Mindfulness means bringing our mind into the present moment. It does not mean meditation or that we stop thinking. We can be mindful while carrying out an activity. Like making that cuppa, for example! When we are present in the moment, in a state of “being here,” we are no longer unaware of our environment, we become aware of our feelings and the quality of our **presence** improves. It also means we can decide if we really want that sugar in our coffee, or an extra cookie.

Just as mindfulness gets confused with meditation, self-care can be confused with pampering. I tell my clients self-care can mean screaming at the wind and breaking things, if that is what you need to do. Self-care is not a facial or getting a massage, although that can be a wonderful thing to do for yourself. Self-care is looking after yourself so when you are feeling sad, you allow yourself to feel sad and make the space for the emotion, or when you are feeling angry, you go outside and scream at the wind until you feel better.

When you combine mindfulness, an awareness of how you are feeling, with self-care, looking after yourself and giving yourself what you need, the likelihood of you wanting to be here, in your life, feeling what you are feeling, increases. Because you allow yourself to feel what you feel, you make the space and time to feel it, you can release it and



it allows a higher level of physical, emotional and mental health.

### **So how do you make the time to be more present in your life?**

You start by giving yourself permission to be your best-self. Your best-self is you when you are at 50% capacity or more. Why do you need to give yourself permission to do this? Well, it can be scary to be more functional in your world if you have a deep-set belief if you feel great, you need to be doing more things. We all long to be super-hero's — that is why they are so popular; however, once you let yourself just be the person you are, without forcing or pushing yourself to do more, you are more

important to you and choose what and whom you engage with, then you have no chance of connecting to the best version of you.

### **Making the time to connect**

You have to make the time; it does not just happen. And many people who are busy often decide ten minutes connecting to themselves could be better spent doing something else. You need to clear it with your whole self, and by this, I mean all the aspects of you have to agree this is a worthwhile task. Ask yourself right now — is spending ten minutes a day disconnecting from everything around you and reconnecting to the essence of who you are worth the time? If you feel anxious or nervous about the

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likely to allow yourself greater presence. Another limiting belief is that you cannot feel good when others around you do not feel good — but a shining light encourages other lights to shine brighter too. Instead of dimming your light to fit in, you need to consciously give yourself permission to shine.

Let us talk a little more about being your best-self. It is rare for anyone to be 100% capacity, so 50% or higher is great. Your best-self is more alert and present in the moment, can hear what is being said, but is also able to pick up on said and more easily ascertain what is not being said. Your best-self does not need to take things personally and react, but can step back, see the full picture and respond. Your best-self does not want to get tangled up in other people's emotions, or drama, yet can make space for other people to have their drama if they want it. Your best-self does get angry, yes, but they do not hold onto it for three months. Your best-self is you when you are at your best. And if you do not take at least ten minutes a day to connect to your centre, re-prioritise what is truly

idea, write down all of the reasons why you should not do it. Walk away from the list and come back to it a few hours later, when you are in a different frame of mind and work through all the reasons you have given yourself, you will likely eliminate them all.

The next step is to pick a time of day that works best for you. 11am is good because it is usually a rest time, but you can choose any time of day. Set an alarm on your phone to go off at your designated time. Make certain the alarm sound is relaxing, and different to the alarm you use to wake up in the morning, or the one you use as a reminder. A special tone just for "me time."

It will take a while to get used to this, so you need to consciously make an effort and commit until this, ironically, becomes part of your routine! Each morning when you look at your plan for the day, make sure you are available for me time. Move your 'me time' alarm to a time that best fits your day — it does not need to happen at the same time. The






objective is to be more present all of the time; you really do not want to do this on autopilot too.

When your alarm goes off, take ten minutes without fail.

- Turn off the phone, close the door, whatever it is you need to do to create a space for you.
- Set a timer to go off in ten minutes so you do not need to keep checking if it has been ten minutes yet.
- Breathe. Notice how you are feeling, place your feet on the ground and slow your breathing — like you are stopping time by slowing down your breath.
- Imagine your energy as octopus arms, entangled in all of the things you are consumed by; see them slowly detangling themselves and pulling inwards, into you, so there is more of you present. Do this slowly and deliberately and notice where you have trouble. Take the full ten minutes.

Notice how you feel when you are done. Take a moment before you jump back into your routine to re-calibrate yourself. You may notice the quality of your interactions improve. You may notice you are more aware of what you are choosing for the rest of the day. Notice if ten minutes in the morning is enough for you, or if you need to do another ten minutes in the afternoon.

After a while, your 'me time' alarm will be a prompt for you to stop, breathe, listen, focus, detangle, ground and centre yourself. With a little practice you get good at it, it happens quicker and you will not need a full ten minutes to get back into the 'zone.' Start practicing 'me time' before a meeting, before an event or a phone call and see if your best-self shows up. Try it at the end of the day when you are worried about something and let your best-self handle it, instead of you, at a lower capacity. Bring your best-self home to your family; the quality of your evening will improve and work can wait until the working hours.

You have the power to take control of your awareness, energy, focus and concentration. Make this the year your best-self shows up, so you can have the best year yet. 



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