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Coach's Corner: This Moment

By Sharon Pahlka

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This moment is all we are truly given. So much of our attention can get focused on the future or the past that we brush right over the present. That's why simply focusing attention on our present moments can so quickly transform the quality of our lives and increase our effectiveness.

Focusing attention on this present moment means:

- Not taking that quick extra bite before taking time to savor the bite we have barely finished.
- Lingering an extra moment to notice the shimmer of the morning sun on the trees.
- Taking the time to watch and enjoy the 16-month-old in the next seat on the airplane.
- Letting go of "gotta do" and embracing a moment of peace with yourself.

Try it! Spend one day intentionally being aware of all your moments ... well, as many as you can muster given the distracting mental chatter of life. I did, and found myself viewing things differently. I noticed it was often about time — taking the time to slow down, pay attention, savor and let go in order to enjoy the moment. I also started seeing some benefits to paying attention to this present moment:

- I really listened to others.
- I became a little removed from the future and the worries that go with it, like paying rent or meeting deadlines.
- I felt more fulfilled, complete and happy. If we don't savor the moments, our days feel starved. When we savor them, we feel satisfied.
- I saw how perfect the present really is most of the time when you cut out fear of the future and regret for the past.

I am easily distracted so had to continually bring myself back to focusing attention to what I was doing. This takes practice, so be gentle with yourself. If you start to wonder what to fix for dinner while reading a novel, just note "distraction" and return your focused attention to your chosen activity. (Or put down the novel and focus on fixing dinner.) Sometimes it helps to sit at attention to keep your mind from wandering.

You might make some fun discoveries. The food I took time to savor actually tasted better. Seeing the benefits has helped me continue to practice being present. It's like showing up for life, this precious gift, one moment at a time.

Coaching Question: If not now, when?

Coaching Tip: Take a few moments each day to be fully in the moment.

Homework: Choose an everyday activity like brushing your teeth, cooking a meal, washing the dishes, taking a bath or even as simple as eating an apple. Do that activity with full attention, noticing the sights, smells, tastes, sounds and sensations. If a distraction comes up, gently return to the chosen activity.

Quotes:

“Let us live today.”

– J.C.F. von Schiller

“Why do you think they call the present a gift?”

– Old saying

“I believe that only one person in a thousand knows the trick of really living in the present.”

– Storm Jameson

Sharon Pahlka is a life coach and speaker. In her coaching, she helps her clients live well and meaningfully, especially those with chronic health challenges. Sharon’s column, “Coach’s Corner,” offers helpful tips from her work.

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