

## **WELCOME TO QUIET COURAGE - May 2009**

The online newsletter for navigating life's changes and transitions from Bailey Coaching and Mary Ann Bailey, MC.

### **FEATURE ARTICLE: The Power of a Pause**

If you were to clock the average speed of your life, what would it be? Are you someone who goes full-speed ahead until you crash? Are you someone who varies their speed from very fast to medium fast? Or are you someone who actually likes to slow down sometimes, but then feels guilty because you are not accomplishing enough?

Living in a society that puts such a high value on speed and achievement, it's no surprise that so many of us have a difficult time stepping off our treadmills. We have integrated this high velocity living into our way of living. It has become the norm - but at what price?

Think about how you spend your day. Most of us spend a majority of time in our heads. We think about how to get a task done, we plan for the next meeting, or we find ourselves obsessing about an interaction that didn't go smoothly. We worry about what might happen, and we fret about things that have already taken place.

Our energy is being split between the past and the future leaving no room for actually being in the present. We are not coming from a place of being centered and grounded. We exist by reacting to life instead of living our lives with a clear sense of intention and awareness.

But how does one become more intentional in the way they live their lives? The first step is to find some way to slow your life down that can be easily integrate into your day. Old behaviors are hard to break and new behaviors are difficult to assimilate into our lives; so taking slow, but consistent steps, towards varying the speed of your life will be the best way to ensure long-lasting change.

One great technique for interrupting our fast-paced life is to begin integrating "pauses" into your everyday activities. Pausing means taking one or two minutes after finishing an item on your "to do" list and asking yourself, "Does this item feel complete?"

If the answer is "yes", then take a moment to acknowledge what you have done and how you feel about it, and then move on to the next task. If the answer is "no", then take the needed time to complete the item to your satisfaction.

Taking the time to consciously complete and acknowledge each item before jumping to the next will help you to feel more connected to yourself, your work and your life and it doesn't take a lot of time out of your day. Taking time to pause between activities will also deepen your awareness as to what is actually happening in that moment.

Pausing provides the bridge between our old ways and our new ways and gives us the space in which to make sure our intentions for the next task are clear. It allows us stop for a minute to look closely at our actions and provides us the opportunity to self-correct before moving on.

Pausing also allows us to be more proactive in our life. It ensures that the choices we make are ours. We no longer find ourselves just reacting to whatever comes along. But one of the best things about pausing is that it is a relatively simple way to integrate a more intentional way of being into your life. As we all know it is very difficult to change a behavior.

Often we try to make too much of a change too quickly and then we get discouraged because it doesn't work. But the action of pausing doesn't take much time and it doesn't disrupt the flow of the day. In fact, it can enhance the flow by helping us to stay more centered and

grounded. It also allows us to increase our capacity to vary our pace of life, to create more space in our life, and to feel more connected to our life.

Are you ready to take a pause? I invite you to practice the exercise of pausing consistently for one week and notice what happens. I think you will be surprised with the results.

Until next time.

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