

Cultivating Presence - Practices that help me develop presence in my daily life

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A few weeks ago, I was with my three- and one-half-year-old granddaughter. I have the privilege of spending time with her each week and giving her parents a break. It was a warm day and I had on shorts. She asked me, "Nan, what is that ouchy on your leg?"

Looking down at the permanent purplish mark on my leg that she was gently touching, I replied that it was from an injury from a long time ago that did not go away. Her concern was obvious as she asked me if it hurt, how did it happen and did I need a band-aid.

Thinking about this conversation after I was back home, I realized that I do not remember how I got this permanent bruise--the medical term for it is an ecchymosis. It means that I got hit on the leg hard enough for it to bleed under the skin, leaving a permanent mark. I have, in fact, two of these on my right leg with no memory of how they happened.

It made me think about how much I have no memory of in my life because I was focused on whatever task I was doing without really being present to those around me and even what I was experiencing. For the past seven years, I have been making effort to become more present to the moment.

There are practices that I have discovered that help me develop self-awareness and presence in my daily life. About seven years, I began practicing yoga. Initially, I joined a yoga studio because it was within walking distance from my house, and I wanted to get exercise and develop more core strength. But I also realized that it helped me to stop my busyness and focus inward. I have a yoga mat in my office area to remind me to stop and spend some time practicing each day.

Meditation is also something that I highly recommend. Meditation is also something that I highly recommend. Meditation is a tool that combines awareness and mindfulness practices. It is known to reduce anxieties, body fat, chronic medical situations, depression, dementia, loneliness, and stress. It also improves one's attention span, sleep, positivity and overall peace of mind.

There are numerous apps that make it easy to access a meditation whenever we want. Some that I use are *Insight Timer*, *Tapping Solution*, *Mind Valley*, and *Headspace*. These have meditations for free and for a fee.

Finding a meditation practice that you feel connected to is important. For some people, walking in nature with the intention of connecting to the beautiful surroundings is the best method. Taking moments out of your day to simply close your eyes and take deep breaths reduces stress and helps to reconnect with your inner self. Another possibility is to take time at the beginning or the end of the day to reflect, meditate and journal. Qigong is a form of moving meditation with many health benefits. One that I have practiced is Wisdom Healing Qigong: www.youtube.com/c/MingtongGu but

you can search for practices online and in your own community.

If you think that meditation isn't for you, check out this article that gives even more ideas and options. tinyurl.com/5d5x7vnh Try out different methods of bringing more awareness and presence into your life to find the ones that resonate the most with you.

Currently, I am combining gardening with my meditative practices. I used to buy plants for my back patio and forget to water them. Now, I am actively working to create a beautiful space where I can relax, meditate, breath and enjoy the fragrant flowers and the vibrant hummingbirds. How well my garden is doing is my litmus test for how I am doing with including presence and self-awareness in my own life.

To purchase my book on Amazon, click here:

tinyurl.com/7-Gifts-to-Give-Your-Child

If you would like to know more about what I offer as a coach, please visit my website: www.coachmyrna.org/ Find out more about Safe Conversations www.coachmyrna.org/safe-conversations.html.