

9. Make Time for Sleep, Vacation, Nature, Spirit, Quiet, Growth, Presence, Fun & Change!

It takes time and effort to make conscious change, and we each need to change in our conscious beings in order to evolve our way out of the mess we've created. Make time for change, sleep, disentangling from work demands and cultures, being in, connecting with and knowing nature, cultivating spirit, meditating, appreciating, relationships, presence, and playing and having fun!

In spite of the incredibly successful and ongoing development of labor saving devices and technologies, like fire, tools, machines, domesticated animals, agriculture, external energy sources, transportation systems, defensive weapons, computers and robots, and more people to divide and share labor with, many human beings today have less leisure and free time away from working to provide for our needs and wants than at most times in our evolutionary history, back to at least monkeys and apes.

We're running harder and faster, spending more time working, with both spouses working when it was enough for one to provide for a family a generation or two ago, and being far more productive at work, but most are not getting ahead or living better lives, in terms of happiness, satisfaction or fulfillment. We don't feel better about our lives than people did before. We're just consumed by different things.

Largely, this is because most of us work for corporate puppets to make our livings, and no matter what a corporation's mission statement says, its operating purpose has been corrupted and perverted into making owners as much money as possible in the form of profits, returns in excess of fair and enough, unnecessary overhead from the perspective of all of us as society, real wealth converted to fake money. A minority of people own most financial wealth, including the corporations. We're draining ourselves making rich people richer and all others poorer, giving our power away to those who use it to exploit us. Disparities in financial wealth and income have become absurdly unfair and are creating very real harms. Common sense says stop it and change. Capitalism is taking over too much of our culture and resources.

We are working harder and realizing less real wealth, which is in things like happiness, fulfillment, good health, rising and evolving spirits, thriving relationships, healthy natural life support systems, free time, and enjoyment of life, because we are focused on acquiring abstract money, which is not real, and wasting that on things that do not produce real wealth. We're burning ourselves out in exchange for pieces of paper and electronic records with numbers on them, and then squandering that on wasteful systems and consumption that do not produce real or lasting wealth or happiness. That must stop, too.

All of life goes down in the moment. Everything that happens, happens now. We always exist only in present time. All action happens contemporaneously. Everything we feel, we feel only in the moment. We're only able to do anything when it's now. We can only connect now. We can only experience life in the present moment. Everything other than that is abstraction. When we think about the past, future, or problems, that takes our attentions away from present experience. When we think about any kind of knowledge or engage our brains to solve problems, we take our attentions away from presence.

When we rehash conversations or experiences, thinking about what we wish we had said or done, we are not available for conversations or experiences in the present. If we worry about what might happen or think about what we want to happen in the future, we are not engaged in what is happening now. We need to make and take time to be present to be healthy, connected, part of community, in nature, in relationships, relax, release, be quiet, feel, just be, and create what we want to see in the world. Presence is essential, and we must make time for it.

On average, we spend about a third of our lives sleeping. Though we don't really know exactly what sleep is or what it does for us, we know we have to have it to live, something essential happens in sleep, and we die if we go long enough without it. Our performance suffers. Without sleep, immune systems are weak; we are weak; we function and feel worse; we're more vulnerable; we enjoy life less; we lag; we look worse; and we don't think as well. Whatever it is, sleep is obviously important. Yet, many of us are regularly sleep deprived. We fight tiredness and call on willpower to continue. We persevere by ignoring our bodies telling us we need more sleep. We need to make and take time to sleep, so we can be present, awake, aware and engaged in life and create changes we want to see in us and the world.

Vacation and free time are as important to health and well-being as sleep. Many of us are vacation and free-time deprived, and we suffer from it, as we suffer from sleep deprivation. It makes us tired, harms performance, makes us feel bad, harms our immune systems and makes us vulnerable to illness, impairs our patience and understanding, deprives our children and families, makes it difficult to develop and maintain our personal relationships, saps our energy, makes us irritable, steals us away from presence, cheats us of experience and wisdom, and dampens our creativity, caring, wit, wisdom, love and spirit. We need vacation and free time to be whole and to create what we want in the world and in our lives.

Meditation is quiet time, when we turn it all off, relax, let go, open, quit thinking, be quiet, be in the moment, and appreciate the feelings that go with that. We all meditate. Most just don't call it that. Good stuff happens when we do. We integrate, recharge, loosen and unravel the knots we tangle up in our busy-ness. And when our brains, egos and dramas are not monopolizing our attention, we become aware of other feelings in our bodies. We can pay attention to our feelings, not by thinking about them, but by just letting ourselves be and feeling. It's important to do that. We need that, perform better, fix problems better, have more energy and patience, are better able to give, and are healthier and happier. We feel and are better. Quiet time can be a vehicle for profound transformation into higher states that change us. We can experience new things, grow and develop wisdom in new ways through quiet time. It's important to take and make time for that. We're all better off for it.

If we are going to make things better, we need time to do that. We are zombie riding our lives, culture and social systems around and around the toilet bowl in a dizzying slow flush of decay, degeneration, exhaustion, exploitation, short-sightedness, anxiety, struggle, suffering, greed and despair. If we want to avoid disappearing in the hole, we have to stop and make time to change. We must become healthy, restore ourselves, think and experience for ourselves, inspect our values and priorities, learn, develop character, integrity and wisdom based on deep personal values, and be, do and behave differently. Vacation and free time are essential. We have to claim time to make things better, no matter the costs.

Fun and play are undeniably good. Don't deny good. We each deserve and need recess every day, no matter who we are or how old we are, to feel alive, be healthy, purge bad feelings, experience joy, make merry, have fun, laugh, interact without agendas, make friends, and be free. Let's have fun and play! Get up, go out, play and have fun! Prioritize that. Just do it! Feels good, right? That is truth.

Let's make sure we have plenty of free time to sleep, restore ourselves, cultivate good health, enjoy and be good stewards of life and our natural life support systems, experience new things, create and share beauty, art and music, cultivate good relationships with each other, be present, make use of quiet time, learn and improve ourselves, enjoy, laugh and play together, and evolve our spirits and consciousness!

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