



Keyword: Moment

Be Present! Seven Ways to Be More Productive and Enjoy Life More

by Kevin Eikenberry

Each day and each moment of each day is a gift that we all have been given. When you stop to think about it you know this is true.

However, it's an easy fact to forget when you open your email, look at your to-do list or see a steady stream of people asking you for help or to get something done . . . now.

The world conspires to keep us moving faster and to multi-task at every turn.

Unfortunately most of the time when we are moving at that frenetic pace we aren't at peak efficiency or effectiveness. We know this too, but too often we don't act on that knowledge. What we need to remember is the value of right now.

And right now...

and right now.

The value of the present moment.

When we stop multi-tasking and live remembering and valuing the present moment we will paradoxically get *more* done. We will have better relationships, we will learn more that we can apply in the future and we will enjoy ourselves more each day.

To get to these benefits we must get past the pace and seemingly the expectations of the world around us. We must find ways to slow down enough to be present in each moment.

Seven Ways to Be Present and Reap the Benefits of Doing So

Be grateful for the "present." Let's put first things first. If you want to be more present in every conversation and situation, you must be grateful for that moment. Even if you don't like the situation, when you are grateful for the opportunity you are better able to stay mentally in the moment rather thinking about what you will do "next."

Note: Granted, this first piece of advice is a bit philosophical and doesn't provide you with a specific strategy or tactic, but this philosophy will drive your ability and willingness to do all of tactics that follow. Read on for six specific actions.



Be Present! Seven Ways to Be More Productive and Enjoy Life More (continued)

Take a deep breath. When you find your mind wandering beyond the current situation, start by taking a deep breath. This breath can serve as a reminder to help you refocus and to center you as well.

Focus on the present moment exclusively. Do one thing – just one thing – at a time. The crux of remaining in the present is to focus on the task, person or situation in your current moment. If you are thinking about what you are going to say next, what you are going to do next, or what you are going to have for dinner you aren't focused on right now.

Reduce the noise. Turn off the iPod, the radio or the television unless that activity is your current focus. The noise and distractions around us can easily pull us away from the current moment, divert our focus and reduce our effectiveness.

Refocus your inner voice. When you notice yourself judging, analyzing or having another sort of mental dialogue in the current moment, shift your mental focus by saying to yourself, “now, now, now” or some other phrase that will help you bring yourself back to the current moment, situation or activity.

Be more observant. Pay closer attention to the present moment! Notice what your senses are noticing, but what you may be unconsciously tuning out. What is the real message under the words you are hearing? What do you smell; what can you taste? What do you hear (in addition to the words)? When you open yourself up to be more observant you give your brain something to think about that is relevant and helpful in the present situation, rather thinking about another time, place or activity.

Ask “What do I want to remember about this moment in time?” I once read the advice that when you are on vacation at a place you truly value, that you should take an omniscient, three-dimensional picture of everything about that place and time in your mind. Taking this “picture” helps you savor the moment in the present and helps you remember it forever. This advice combines the concepts of being grateful and being observant. I believe this approach can be used anytime, as a way to capture a moment for memory, for future reflection and more. You can stimulate this activity by asking, what do I want to remember about right now? Or a similar question that works best for you.

These activities will make a difference in your results – both personal and professional. Plus, the benefits mentioned at the start of this article will all be yours as you perfect the habit of being in the present moment.



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