

Ten steps for becoming more present, peaceful and mindful

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Be conservative with your time, your talent and your resources says Anel Martin

We live in a world that is fast...too fast! Which leaves most of us feeling like we are on an out of control rollercoaster.

We get to the end of the week with full mailboxes and a to do list that we haven't even dented. Expectations and pressures seem to increase almost weekly and the distractions in our world have become more prevalent and louder.

Tech stress, social media addiction and infobesity are becoming real and serious issues. Our sense of wellbeing and community has become eroded. Connected but disconnected! Tired, overwhelmed, and stuck.

So, how do you claim back some sanity and recharge?

Here are some strategies that can help you become more mindful and, more importantly, present:

1. Review and analyse how you are spending your time

Take a close look at how you spent your time last week. Did you spend at least some of your time on your priorities or only on the priorities and plans of others? Is your TV/or screen time out of control? Do you need to build more time in to exercise or buy less take out? Are you constantly looking for stuff, rushing around because you are chronically late or under prepared? Is your commute crushing your soul? Are you sleeping the way you should? When last did you and your family or friends simply sit down to a meal together at one table without mobile phones present and have conversations that matter? What are you procrastinating on...and WHY?

Most of us will not like the answers but bringing awareness to these questions will help you improve the quality of your life. The



common complaint is that people feel stuck in a rut. Chances are that if this is how you spent last week, it is how you spend most of your weeks and that is the REAL problem. If you want something different you need to do something different – FACT!

2. Adjust your relationship with technology and screen time (infobesity and FOMO)

Technology has helped us a great deal and so has social media; there is also nothing wrong with a bit of TV. The problems begin when these things take over. When were you last in a meeting where no one used their laptops or smartphones? For most of us it has been several years – no wonder

the quality of our meetings is so poor! When did you last walk down the street without someone bumping into you because they were too busy looking at their screen? Or sat in a restaurant and people were not glued to their phones?

According to an article in the New York Post (published in November 2017) the average American checks their phone once every 12 minutes - which translates to 80 times a day! They also found that the average person struggles to go more than 10 minutes without checking their phone. Of the 2,000 people surveyed, one in 10 checked their phones on average once every four minutes.

And when it comes to email, research from the Redicati Group indicated that in 2015, the number of emails sent and received per day were over 205 billion. This total is expected to grow annually by 3% over the next four years, reaching over 246 billion emails sent and received every day by the end of 2019. These statistics are crazy!

No wonder we are overwhelmed with the amount of electronic communication/stimulus that we receive.

A few things to remember:

- Technology was supposed to be a tool to improve our lives, not rule it.
- No one is living the life they have on Facebook so forget about comparing yourself or letting it influence your perception of your own life.
- Unfollow and block anyone who brings negativity or judgement onto your timeline.
- It really is OK to switch devices off (I promise).
- You are NEVER going to get “up to date” with your email, you will simply manage it.
- Make the people who are with you in real time more important.
- Set a good example for your children (or the children in your life) as it will impact their generation even more.

3. Remember that you are a human being, not a human doing

Our society glorifies busy and getting by on little amounts of sleep. We feel guilty taking time out for self-care, relaxation or fun. These things are important too! These things fuel creativity and enhance your ability to solve problems, your general resilience and ability to cope with challenge and illness. Don't view time out as cheating but rather as necessary to charge your batteries. Burnout is not sexy or fun. You can't serve anyone with an empty jug. Stop and refill from time to time!

4. Enjoy the simple things

Things as simple as making the bed, washing the dishes or cooking a meal can be joyful and

mindful. Focus on the activity. What does this activity create in your life?

Washing the dishes creates a clean kitchen. I like the colours of the rainbow I see in the bubbles; I also like the feeling of hot water. By turning it into a very mindful activity instead of just doing it on autopilot and with distaste, we can enhance our overall wellbeing and practise being in the actual moment, doing the actual thing. I want you to start savouring the small joys and activities.

5. Breathing and exercise

Nothing grounds and connects you to your inner self in the same way as breathing intentionally. In addition, when you get some exercise (in the sunshine if you can) it not only releases good hormones but burns off cortisol and adrenaline. Exercise creates a dramatic change in breathing too. Anyone who has done yoga can testify that you cannot get into a balance pose and think (or worry) about anything else. It forces you to be with your body.

6. BE with people and be real with people

Start making more visits or calls instead of just firing off an email or other form of electronic message. Spend time with family and friends in person. Start to appreciate conversation (and not just the talking part) really savour the listening.

The greatest gift you can give another human being is your time and attention. This is also something that is becoming scarce in the modern world. Make connections and be authentic. Being real and honest takes so much less energy than trying to be something you are not.

7. Realise that time is fleeting

As cliché as it sounds, today won't come around again. Don't just rush through it without experiencing it. The good, the bad and the ugly of it! Today is your life. You don't exist in tomorrow and yesterday is gone for good.

8. Gratitude

In my life (and experience) I have found that gratitude and appreciation really does enhance

your joy and attracts more amazing things into your life. Start focusing on what you DO have instead of what you want.

9. Get organised and plan your day

It seems counter intuitive but sometimes you will need to take time to plan, clean up, sort out and create routines and processes (often, when you can least afford to take the time). I promise you that this kind of time is an investment, not a luxury. Once you have good systems your sense of chaos and overwhelm will be greatly reduced.

This can be as simple as planning a weekly menu, planning your wardrobe for the week in advance on a Sunday night, leaving your house earlier to avoid traffic, sorting out the contact list at the office before it is needed or checking the stock levels of important consumables before they run out.

What can you do today that will take the stress out of tomorrow?

10. Learn to say NO and self-preserve

I always found it very hard to say no, until someone explained to me that by saying yes to everyone you inevitably say no to someone. This someone is often our family, our own health or personal development.

Take back your time, realise that by saying no when you need to, you are actually conserving energy and resources for what really matters and for activities that will move your life forward.

Be aware that often people will exploit you because you are always trying to be the “good guy” and you have a hard time saying no. It is not easy, but I want you to try!

I hope that some of these tips will be helpful to you in. It is really important that you show up for your own life!

BE HERE NOW.

about the author



Anel Martin is a multi-award winning ex-Personal Assistant who now works as a full time trainer. She has extensive experience in the profession and is widely considered an industry expert. Anel is also one of the Directors of the Isipho Admin Bursary (www.isiphoadmin.org.za) and currently involved in the World Administrator Summit 2018. She is the author of *The Executive Secretary Guide to Building a powerful personal brand*, available now on Amazon. Anel will be speaking at Executive Secretary LIVE in Johannesburg, September 2018. For full details and to book please visit www.executivesecretarylive.com

