

When Are We Going to Get There?

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Remember when you were on a road trip with your parents when you were a child? After riding in the car for a while you asked, “When are we going to get there?” As adults, people are still stuck in that thinking mode. It sounds like this... When am I going to be thin enough? When am I ever going to get the job of my dreams? When is my significant other ever going to...? When are MY parents going to leave me alone to live my own life? When are my kids going to stop bugging me?

People are goal seekers. That can be a good thing. However, when the future is the only place that happiness and contentment seem to live, life gets put on hold while internally you scream, “When am I going to get THERE?” Life is a series of steps. Think of life in pursuit of your dreams as the experience of being on a river raft. Sometimes there are rapids and sometimes there are doldrums, but around every bend is a new experience to embrace.

How does one pursue one’s dreams and at the same time enjoy life happening now? There are two steps along your life path that can be helpful.

1. **Learn to Be Present Where You Are Now.** This is the skill of mindfulness. Learn control of that Monkey Mind that tries to run us around in thought circles. Be present NOW by learning to STOP and Breathe *literally*. It sounds simple, and breathing may seem like it is effortless and second nature, but unknowingly, most people are shallow breathers. People take light high chest breaths that keep them in their head rather than in their full body. Lungs are made like bellows. Their full expansion and ability to supply oxygen to your body, especially your brain, is enhanced by a deep “Buddha belly” breath. Imagine for a moment that you are sitting like that happy fat Buddha. He has a nice full round belly. When you breathe in, feel the air go all the way into that belly. Expand your lungs like you are getting ready to do a Tarzan yell. Pull air all the way into the bottom of your belly. Hold it for a second and then push the air out with an audible sound. Some people say “Ha” long and slow as they exhale.



If you have never done this, you may feel lightheaded after a couple of these deep breaths. The next time that Monkey Mind is running you into too much future thinking OR just running you down, stop and smile. That's right, just think of that happy Buddha and take one or two deep breaths. This breathing process brings you back into your body and into NOW. Use this when stress, frustration or worry from that Monkey Mind is running you around.

2. Run that Monkey Mind Rather Than That Monkey Mind Running You.

Our conscious mind can certainly get on a rant and make us miserable. The best step one can take to begin to tame that Monkey Mind is to be very clear what you DO want, stated in the positive. Much fodder for that Monkey Mind comes from thinking about what you



DON'T want. "I don't want to mess up. I don't want to be late. I don't like this job." Yadda, yadda, yadda. The mind gets stuck in an infinite loop. Break out of the loop by taking time to focus on a clear picture of what you DO WANT. It goes like this: When Monkey Mind gives you a stressful thought, catch the thought and turn it around to what you DO want. This is called a Pivot.

Pivot from: "I don't want to mess up" TO "I always know what to do in the right way." Put in your mind a mental picture of a time you did just that.

Pivot from: "I don't want to be late." TO "I arrive on time easily and effortlessly." Put in your mind a picture of a time you arrived on time. Bring that smile to your face.

Pivot from: "I don't like this job." TO "I am in preparation for my next best job opportunity as I do my best work each day." Get a clear picture in your mind of the ideal, values-driven job you'd like.

Seeking goals while being present *now* is a balancing act. There are times you can put the boat paddles down and rest, enjoying the river scenery. Then, there are times you need to paddle like hell to keep off the rocks and keep out of the eddies and rapids. In either place, a good deep breath helps keep your mind nourished, allowing you to enjoy *this present moment*.



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