

# A More Deliberate Way of Living

Our lives are often spent in a rush, almost on autopilot, drifting from one wave of busyness and distraction to another, adrift in a sea of crises and urges.

There's noise and quick tasks, lots of tabs, messages and requests, demands on our attention, multitasking, mind scattered everywhere.

The nature of the world is chaos, but what if we could find a more deliberate way of moving through the chaos?

I'm going to share some ways I've been trying to move more deliberately — none of them new to me or you, but more of a coming back to what I know to be helpful. We're always coming back.

1. **Set intentions at the start.** When you start your day, or any meaningful activity, check in with yourself and ask what your intentions are for the day or that activity. Do you want to be more present? Do you want to move your mission forward? Do you want to be compassionate with your loved ones? Do you want to practice with discomfort and not run to comfort? Set an intention (or three) and try to hold that intention as you move through the day or that meaningful activity.
2. **Pick your important tasks & make them your focus.** What tasks are meaningful to you today? Pick just three (or even just one) and focus on that first. Put aside everything else (you can come back to all that later) and create space for what's meaningful in your life.
3. **One activity at a time.** If you're going to write, close all other tabs and just write. If you're going to brush your teeth, just do that. If the activity is important enough to include in the limited container of your life, it's important enough to give it your full focus. Treat it as if it might be your last act on earth.
4. **Use any activity as a meditation.** This is really the same as the item above, but every single act is an opportunity to be fully with the activity. Everything we do can be a practice in breath, in presence, in deep consciousness. Treat each act as sacred, and practice.
5. **Create more space.** Instead of filling every minute of the day with space, what would it be like to have some time of rest, solitude, quietude and reflection? My tendency (like many people, I suspect) is to finish one task and then immediately launch into the next. When there's nothing to do, I'll reach for my phone or computer and find something to read, to learn about, to respond to — something useful. But space is also useful. What would it look like to include space in our lives? Giving each activity an importance, and when it's done, giving some weight to the space between activities. Taking a pause, and taking a breath. Reflecting on how the activity went, how I held my intention, how I

want to spend the next hour of my life. Moving deliberately in that space, not rushing through it.

6. **Be in silence more.** Our days are filled with noise — talking, messaging, taking in the cacophony of the online world. What if we deliberately created a space or two each day for being in silence? That could look like a couple of meditation sessions, a walk out in nature, a bath where we don't read but just experience the bath, a time for tea and nothing else but the tea, or just stopping to watch a sunset (without taking photos). Silence is healing to the soul.
7. **Create containers for messaging & other chaos.** We need to respond to emails and messages, read the news and catch up on things. But this chaos doesn't have to fill our entire lives. Create a container for each of these activities: set aside 30 minutes for responding to all your emails, another 30 minutes for messages (maybe 2-3 times a day), and so on. In each container, do nothing but that activity. When you're done, leave that activity until you need to come back to it deliberately.
8. **Simplify by limiting or banning.** We don't have to say yes to every French fry or cookie, or every Youtube video or beer. We can choose what we want in our lives deliberately, and what we don't want (or want less of) ... then set limits or ban that activity. For example, can you limit sugar to one treat every week? Or go a month without alcohol? Or only watch Youtube videos between 6-7 pm? These kinds of limits help us to simplify and be more deliberate.
9. **Listen to what life is calling you to do.** As we sit in silence, as we move deliberately into spaces we've created, as we check in with our intentions ... we can listen. Listen to life, God, the universe, whatever you want to listen to ... and see what its calling you to do. Maybe it's just your own heart. But you're being called, and if you listen, you will hear it.

When you add these together — and you don't have to be perfect at any of them — they flow into a beautiful way to move through life.