The Practice of Listening to Find Purpose

Very often, our lives are so filled with busyness and distraction that we have no space to actually listen to what life is calling us to do.

Think about your day so far, and your day yesterday: how much of it was spent in busywork and distraction? Messaging, social media, videos and news, reading favorite websites, answering emails and doing errands, replying and reacting.

In the middle of this craziness, do we ever have space for silence? For creation, contemplation, reflection? And for a practice that I think we do too little of much of the time: listening.

The practice of listening is about creating a little space for silence, and then listening to what you need to do right now:

- What have you committed to doing that you're not doing?
- Why is what you're doing now important?
- What do you need?
- What do the people you care about need?
- What are you being called on to do?
- What would be the most impactful or meaningful thing you could do right now?
- How do you want to spend the next month of your life?
- What do you care most deeply about? Are you willing to commit yourself to it?

These are the kinds of questions to ask in this purposeful listening practice. But more important than the questions is how you listen:

1. **Create some space by taking a break from devices and busyness**. Stop and get somewhere where you can have stillness — a walk in nature, dropping into sitting meditation, dropping into child's pose on the floor, having a cup of tea, sitting out on your porch, finding a bench in a park.
2. **Now just find silence and stillness and ask a question**. You can ask any of the questions above, or whatever feels important for you right now. One of my favorites is, "What am I being called to do right now?"
3. **Keep yourself in that stillness and silence, and listen for the answer**. Breathe deeply. Feel how your body feels right now. And then listen to the answer that comes up for you. Your gut has an answer. Maybe it's not the perfect answer, but it's something to start with. Listen until you have clarity.

It's that simple. Pause in a moment of stillness and silence. Ask a question. Listen for the

answer.

This can be used in all areas of your life: your relationships, your health, your finances, your work, your meaningful contribution to the world.

How can you practice this throughout the day?