

“Smile, breathe and go slowly.” - Thich Nhat Hanh, Zen Buddhist monk

‘Powerful indeed is the empire of habit.’ ~Publilius Syrus

Hello. Here we are in the first quarter of this year – rapidly moving through into the second. All I hear around me in my practice at the moment is the reflection on time [and the lack of it]...and the struggle [challenge] to make meaning out of our lives. An existential reality [crisis] I have no doubt.

It seems to feel as if ‘things’ get busier and fuller and less controllable. And it is only if one consciously engages this phenomenon that one makes sense of its meaning in our lives. Are you ‘addicted’ to being busy and full – is this a source of worth that you apply relentlessly to your being? Do you create chaos to avoid the silence? Have you allowed your identity to be encompassed by what you DO? Tough questions...critical conversations.....

We seem to have an expectation that ‘life is coming’ or ‘happening later’ – and perhaps it’s just a realization that I am having cos I’m in my 40’s – but it becomes clearer and clearer that life is happening RIGHT now. And that means making sense of it day by day. I have found that reminding myself [and clients] about the ‘simple’ things like awareness, the consistent rhythm of habit and the small reminders of grace present all around us – goes a long way toward creating tiny ‘moments’ of grace that add up to a general sense of gratitude, consistency, well being and purpose.

Thanks to a resourceful client, I subscribe to a blog called ZENHABITS [zenhabits.net] – and every now and then I pause to reflect on what it so simply and consistently says – breathe, take time, slow down and think. I attach it to this Newsletter should you wish to pause....and reflect....

As ever, I remain interested in your journey, and would love to hear your update should you wish to drop me a line? If you are still currently a client of mine, thank you for keeping me engaged in life’s complexities with you!

Take care, Aderyn

Creating new realities

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“I change or transform my life”
Symbol of life transformation.
Symbol combines two separate adinka symbols, the “Morning Star” which can mean a new start to the day, placed inside the wheel, representing rotation or independent movement.

9 Mindfulness Rituals to Make Your Day Better

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Post written by [Leo Babauta](#).

Are you simply moving through your day, without fully living?

I did this for many years. It was as if life were just passing by, and I was waiting for something to happen. I always felt like I was preparing for something later.

But today isn't preparation for tomorrow. Today's the main event.

Fully live today by being mindful. I realize this is easier said than done — mindfulness is a habit that's not easily picked up. And so I've decided to share with you some of my favorite mindfulness rituals to help you appreciate every moment.

You don't need to do all of these, but give a few of them a try to see if they make your day better.

Mindfulness Rituals

Ritual isn't about doing a routine mindlessly. It's a way of building something good into your life, so that you don't forget what's important. Done mindfully, a ritual can remind you to be conscious. Done mindlessly, a ritual is meaningless.

Here are a few of my favorites:

- 1. Sit in the morning.** When you wake up, in the quiet of the morning, perhaps as your coffee is brewing, get a small cushion and sit on the floor. I will often use this opportunity to stretch, as I am very inflexible. I feel every muscle in my body, and it is like I am slowly awakening to the day. I'll also just sit, and focus on my breathing going in and out. I'm an absolute beginner when it comes to meditation, but this always starts my day right.
- 2. Brush your teeth.** I assume we all brush our teeth, but often we do it while thinking of other things. Try fully concentrating on the action of brushing, on each stroke of each tooth, going from one side of the mouth to the other. You end up doing a better job, and it helps you realize how much we do on autopilot.
- 3. Eat mindfully.** Turn off the TV, put away the computer and mobile devices, even put away the book or newspaper. If you eat with any of these things (most people do), eating without them will seem boring. And yet, unless you do this, you are not truly appreciating your food. I like eating my oats (with nuts and berries — see [my diet](#)) mindfully, paying attention to each bite. It makes the food taste better, and I eat slowly and with gratefulness.
- 4. Wash your bowl.** When you're done eating, wash your dish immediately. Do it while paying full attention to your washing, to the water and suds. [Read more](#).
- 5. Drink tea.** There's something ancient about the tea ceremony — and when you drink tea as a mindfulness ritual, you're connecting with millions of others who have done so over the centuries. Make your own tea ceremony — prepare the tea carefully and mindfully, pour it slowly, sip it with thoughtfulness. See if you can set aside one time each day to do this, and it will transform your day.

6. Walk slowly. I like to take breaks from work, and go outside for a little walk. Walk slowly, each step a practice in awareness. Pay attention to your breathing, to everything around you, to the sounds and light and texture of objects.

7. Read in silence. Find a quiet time (mornings or evenings are great for me), and a quiet spot, and read a good novel. Have no television or computers on nearby, and just immerse yourself in the world of the novel. It might seem contradictory to let your mind move from the present into the time of the novel, but it's a great practice in focus. Also, I love a good novel more than almost anything else.

8. Look at someone gratefully. Each day, find someone you care about. Instead of just seeing what you always see, really look at the person. Try not to do it creepily. See this person for the miracle that she is, and be grateful for her existence. If you're feeling generous, tell that person how thankful you are for her.

9. Work with focus. Start your workday by choosing one task that will make a big difference in your work, and clearing everything else away. Just do that one task, and don't switch to other tasks. Single-tasking is a great way to find focus. Increase your [Monk Mind](#).

These rituals aren't the only time you should be mindful, but they're great reminders. Today, try a few of them to fully live and fully appreciate this wonderful day.

It's amazing how big a difference a little thing can make. Starting your day mindfully with some tea, for example, can change your entire day. Clearing your desk will make your work day amazing. A smile from a loved one can mean the world.

And when these little things are repeated daily, and formed into habits, their benefits increase not just by multiples but by exponents.

The little habits can be life-changing.

Everyone's world-changing little habits will be different, but I'll share a few of mine, and then some tips for forming them.

My Little Habits

I have lots of little habits, but these are a handful of my favorites:

- 1. Get-in-the-door ritual.** Whenever I get home, the first thing I do is put my stuff away. I have a designated spot for my keys, cash/cards (I don't use a wallet), phone, and coins. Everything else either gets tossed or put wherever it belongs. If we brought something home like groceries or library books, those get put away, right away. This is an important little ritual because even people who have simplified their homes notice that possessions and junk can build up over time — and that starts with what you bring in. It's no use simplifying and organizing if it just gets cluttered and disorganized every time you come home.
- 2. Put clothes away.** It's so simple, but when I take clothes off, they either go in the hamper or I fold them & put them in my drawer or hang them in the closet. Others drape them over chairs or throw them on the floor or bed, and sorting through them later becomes a major chore. By doing it right away, things stay organized and I don't have to worry about cleaning up later.
- 3. Wash my bowl.** When I finish eating, I wash my dishes by hand, mindfully. No mess to clean up later. [Read more](#).
- 4. Prepare meals in advance.** This is important when I'm trying to stick to an [eating plan](#). Cooking your own meals is the healthiest (and most frugal) choice, but if you have to cook three to six times a day, it'll get too cumbersome and you're likely to give up. So

I prepare my food in bulk (for 3-6 days in advance), and eat the same meals all week. It's no harder than cooking smaller meals. I only make food that I adore, so I don't get bored. It's super easy to stay on a meal plan this way.

5. **Just step out the door.** My motto for exercise. Most people have a hard time with motivation to do workouts, but not me. First of all, I only do workouts I love, so I actually look forward to them. But second, I never think about how I don't feel like doing a workout — because I tell myself that all I have to do is get on my shoes and get out the door. The rest flows naturally.
6. **Clear distractions.** When I'm ready to do a task, I [clear all distractions](#). Small action, huge difference.
7. **Take a walk & reflect.** Taking a short walk is such a simple thing to do — you can do it during your lunch break, or take a break when you've been working for a couple hours straight. It only needs to be 10-20 minutes. But oh boy, what a world of difference. Not only does the walk relieve stress and clear your head, it gives you an opportunity to reflect on what you've been doing, and reflection is one of the most important tools for changing your life.
8. **Breathe.** When I get stressed, I simply [breathe](#).

How to Form Them

I've written about habits numerous times before, but here's an easy guide to forming a little habit:

- Do one habit at a time.
- Make it easy to do.
- Do it consciously, very consciously at first.
- Don't allow any exceptions.
- Post your progress publicly.
- Keep doing it, every single day.
- Enjoy the habit.

Forming a habit can be easy, if you enjoy it, take it slowly, and do it mindfully