

Practical Tips for Slowing Down Your Chaotic Life

Last week, I decided to do some baking on my day off. I grabbed the pile of bowls in the cupboard and instead of taking out a couple at a time, I went for the whole stack. As a result, the heavy glass one at the bottom got away from me and crashed down on my little toe.

I'm not sure if I screamed or cried, but whatever I did, it was dramatic and appropriate for the situation. It was a classic "me" move, trying to do everything at once and in a hurry.

Story of my life.

Well, my past life. I've been trying (bowl incident aside) to set a new tone for my everyday living.

Slow Down

I've always tended to go through life in a rush. Carrying all my groceries into the house in one trip. Frantically doing all the things I should have done on my day off, in the last hour before everyone gets home. Powering through tasks because of procrastination and poor planning, and leaving things until the last minute.

A big mess, trying to get through the day.

But why?

How about slowing down?

Is that even possible?

Anything is possible, especially if you're tired of dropping bowls on your feet.

So, here are four things I've been trying to do in my slow-down experiment.

Look at the week ahead and plan accordingly. Time management has not always been my strength. For years, I would take work home with me every weekend and cause stress to my family. My weekend was me running out and trying to get things done that I should have done at work. Now, I get everything off my list by Friday so I can be present at home. When you look at the big picture of what you need to get done (at home and at work), you can break it down into manageable portions. Get the big things off your list at the start of the week to allow for balance throughout the rest, this naturally slows your week down.

Make time for people. How often do we tell people we'd love to get together, but we never do? I feel guilty about how often I've said that and it's never happened. Of course, the reason is always busyness. So, I'm trying to slow down and make time for relationships and connection, setting aside a specific time in my week/month with scheduled connecting time. People matter, and neglecting that leads to isolation and loneliness. It's OK to schedule in relationship time; it means those relationships are a priority.

Set a pace. My natural pace is fast and furious. That has been what gets me in trouble. I lose things, I forget what I'm supposed to do, I lock myself out of places, wear shoes that don't match and the list goes on. I am literally learning to talk myself down to a pace that is manageable where I'm still effective and productive. Otherwise, I'm a hot mess running through the streets. If you get into the habit of reminding yourself to slow down, you can do it. Take a breath and step back. You won't get behind if you walk instead of run, and often you can think more clearly and get more accomplished.

Care for myself. There are a lot of things I like to do, things that fill my heart and soul. This summer, I got

obsessed with our local beach, and I just wanted to be by the water. So, we did that a lot. There are small, easy things in life that give me joy, and I'm trying to slow down and do more of those things. We can race through life with all of its responsibilities, but it's important to make time for yourself and the activities you love. Put those things on a calendar if you have to and make time for heart-filling joy and fun.

Slowing down doesn't come natural to me. It feels too confining and goes against the free-spirit part of life that I have always loved. However, the more clearly I can see things around me, the more effective my life is.

I don't do less, but I do things better.

The more we slow down, the more we actually see.

The pace we set helps us define what we value.

Making time for others and ourselves an investment that matters.

So, take a step back. Don't try to grab all the bowls at once; they will just crash in a mess.

Take your time. Take a breath.

Slow down. {eoa}

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