



PRESENCE

If you love someone, the greatest gift you can give them is your presence. Thich Nhat Hanh

Being present and in the moment is a skill. It is one that is undermined in many ways with a culture of instant availability and addiction to technology.

Being present increases focus, enhances intimate relationships and leads to greater productivity. People extend higher levels of trust to you when you are more present and you are more likely to pick up on small signals that help you enhance the quality of the relationship.

Presence is also an element of being more mindful with a plethora of benefits that arise from living more mindfully.

Increase your skill of being present with some of the following activities:

- Make a list of those things you do, or have done, during which you lose track of time and become totally absorbed in when you do them. For one week keep track of how often you are able to do these things. Then find ways to do them more.
- Choose and do one activity, which requires you to use a specific skill you have, and allow yourself to become fully engaged in this activity (e.g. write a letter, cook a meal, do a sketch, play a computer game). Plan in advance when you will do this activity to ensure that you will not be interrupted and that you have all the time available to complete the activity.
- Identify one activity you regularly do that you find boring (e.g. wash the dishes, catch a bus, pay your bills). Decide to transform this activity into something you find interesting to do by giving yourself a challenge as you do it. For example, recite by memory your favorite piece of poetry while you vacuum the floor, or solve a Sudoku puzzle while you wait to pick up the children.
- Identify one pleasurable activity that you currently do and for one week make the decision to savour that activity by trying to make the activity last longer and by making your enjoyment of the activity more intense. For example savour the feeling when you first hop into bed, or a warm shower, or every mouthful of your dinner.
- Make contact with a friend or family member and have a specific conversation in which you reminisce about an event you have shared that was enjoyable. For example you might look through a photo album together, or relive a special meal you had together, or simply talk through the sights, sounds, smells and feelings of a shared experience.
- Find 15 minutes to admire an object of beauty. For example stop by an art gallery, take a short detour to a scenic lookout, take a short stroll in the botanic gardens.
- Leave your mobile device at home/in the desk drawer for one activity or meeting a week.