

Week 2 Practice

Last week, we focused on replacing *doing* with *breathing*. This week, we are going to build upon that by breathing and *resting*. The rest revolution begins with intentionally forsaking physical or mental activity in one way or another. This week, add one or more of the following practices to your morning breathing exercise:

1. *Wake up fifteen minutes early, but not in order to get a jump on the day. Instead, spend five minutes opening your eyes slowly, opening the eyes of your body and your mind and your heart to a new day. Feel the warmth of the covers on a cold winter morning, or attend to the dance of light on the ceiling from a summer sunrise. Do nothing to the moment. Simply allow yourself to be in the moment—feel the weight of your body on the bed, your rested muscles, and your normal aches and pains. Slowly, ever-so-slowly, throw your legs over the side of the bed, feeling the texture of the floor as your feet meet the day. Sit up and breathe slowly. Notice the air as it fills your lungs. Notice your mind as it already begins the daily race, and repeatedly bring your attention back to the breath in your lungs. Spend some time being grateful for each and every breath. After all, your breath—not your job or your kids—is what keeps you alive.*

2. *Before you stand up to take on the day, pick words to breathe throughout it. Words like simple. Or sacred. Or sublime. Words that help us to quit ignoring everything that is happening in the lower gears of life.*

3. *Schedule ten minutes in the middle of every day to engage your senses. To catch the scent of the tomato plants in bloom, or today's shade of blue in the dome above you, or the rich scent of coffee in the mug on your desk. When you do this, you will want more of it, so you may have to find time in the day to do it again.*

4. *And maybe—and this is totally crazy, I know—on the weekend, trip every switch in the fuse box (except the kitchen, of course, no need to spoil the food). Maybe do it for the entire weekend.*

If the power went out of our houses, perhaps we'd feel the power drain out of our hurried lives, as well. Maybe we'd discover the kids sleep later when there are no cartoons to watch. Maybe the internet would have to be traded for a board game, and maybe our families would rediscover the art of laughing together. Maybe without air-conditioning, we'd be forced to sit on the front porch with a sweaty-cold glass of tea, and maybe we'd have time for a long-slow conversation with the neighbor we love but never have time for. Maybe, without lights, we'd go to sleep with the sun. Maybe, if we cultivated rest in this way, we'd have enough energy left over for our vacations.