



It took me a long time to really begin to understand what spiritual gurus mean when they say, "Slow down!" It seemed crazy. How can you get more out of life if you do less? You've only achieved half of what you did in a day before. How can that be success?

Well, part of slowing down is realizing that "success" isn't necessarily measured in quantity. A heavier backpack doesn't mean a better hike. And what IS this success stuff anyhow?

Achieving our fantasies just means spending more effort to create new ones. Plus finding room for, and maintaining, and working with all the ones we've "achieved."

OK, so slowing down . . . Not multi-tasking. Really focusing on one thing, and later, something else. Whaddya know??? Less stress, more relax. But, oh my goodness, finding out a lot more about each of those things as we go along!

Paying attention takes time. Wonderful things take time to unfold. An empty cup is needed to hold a long drink.

Slowly, in my slower mind, a memory floats up of friends I always had trouble connecting with. Kept feeling we were missing some big stuff. They were always too revved; one foot out the door; cutting both of us off in mid-thought. Always felt they were too busy, or had too many too important things waiting to allow what I wanted to connect about.

Hmmm . . . going slow gives time to go beneath the immediate, surface stuff. To the heart of things. To what needs to be teased out. Hanging out. Musing. Dreaming together. The real questions we have to sneak up on.

And you know what? Taking a couple of breaths before responding to someone gives time to really absorb what they said. And for real responses to well up, not just what you revved into your mouth before you heard the last half of what they said.

Silence, and space, and being at rest allow an openness impossible with life-in-the-fast-lane. Permission for things to emerge into awareness. Things that come from outside our self-centered, mind-churning focus. Discovery! Wonder! Awesome new awareness encompassing more than just us.

What happens when we decide to slow down; push the "Off" button on the TV, on the I-Pod, on billboards and media pounding us every moment? Wow! It's pretty scary, but you know what? Time for a thought . . . OF YOUR OWN!!!

And the world of qi energy, of quantum-interconnectedness and the integral consciousness of all Creation operates in a totally different realm than the action-packed life of our minds and bodies. It's a quiet voice, overpowered by the "computer peripherals" of our five material-world senses. But volume isn't power. And the connectedness, the "knowing," the Oneness, the sense of being truly a part of an awesome unfolding of life is an incomparable gift gained no other way.

Maybe I'm getting old, or maybe living 30 years in a small village, enfolded by the power of the natural world, without the noise of TV, radio, or refrigerators has changed me. Slowed me down. Unfurled me. Emptied the trash. Grown new eyes. Two conversations at once is too much. Two words too close together makes me stop. I need that space. It's really important. That's where real answers come from. Real joys emerge. Real connections happen.

I now know why Native Americans sat in silence, smoking a pipe together before talking. Letting their smoke, their hearts, their breaths entwine; the ripples on the surface settle slowly into stillness, the mirrored reflections congealing together into clarity.

So . . . slowness! Hmmm. Is getting to the end of a song the goal? Or the joy within the interweaving harmonies? Is completing the dance what we want? Or the dance itself?

Somewhere, in all this, time comes to an end. Time, clocks, hours, minutes. Cutting living things into sliced bologna. Ending something just as it gets interesting. "We're out of time." We're late. Always thinking about where we "need" to be, not where we're at. Let go. Go on native time. When it happens, how long it needs.

At the end of our lives, looking back, what do we remember and hold with pleasure? What was just wasted time? Is building a lot of houses better than just a couple wonderful ones? Is writing a lot of stuff that people have already forgotten about better than saying one thing that is precious? Is working 90 hours a week to save up for retirement and dying before you can enjoy it "success"? Or taking time as you go, for those irreplaceable moments with your kids, with friends, watching a whale breach or the moon rise?

Fullness, enoughness. Not more and faster. Go slow, my friend.