

Slowing Down While Keeping Up

It's been more than a few weeks since our last post here at Groupaya, which should give you a small insight into how busy we've been.

Given this current state of affairs, I was thrilled to discover that my dear friend and coach, [Meredith Walters](#), was offering her first workshop through Skillshare entitled, "[Slowing Down While Keeping Up.](#)" Without even glancing at my overly packed calendar, I said, "YES! Sign me up!" And boy am I glad I did.

So while I normally leave it to Kristin to blog about coaching, I'd love to share my experience in case some of you could use help Slowing Down While Keeping Up.

For me, the evening really started about 30 minutes before the actual workshop. I was whizzing around my house like the Tasmanian Devil. I had to finish work! I had to eat food! I had to clean myself! I had to get there on time! There were a million things at once I had to get done. As I buzzed by my roommates, almost knocking them over, they inquired what the rush was. I screamed back down the hall, "I'm going to be late for my workshop on slowing down while keeping up!"

Thirty-five minutes later, I slinked into the workshop, tail between my legs, horrified that the 14 other participants all managed to make it on time. Did they really need to be here? How did they have things so together?! I wasn't off to a great start.

Then Meredith asked a very simple question: Why are we so overwhelmed?

I could have broken down crying in that moment. I felt the weight of the world's expectations on me, I felt my own expectations of myself, I felt the excitement of the city

pulling me out to explore, my desire to see the world, the need to connect to my friends, family, community, my desire to make an impact, feel joy, feel love, feel nourished and healthy. How could I not be overwhelmed?

Going around the room I heard a lot of similar stories. There are just so many things that interest me! There are just so many expectations I have to fulfill! Some felt paralyzed by the fear of failure, others didn't know how to manage the demands of a constantly connected world.

Meredith artfully wove these many different experiences together, and helped us discover the common thread. At the end of all these activities – of looking to respond to the beeps, see our friends, over-deliver on expectations – is the desire to feel satisfied.

The problem is, we often sacrifice satisfaction right now for some future outcome.

Meredith challenged us to ask: When will I be satisfied? What is it that really feeds me? Now before you tailspin into an existential crisis trying to answer that question, Meredith provides a few guidelines to help deal with the satisfaction conundrum:

1. Reject “more is better”
2. Take care of your needs NOW (as opposed to deferring those needs for some perceived pay-off in the future)
3. **Focus** on what is important and meaningful
4. Feel fulfillment (actually slow down enough to notice when you've accomplished something and have a sense of fulfillment instead of seeking the next hit)

To this point, I was following. I agree that our desire to meet others' expectations, to achieve, to experience, to connect – all the many things we overflow our lives with are about achieving a sense of satisfaction. And I believe we are so busy filling our lives and seeking more that we run the

risk of missing what makes us truly satisfied.

But how do I prioritize enough to slow down? How can I really find that focus? I've tried meditation and other techniques, but I always bump up against the same conundrum: time. In particular, how do I deal with the reality that time is indeed a limited resource?

This is where [The Energy Project](#) comes in. The Energy Project teaches that, while time is limited, energy is not. So instead of focusing on how little time we have, we should focus on how we can refresh our energy. The Energy Project claims there are four different types of needs we can meet to refresh:

1. Physical (food, exercise, rest, sleep)
2. Mental (the opportunity to focus, be stimulated, be creative)
3. Emotional (feeling positive emotions, such as feeling satisfied, understood, valued)
4. Spiritual (a sense of purpose, that what we do matters)

The activities and tasks we fill our days with should all map to meeting the above needs... which is precisely what we did next. Staring at a map of how different activities energize (or don't energize) me was an eye opener. I personally saw how much I've devoted the past year to refreshing physically and saw signs of neglect in other categories.

Staring at this hard reality, you can't help but ask what is really important and meaningful. What do I want more of and less of, and what practices could support me? I found the concept of power activities particularly intriguing: activities that meet multiple needs very effectively. This explains why playing music with my friends is so energizing. It's a mental and emotional power activity!

If you've gotten this far, you might be thinking, "This all seems like so much work. I was hoping for a few simple tips I could incorporate into my everyday life." But we know there

are no quick tips and tricks to solve any of our tough sustainability challenges, hard group dynamics, or organizational struggles, and the same holds true for undoing some of our deepest personal patterns.

What Meredith provided at the workshop was the gift of awareness and the reminder to be more intentional. All we can do is take an honest look at our mindsets and behaviors, the effects of those behaviors, and try to find practices that will help us slowly shift. And sometimes it takes the help of an outside coach or friend to be honest about what is really going on.

The morning question, What good shall I do this day?	5	Rise, wash, and address <i>Powerful Goodness</i> ; contrive day's business and take the resolution of the day; prosecute the present study; and breakfast.
	6	
	7	
	8	
	9	
	10	
	11	
	12	
	1	
	2	
	3	
	4	
Evening question, What good have I done today?	5	Work.
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	9	
	10	
	11	
	12	
	1	
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	3	
	4	
	5	Read or overlook my accounts, and dine.
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	11	
	12	
	1	
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	4	
	5	Put things in their places, supper, music, or diversion, or conversation; examination of the day.
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	5	Sleep.
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So, to wrap things up, I'll share a few daily practices Meredith recommends to help us live more intentionally and find satisfaction, minus the overwhelm.

Practice: Set an intention every morning, and decide how you'll invest your time and energy, balancing needs, taking time to recharge, and aligning with what's important and meaningful.

Practice: Stop and notice what's meaningful to you. Journal every night: What did I do that was meaningful today? When did I feel fulfilled? How did that feel? Try to stop and notice when you're feeling fulfilled or purposeful throughout the day.

Practice: Before committing to something, take a pause. Evaluate how important it is, how meaningful it is, and how powerful it is versus the time and energy it will require.

(Pictured to the right is a page from Ben Franklin's journal. See, he knew how important it was to set your intention every day too!)