

The Pause That Refreshes

Patrick Williams

In our coaching engagements, we model and may even teach the power of pause.... a purposeful use of silence and focused listening giving us and our clients time to slow down and hear our inner voice. Even our coaching conversations are structured as a way for our clients to have the opportunity to say what they might not have said, to see things in a new manner, and to say it all out loud to a caring listener...their coach.

Sometimes, we, as a professional listener, facilitator, coach, need to recharge our batteries with a scheduled and purposeful pause. I do that with morning meditations, walks in nature, music, or writing.

And in my life, I have needed to do a Purposeful Pause away from my normal routines and do something truly out of the ordinary.

Big Pauses

At age 27, I did a 21 day Outward Bound course in Canyonlands National Park in Utah....away from TV, radio, news and with basic survival food and water that was carried or waterholes that were found that had to have iodine drops to cleanse the water for drinking. 21 days of hiking, rappelling, rock-climbing, beans and rice and dried fruit and veggies, map reading, sleeping in the open or in caves, and a 3-day solo at the end, with no communication with anyone. (I did have conversations with birds and squirrels). That was a *pause* that is deeply embedded in my soul to this day.

In 1996 at age 46, I volunteered to go on a friend's 42 foot long motor yacht from Florida to St Thomas in the US Virgin Islands for the adventure. I had never been on the open seas before and really had no idea what I was volunteering to do. But I trusted my friend and his skills. That trip also shook up my world. Sea sick the first 4 days, I was not much help on board, but Gerry was kind enough to let me sleep and get balanced until I could be more helpful on board. The trip was 17 days and included beautiful sites, island people, and also horrific storms and rough seas at times, but it was a very memorable adventure and one that added new chapters to my life story and my personal evolution.

Then in 2007, at age 57, I went on a 17-day adventure safari in Tanzania with 10 men to explore the beauty and diversity of flora and fauna, and traveled with tribesmen from the Hadzabe who are the only original hunter-gatherer tribes in the world. We also learned about two other tribal cultures including the Maasai people and their way of life. This experience was called an Inventure, as we had an outward adventure in an exciting terrain, but we explored our inner terrain with nightly fireside chats and reflections on how we were being affected by this ancient landscape, and the wild animals we traveled amongst on the trek.

My latest in Inventure was just recently, (age 64) as I was invited to participate in a retreat called Points of Inspiration with 16 people from 13 countries in Israel. Most all of us were trainers in a method called Points of You™, a coaching and communication game with photograph cards and methods to relate a picture with a new point of view for any part of your life or work. Our first three days were in the desert in South Israel in Sukkahs, very primitive huts in the desert with no running water and vegetarian food for the 3 days. The first two days were to be in silence (except when we were in group meetings with some limited sharing). We all did deep personal exploration of our life direction, our place in the world, our purpose for being, and our connection to our new 'friends' from all over the world. The final 3 days were spent in Jerusalem exploring our inner self some more in group activities, but also including seeing the holy sites of the Christians, the Jews, and the

Muslim religions, giving us what I called purposeful touring for different points of view. This experience was another eye opening experience, and one that opened my heart and spirit to new viewpoints and new ways to bring my learning back with me to my present life.

I could never relate the details of any of these trips and how they translated my inner world, with such powerful pauses from my usual world. But they changed me, in ways that would not have happened by just doing my routine at home. That being said, I still do short pauses alone on walks, bike rides, or meditating or journaling, and my wife and I love to do get away weekends and mini vacations to new places. They change the way we see the world, they allow us to spend time together exploring new things and places, and these pauses allow a kind of “re-booting” of our inner guidance system.

I miss my wife and our life together when I am gone, and I miss the comfort of my bed and our beautiful life together in a very comfortable house. And I come back with a heart and soul ready to be a more thoughtful and caring person, more reflective, open, and whole hearted.

So my question to you who read this is, how do you pause? When is the last time you engaged in a Purposeful Pause out of your comfort zone, by yourself or with someone special?

How is pausing built into your day, your week, and your years? Think about an invention or journey you would like to do and do it...the pause that refreshes. For work, for relationships, for health, wealth, love, and happiness, pausing will regenerate purposeful living.

Peace

Dr. Pat Williams

Pat@DrPatWilliams.com

