

## **Finding Stillness Amidst the Chaos**

The world drama continues to unfold while planetary tension continues to build, and there seems to be no way out for our country or our planet from the intrusive imperialism and environmental degradation resulting from U.S. policy across the globe. It seems that no matter how much cultural creatives attempt to resolve the environmental issues on a national scale and activists try to bring attention to the insane wars on a global scale, we are seeing nothing from our efforts. However, that may be because the focus is global rather than local. And in local I mean not only our own community but our own personal consciousness.

I remember back in the 70s, the term that was coined by Common Cause: “Think globally and act locally.” That is what I have been doing for years, am particularly doing now, and it is what we can all do if we wish to see “hits happen” instead of “shit happen” in our environments. It is very difficult to find the stillness necessary to make a hit. It takes intense contemplation and much action, and also a focused intent that can only come when the mind puts up barriers to the surrounding chaos so that we can think and act accordingly. Today, with the media and commercial advertisers bombarding us with everything that we don’t want or need to hear or read or buy, it becomes a task in itself just to get through the bulk communication that clutters our thought and our line of vision. That’s where a focused stillness can be beneficial.

I do not read junk mail, I am on Do Not Call lists, and I do not speak on the phone to chat because it takes up valuable time. I filter what’s coming in so that I am not swamped and overwhelmed by the chaos of today’s technology, news and advertising. Most people can’t even get to the point of realizing they are being bombarded by distractions. In fact, most people have become so accustomed to distractions that they can’t even get beyond the distractions to do anything meaningful in their lives. They work, listen to their iPods, talk incessantly on cell phones whether at work, at home on the road, in restaurants, in restrooms, walking down the street or even on a hike, and leave absolutely no time for contemplation; let alone possible activism or productive and meaningful projects in their own lives or communities.

The remedy to distraction and chaos is making and taking time for stillness and contemplation. This requires putting up mental barriers to the current frenetic frequency bombarding this planet. This is not an easy task. The overtly distracting stimuli overwhelm our brain and our senses leaving many of us feeling brain dead and “senseless.” The remedy requires being aware that this is a problem in the first place and putting our priorities in place. Can you get rid of the cell phone and the multiple distractions that seem to drive your waking hours, at least, within reason? Can you make time for those little pet projects that you keep putting off and never get to? Can you make the time to take the time to plan something meaningful that goes beyond the daily grind of listening to and either reacting to or becoming numb to the endless miserable news, violence and commercial sales pitches?

What it boils down to is what is really important to you for the remainder of your life? Can you find it within yourself to even realize your greatest dreams, beyond the material realm and the senseless array of distractions? Or are you just so caught up in the material realm and the distractions that you haven't even contemplated another type of existence that might raise your awareness of your own possible role as a healer on this planet? Are you so caught up in the noise and your repetitious routine that you can't see you're not living but instead being endlessly driven by an unseen and compulsive force that runs you in circles?

It's in the stillness that you can find the answers to these questions -- questions that you have most likely unconsciously ignored as a result of grand-scale manipulation of your brain and your senses. Only scholars and sages have managed to be still long enough to engage the quest for meaning in life and in so doing have found answers and a purpose, both of which are lacking in our otherwise mundane world and existence. It's in the stillness that you can become one with all and recognize the eternal need of the planet and its inhabitants. It takes a conscientious effort to recognize that everything else occurring on the planet right now is a major distraction. Cell phones and technology may connect you to a temporary source of either needed or distracting information, but do not connect you to the pulse of the Earth and your life, only stillness does. And out of that stillness awareness, consciousness, and conscience are born.