



A Quieter Mind

Dear

It was the final day of our trip to Portugal last Sunday. We weren't flying until the evening, so we spent the morning at a beach before we needed to get back to our accommodation to pack up and travel home. Our son Jake spent the morning surfing then lay in the sun for a while before we needed to leave the beach.

About ten minutes before we had to leave, he stood up and walked towards the edge of the sea. For about five minutes he stood almost motionless and just watched the sea, the waves and the people

surfing. Then he walked into the sea up to his knees before turning around and taking in the cliffs that rose steeply behind the beach.

I knew what he was doing. He was just taking in the moment. Taking in the sights and sounds of that beautiful place. Etching pictures of it in his mind so he would remember the place and the feeling of being there as opposed to just remembering it from a photo in his phone.

This is the picture I took of Jake taking in the last few moments on the beach at Sao Juliao.



My kids have become my teachers in so many ways in this stage of my life. I have a busy mind at times. Being present in moments like Jake was, can be elusive for me. I spent a lot of the time on the beach that morning thinking about all that needed to happen between the time we got back to the house and getting to the airport. Every moment I spent doing that was unnecessary. There wasn't one thing that happened later that day that needed me to spend time thinking about it while I was at the beach.

Jake spent the morning surfing, experiencing one wave at a time while I missed it and spent the morning thinking about things I didn't need to think about. Jake was at the beach and present to it. I was at the beach, but I was really somewhere else.

On a call with a client this week, he talked about how he can find himself spending time in at work thinking about things related to home and time at home thinking about things related to work. I asked him, 'what would happen if you spent more time at home thinking about the things that relate to home and more time in work thinking about the things that relate to work'? His reply was simple and clear, 'I'd get a lot more done.'

You are not your thoughts

My mind is quieter more often than it used to be, but it is still pretty busy at times. Thoughts come up and I follow them when I don't need to. In those moments I behave like I AM my thoughts as opposed to someone who HAS thoughts. Sometimes I catch myself and notice this happening. Sometimes I even manage to bring myself back to being present, to the person I am with, or to the place I am in, or to the task I am supposed to be working on.

Meditation helps me

One thing that continues to help me with being more present is meditation. My current practice is to spend ten minutes every morning in silent meditation. Meditation is not just something to tick off on my to do list (that was where I started with it). For me meditation is becoming a practice, or a 'way of being' that is helping me get better at 'noticing'. Better at noticing when I have become distracted. Better at noticing I am not present to the conversation I am in or person I am with. Better at noticing when I am caught up thinking about something I don't need to think about. Once I notice, I have an option to drop the thoughts that distracted me, an option to stop scrolling on my phone, an option to come back to the person I am with or an option to come back the task I was working on.

My experience expands when I am present

What I am learning is that when I catch myself and bring myself back to wherever I am, to whatever I am doing or to whoever I am with, my ability to experience places expands, my ability to be with people and really listen to them and connect with them increases and I just get a lot more done.

The more I catch myself and bring myself back to being present, the quieter my mind is getting and that is making a big difference.

Wishing you a present and peaceful weekend!



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