

Heel-ing the mind heals the soul

If you've ever tried teaching a dog to heel you know it is no easy task. Every few seconds or so you're saying "heel" and yanking on that leash... "heel", yank, "heel", yank, "heel", yank, and so on. After a while the distance between the "heels" gets longer and longer and the dog's attention span begins to expand. Eventually you can walk a whole city block and then perhaps a mile without any command at all. You get to simply be at peace and 'be' on your walk.

What would it be like to "heel" your mind in the very same way? Have you ever noticed how you can be doing something and realize you've not been there at all? Staying present is a challenge, let's face it. Though just like your relationship with your dog, once your mind is quiet, you can truly 'be' with yourself and focus on what you're doing or who you're with. Through this act you are connecting with and healing your soul. Imagine the gift in that for you and those around you. You've experienced it, someone who is always present with you as if you are the only one around and the only thing that matters to them in that moment. I venture to say, that takes skill and passion to accomplish. Even in writing this article, my mind continues to wander and I must remind it "heel".

This seems to be the topic with my clients lately. One client has been on maternity leave and realized as the time is closing in that she has not been fully present with her children. Instead she has been biding time until she goes back to work. Through our coaching she realizes how distant she is with her kids, husband, friends, work...basically everywhere in her life she finds she is somewhere else. The exercise of 'healing the mind' reveals deep awareness as she explores and expands the depth and length of her presence. She becomes keenly aware of her own needs and finds ways of satisfying those needs. She is meditating more, procrastinating a little less, finding joy in daily life, and reminding herself to come back to the moment when her mind wanders. As a result she is more present with her family, taking time for herself, and making the best of the remaining maternity leave.

Another client is working on being content with her life today and being present in it before stepping back into her career. Utilizing the techniques I share below plus additional belief work she says, "For the first time in years, I went to bed totally satisfied with a day in my life. I could have died that night and been happy. That was big for me."

It's not easy having been a career woman and then finding yourself in Mommy Land. Do know that you have choices and with a shift of presence you can wholly step into this phase of your life while allowing your future to unfold as the time is right. The most important thing is to be gentle on yourself.

Healing the Mind Technique:

1. Notice you have drifted
2. Say "heel"
3. Return your attention onto what you are doing

Body/Mind Awareness Technique:

1. Ask “where am I in my body”
 - a. notice where your attention goes in your body
2. Ask “what am I feeling”
 - b. notice any physical sensations or emotions your are experiencing
3. Ask “What am I thinking”
 - c. Notice what your thoughts are and what they are about
4. Ask “what is the quality of my breath”
 - d. Notice whether your breath is shallow, deep, quick, slow, etc.
5. Ask “is there something I need in this moment”
 - a. Notice what comes up for you
 - b. If something comes up
 - i. Take care of the need, or
 - ii. Make a plan to take care of the need, then
 - iii. Focus back on what you’re doing

ABOUT GRETCHEN

As a coach and facilitator for more than 16 years, Gretchen Reid passionately lives her life inspiring others to connect with their highest selves and manifest their dreams. She is the founder and lead facilitator and coach of Integrated Growth and Motherhood Transitions. Integrated Growth is a leadership consulting and career coaching firm while Motherhood Transitions is a coaching practice offering life coaching to moms experiencing both large scale and day-to-day transitions. She holds a BA in Psychology, an MS in Career and Human Resource Development with a concentration in Organization Development and Instructional Technology, and has been trained in the Mind Body Method and Direct Access coaching techniques. Above all, she is a mom of two fabulous boys.

Gretchen offers one-on-one and group coaching as well as workshops on the subjects of transition, personal development, leadership and management techniques. For more information, visit her websites at www.integratedgrowth.com and www.motherhoodtransitions.com or call her at (303) 642-3105.

ABOUT THE COLUMN

Look for Gretchen’s column in each publication of the Highlander Monthly. Though her column often focuses on transitions of motherhood, her column is not only for moms as we all face transitions in our lives.