

## 5 Inspirations for Being in the Moment

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How often have you eaten a meal and not really tasted it, or completed a chore or drove to work without really thinking about it.

Normally, we do not so much look at things as overlook them. — Alan Watts.

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Our days often pass us by while our minds are elsewhere.

**One of my favorite methods of finding happiness and preventing stress is living in the moment** — also known as [mindfulness](#). It's one of the foundations of Zen Buddhism, of course, (actually all Buddhism, I believe), but it's not necessarily meditation, per se — it's more being aware of your actions and thoughts, and what your senses bring in, in your every day routine.

No one actually lives in the moment all the time — I don't think it's possible. Some, with practice, can learn to live in the moment for longer than most of us, but there will always be times when you're worried about the future or thinking about the past, and forget to be in the moment.

It's actually pretty hard, if you give it a try. Test it out right now: close your eyes (after reading these instructions first), and concentrate on your breathing — the sensation of the air as it enters your nose or mouth and fills your lungs, and as it goes out again. If other thoughts come up, be aware of them, acknowledge them, let them go (but don't try to force them away) and then return your focus to your breathing.

**It's hard, isn't it? Being in the moment isn't as easy as it sounds.**

It takes practice. But it can be achieved at times. To help inspire you to live in the moment, here are 5 great examples:

1. **Children.** There's no one better at being present than a child. I love to watch my three-year-old son, Seth, as he plays. He's not thinking about what happened to him yesterday, or what he's going to do later today. He's Spiderman, and he's fighting the bad guys, and nothing else in the world exists. If he gets mad about something, he overreacts, and nothing else in the world matters but what has upset him. But he'll cry about it, and then soon return to normal, happy again, the offending situation forgotten without a grudge. He has no cares about tomorrow, and for that, I love to watch him. We need to use children as inspiration, and try to be like them sometimes. Jesus instructed us, "Be as a child," and those were wise words.
2. **Cats.** I also like watching my cat, Riddle. He thinks he's a lion. He'll stealthily stalk an insect or lizard, as if he's hidden in tall grass on the savanna, and then he pounces and attacks. You know he's not thinking about

what he had for breakfast or what furniture needs to be clawed to shreds later in the day. Cats (and other animals) are all about the Now. Be like a cat.

3. **My wife and dessert.** My wife Eva really knows how to eat dessert. Actually, of all the people I know, she may be the best at being in the moment, completely. She can really enjoy something, with all of her being. I've learned how to eat dessert by watching her — while I tend to gobble something quickly, Eva closes her eyes, and slowly puts a spoon of ice cream in her mouth. She savors the flavor, the texture, the coolness, the sweetness, the chocolateness of it. Eva enjoys things more than most human beings, and she inspires me. The next time you eat something, try not to think about anything else, not to read, not to talk to someone — just experience the food.
  4. **Zen sweeper.** It's been said that the only two jobs of a Zen monk are sitting zazen (meditation) and sweeping. Cleaning is one of the daily rituals of a Zen monk, one of their most important daily practices. They sweep or rake, and they try to do nothing else. They aren't thinking about being in a Zen state — the Zen state is the sweeping. The next time you're doing housework (or anything, really), try concentrating on the housework, on the dust, on the motion, on the sensation. See [this interesting article](#) for more on this.
  5. **Yourself, lost in something.** You've been in the moment plenty of times. Can you remember a time when you lost yourself in a task? Not lost in thought, but lost in the doing of the task itself — you were concentrating fully, you thought of nothing else. The world disappeared. It might have been work — you might have achieved that state of mind known as "flow" — or it could have been a hobby, playing sports, yardwork, fixing something, anything. Try to remember a time like that, and replicate it.
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Author: Leo Babauta

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