

Take a Daily Retreat

I recently attended a wonderful retreat. A whole week surrounded by loving, like-minded people on the path of spiritual growth was amazing. I returned home happy, with my tank full of joy and love. But between my busy schedule and my kids bickering, it wasn't long before I found my tank depleted again. How do I keep that feeling going in my day-to-day life? — Busy Mom

Retreats are wonderful ways to grow and restore ourselves. They remind us of the value of slowing down, opening our hearts and deeply connecting with others. Once they are over, the challenge is integrating what we learned and committing to restorative practices in our daily lives. Replenishing is possible even amidst the busiest schedules. At a traffic light or while listening to your children, take a deep slow breath. Laser your focus on what is happening within and around you, even if it's uncomfortable. Just simply notice. This present-moment practice connects you to the ultimate source of joy and love. The universe uses these small openings to realign you with your true nature of balance and grace.

Time away with like-minded people is valuable and important, but that which fills your tank is always available. When in a state of constant motion and responsibilities, being present and patient with growing children — let alone happy and fulfilled — can seem impossible. Your linear, logical mind may scoff at the idea that dedicating time for daily spiritual practice (even just four minutes) will re-wire your day-to-day experience. But it does.

The gift of this commitment reminds me of Rainer Maria Rilke's poem, "The Swan." The poem offers that our "clumsy living" of stress and depletion is like the swan's ungraceful waddling on land. As the Benedictine monk Brother David Steindl-Rast said of the swan, "It is the simple contact with the water that gives him grace and presence. You only have to touch the elemental waters in your own life, and it will transform everything."

So, Busy Mom, let yourself down into the waters of your beautiful everyday life. Breathe, meditate and pray. In this way, you bless yourself, your children and all of us. Welcome home. ❀



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