Cultivating Mindfulness and Peace While Living in a Chaotic World

**"Peace is not something you wish for;
it's something you make, something you do,
something you are, and something you give away."**

— John Lennon

In this day and age, most people would agree that we are living in a stressful world. Between terrorism, unemployment or being overworked, making ends meet, and the state of the economy, it's easy to become overwhelmed. The good news is that there are things we can do to help us live with more peace and serenity on a daily basis. Read the following tips for suggestions:

1 With the overload of stress in their lives, most people need time to feel centered and relaxed. Stretch your legs, take a walk, listen to music, read, meditate, work out, or relax in some way that feels good for you. Maybe it's kayaking on a lake when the weather is nice, or painting, or writing. Easing psychological and emotional problems that cause anxiety and stress is one way to try to find some peace in your daily life. Identify what grounds you, then really make an effort to include it as part of your daily routine.

2 Incorporate five minute "mini-meditations" into your day, if you can't find or don't like to do longer meditations. This can help you release emotional burdens and negative thoughts, in turn relieving you of tension and bringing you back to a state of peace, using only a few minutes of your time. Just close your eyes and imagine yourself somewhere beautiful, like a beach, mountain, waterfall, or anywhere else that feels peaceful to you. There are many apps you can download to help with this as well.

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3 Use deep breathing techniques to ground yourself in the midst of chaos. This will cause your mind to calm down and relax, helping you to think more clearly. Close your eyes, inhale deeply, and exhale deeply. Repeat for a few minutes, using and filling your diaphragm.

4 Create a mantra. Elena Miller, a psychiatrist who wrote a piece for the Huffington Post on this subject and who is passionate about integrating Western Medicine with Eastern philosophies, suggests this mantra: "Breathing in, I calm my body. Breathing out, I calm my mind. May I be balanced. May I be at peace."

5 Yes, worrying about things like paying bills or caring for elderly parents can add turmoil to your life. But regardless of the type of stress you're under, stop multitasking! We all do it, but it can really contribute to a constant feeling of chaos. By focusing more on being in the moment, you can use your energy in a more productive way. Take the time to work on just one project or task at a time, and see if you can feel a difference. Here's another helpful tip: when you're in a joyful state, make a conscious effort to be in the moment and soak up the feeling or experience; do your best to be present, rather than thinking or worrying about the future.

6 Turn off the TV or radio. While it's important to be aware of what's going on in the world, it is equally as important to be able to disconnect, when need be. When things are feeling too overwhelming, switch off the news and instead focus on something that will help you to feel more at peace: yoga, a board game with your child, making dinner with a partner, coffee and laughter with a friend, curling up with a good book where you can escape the world for a while, or just a quick walk where your focus is on nature, can all help you to relax and be more present in your own life.

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