

The Power of the Still Point

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"This above all: to thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man."

Shakespeare

"If we were not so single-minded about keeping our lives
moving, and could do nothing, perhaps a huge silence might
interrupt this sadness of never understanding ourselves."

Pablo Neruda

When was the last time you touched a still point in your self?

Although it's platitudinous to talk about the busy-ness of everyday life, it is nonetheless true that it's all too easy to lose the connection to the wellspring of that which makes our lives worth living and gives us direction.

In the extroverted society of the U.S., when you're committed to personal leadership development, whether that's in the context of your own business or within the walls of a corporation, it's not uncommon to feel tyrannized by the need to get results. We often feel that we need to stay in motion.

It can be challenging to step out of the inertia of being on a particular treadmill you thought was going somewhere even when it's not getting you where you want to go.

So what's the first thing to do when you're not getting the results you want?

Touch back into your still point.

The still point is the place of rest, of silence, of neutrality, of dispassion. It is that place where we are able to re-equilibrate, to allow the noise, motion, and e-motion of our lives to recede if ever so briefly.

It is also the place from which healing and new knowing can occur. Healing is the process – mentally, emotionally, energetically, spiritually, and physically – of becoming whole again.

It requires release of what we think we know, tolerance of the void of not knowing and uncertainty, and the embracing of a new form of thought, being, or action which may be sensed but not yet fully formed or known. Or... it may be known immediately and fully.

When we touch into the still point, we can once again connect to the well-spring of our purpose and our vision.

This quiet, very internal place is like an inner sanctuary. Finding this space and going there periodically is one of your most powerful tools, for it is where you can hear the inner voice that provides the compass and guidance to move you towards your north star.

It's important to remember that it speaks in different voices and can be recognized in different forms, sometimes giving you messages in words, other times visual images, or even physical symptoms. Sometimes it speaks from the inner child, who may be angry and frustrated at a lack of gratification and whose plain speaking voice we so easily ignore or dismiss.

Sometimes it speaks from the inner physician and healer who knows what it is you need to do come back into balance to restore your well-being, and sometimes it speaks from your inner "wise man" or "wise woman", who reminds you in what direction you need to be going in order to fulfill your unique destiny.

The still point is the alpha and the omega point – the point of the beginning and the end. When we feel stressed or confused or lost, it is the place to return to.

How does this relate to emotional competence? Remember that self-awareness, accurate self-assessment, and confidence are the cornerstones of emotional competence and well-being. Furthermore, when we are in integrity with ourselves, we manage ourselves more effectively.

Thus, integrity and self-management require that we know ourselves. This is not a one-time process. As we grow and develop, and are confronted with the life's unexpected exigencies, we must look inward again and again and again, if we are to know ourselves in current time and be transparent to ourselves and to others.

Our personal integrity is inextricably tied to our integrity towards the world. Therefore, practicing integrity with ourselves will naturally bear the fruit of emotional intelligence.

Just as still water confers a transparency that allows you to see your reflection in the water, so too, do we become transparent to ourselves when we return to the still point. For it is here that our inner knowing can be seen, heard, and felt, apart from all the noise and activity into which we so easily lose ourselves.

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Action Steps You Can Take!

1. Declare a time-out, or a time-in (inside that is)! Recognize that for some of you, slowing down is going to be a challenge.
2. Touching the still point is essentially a mindfulness practice. What is it that allows you to become aware of what you're thinking, feeling, experiencing? It could be sitting in meditation, sitting and focusing on your breath, or doing something that allows you to relax deeply such as getting a massage.
3. As you become mindful of what you're experiencing, allow yourself at the same time to let it go, to release it. See if you can let yourself get beyond what you think you know and what you think is right – reach for the space of not knowing, from which new things are born.

4. Be ready to receive new information, which might surprise you or even scare you. Receive it without judgment or evaluation, simply acknowledging that which you have received.