



September 2010

Hi Everyone, thank you to all of you who have sent me welcome home messages and yes I had a really wonderful time in Europe and the UK catching up with family. It was hot, hectic and loads of fun, especially watching the world cup soccer final sitting outside an Irish Pub in Florence, surrounded by exuberant fans from all over the world. It was a sight to remember! Role on the next one.

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Time To Relax

Being on holiday...what a lovely thought....it's beneficial in so many ways, some we may not even be aware of. Yes we do have that chance to relax and unwind, participate in activities we may not usually have time for, meet people from other walks of life, taste different foods, explore other countries and cultures and of course there is always the shopping! Who can ignore the bargain of a lifetime eh girls! It's very easy, when we have been hanging out for holiday, to fill it with so many activities that we come home needing a rest. How many times have you heard yourself say the same thing?nbsp;

Wondering where I am going with this? Well, it's to gently highlight the busy, hectic pace of our lives, how much we pack into our days, even when on vacation. That's not to say we shouldn't do anything when on holiday, of course not, after all we go on holiday to explore and enjoy new ventures. But we often find it hard to actually relax and unwind. Our minds maybe still thinking about work, or what we think we should be doing, instead of just simply chilling out, completely relaxing and taking things as they come.

We Find It Hard To Switch Off

It is actually becoming an art to relax...not many people find it easy. When did you last just stop and do nothing even for 5 minutes? We find it hard to switch off. So much external stimulus coupled with inner nagging thoughts, worries, fears, pressures makes for a busy mind. No wonder we find it difficult to relax. Thoughts are constantly streaming through our minds at such a pace.

It almost feels natural to have a busy mind, and unnatural if our minds are quiet.

"Mmm, methinks there must be something wrong with me, I didn't think about anything in the last 5 minutes, maybe if my mind's empty I won't have anything to think about, so I had better think of something"

- [Why do we try and relax for just a few weeks of the year?](#)
- [Why do we limit ourself this way and put so much pressure on ourselves for the remainder of the year?](#)

External/Internal Influences - (as within, so without)

We live in an extremely busy world, there is always something going on, something to distract us; the world is full of distractions. We can allow ourselves to become immersed in the outside world, buy into the issues, the fear, the "I must have", and the "needs" that are created by very effective marketing, or we can choose to stay centered and focussed on our inner self and hence stay on a much more calmer, smoother pathway.

Have you noticed that when there is what feels like, albeit a short lull, something comes along to attract our attention, tempting our thoughts to once again focus on the external world ensuring that we don't touch base with the real self. Once again pulling us off track.

We have become so used to this way of being, hypnotised by it even, that we can't bear it when we can actually hear the quiet, when there is no "noise" to fill our minds. We have become programmed to expect interference of some sort to occupy our minds and

our thoughts. We feel lost when it is quiet.

This conditioning is also perpetuated by our individual environments. How many times did you hear, for example, your teacher say "stop day dreaming", or your parents say "you can't just sit there doing nothing, do something useful with yourself". Ever find yourself at work thinking something through, maybe gazing out of a window for inspiration, (if you are lucky to have a window seat) and feeling maybe that you should look busy? When we are able to stop, subconsciously we may feel guilty or lazy, that we should be doing something else or perhaps we feel uncomfortable with our own thoughts. Even in that moment our mind is still churning over those worrying thoughts.

Our subconscious mind accepts without question all that is given to it, our thoughts and emotions resulting from our experiences, our reactions to situations and retains them until we either consciously choose to release them through some form of healing, or they release themselves, usually when we least expect it, because someone or something has triggered a reaction in us.

It's Hard For Our Minds To Be Still

So you can see that it's hard for our mind to be still. Given then, that our conscious mind is constantly distracted by outside influences and the subconscious mind is stressing out, racing around trying to keep a lid on those deeper, unsettling thoughts, no wonder we get tired. Where do we go to relax and chill out? You can imagine a scenario of constant struggle and indecision going on in our mind... *"is it quieter outside or quieter and safer inside. Where can I go to find peace and quiet?"* It can feel to some, that there is no escape, nowhere to go to switch of the interference or the noise. It can be quite tiring, perhaps exhausting when wanting and needing so much to be able to find quiet. Just trying to relax can be stressful in itself; the very thing its supposed to assist and not be.

Now to some it may seem that there is no point in trying. If our unconscious thoughts are so unsettling, why then would I want to relax and be faced with a barrage of negative thoughts and worries? Well ask yourself this, if you leave those unfettered thoughts to do their own thing, exactly what will they do? When and how will they catch you off guard?

Would you rather be in charge and not leave it to your subconscious to rule your life?.

I know at this point, it may seem that I have wandered from the topic of something so seemingly innocuous and gentle as relaxation, but many people that come to see me find it hard to relax, and that's mostly because of those deeper thoughts and emotions held in the subconscious mind which create the barrier to relaxing. They get so stressed trying to relax!

Find It Hard To Relax?

If you find it hard or stressful to relax try this simple technique and if deeper thoughts and emotions crop up, or you feel fearful, write down what it is that is bothering you. Take it out of your mind, even for a moment, look at it and ask yourself what is it that is causing you angst or fear around this thought or emotion and then decide if you want to dig deeper. If you find that you are too fearful to ask further then seek help.

But if you feel ok to go deeper then keep asking and writing down what comes to mind. In this way you are clearing the clutter and finding a pathway into your deeper subconscious thinking; that part that runs your life until *you* put *you* back into the driver's seat. The more you write down, the clearer your mind will become. You may still need help with the deeper issues and that's ok, as we all need help sometime.

Relaxation Exercise:

Imagine or visualise a staircase in your mind and it can be any staircase that you choose. It could be one that you've seen in a movie or one remembered from childhood, or you can make it up. It can be a long sweeping ornate staircase with golden bannisters and a thick rich red carpet covering the steps, or it could be a cool white marble staircase. Allow yourself to notice the detail. When you can picture it in your mind tell yourself that you are going to walk down the staircase one step at a time and with each step you are going to relax deeper and deeper. Really use your imagination and sense of feeling to notice each step beneath your feet and as you count yourself down each step say these words to yourself, "deeper and deeper down I go. The deeper I go, the more relaxed I am"

Now allow yourself to go even deeper. At the bottom of the stairs imagine a deep blue pool of water; walk into the water, notice that it is warm, it feels gentle and nurturing. Then feel yourself floating on its surface. Sense the water touching the outline of your body; it's comforting, it's supporting you as you float and you begin to drift. Whilst floating tell yourself, " I am safe, relaxed and comfortable. Every day I am relaxed and calm in all situations. My mind is calm, my body is calm, all my muscles are relaxed and calm". Continue to imagine that your body is relaxed, that each muscle is relaxed. Scan your body and if any area feels tight, imagine a soft blue light encircling that part of your body, releasing all tension. Do this until all of your body feels relaxed. Continue to feel yourself floating and drifting for a long as you wish. When you are ready to return, come out of the water feeling refreshed and de-stressed. Walk back up the staircase slowly and



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calmly feeling more refreshed and relaxed as you progress.

When you arrive at the top of the stairs open your eyes and repeat, "I am safe, relaxed and calm."

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