

Preparation for G53 -- The Spaces In Between

All readings are adapted from *Everyday Serenity: Meditations for people who do too much* by David Kundtz (available through the bookstore at www.uua.org).

Do you ever just hang out and do nothing? Chances are, you do it very rarely, if ever. Most of us are “doers, producers, people of action. We are caught in lives in which we are doing too much.” The consequence of this constant doing-ness is that we may frequently—even permanently—lose touch with our truest, deepest feelings and desires. We risk becoming what we *do*, not who we really *are*.

This session focuses on finding **spaces in between the events of your life**, to “do” nothing and just “be.” What’s the benefit of this? “Many of us are starving for those moments of solitude when we can just hang out with no pressure or guilt. Those in-between times used to give us a feeling of centeredness in our lives, of awareness of our spiritual needs, and those of our families, a confident sense of self-knowledge... Time spent doing nothing is an antidote to superficiality. It encourages and develops the skills to focus and pay attention for both the short and long hauls, and helps us to probe below the surface of life, not just skim it. In the stopping, we discover the vast spaciousness of life, of love, of connection.” These in-between spaces can bring “calmness and clarity that an over-demanding schedule steals from you.”

Try this. It might surprise you.

During the coming week, create a space to rest, daydream, wander, ponder, or remember. Try to make it a significant amount of time. *Remember, this isn't traditional meditation, or activities like reading, exercising, gardening, or other hobbies.* It’s quiet time spent focused on yourself, on looking inward; time that isn’t useful, productive, required, educational, healthy, entertaining, creative, or distracting. Here are some ideas:

- Go for a stroll or drive with no fixed destination or purpose.
- Take out a blank piece of paper and write whatever comes to your mind. Don’t plan, judge, or edit what you write.
- Sit quietly in a comfortable chair or sofa and gaze out the window.
- Soak for a long time in the bath or hot tub.
- Open a box, drawer, or scrapbook of photos or mementos. Don’t sort or organize; just look and remember.
- Sit at a sidewalk café, in a garden, or on a park bench by yourself. Don’t read or talk; just sit and think.
- Go to a playground and spend some time on the swings.
- Lie on the ground on a blanket or towel and just look at the sky or trees.
- Walk the labyrinth at church.

Now think about what happened.

Consider any or all of these questions to help you understand the experience.

1. While you were “doing nothing,” what did you feel, emotionally and physically? What did you think? What about afterwards?
2. Was it difficult for you? Were you bored, restless, guilty, or sleepy? Why?
3. Did you learn anything about yourself from the experience? Did it seem like “valuable” time? Were there any surprises?
4. Would you want to do more of this? Why or why not? What effect would it have on your life if you did this more often?