



# LIVE GUILT FREE

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## BEING PRESENT IN LIFE'S MOMENTS

By Tanya Curren

My sincere hope for you is that you not only make the time to do things you love, but have the attention to do the same. Let's talk about this concept for a minute because many of us deal with feeling guilty for either not having enough time or for not being present in the moment. We all make time for the things that are important to us, whether they are things that we want to do or not. For example, even though I hate sitting down to pay the bills, I definitely make time for it each month because I enjoy living in an air conditioned house while eating dinner. I also have to pay attention when I'm paying the bills online, because if I don't I will put in the wrong amount to the wrong company and have a mini-disaster on my hands!

I also make time for things I love and intentionally make sure I'm paying attention to life's precious fleeting moments. One of the many good outcomes of my coma experience was that it has made me a huge moment grabber. I will stop and do something special right then - in that moment - with my son or husband because I know the moment will pass. Even if I'm focused on getting somewhere or doing a specific task, if an opportunity arises where we can create a special new memory, we are on it!

But the reality of what happens in our lives is that we have so much on our "to-do" list and we cram so many things in the limited hours that we are awake that the things we choose to do don't have our attention. I have been reading a great book by Timothy Ferriss called, *The 4-Hour Workweek*, and here are a couple of his quotes that are so true: "Time without attention is worthless, so value attention over time. If you have time but you don't have attention, your time has no practical value. Attention is necessary for not only productivity but appreciation."

These are so true, aren't they? We can give someone our time, but if our mind is somewhere else and our attention is not focused on them then we are not truly appreciating them. This happens to a lot of mothers, and believe me it has happened to me, too! I can be in the room with my son trying to multi-task a million things while he's talking to me and showing me something and I can hear myself saying, "Um-hum... Ohhhh...Ok...Yes that sounds great..." and yet in reality I have no idea what he's just said! Sound familiar? Even the other day, my husband Rick was talking and talking to me and I was just nodding my head and even responding. Then he asked me a question and I had to totally bust myself out by telling him that I hadn't heard a word he'd said! I was thinking about what we were going to have for dinner that night! Ooops. Obviously I have not perfected this yet!

The point is that we have to be focused on where we give both our time and attention. Remember, Satan doesn't have to hurl a massive stone at your car while you're driving to work. All he has to do is keep you mentally and emotionally distracted to win the battle for your time. Ephesians 5: 15-16 says, "Be very careful, then, how you live - not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil."

Making the most of every opportunity means valuing and paying attention to where your time goes. This takes an intentional focus and thought process on our part, but the end result is very worth it.

Let me give you a practical way to make this positive change: Think about the last time you felt guilty about being physically present with your child/spouse/co-worker/friend, yet you were mentally absent from their conversation or your experience together. As you relive this moment in your mind, be objective and see how you could have changed the outcome. Were you trying to do too much at once? Did your child try to share something with you when you were super stressed out and couldn't focus? Were you trying to plan your dinner menu while your co-worker was just rambling on and on? Or, were you having coffee with a friend, yet ignoring half of what she said? As you look at the situation, see what you could have done to produce a different outcome.

Maybe you could have slowed down and focused on one task, rather than trying to do 8 things at once. Or maybe you could have told your child that you needed a few minutes alone before you listened to their story so that you could focus on what they were sharing. Perhaps you could have told your co-worker that you could catch up over lunch because you had to plan something for your family. And, instead of tuning out what your friend was sharing over coffee, you could have tried to focus on how you appreciate having her for a friend and all of her great qualities that enhance your friendship.

I know this isn't easy, and I'm definitely not suggesting that we stop multi-tasking! (I think the world would fall apart if we did! I know I'd never be able to accomplish all I do in a day if God hadn't given me the ability to get so much done.) But, what I am definitely encouraging us all to do is to slow down and pay attention to what is right in front of us.

The moments will pass if we don't grab them and treasure them for what they bring. Life's true treasures are happiness, joy, laughter, discovery, creativity, passion, purpose, love, excitement, and so much more! When you put God first and focus on appreciating the time you have, it will bring you so much fulfillment, joy and true inner peace.

This is my prayer for you. I want you to enjoy your life, and God does too! I want you to live your life free of any and all unnecessary guilt. By intentionally and honestly looking at how you interact with others in your life, you will be able to see where any guilt creeps in. This puts you in a very powerful and empowering position, because you are no longer on the defensive - you are now offensively protecting your heart and mind! I love this mindset!

In Ecclesiastes 3:1-8, Solomon is talking about everything having a specific time. In verse 6 he says, "...a time to search and a time to give up..." I believe that this is the time for us to search ourselves and focus on God's perfect will and timing for our lives and this is the time to give up unnecessary time wasters like holding onto guilt. Give each day and moment to Him and ask Him to help you to be present in all of life's most precious moments. This is a gift that He wants you to enjoy each day!

I want to leave you with a poem I read recently, and I thought it was perfect for this month's theme. God Bless You as you continue to enjoy your relationship with the One who created you to live your life guilt free!

God Bless You,

*Tanya*

## SLOW DANCE

By: David L. Weatherford

Have you ever watched kids on a merry-go-round,  
or listened to rain slapping the ground?

Ever followed a butterfly's erratic flight,  
or gazed at the sun fading into the night?

You better slow down, don't dance so fast,  
time is short, the music won't last.

Do you run through each day on the fly,  
when you ask "How are you?", do you hear the reply?

When the day is done, do you lie in your bed,  
with the next hundred chores running through your head?

You better slow down, don't dance so fast,  
time is short, the music won't last.

Ever told your child, we'll do it tomorrow,  
and in your haste, not see his sorrow?

Ever lost touch, let a friendship die,  
'cause you never had time to call and say hi?

You better slow down, don't dance so fast,  
time is short, the music won't last.

When you run so fast to get somewhere,  
you miss half the fun of getting there.

When you worry and hurry through your day,  
it's like an unopened gift thrown away.

Life isn't a race, so take it slower,  
hear the music before your song is over.



Tanya Curren is the co-founder of Boundless Limits International, a ministry of encouragement and empowerment. In 2004 Tanya Curren was in a life threatening coma for 8 days as a deadly infection ravaged her body. Given two hours to live, she survived only to face the ordeal of a painful three year recovery. She is the author of Broken Places, The Proverbs Devotion Guide, Embracing Change & Conflict, and several other CD's. In her conferences and seminars, Tanya shares with others the life-lessons she learned through her journey to restoration. Tanya travels and speaks at local, regional and international venues, and is passionate about guiding others to have a personal, real relationship with Jesus Christ.