

“Be Here Now”

by Jackie Sorensen, RYT 200

“Be present,” a simple statement. It’s something we hear so often, but what does it really mean and why would we want to do it? The age old tradition and way of life through the eyes of Yoga offers insight into both these questions.

The simplified “How” is practicing being in a state of Conscious Awareness. To achieve this state, we practice attuning our awareness to one or more levels to bring us into the present. We invite our ever-present witness to notice what is arising: the physical sensations in the body, thoughts in the mind, emotional sensations, and the qualities of the breath. Through this practice, we become acutely aware of the present moment as it occurs, opportunities continuously arising and inviting us to participate in life. Past and future fall to the periphery, the mind quiets, and we are able to more authentically live in the moment.

Now the question of “Why?” Imagine being in a consistent state of equanimity; calm, levelheaded, and poised in every situation. We still experience life, still feel all the feels, but we do so without attachment. As we detach from this tendency to allow the mind and emotions to influence our decisions, we become less reactive. We are more able to go with the flow of our personal participation and the creation of our lives.

It has been my experience that this is THE purpose of Yoga. There are thousands of years worth of yogic wisdom on how to be present, and it is more readily available than ever before. Here are a few things you can do to build your personal practice:

- Take a yoga class!
- Walk outside barefoot.
- Sit down and enjoy a meal slowly.
- Listen to a guided Yoga Nidra meditation. Here is a link to a 12 minute one I pre-recorded:
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/xjnsrwm6y0v1tx/Intro%20to%20Yoga%20Nidra%20with%20Jackie%20Sorensen.m4a?dl=0>
- Set aside 5-10 minutes a day for this short meditation:

Find a quiet place to sit or lie down. As you begin to settle in, bring your awareness to sounds around you... then smells and tastes... thoughts... emotions... physical sensations. Simply notice what is present, not trying to focus on one thing in particular, or attaching a story, just notice what is arising in your field of awareness... Continue to notice what arises... Now bring your awareness to your breath. Feel the air as it enters the nasal passages. Notice the way the body engages and participates with the rise and fall of the chest and belly. Even the breath out, lengthen the inhale, then the exhale as you find an evenness in the length of both... Now with the body and mind calmer, see if you can experience the witness within you, the awareness that is always there in every moment. Imagine that you are seeing yourself on a movie screen, and the

watcher is this witness. On the movie screen is you living your life, a series of events with thoughts, emotions, and experiences continually arising. The witness sits back, detached from what is unfolding, simply aware of what is happening... Now bring your awareness back to what is arising (sounds, thoughts, emotions, sensations) and experience them through the eyes of the witness; no attachment, no stories, just awareness... When you are ready, welcome your awareness back to your physical body, take in a few deep breaths, and blink your eyes opened and closed. As you return to your day, take this practice with you as situations arise. Allow yourself to come back to the witness and this moment; feeling present, levelheaded, and ready for whatever comes your way.