

Squeezed by the pressures of this crazymaking world of ours?

*Say hello to strategies that will
engage your mind, encourage your heart,
energize your body, and strengthen your spirit!*

Building on the success of its sister book, *Press Pause . . . Press On*, Patricia Katz presents 64 more sanity-saving solutions in *Press Pause . . . Think Again*. These 64 new "pause prompts" deliver fresh perspectives on life and work—each loaded with sound advice for navigating this speed-crazed world with greater joy, ease, and grace than ever before.

In *Press Pause . . . Think Again*, you discover how to:

- Avoid tempo tantrums and adopt transition tactics.
- Make meltdowns optional and safety valves matter.
- Nix life's discretionary burdens and plug energy drains.
- Put technology on hold and bypass the acceleration trap.
- Choose "presence" over "pace" to strengthen your community of support.
- Live with an awesome sense of wonder, carving out your legacy as you go.

Pause fans say:

*Timeless wisdom • Succinct • A breath of fresh air and a sigh of relief
Hits the nail on the head • Priceless • Sane and solid advice
An island of calm in the midst of the crazy • Cheaper than a therapist!*



Patricia Katz, MCE, helps people and organizations shift from overloading to rightloading in ways that are healthy, satisfying and sustainable. An expert on balance and productivity issues for 25 years, she inspires people to take action through her seminars, speeches, and writing. A past president of the Canadian Association of Professional Speakers, in 2010 Patricia was inducted into the Canadian Speaking Hall of Fame.

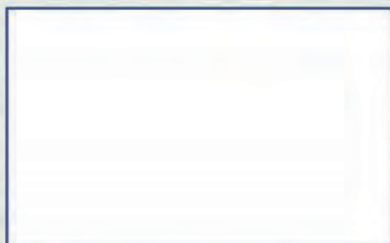
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PRESS PAUSE . . . THINK AGAIN More Balance & Perspective For Work & Life BY PATRICIA KATZ

PRESS PAUSE ... THINK AGAIN



*More Balance & Perspective
For Work & Life*

BY PATRICIA KATZ

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Introduction

If you were here in Saskatoon to start your day with me, I'd take you for a walk along the South Saskatchewan River. I'd invite you to sit a while on my riverbank rock, just watching the water and the world roll by.

This is how I begin most days—in my place to sit with time to think. Doing so focuses my mind, directs my heart, and puts things in perspective for the whole day ahead.

In this stressed-out, overloaded, crazymaking world of ours, when and where do you just sit and think? Do you make the time? Have you found the patience? Even on days when it's a struggle, I've learned this kind of time out pays big dividends in calm and presence.

Consider this book, *Press Pause...Think Again*, to be your invitation to step outside the frenzy of everyday life, to pause and reflect on your challenges and choices. In the process, you just might discover saner, more satisfying ways to live and work.

The concepts in this book are based on paying attention—on noticing—which I believe to be one of life's more useful practices. Among the things I've noticed over the years is the power of a story, a metaphor, an image, a shared experience. They all serve to capture one's imagination, anchor ideas, and shift perspectives. Through them, every experience becomes a teachable moment and our lives become a learning lab. Our days are ripe with the promise of lessons to be harvested—when we pay attention! This book is a collection of these noticings—of experiences lived and lessons gleaned.

For more than a decade, I've been sharing these observations through a weekly e-zine called *Pause*. Readers continually tell me how they put the insights and ideas to work in their lives. They post *Pause* messages on bulletin boards and refrigerators; they circulate them by email to their friends; they discuss them with colleagues over a cup of coffee. These ideas become fodder for reflection and instruments of change as they make their way into the world.

This is the second collection of *Pause* messages presented in book form. The first, *Press Pause...Press On*, was published in 2006 and has gone on to a second printing. *Press Pause...Think Again* builds on the success of its sister edition, expanding its themes and exploring new directions.

Each of the 64 concepts features a single reflection along with suggestions for how to put it to good use. You'll also find a related quote or two, plus valued anecdotes that *Pause* readers have contributed in response to my *Pause* messages.

As you'll discover, the 64 concepts are loosely grouped under these eight themes:

- Taking Time
- Rightsizing Loads
- Setting Pace
- Boosting Vigor
- Minding Thoughts
- Shifting Viewpoints
- Building Bonds
- Mining Moments

You'll find *Press Pause...Think Again* to be an easy read with each concept complete on two facing pages. Feel free to jump around, scan titles, and skip to those that catch your attention. Or, if you wish, start at the beginning and make your way through it from start to finish. You can savor one concept a day or several a week.



The overall mission of this book? To help you navigate through an increasingly overloaded, fast-paced world with greater joy, ease, and grace than ever before.

May the ideas you find here put a smile on your face, a song in your heart, and a spring in your step. Above all, may they encourage you to press pause ... think again!

Paus-atively yours,

A Quick Word

The phrase “to make a long story short” is often used by those who are well into a lengthy discourse. By the time they realize they’ve gone on far too long, attention has waned and the listeners wish the storyteller had the foresight to make that long story short from the get-go.

“Slow down and enjoy life. It’s not only the scenery you miss by going too fast — you also miss the sense of where you are going and why.”

— Eddie Cantor

However, not everything needs to be abbreviated or excused for taking up precious time. That’s why I’m alarmed to hear the word “quick” being attached to so many of the events of our lives—in all kinds of unnecessary ways.

I recently participated in a Q & A session in which many of the queries were prefaced with the apologetic phrase, “I just have a quick question about . . .” For heaven’s sake, we were there to share questions and answers, and a full two hours had been allotted specifically for that purpose.

“Just watch what you’re doing right now; watch it carefully, attentively, and witness the amazing slowing down in the simple presence of attention.”

— Joni Packer

In another example, I heard a radio announcer introduce a promo for an upcoming event with the words, “Just a quick note about . . .” And I’ve often read, “Here’s a quick update . . .” as the lead phrase in email messages. I’ve even written a few of those myself.

In the same vein, friends and colleagues ask each other to go for a “quick bite to eat.” It’s as if we dare not make time for the legitimate and *welcome* parts of our day.

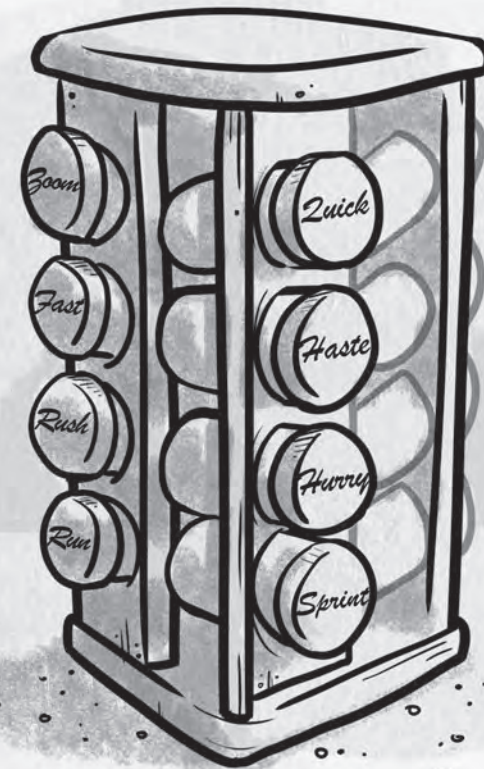
I expect this conversational habit is driven by a focus on time consciousness. However, it’s a practice that works against us. How? *By making everything feel hurried.*

Let’s get over our need to remind each other of the precious passage of time. Let’s stop adding a “quick” dose of urgency to every exchange. 🌀

When I was purchasing a new TV, the young salesman at the store responded to my question by saying, “I’ll check in a quick second.” When I asked him, “Is there a slow second,” he was befuddled! Later, when the twenty-something technicians connected my new cable system, they had to wait for the channels to load. It was interesting to watch them uncomfortably shift their weight from foot to foot, flick the remote, tap, etc. After fifteen minutes, they decided it would be too long to wait. They’d return later in the afternoon to finish.

I refer to this as the McDonald’s Syndrome. We’ve come to expect everything in a hurry, hurry, hurry.

— Kay K.



The 90-Minute Habit

You're working away—head down, afterburners aflame. You've been making great progress and, blessedly, interruptions have been few. Still, after an hour and a half or so, you feel restless. Your attention wanders. You find yourself feeling irritable, impatient.

Why are you having trouble with focus when the stars are aligned for productivity? It could be your internal body rhythms clamoring for your attention.

You see, the human body isn't built for nonstop high performance. People do a better job of maintaining energy over the long haul when they offset periods of focused concentration with time outs for renewal.

"The higher the demand, the greater and more frequent the need for renewal."

—Tony Schwartz

Top performers in all kinds of fields tend to work in approximately 90-minute cycles—90-minute sprints, if you will. They shift back and forth between periods of intense effort and purposeful renewal. Consider

that the race car driver's success depends on focused, high-speed performance on the track. Yet an equally important part is knowing when to pull off the track and into the pit for adjustments. Ignore, postpone, or cancel the pit stops, and the race is lost.

I suggest you plan variety into your schedule and be intentional in choosing your own pit stops. For example, if you're focused on developing a project plan or writing a report, you'll be expending a lot of mental energy. So during your break, you might choose a contrasting activity such as moving your body (walk or stretch) or connecting socially with others (share a chat or a joke).

Remember, the length of your pause isn't as critical as its regularity. Make sure you DO step away from the work, and that you choose the best recharging option for your needs and situation.

Given the fast pace and high expectations of today's workplace,

it's tempting to abandon the practice of taking breaks. If that's true for you and your colleagues, share these ideas and build support for each other. Discuss the kinds of renewal breaks—either solo or with others—that make the most sense in your world. You could even set an alarm to interrupt you at 90-minute intervals—or at the very least mid-morning and mid-afternoon.

Help each other step away from the press of work before exhaustion and inefficiency set in. Then you can return to the task at hand with fresh energy and a high level of concentration for the long haul. ↻

The hand dryer in our office washroom works at about half capacity. We joke it's faster to dry your hands on your clothes. Lately I've taken the time to simply let the machine dry my hands completely. It likely adds about two minutes to my daily down time, but I feel more settled and less rushed on my way back from the washroom. Perhaps that dryer is actually working better than I thought!

—Brenda F.



Meltdowns Optional

I had just purchased a new desktop computer and set out to transfer files and applications from the old to the new. The process went relatively smoothly, and the new larger, brighter screen and faster processing delighted me.

However, the delight faded when it turned out my new “baby” was a touch temperamental. She’d shift from humming along happily to spiking a fever and spinning her wheels. The wheel-spinning was punctuated by intermittent brain freezes during which all the clicking and cajoling in the world couldn’t raise a response.

It soon became evident a trip to the ER (Electronic Rehab) unit was in order. There, it languished in the queue waiting to be examined by the doc on call.

Although this new “baby” was under warranty and repairs wouldn’t cost me, still I stewed. I’d invested significant time in the system transfer and set up, which could be hours and energy down the drain. So when this meltdown occurred, I found myself slipping into recrimination mode. “Should have done X! Could have done Y! Why didn’t I try Z? Why did this happen to me?”

All pointless machinations, of course, and an even more colossal waste of energy.

“Calmness is power.”
– James Allen

The good news is that I didn’t stay stuck in letdown limbo for long. Somehow, reason prevailed. I reminded myself that just because my computer had a meltdown, I didn’t have to follow suit.

And you don’t either. When life’s experiences go sideways, here’s a formula for a healthy response within relatively healthy time frames*:

1. Review reality - 30 minutes
2. Rant, rave, wail, and gnash teeth - 30 seconds
3. Explore options - 30 minutes
4. Choose action - 30 seconds
5. Get on with it - Pronto!

* Actual times approximate—proportions accurate. If you get my drift! ☺

When my hubby and I arrived on the Hawaiian island of Oahu, we learned that our hotel had double-booked, leaving us with no place to stay. After we spent a couple of hours of simulated patience, the hotel managers came through with a solution. They sent us to Kona, Hawaii, where we spent three days at their expense. Much more than we’d dared hope for!

On returning to Oahu three days later, we discovered the key to our suitcase had stayed in Kona. Although we had all our belongings with us, we couldn’t access them! More kind people, a cheerful locksmith, a bit of delay, and everything turned out okay. This was one of our most beautiful vacations ever.

– M.S.



Beneficial Presence

I like to dip into a book of uplifting quotes or short reflections, working them into my morning routine whenever possible. One recent piece really got me thinking. It discussed the value of appreciation and gratitude—not a new concept, to be sure, but valuable nonetheless. The phrase that grabbed me, though,

“We should give as we would receive, cheerfully, quickly, and without hesitation; for there is no grace in a benefit that sticks to the fingers.”

– Seneca

suggested we try to be a “beneficial presence” in the lives of others.

A *beneficial presence*. Hmmmmmm. *Beneficial*: helpful, useful, valuable,

advantageous, positive, favorable, constructive. *Presence*: being there (or here).

This causes me to ask, are we actually *present* to the needs of the moment and the situation—or are we someplace else, whirling away in our private planetary orbit?

“Our true home is in the present moment. To be in the present moment is a miracle.”

– Thich Nhat Hanh

Does our presence add value—or do we simply take up space or, worse yet, suck the life out of a room, trailing black smog in our wake? Harsh, I know, but it happens.

I challenge you to play with the Beneficial Presence concept. Think about three of your recent experiences: a personal conversation, a business transaction, and a social gathering.

“When you leave this earth, may you leave it knowing that you were well used and that all who knew you felt blessed by your presence.”

– Lovetta LaRoche

Then on a scale of 1 to 10, rate how beneficial your presence was in that moment to those with whom you spoke, worked, and played.

As a follow-up, see if you can make that next conversation more satisfying for you and your partner by being a Beneficial Presence. Add even more value for your next client by being a Beneficial Presence. Make your next meeting even more productive because you are a Beneficial Presence.

This concept applies to not only individuals but groups as well. How could you leave your *community* in better shape because your family, your association, or your organization made the most of every possible moment to “up” its Beneficial Presence?

It’s a worthy goal for a fractured world. 🌀

The question “Are we actually here?” reminds me of a lyric from my favorite Canadian band, The Barenaked Ladies⁸. It goes like this: “If I hide myself wherever I go, am I ever really there?” To be a Beneficial Presence, your whole self needs to be there. Presence benefits you and everyone around you.

– Colleen R.

