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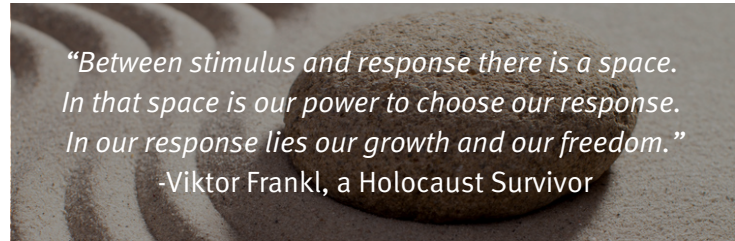
EMBRACING THE PAUSE

January 26, 2023

Weekly Practices for Self-Care & Well-Being

Embracing the Pause is a weekly resource that cultivates insights and practices to support communal well-being and self-care amid the toll we have accumulated over the past few years.

Curated by Laura Thelander, VOA's Director of Racial Justice and Spiritual Care, and colleagues, this series encourages finding a moment of pause to ground ourselves and reflect.



*“Between stimulus and response there is a space.
In that space is our power to choose our response.
In our response lies our growth and our freedom.”*
-Viktor Frankl, a Holocaust Survivor



This week's Embracing the Pause is a short reflection by Director of Racial Justice and Spiritual Care, Laura Thelander.

“If I only had more time in the day, I could”

How many times have you asked yourself this very question? Countless times (if you're anything like me). Every one of us faces the persistent challenge of navigating between the 24 hours we have been allotted each day and the number of things we need and want to accomplish in that time period.

One of the first things to get dropped from my daily list of tasks is exercise. Making time every day or even 3 times a week for physical exercise can feel burdensome – especially during the shorter, colder days of winter. But by making a few minor adjustments to our daily routine, we can enjoy some of the benefits of exercise without having to go to the gym or carve out a chunk of time in our day.

Recent studies in exercise health offer a hopeful substitute for those days when our agendas are too full. According to a number of researchers, “exercise snacks” – which are brief spurts of physical activity spread through the day – can improve one’s health and counter some of the negative effects of sitting too long. Exercise snacks consist of any physical activity that lasts one to two minutes – anything that increases our heart rate and gets us breathing a little harder for a short period of time.

An exercise snack might include taking a minute or two to walk a few flights of stairs, practicing “chair squats” (rising up from your chair to standing up onto your tiptoes and then sitting back down on your chair; repeat 15 times), or walking a few laps around the office or work site periodically throughout the day. And if you're not overly self-conscious, you might try doing a set of jumping jacks in your office or a corner of your workplace.

Consider how you might try work to work in some regular exercise snacks to your day that best suit you – embracing the pause by moving your body.

If you practice other exercise snacks not mentioned above, let me know so that we can share best practices with one another. Remember, exercise snacks are not only manageable but also scientifically proven to be very effective for our heart, muscles, and overall health.

Happy snacking!