



a monthly newsletter from Carol McKay, Life Coach
Helping people create happier, more passionate lives!

Taking a Time-Out

I recently watched as a young mother struggled to get control over her wildly enthusiastic little girl. After asking, demanding and threatening the little girl, the mother finally asked, "Do you need a time-out?"

To my surprise, the little girl answered, "Yes."

In the next moment, the mother found a chair, separated from the rest of the room, and lifted the girl into the seat. The mother instructed the girl to settle and relax, and that's just what the child did. She appeared to almost meditate in that moment. Her breathing became slower and deeper. I wondered if she was taking a little mental vacation, or just calming herself. After a few minutes, the mother asked if she was finished, the girl shook her head "yes," and all was well from that moment.

I was struck by two thoughts: 1) What a terrific mom and 2) Sometimes I need a time-out, too.

In our day-to-day lives, most people are regularly bombarded by stressors. How often do you feel like you're spinning out-of-control? How regularly do you want to scream, kick, punch, run, cry or quit?

How often do you turn into a 4-year-old?

Do you need a time-out, too?

It doesn't matter whether you call it a time-out, a mental break, a mini vacation, a moment to collect or whatever feels right for you. Getting that time, separate, to gather your strength and let go of the annoyances could make all the difference. Just imagine how much violence would be prevented if people just took a little time-out instead of acting out.

The world can feel like a vicious place. Sometimes people feel like they are being chewed up. We feel demands, irritations and frustrations every day. Every day. I imagine even the most mentally whole+people occasionally feel like they want to put a fist through a wall.

Everyone could use a time-out. Think about it in terms of sports. During a time-out, play stops. Attention focuses on the task at hand. Strategies are developed. Plans are created. The body gets refreshed. Everyone regroups.

Doesn't that sound like a good thing?

PLAYTIME

The next time you feel the pressures of the world are too much, allow yourself a time-out.

1. If possible, remove yourself from the situation. You might just walk outside for a moment, or say you need to locate something in another area.
2. Take 5 long, slow, deep breaths in and then slowly let the breath release from your body.
3. Do a quick inquiry. What's really happening? Is there anything I can do right now to resolve the stressor? Is it really about me? Am I making the stressor bigger than it needs to be?
4. Let go. What could I allow myself to let go of right now? Is there some small part of the stress I could just allow to gently float away?
5. Breathe again.
6. Smile.

Then, you can let yourself finish the time-out when you feel ready. Take as long as you need.

If you find me sitting in a corner...it's all good.