



THE STILLNESS IS THE KEY

BY

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my notes

Stillness aims the archer's arrow.

Stillness sharpens perspective and illuminates connections.

Stillness generates a vision, helps us resist the passions of the mob.

A leader and decision maker's job is not to "go with the gut" or fixate on the first impression formed an issue.

Be strong enough to resist thinking that is too neat, too plausible, and therefore almost always wrong.

Be fully present.

Empty our mind of preconceptions.

Take our time.

Sit quietly and reflect.

Reject distraction.

Weigh advice against the counsel of our convictions.

Deliberate without being paralyzed.

Cultivate mental stillness.

The hardest thing is actually doing something that is close to nothing.

It demands all of you.

There is no object to hide behind. It's just you.

See the world like an artist: the mind, fully engaged, notice what really surrounds you.

Don't reject a difficult or boring moment because it is not exactly what you want.

Napoleon told messengers to wake him with crisis immediately, but wait three weeks before opening any correspondence. When he finally did hear what was in a letter, Napoleon loved to note how many supposedly

“important” issues had simply resolved themselves and no longer required a reply.

Filter out the inconsequential from the essential.

It's very difficult to think or act clearly when we are drowning in information.

Limit the amount of people who have access to the boss.

Gatekeepers: no more drop-ins, tidbits, and stray reports.

So the boss can see the big picture.

So the boss has time and room to think.

Because if the boss doesn't, then nobody can.

Ask yourself at every moment, 'Is this necessary?'

It means questioning that “open door” policy, or even where you live.

We are afraid of being the bad guy who says, “Nope, not interested.”

Chop wood, carry water. Don't overanalyze. Do the work.

That space between your ears - that's yours.

Control what gets in.

Control what goes on in there.

Protect it from yourself, from your own thoughts.

Philosopher examines our impressions and thoughts to make sure we aren't led astray by appearances or missing what couldn't be seen by the naked eye.

Do the kind of thinking that 99% of the population is just not doing.

Stop doing the destructive thinking that they spend 99% of their time doing.

journal/diary: Paper has more patience than people.

John Cage 4'33" was never about achieving perfect silence - it's about what happens when you stop contributing to the noise.

Wisdom is a sense of the big picture, the accumulation of experience and the ability to rise above the biases, the traps that catch lazier thinkers.

Add experience and experimentation on top of this. Put yourself in tough situations. Accept challenges. Familiarize yourself with the unfamiliar.

Egomaniacs are the least peaceful.

Their mind is swirling in their own grandiosity and insecurity.

They constantly bite off more than they can chew.

Everything with them is complicated, everything is about them.

Confidently embrace change.

It's swapping an incorrect opinion for a correct one.

It's not an admission of inferiority.

Both egotistical and insecure people make their flaws central to their identity.

The closer we get to mastery, the less we care about specific results.

Mental stillness will be short-lived if our hearts are on fire, or our souls ache with emptiness.

A virtuous life is worthwhile for its own sake.

Form a moral code, or you'll have to belabor every decision and consider every temptation.

What do you stand for?

What do you believe to be essential and important?

What are you really living for?

Develop good character so when it counts, you will not flinch. So that when everyone else is scared and tempted, you will be virtuous. You will be still.

Give more.

Give what you didn't get.

Love more.

Drop the old story.

Ask when pulled by a strong desire:

What will happen to me if I get what I want?

How will I feel after?

Suppose that all your objects in life were realized; that all the changes which you are looking forward to were done.

Would this be a great joy and happiness to you?

No!

(At this my heart sank within me: the whole foundation on which my life was constructed fell down.)

Cultivate a poet's eye - the ability to see beauty everywhere, even in the banal or the terrible.

Nature is a cure-all, a comfort available to any and all who suffer.

(Shinrin yoku: forest bathing.)

Addiction is becoming obsessed with yourself and the primacy of your urges and thoughts.

A life solely about work and doing is terribly out of balance.

Love is the great educator. We learn when we give it. We learn when we get it. We get closer to stillness through it.

Conservation of energy:

Never stand up when you can sit down, and never sit down when you can lie down.

So that you never shirk from a task, or back down from a challenge.

So that you never burn yourself out or snuff out the spark of joy that makes life worth living.

Churchill chose an unexpected form of leisure: bricklaying. Bricklaying didn't wear down his body, it invigorated him. He loved the slow, methodical process.

Find new activities that use other parts of your mind and body to relieve the areas where you are overworked. Have at least two or three hobbies, and they must all be real.

Every prophet is forced into the wilderness, where they undergo solitude, deprivation, reflection, and meditation. Psychic dynamite comes from this physical ordeal.

Leave written works behind you.
Be financially prudent and provide for the future.
Cherish country living.

Develop a reliable, disciplined routine.

Movement through a beautiful setting can unlock a different kind of stillness than traditional meditation.

A good routine is not only a source of great comfort and stability, it's the platform from which stimulating and fulfilling work is possible.

Repetition is a form of mesmerism. Mesmerize yourself to reach a deeper state of mind.

Poet John Milton was up at 4 a.m. to read and contemplate, so that by 7 a.m. he was ready to be “milked” by his writing.

Conflicting impulses, incentives, inclinations, and external interruptions are no path to stillness and not a way to get the best out of yourself.

Automate and routinize the trivial parts of life, but also make automatic good and virtuous decisions, to free up resources to do important and meaningful exploration.

Buy room for peace and stillness, and thus make good work and good thoughts accessible and inevitable.

Limit the number of choices you need to make.

The wealthy man has vast estates that lord over him rather than the other way around.

The gentleman makes things his servants.

The petty man is servant to things.

Diogenes supposedly lived in a barrel and walked around nearly naked.

When he saw a child drinking water from a well with his hands, Diogenes smashed his own cup, realizing that he had been carrying around an extraneous possession.

Alexander the Great could neither tempt Diogenes with any favors nor deprive him of anything

If a man can reduce his needs to zero, he is truly free. There is nothing that can be taken from him and nothing anyone can do to hurt him.

Solitude allows you to reflect while others are reacting.

Solitude is the school of genius.

The crowded, busy world is the purgatory of the idiot.

Solitude without purpose is a killer of creativity.

Leisure is activity. What is absent is any external justification - you can't do leisure for pay, you can't do it to impress people. You have to do it for you.

Let it relax you and give you peace.

Find a pursuit that simultaneously challenges and relaxes you.

To do leisure well, don't let it turn into a job.

Stillness is not an excuse to withdraw from the affairs of the world. Quite the opposite - it's a tool to let you do more good for more people.

Source: [Stillness Is the Key - Ryan Holiday | Derek Sivers](#)