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Beba Papakyriakou

Let's Slow Down

So much about the world today seems to have become superficial and with almost no concern for detail or great thought. We want everything swiftly.

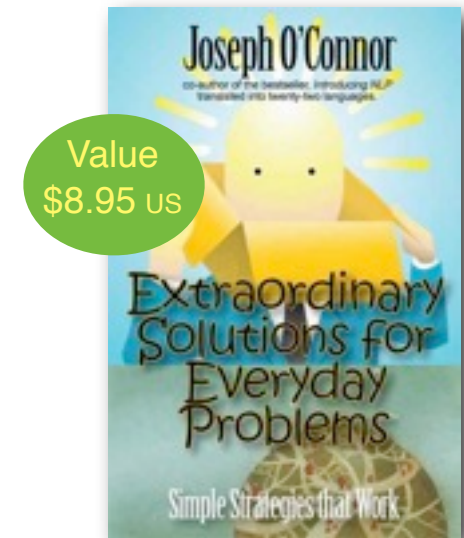
Our written communication has been reduced to combinations of letters and numbers, instead of words and complete sentences. Technology allows us to view movies and videos in a flash, on mobile phones or portable computer screens, and if the movie or video takes longer than 10 seconds to start, we become impatient.

Internet is becoming ever faster, and ever more efficient, and if the status bar at the base of our computer screen looks like it isn't moving fast enough, we start grinding our teeth and pounding our fists.

Gone are the days of searching through a library and actually interacting with someone to find information, or even sitting down to read a proper book, cover to cover and slowly absorb what we're reading. Now we just put a word into a little block on our computer screen, and we instantly have thousands of pages of information, some relevant, some not so relevant. Books are on a screen rather than in our hands, and we can even search for just one word in an eBook and find it, in an instant – we probably don't even need to read anything.

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Meal times seem seldom to be what they traditionally used to be, either in content or duration – fast foods, convenience foods, ready-made meals and Mr Delivery services have ensured that we don't often have to wait too long to eat a regular meal. It's there, we shovel it down our throats, barely pausing to taste it, or appreciate it, then we push our plate away from us, get up and go do more things - fast.

I don't particularly want to go back to the old way of doing things, certainly not everything. I like most of the efficiencies we have, but I am watching the impact this way of life is having on the daily quality of our lives on a deeper level. We want what we want, and we want it now.

We have become so used to speed and superficial experiences that we seem to carry that way of life into other aspects of our lives, e.g. into our relationships and how we deal with them. We want instant divorce, we want instant relationships, we want instant connections. If we can't have children, or can't wait long enough to conceive and give birth to our own children, we go off to a foreign country and buy an instant family.

We want instant answers, we want instant comprehension, we want things fast, we want them now, and we seem unwilling to take the time to process the whole experience, whether it is the process of learning a new skill, or learning

more about a person, or learning more about a specific situation, event, occurrence.

We see, hear or read something, somewhere; we immediately evaluate it – at face value – and we react. We don't often respond, because response tends to require more thought, stillness, and only then some form of action (even if it's just a conclusion in our minds or a feeling in our hearts).

With reaction comes the full impact of the Ego – the Ego that is full of self-importance, and superficial evaluations of events, and is a force that seems to help breed a species of wounded people. "He didn't return my call; she didn't read my e-mail; she doesn't care; he doesn't say he loves me ..."

On the other hand, if we could slow down just long enough to take a breath, and look at something through the eyes of understanding (which is also through the eyes of love), and then evaluate a particular event, and only then respond to it, our inner world would probably be in less turmoil. We would be less at the mercy of other people's free will, and their choices.

If we took the time to look slightly more deeply into something, our inner power would work in our favour. We would stand a better chance of seeing things as they are, and from that point of power and understanding about something at a

deeper level, we could take action, reach conclusions, deal with an event.

Let us surrender our need for speed in all things. Let us slow down a bit, say less, listen, really hear and see, tune in, see things from a different perspective, and then respond.

Let us try to understand more, let us find the truth in all things. Let us be less wounded and reactive, and be more supportive and mature.

Let us be more generous with our time and our love. Let us appreciate more, and take the time to speak more kindly. Let us be more gracious in giving and in receiving. Let us savour our experiences.

Let us bring quality to our days, rather than seek to rush through them, reacting to everything, and walking around with wounds on our soul through lack of comprehension and ultimately, love.

Let us be mindful of our thoughts, our words, and more deliberate and purposeful in our actions. And let us bring some harmony and compassion back to our days, and understanding to our interactions with others.

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