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Grandmother Instills Value of Being Still

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When I was a child I spent many summers with my maternal grandmother, who taught me culture and southern grace. These weeks in the summer were idyllic and wonderful for a child. Hours were spent learning to sew, to “lunch”, and enjoy the days of summer. I spent hours with my grandmother experiencing what I would come to realize later is a valuable asset, the ability to be introspective, read quietly or think. She taught me something extremely important; the meaning of the phrase “Be still”. When all of her grandchildren would be together or would be getting rowdy and over stimulated she would always say “just be still”. As a child I never understood what she meant and always thought she was essentially saying “quiet down”. I did not appreciate the importance of the statement be still. As a teenager I would sit and read for hours, often well into the night, maybe even until dawn. I do that even today. It is not just for the reading that I do this; reading is my release and my stillness. My stillness is also a trip to the Outer Banks in North Carolina a place that I feel more at peace than anywhere. Away from the hustle, bustle tourism and close to the peaceful vastness of the ocean. This is the place that for me puts everything in my life in perspective, because I still feel small, when I stand by the ocean. Now as an adult working with adolescents and adults who have extremely busy lives I use the term “Be still” frequently to address the feelings of being overwhelmed and over stressed. We all need to take every opportunity we can to just be still. Some of the more unsettled times in my life have come when I have been too busy or have forgotten to take the time to be still and take time for myself.

The ability to be introspective is important not only in adulthood but should be encouraged in childhood. Being unafraid to be alone and quiet with your thoughts is not an easy skill to master, if it does not come naturally. Simply by creating some stillness in your life for a time each day, you are giving yourself a great gift. It is never a waste of time and it is always of benefit to you. By nurturing yourself in this stillness, opportunities arise for gaining greater clarity in your life and reducing endless stress and brooding.

As we travel the busy highway of life we often forget to stop and enjoy the simple pleasures. Life is a journey and process of finding out who you are. So begin to trust and open up to faith. Learn to love and nurture yourself. You are a treasure that deserves to be well treated. With trust, you will begin to see the real you. Learn to be still and enjoy the ride. It may be bumpy at times and it may be smooth, but ultimately it is worth the trip.