



Abundance Starts Within

I stood in awe.

I felt the tickle of cool grass beneath my feet and the warm whisper of a breeze glide over my cheeks. In front of me was a kaleidoscope of greens forming lace-like patterns of leaves. The twisted tree trunks rose from the earth like wizened wizards, while mossy thumbprints sprouted like unruly hair.

The scene hummed and flickered with life: the soundless clap of a butterfly's wings, the stillness of a dragonfly's pose and the quick step of an ant's march. There were bursts of colour, streaks of light and then, overhead, the piercing call of a cockatoo punctuated the air like an exclamation mark.

For those moments, I was cocooned. I was in an embrace. I was both a watchful observer and a part of the scene.

I wasn't standing in front of a celebrated natural landmark, and I wasn't visiting a wildlife sanctuary. I was, in fact, in my own backyard.

Rewind a few days... I take a break from working on the computer and I stand in exactly the same place, looking at the same scene. My mind is distracted, my body is tired and I'm still thinking of some unfinished projects. Yes, I'm still seeing the beauty, and I can probably fool myself into believing that I am appreciating it, but, in truth, I'm not really there.

What was the difference between my two experiences? Intense presence.

It got me thinking about how much we miss when we are not present in our lives. What distractions do we let get in the way? And what abundance already surrounds us that we are not seeing?

I think most of us have experienced variations of what I'm talking about... That meal you've spent hours preparing, but in the end not really tasting. Those conversations filled with lots of words and noise, but no real sense of connection.

It can feel as though there is an invisible barrier and you're stuck in a place where you just can't receive. You're going through the actions and you may outwardly seem okay, but you're functioning on autopilot. The unconscious mind has taken you outside of your body, trapping you in the fantasy and fear of the future, or in the pain and pleasure of the past. You're anywhere but here in the present moment.

The more we can remain connected to our body and grounded in the present moment, the more we can perceive - and receive - everything and everyone around us. Yeah, I can hear you say, "Easier said than done." Especially considering the struggles of the heart and the mind that confront us on a daily basis as we live in the 21st century.

While children have a natural ability to be present, most adults have to learn - or, more aptly, remember - how to be in the now. One way to do this is through that practice called the M-word most of us know of yet still avoid.

Yes, I'm talking about meditation. Just mentioning the word meditation can elicit a range of reactions, from knowing nods of absence, to looks of bewilderment and even anxiety, to the well-worn expression, "I would love to meditate, but I just haven't got the time."

We seem to instinctively recognise the benefits of meditation, yet something stops many of us from developing our own regular and meaningful meditation practice. It is often something people start before soon giving up, while others delay even trying because they just don't know how or where to begin.

So, how did I move from being an avoider of meditation, to an advocate? Honestly, I started with small steps. I figured that if meditation is the gateway to the infinite, then my body undoubtedly holds the key, so that's where I began. I sat with my body, listening and acknowledging what my body had to say.

For me, meditation is essentially the art of being present. With this understanding, I treated meditation as a tool for life that wasn't just something I practiced on a mat in a quiet room for a designated amount of time. I allowed meditative awareness to permeate every aspect of my life, a practice that involves seeing (not just looking), listening (not just hearing) and connecting (not just talking).

Yes, I still have those moments where my mind is like a dog off a lead, zigzagging all over the place.

What's my go-to in those situations?

I stop what I'm doing, I take a deep breath, and I return to my senses.

When we fully engage with our senses - sight, smell, sound, taste and touch - we ground ourselves in the here and now. These moments of engagement can be as simple as sipping your first cup of tea in the morning, or listening to the melody of your favourite song, or feeling the warmth of a hand enclosed in yours. There is abundance in such simple moments, such opportunities to wordlessly receive and give to your own self and others.

What's the key to experiencing abundance right now?

When I stood in my backyard that day, I was given a precious reminder: abundance isn't reliant on external events, life circumstances or even a change of scene because true abundance starts within, and it is mirrored back to me depending on my degree of presence. And being present begins with one conscious breath.

Lauren Wilson is the creator of Soul Resonance, a space for self-healing. She practises emotional anatomy, energy-based bodywork and runs meditation courses, empowering people to seek knowledge from within.