

# **How to be the “Eye of the Storm”**

## **Creating Calm in the Midst of Life’s Busyness!**

**By Kate Heartsong**

When you think of the “eye of the storm”, what comes to mind? Do you see the center of a hurricane being still while all around it are the swirling waters and debris? Perhaps you envision the quiet in the middle of a tornado, with the circular dust all around, conjuring up visions of Dorothy in Kansas from The Wizard of Oz?

What is it about this phenomenon that’s so intriguing? For me, what intrigues me is that it’s an oxymoron, two opposites occurring at the same time, chaos and commotion all around the calm and quiet center.

Most of us can relate to having a lot of commotion, stress, intensity, too much to do, and/or chaos at various points in our lives, as well as difficult challenges from time to time. But when this gets to be the norm and not the exception, it can be draining on our physical, emotional and/or mental health. Even if it only happens infrequently but with intensity, it can cause more stress than we may realize, resulting in a negative impact on our well-being.

So, what’s a person to do? It seems our lives are even busier than ever doesn’t it? With all the commotion in our lives how can we hope to create and maintain calm and inner peace? Thankfully there are some simple tools that can easily be incorporated into our lives to help us effectively deal with this.

Before we get into some tools, let’s go over important prerequisites that help make these tools more effective. One prerequisite is to have a sincere intention to create more inner calm and peace. Setting an intention adds power to your ability to create more of what you desire because it gives a clear message to the universe that this is what you want. If you are uncertain in your thinking, you tend to send mixed messages to the universe resulting in either a delay in the desired manifestation or a different or unintended outcome.

Another important prerequisite is to be consistent in using the tools. Change doesn’t just happen overnight because you’ve lived a certain way for so long. It takes awhile to undo your conditioning but it can be done. With consistent use of several tools, it’s easier to create new patterns of habits and behavior.

Believing you can be calm and peaceful in the midst of life’s busyness is another important condition that cultivates the tools’ effectiveness. If you don’t completely believe you can have calm and peace, then start out by being *willing*

to believe it's possible. It's like anything else in life, the more you actually believe something is possible, the more easily it becomes a reality in your life.

And finally, knowing that you deserve to have inner calm and peace facilitates the tool's effectiveness. It may be easier said than done, but when you truly know you deserve to have a more relaxed and calm life, you're helping to create a "receiving vessel" in which you can more easily *allow* and then receive the good you desire, and deserve! Of course, you *already are* deserving of all, but if believing that you're deserving doesn't feel true for you, then "acting as if" and "pretending" that you deserve what you desire will help you believe it more and you will gradually know and feel it to be true. Remember, the mind doesn't know the difference between pretending and the real thing. In time you will come to know the truth that you really *do* deserve to have what you desire. Also remember that intending to know you deserve what you desire is very powerful.

Here are some simple tools that you can easily incorporate into your life to become more like the "eye of the storm":

- 1) **Be aware.** When you live more consciously and mindfully, you're better able to assess your own moods, emotions, bodily sensations, your interactions with others and your own self-talk. Through this awareness, you're better able to catch yourself when you start feeling overwhelmed, anxious or rushed and when you do, you actually slow down or can even prevent the momentum of those feelings from building up. Once you've become aware of your feelings, you can then say uplifting and positive things to yourself, get recentered, view the situation in a more positive light and/or assess what different action steps, if any, you can implement.

For example, at the onset of preparing for the book launch campaign for my book *Deeply We Are One*, I became easily overwhelmed many times by all the required action items. Fortunately, I remembered to be more aware of my reaction to all that needed to get done and was able to stop myself from getting more overwhelmed, simply by being aware of myself. I would then say such things to myself as: "I can only do one thing at a time and I will get to everything in the right timing" and "I'm doing the best I can and that *is* good enough!"

- 2) **Pause and take a couple of deep breaths.** In the middle of feeling rushed, anxious or overwhelmed, stop and pause. Breathe deeply a few times. This is something many of us have heard of but how many times do we really do it? When we do pause and breathe deeply, not only are we breaking the momentum of being rushed, anxious or overwhelmed,

but we are also physiologically slowing our bodies. Remember there is an intricate interconnectivity between the body and mind.

Sometimes while I'm shopping at the grocery store, I feel myself rushing down the grocery store aisles to get my groceries as quick as possible, then while waiting in line, I might feel antsy. In the last few months I've gotten much better at realizing I'm doing this (I'm more aware), so I pause and take a few deep breaths, reminding myself to slow down. I also do this when I find myself rushing in other areas of my life. I remind myself that rushing isn't going to save me much time at all, and in fact, ironically, sometimes it actually takes longer than when I'm relaxed.

- 3) **Assessing what is.** Stop and assess what in your life you have control over and what you don't have control over. If you're feeling anxious, worried or nervous about it, ask yourself why. If you're in control of the situation, and you aren't happy with it, examine what it is that you're unhappy about and what actions you can take to change it. If the situation is out of your control, then you can give yourself the gift of inner calm and peace by accepting it and not judging it.

A few years ago when my daughter was in high school, there were a few nights when she, being a typical teenager, didn't come home on time. Until I knew she came home, I worried about her safety. I came to realize that as much as I worried, it didn't change the fact that she would occasionally come home late and that in truth, I couldn't really control her behavior. When I assessed my daughter's character in relation to being timely, I realized that she's learning to spread her independent wings and also that she wants to be safe as much as I want her to be safe. This brought me comfort and I began to better accept the situation on the occasions she came home later (after of course, a couple of reminders of "house rules").

- 4) **Live in the present moment.** The past has already happened, the future is yet to be; there really is nowhere else to live but the present moment! Also know that the mind can only focus on one thing at a time and therefore, it's easier and more efficient to be aware of what you're focusing on and this happens best when being in the present moment.

How much control do you have over the past? None, since it already happened! And the control you have over the future lies in the present moment. For it's in the present moment that we plant the seeds for the type of future we desire. We do this by having, for example, positive thinking and effective planning. Because being in the present moment

brings such a sense of inner calm and peace, using this tool will help you when you're finding yourself overwhelmed, rushed or too busy. It will also help you realize what you're presently doing or what state of being you're in. And this brings the self-awareness that will assist you in recognizing your mood, emotions or reactions to the present situation.

A simple way to bring yourself to the present moment is to stop and remind yourself where you are physically and also to be aware of your physical body and any physical sensations you're experiencing. This works like a charm! For example, when you catch yourself thinking of all the errands you need to run this weekend, pause. Remind yourself of where you physically are and feel the chair that you're sitting in. Perhaps write a list of your errands and in doing so, be mindful of the pen strokes as you write down the list of tasks, for when you notice the pen strokes, you're being very focused and in the present moment.

**5) Get organized.** If you're like most people who are really busy, knowing where things are makes life much easier, efficient and less stressful. It will be worth your time to organize your papers, files, emails and other items, so that you don't spend your time searching for those important papers, for example, when you're in a time crunch. Being proactive is worth its weight in gold.

Like most people, I receive many emails. About two years ago I discovered my email service provider has an option to create individual subject folders. So now, as part of my systematic approach for managing emails, I put emails that I want to save into a specific subject folder and it's easy to find.

**6) Learn to say no.** Some of us just take on too much. It's wonderful to do what we can for our business, our friends and family, our community and being in service to others in general. But it's important to take care of ourselves so that we're more available to be of service to others. For this reason, sometimes it's best to say no when someone asks you to take on, for example, a volunteer board position. Before deciding whether to take on yet another project, evaluate what you currently have going on in your life and ask yourself if you can handle doing it and still have time for yourself. As with anything else in life, it's important to find a healthy balance.

All of us know someone who's always saying yes to people who are asking them to do something such as volunteer work, when it might be better to say no. I know several people who are like this, and although it's quite

admirable, I can sometimes see their busyness is at the expense of their own health or emotional well being. Using the analogy of a pitcher of water, when we keep pouring water from our pitcher to other people's glasses, soon we'll run out of water. Without replenishing the water in our pitcher, we can't fill other people's glasses.

- 7) **Repeating a simple mantra or phrase.** Create a mantra or phrase that brings comfort to you. When repeated over and over while feeling rushed, stressed or anxious (or anytime, for that matter), it will bring you inner peace and calm. It works even better when you associate a feeling with it. For example, you could imagine yourself in a beautiful meadow and while feeling the gentle breeze on your face, say the words "I am always supported and loved".

Occasionally as I'm trying to fall asleep, my mind will be racing due to all the tasks I want to accomplish in the next day or two. When this happens, I will often repeat the following words to calm me down and help me sleep: "I have more than enough time to accomplish all that I desire."

Remember to set an intention, use these tools consistently, believe you can create the inner calm and peace and know you deserve to live this way. With consistent practice, using these tools and those you come up with yourself, will become a regular part of your everyday life resulting in a more relaxed and joyful life.