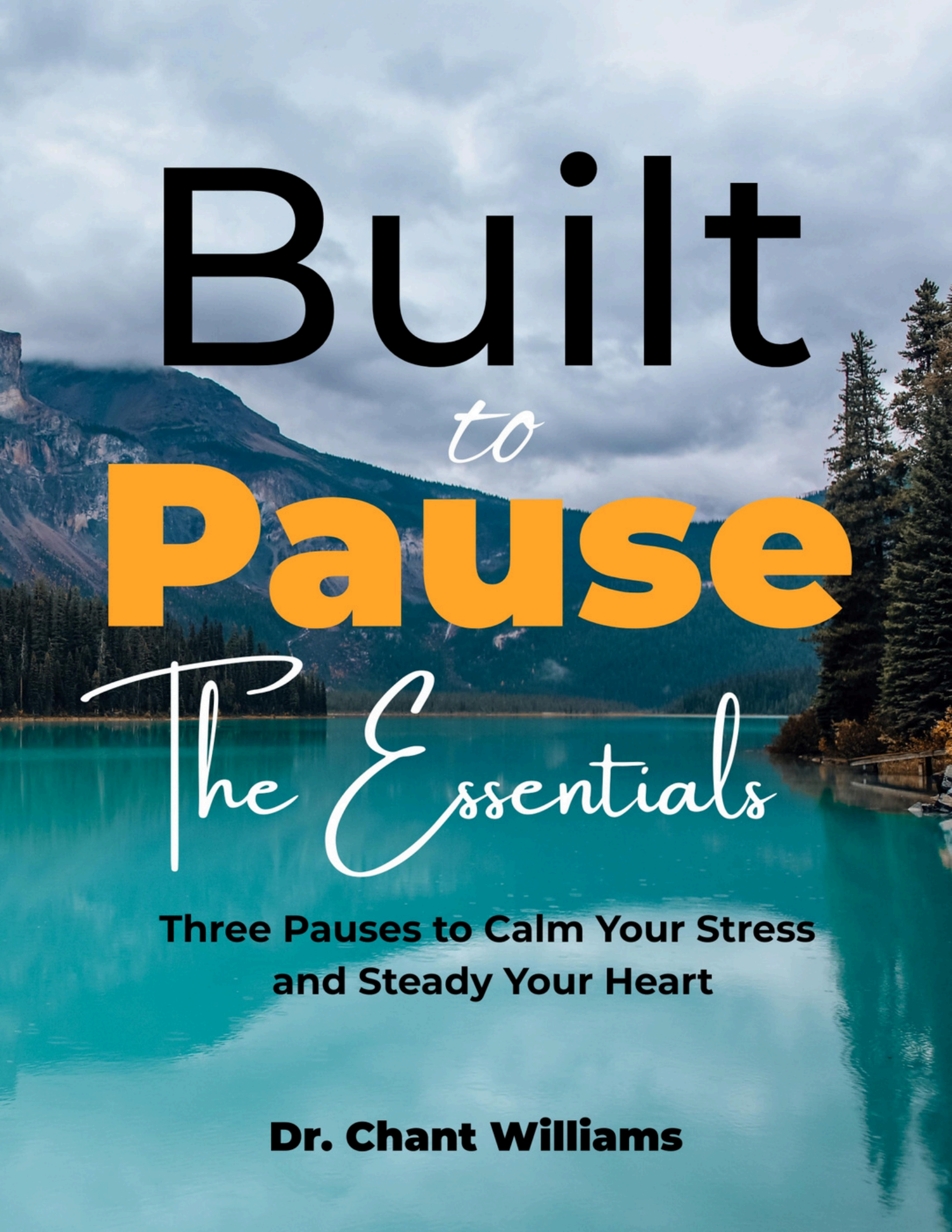

Built
to
Pause
The Essentials
Three Pauses to Calm Your Stress
and Steady Your Heart
Dr. Chant Williams

Built to Pause: Three Pauses to Calm Your Stress and Steady Your Heart. The Essentials
© 2026 Chant LLC. All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means without the prior written permission from Chant LLC.

Published by Chant LLC
DBA Resolute Growth
Idaho, United States
First Edition, 2026

Author: Dr. Chant Williams

The information in this book is intended for educational purposes only and is not a substitute for professional medical, psychological, or financial advice.
Please consult qualified professionals for your specific situation.

Table of Contents

1. The Pause You Were Built With 1
2. Good in a Crisis 3
3. The Two Paths 5
4. Your Agency 7
5. The Workshop and Quiet Coach 9
6. The Ball of Light 11
7. Pause to Think 13
8. The Chain Reaction 15
9. Pause to Breathe 17
10. Notice. Label. Choose. 19
11. Daily Medicine 21
12. The Reset 23
13. Pause to Nourish 25
14. Gut, Heart, and Energy 27
15. Hearing Your Quiet Coach 29
16. Following Your Quiet Coach 31
17. The Pause on Purpose System 33
18. The Journey 35
19. What They Inherit 37

A Note Before You Begin

For a long time, I ignored my quiet voice.

It kept nudging me to write this book, to take what I had lived through and turn it into something others could use. And for a long time, I had excuses. Nobody wants to hear about my life. I don't have anything new to say. But the nudges didn't stop. They came again and again, gently and persistently, until I finally listened.

I've learned to trust that voice. Years ago, I was supposed to spend a summer working in a different city. Nothing about it was working out, and I felt a quiet prompting to go to West Yellowstone, Montana, and work with a friend instead. It didn't make much sense at the time. That summer, I met my wife.

Throughout this book, I'll call that voice your Quiet Coach. You have one too. I believe it already holds all of the answers you've been searching for. It's simply been hard to hear over the noisy stress of life.

I wrote this book for someone I picture very clearly. You're doing all the right things, or trying to, and life still isn't working out the way you thought it would. The stress keeps building, and you can't remember the last time you truly rested. You sense there's a purpose for your life, but you're not sure where to start, or whether you're even on the right path.

If that's you, I'm so glad you're here.

My hope is simple. By the time you finish this book, I hope you feel calm and at peace, not because your life is suddenly free of storms, but because you know you have what it takes to steady yourself through them. I hope you begin dreaming again and planning again. And I hope you trust that you can find answers to the questions in your life, because you'll know how to hear your Quiet Coach, and how to follow it.

As a husband and father, I feel real pressure to be ready for whatever my wife and children need from me, especially emotionally. Learning to pause and calm my own heart has blessed my family in ways I see every day, and I'm sure in many ways I'll never see. My greatest hope is that my children will carry this practice into their own families someday.

Because what I want them to inherit, and what I want you to discover, is this: the peace, calm, and joy we all long for usually don't come from one big change. They come from simple actions, taken daily.

There's one more reason I wrote this book.

As I was pondering what my purpose is in this season of my life, a verse came to mind that I haven't been able to set down. Speaking of the time before His return, the Savior said there would be "men's hearts failing them for fear" (Luke 21:26). When I read it, I felt a strong pull: This is how you can help.

I've listened to so many parents describe the stress they carry, and then, often in the same breath, the stress and anxiety their children are carrying too. Most of them didn't know what to do, for themselves or for their kids. I didn't either, once.

I believe we're living in a season when many hearts will be tested. My part is to share how I went from overriding every pause and pushing through every hardship, to restoring the pause in my life, and what it has done for me and my family. I don't share it as a warning, but as a hope: that steady hearts can be passed down, from parents to children, one generation to the next.

As you read, you'll find short "Between the Beats" moments. Please don't skip them. This book is meant to be practiced, not just read.

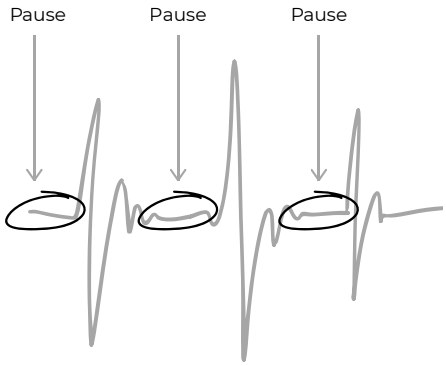
I'm not here to hand you answers from a distance. Everything you need is already in you. I'm simply here to point out the stepping stones.

You'll be the one who takes the steps.

—Dr. Chant Williams

The Pause You Were Built With

Your heart rests between every beat. That rest is what keeps it going.



Put your hand on your chest for a moment. Feel it?

Every beat of your heart is followed by a rest. Doctors call it diastole. When you're at rest, that quiet space takes up roughly two-thirds of each heartbeat. It is when the heart refills, and it is when the heart muscle receives most of its own blood supply. Your heart doesn't rest because it is weak. It rests because that is how it was designed to keep going for a lifetime.

You were built the same way.

There is an old story told about the apostle John. A hunter came upon him resting, gently playing with a tame bird, and was surprised that such a respected man would spend his time so simply. John asked about the bow the hunter carried. "Do you keep it strung all the time?" "No," the hunter said. "If I did, it would lose its spring, and it would fail me when I needed it most." John smiled. "So it is with us."

If you are a parent, or the one everyone leans on, you know what it means to stay strung. Lunches packed. Schedules held in your head. The calm voice in every storm. You are capable, and you are good at this. Somewhere along the way, though, you started overriding the pause you were built with.

This book won't hand you something foreign. It will help you uncover something already in you: three pauses (Think, Breathe, and Nourish), seven small daily actions, and one simple look back each week. Each piece has a smallest version that still counts, because you don't need one more demand on your day. You need to return to a rhythm your heart has been keeping all along.

Beat. Rest. Beat. Rest.

Your pause is still there. Let's find it.

The Pause You Were Built With

Right now I feel: (a one-line check-in after you read this section)

Reflect: Where in your life are you most “strung,” with no rest between beats?

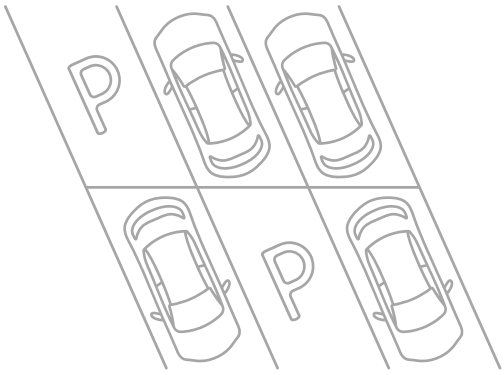
Notice: When did you last feel truly rested? What was different?

Try This: Before bed tonight, put your hand on your chest and take three slow breaths.

What is on your heart? What are you grateful for? What changes are you looking for? What came to mind as you were reading?

Good in a Crisis

My will was never broken. It was overused, with nothing left to refill it.



I used to take pride in my ability to respond to life! I was good in a crisis. Calm. Decisive. The one who could get everyone through the day, then the week, then the month.

When the 2020 pandemic closed my chiropractic practice almost overnight, I did what I had always done. I stayed calm, kept moving, and told everyone I was fine. For nearly a year I pushed through on willpower alone. I ate whatever was fast. I let the same tired thoughts run in the background. My body kept asking me to stop, and I kept overriding it.

Here is what I understand now. My will was never broken. It was overused, with nothing left to refill it, like a heart that only beats and never rests.

The turning point was quiet. I was sitting in my car in a parking lot, and for the first time in months, I actually stopped. I turned off the engine, set down my phone, and breathed. In that stillness I heard a quiet voice, barely a whisper: “This doesn’t have to be your story.”

I share this because I know how easy it is to override your own signals, especially when you’re good at handling things. Maybe you’re the parent who keeps the household calm, or the one caring for an aging mom while holding everything else together. Being good in a crisis is a gift. Living in one is something else.

Everything that parking lot showed me is already in you. You only need to stop long enough to notice it.

Good in a Crisis

Right now I feel:

Reflect: What signals has your body been sending that you've been overriding?

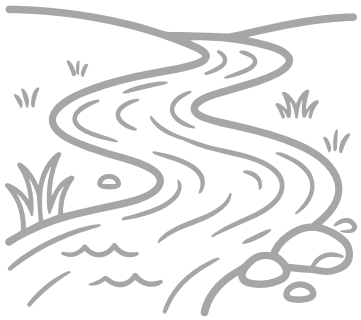
Notice: Who leans on you, and who do you lean on?

Try This: Next time you're alone in the car, sit for one quiet minute before starting the engine.

What is on your heart? What are you grateful for? What changes are you looking for? What came to mind as you were reading?

The Two Paths

Stress doesn’t take you all at once. It wears you down, like water on stone.



Every morning offers two paths.

On the first, the alarm goes off and your hand finds your phone before your feet find the floor. Messages and news rush in before you’ve had a single thought of your own. Then the race begins. Lunches, permission slips, a missing shoe, someone in tears over the wrong cereal. You snap at the child who is moving too slowly, then carry the guilt with you all day. By evening you’re running on empty, so you scroll until the noise goes quiet and promise yourself tomorrow will be different.

This path doesn’t wear you down all at once. It wears you down like water on stone. A little less patience. A little less clarity. A little less joy. Until one day you realize you can’t remember the last time you felt like yourself.

On the second path, the alarm is the same. The kids, the lunches, and the missing shoe are all the same. But before you reach for the phone, you pause. A few slow breaths. A quiet moment to choose how you want to show up this morning. When the cereal crisis comes, you notice the tightness in your chest, breathe once, and answer with the voice you’d want your child to remember. And without a word, your child learns what a steady heart looks like.

Nothing about your life got easier. You simply returned to the rhythm you were built with, and that changes how you carry everything else.

Same morning. Different path.

You don’t choose a path once. You choose it every morning, and many times a day, in small moments no one else sees.

Which path will you take tomorrow morning?

The Two Paths

Right now I feel:

Reflect: Describe your “first path” morning. What happens, and how do you feel?

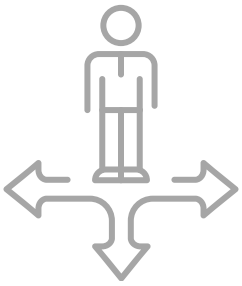
Notice: Where in your day could you choose the second path?

Try This: Tomorrow, take three slow breaths before you touch your phone.

What is on your heart? What are you grateful for? What changes are you looking for? What came to mind as you were reading?

Your Agency

Your agency can’t be taken from you, but It can be forgotten.



Underneath every pause is something you have carried your whole life: your agency.

Agency is your God-given ability to choose and to act. It means more than being affected by what happens. It means having a say in what happens next. Viktor Frankl lost nearly everything in a Nazi concentration camp, yet he found one thing no one could take from him: the freedom to choose how he would respond.

That same freedom lives in you right now, in the middle of carpool and bedtime and bills.

Here is the quiet part most of us miss. When life gets full, we start choosing by default. The phone chooses how the morning begins. Stress chooses the tone of voice at homework time. Convenience chooses what’s for dinner. Exhaustion chooses the evening. Each of those is still a choice. It is your past patterns running on autopilot.

Picture a mom at the kitchen table with her son and a math worksheet that has gone sideways. Default says raise your voice. Agency says wait. She takes one breath, sets her pencil down, and says, “Let’s take a break and try again in five minutes.” Same worksheet. Same tired kid. A completely different evening.

That’s agency. It isn’t a dramatic act of willpower. It’s a small, deliberate choice made in the space a pause creates.

Your agency has simply been running on autopilot. Every pause you take hands the choice back to you, and every deliberate choice makes the next one a little easier.

You’ve been choosing all along. Now you get to choose on purpose.

Your Agency

Right now I feel:

Reflect: Which part of your day is being chosen by default: the phone, stress, convenience, or exhaustion?

Notice: When did a small, deliberate choice recently change how something turned out?

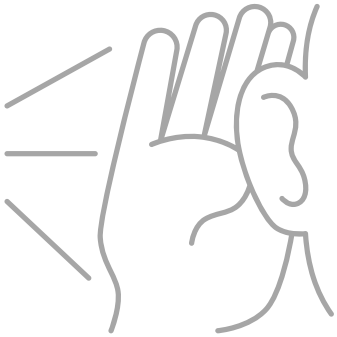
Try This: Pick one default moment and decide now how you'll choose differently.

What is on your heart? What are you grateful for? What changes are you looking for? What came to mind as you were reading?

The Workshop and Quiet Coach

You are not your thoughts. You are the one noticing them.





Most of us go through life believing we are our thoughts. When a heavy thought shows up, we assume it's the truth about us.

Here is what changes everything: you are the one noticing your thoughts.

Dandapani, a former Hindu monk, describes the mind as a workshop. Inside are many tools: memory, imagination, reason, willpower, intuition, and perception. You, your awareness, are the one who walks into the workshop and decides which tool to pick up.

Think about the night after you lose your patience with your kids. The thought arrives fast: "I'm a terrible parent." It feels like a verdict. Step back and look at it, though, and you'll see it for what it is. A thought. One you can set down.

"I am a terrible parent" should be followed by "There's that thought again."

In that small space between you and the thought, something else becomes easier to hear. A quieter voice. Beneath the anxious chatter, there is a calm knowing. It's the same voice that whispered to me in that parking lot. In this book, I call it the Quiet Coach.

Your Quiet Coach doesn't shout or shame. It's the part of you that already knows the next right step, and it speaks most clearly when the workshop is still. You've heard it before, in the moment you knew to hold your child a little longer.

The noise is loud. The voice is quiet and wise.

You get to choose which one you listen to.

The Workshop and Quiet Coach

Right now I feel:

Reflect: What thought about yourself repeats most often? Rewrite it as “There’s the thought that…”

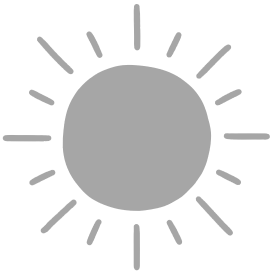
Notice: When have you heard your Quiet Coach? What did it say?

Try This: Each time a heavy thought shows up today, say, “There’s that thought again.”

What is on your heart? What are you grateful for? What changes are you looking for? What came to mind as you were reading?

The Ball of Light

Where your awareness goes, energy flows.



If you are the one noticing your thoughts, how do you guide them?

Picture your awareness as a ball of light. Your mind is a large, dim room with many corners labeled the following way: worry, planning, memory, gratitude, fear, imagination, and self-criticism (and many more not named here). Wherever the light shines, that corner lights up, and that becomes your experience in that moment.

Shine it on worry, and you feel worried. Shine it on gratitude, and you feel grateful. Let it bounce between the to-do list, the news, and an old regret, and you feel scattered.

Most of us let the light get pulled around by whatever is loudest. A notification. A fear. A familiar hurt.

Now picture yourself on the living room floor, working a puzzle with your four-year-old. Your body is there, but your light is on tomorrow's appointments and the email you forgot to send. Your child can tell. Children almost always can.

Then you notice. You gently bring the light back to the puzzle, to the small hands, to the cheer when the last piece clicks in. Same five minutes. A completely different memory, for both of you.

That is what focus really is. It's a skill you strengthen each time you notice the light has wandered and kindly bring it back. Each of the three pauses is a way of guiding your light.

Pause to Think shines it on your thoughts.
Pause to Breathe shines it on your body.
Pause to Nourish shines it on what sustains you.

The light has been in your hands all along.

The Ball of Light

Right now I feel:

Reflect: Where does your light go when you aren't guiding it?

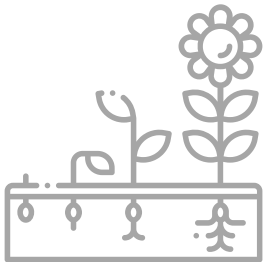
Notice: Who in your life most needs your full light, and when?

Try This: Give someone five minutes of your undivided attention today.

What is on your heart? What are you grateful for? What changes are you looking for? What came to mind as you were reading?

Pause to Think

Change the thought, and you change what follows. Not magically. Not instantly. But steadily.



You are thinking all the time. The question is whether you're thinking on purpose or by default. James Allen wrote that the mind is like a garden. Left untended, it doesn't stay empty. It grows weeds. Old worries and limiting beliefs spread without any help, but the flowers need your care.

Pausing to think begins with one simple distinction; the distinction between facts and interpretations. **The fact:** Your teenager walked in, said nothing, and went straight to their room. **The interpretation:** They don't want to talk to me. I'm losing them.

The fact took two seconds. The interpretation can color the whole evening. When a heavy thought takes root, author Byron Katie offers four gentle questions:

Is it true?
Can I absolutely know it's true?
How do I react when I believe this thought?
Who would I be without it?

Asked honestly, these questions loosen a thought's grip. Maybe your teenager had a hard day and just needed quiet, the same as you. Now you can choose a thought worth watering: They've had a long day. I'll check in later with a snack. This isn't forced positivity. It's tending your garden, giving your care to thoughts that are both true and helpful.

There's more than relief waiting here, too. We aren't here just to endure life. We're here to have joy in it. When the weeds come out, there's room for enjoyment in small moments, satisfaction in a day well spent, and meaning in why you do it all.

Pull a weed. Water a flower. That's how a garden changes.

Pause to Think

Right now I feel:

Reflect: Write down one recent fact and the interpretation you added to it.

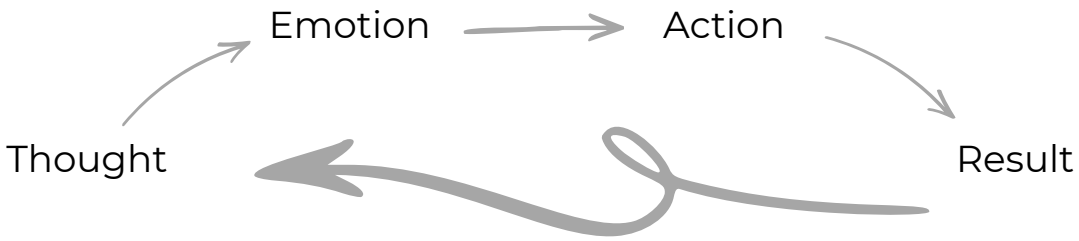
Notice: Run that interpretation through Byron Katie's four questions. What changes?

Try This: Before bed, name one moment of enjoyment, satisfaction, or meaning from today.

What is on your heart? What are you grateful for? What changes are you looking for? What came to mind as you were reading?

The Chain Reaction

Your circumstances set the scene. Your thoughts shape the story.



Your thoughts don't stay small. Each one sets off a chain.

Thoughts shape emotions. Emotions move you to act. Actions bring results. And results tend to confirm the thought that started it all.

Picture a daughter caring for her aging father. Between his appointments, her own kids, and work, the same thought shows up most evenings: I can't keep doing this.

The emotion that follows is dread. The action is pulling back. She lets her brother's calls go to voicemail and stops asking for help. The result is that everything stays on her shoulders, and that result seems to prove the thought. I really can't keep doing this.

Now watch the same chain with a different first link. The thought becomes: I'm doing my best, and today I only have to do today.

The emotion softens into steadiness. The action shifts. She calls her brother back and asks if he can take Thursday's appointment. The result is one evening with a little more room to breathe, and that result supports the new thought.

Same father. Same schedule. Same chain. A different experience.

The new thought may feel unfamiliar at first, even a little forced. That's normal. Each time you choose it, it becomes easier, like a trail through tall grass that grows clearer every time you walk it.

Your circumstances set the scene. Your thoughts about them shape what happens next.

Change the thought. Change the chain. Change what follows.

The Chain Reaction

Right now I feel:

Reflect: Trace one chain from your week: thought, emotion, action, result.

Notice: What new first link could change where that chain leads?

Try This: Write the new thought somewhere you'll see it tomorrow morning.

What is on your heart? What are you grateful for? What changes are you looking for? What came to mind as you were reading?

Pause to Breathe

Your breath is the one rhythm you can steady on purpose.



Some moments move faster than thoughts.

It's the third time your son has come out of his room after bedtime. Your jaw is tight. Your shoulders are up near your ears. Your heart is racing. You know all about facts and interpretations, but in the moment, knowing and doing are miles apart, none of it can get through.

That isn't a lack of willpower. It's your body. Under stress, your nervous system shifts into protection mode, and the calm, thoughtful part of your brain becomes harder to reach. Your body is sending a signal, and it's a loud one.

This is where the second pause comes in.

Your breath is unique. It runs on its own, like your heartbeat, yet you can also steady it on purpose, and when you do, your whole body notices. Quick, shallow breaths tell your system to stay on alert. Slow, deep breaths, especially long exhales, tell it that it's safe to settle.

Here's what makes this pause so important. Every hard moment has two parts: the signal your body sends, and the story your mind tells about it. Tight chest. Racing heart. Then the story: He's doing this on purpose. I can't handle one more thing.

Most of the time, the story arrives so fast that it feels like part of the signal. A few slow breaths open space between them, and in that space, you get to decide what happens next.

So you stop in the hallway. In through your nose. A long, slow breath out. Then another. Your shoulders drop. Instead of the voice that was coming, you hear yourself say, "Hey, buddy. Let's get you back to bed."

The breath doesn't fix the moment. It gives you back the space to choose and the reminder to exercise your agency.

Pause to Breathe

Right now I feel:

Reflect: Where does stress show up first in your body?

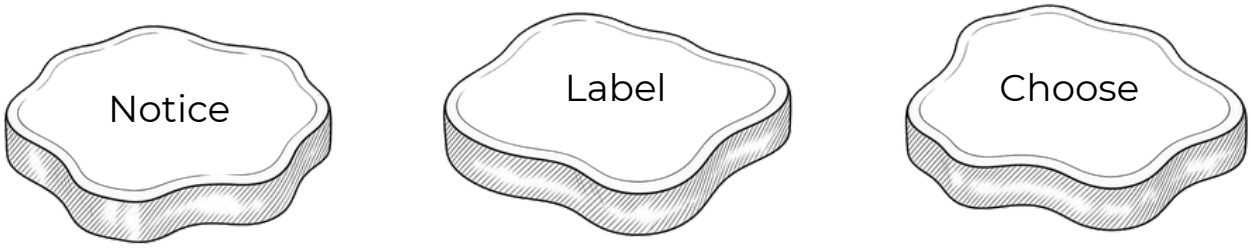
Notice: What story usually follows that signal?

Try This: The next time you feel it, take two slow breaths before you speak.

What is on your heart? What are you grateful for? What changes are you looking for? What came to mind as you were reading?

Notice. Label. Choose.

In the space a breath creates, you get to choose the story.



A breath opens the space. Here is what to do once you're in it.

Notice what's happening. Let your ball of light rest on the thought or feeling without jumping in. Watch it the way you'd watch a cloud pass over a field. Instead of I'm failing, try "There's the thought that I'm failing." That small step back makes all the difference.

Label it. Give it a name. That's worry. That's an old story. That's a weed in my garden. Naming a thought reminds you that it's a habit, not a verdict, and habits can change.

Choose a better thought. Plant something true and helpful in its place. "I'm learning. One step at a time. My child needs me present, not perfect." Say it out loud if you can. Write it down if you have a moment.

Picture getting a message from your daughter's teacher during your lunch break. She's been struggling with reading. Your stomach drops, and the story starts fast: "I should have caught this. I'm failing her."

You take one slow breath. Then:

Notice: There's the thought that I'm failing her.
Label: That's guilt talking, and it's an old, familiar voice.
Choose: She has a parent who cares enough to notice. We'll figure this out together.

That evening, instead of a worried lecture, you sit beside her and read together. The new thought may feel fake at first. Do it anyway. Unfamiliar isn't the same as untrue, and each time you walk that trail, it grows clearer.

Breathe.
Notice. Label. Choose. That's how the space becomes yours.

Notice. Label. Choose.

Right now I feel:

Reflect: What label best fits the thought that visits you most?

Notice: What true and helpful thought could you choose in its place?

Try This: Walk through Notice, Label, Choose once today, and write down what happened.

What is on your heart? What are you grateful for? What changes are you looking for? What came to mind as you were reading?

Daily Medicine

God didn’t put calm behind a paywall. He wove it into the air you breathe.



After my practice closed, every solution I found seemed to cost money I didn’t have. One night in my car, I prayed honestly: What did you put on this earth that I can actually use? The answer came quiet and clear. Your breath.

It’s free, and it’s always with you. I’ve had asthma since childhood, so I almost laughed. Of course the answer would be breathing.

This is your daily medicine. It’s called coherent breathing.

Breathe in gently through your nose for six seconds.
Breathe out gently through your nose for six seconds.
Repeat.

This slow rhythm, about five breaths a minute, is linked in research to healthier heart rate variability, a measure of how flexibly your heart and nervous system respond to stress. Studies suggest it can ease anxiety, steady your mood, and help your body recover more easily.

Take it twice a day if you can: five to ten minutes in the morning before you reach for your phone, and five to ten in the evening before bed.

On the days when that isn’t possible, here’s the smallest version that still counts. One minute while you wait in the pickup line. Six slow breaths at the kitchen sink while the pasta boils.

The first week may feel mechanical. Keep going. Many people notice their everyday calm shifting within a few weeks.

Your breath works alongside any care you receive, never instead of it. If your stress is heavier than everyday stress, reach out for support. That’s a pause, too.

In for six. Out for six. Medicine you already carry.

Daily Medicine

Right now I feel:

Reflect: Where in your day could coherent breathing naturally fit?

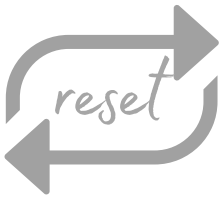
Notice: After one session, what did you feel in your body?

Try This: One minute of coherent breathing today, in for six and out for six.

What is on your heart? What are you grateful for? What changes are you looking for? What came to mind as you were reading?

The Reset

When the moment is already loud, a long, slow exhale brings you back.



Daily medicine steadies you over time. Some moments, though, need help right now.

It's 11:40 p.m. Your sixteen-year-old was supposed to be home at eleven. Your texts show delivered, not read. Your chest is tight, your mind is racing to every worst case, and six slow seconds feel impossible.

This is when you reach for the reset. It's called 4-7-8 breathing, a practice made popular by Dr. Andrew Weil.

Breathe in quietly through your nose for a count of four.
Hold your breath for a count of seven.
Breathe out fully through your mouth for a count of eight.

Start with four rounds. If you feel lightheaded, use shorter counts and keep the same rhythm.

The long exhale is the key. Slow, extended exhales are thought to engage the vagus nerve, the main pathway of your body's calming system. It's a clear message from your body to your brain saying "we can settle now."

I've used it in the middle of a rising panic attack, and I'm still amazed something so simple can help that much. Use it when worry starts to spiral, when sleep won't come, or when you're about to say something you'll regret.

Back to that moment of waiting for your teenager. Four rounds of breathing and your hands are steadier. When the headlights finally pull in, you meet your teenager at the door with relief instead of a lecture. Tomorrow you can talk about curfew. Tonight, you're just glad they're home.

Coherent breathing builds your steady baseline. 4-7-8 brings you back when the moment shakes you. Two breaths. Two purposes. Both always with you.

The Reset

Right now I feel:

Reflect: Which moments in your life most need a reset?

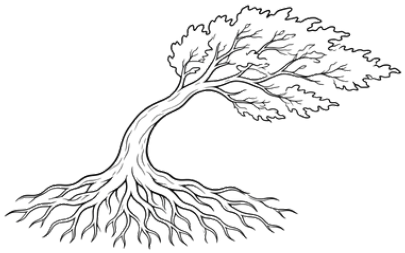
Notice: What happens in your body during the long exhale?

Try This: Four rounds of 4-7-8 tonight before you fall asleep.

What is on your heart? What are you grateful for? What changes are you looking for? What came to mind as you were reading?

Pause to Nourish

You can’t control the storm. You can deepen your roots.



There’s a story in scripture about a man who was very good in a crisis.

The prophet Elijah had just stood strong through one of the hardest seasons of his life. Then, all at once, he ran out of steam. Exhausted and discouraged, he sat down under a tree in the wilderness, ready to give up, and fell asleep.

What happened next is beautiful in its simplicity. The angel didn’t lecture him or hand him a plan. The angel touched him and said, “Arise and eat.” There was bread baked on the coals and a jar of water. Elijah ate, drank, and slept again. Then the angel returned with more, “because the journey is too great for thee” (1 Kings 19:7).

Food. Rest. Only later did Elijah hear the still small voice.

That order matters. It’s easy to try to think and breathe your way through stress while living on caffiene and the crusts of your kids’ sandwiches, eaten standing at the counter. I did it for months. Some days the thoughts wouldn’t shift and the calm wouldn’t last, and I finally saw why. I was asking my mind to do steady work with nothing to draw from.

This is the third pause. Pausing to nourish is about adding what helps, not about dieting or getting it perfect. Real food. Water. Movement. Sleep.

The smallest version that still counts is a glass of water and a few bites of protein before the dash to school.

You can’t stop the storms of life, but you can deepen your roots. A tree with deep roots still bends in the wind, and it stays standing.

Understand that feeding yourself is part of caring for them. They need you physically and mentally strong.

It’s how you stay strong enough for the journey.

Pause to Nourish

Right now I feel:

Reflect: What have you been running on lately?

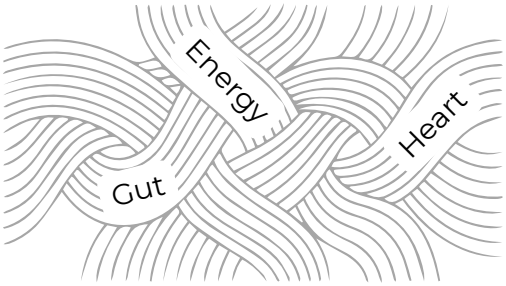
Notice: Like Elijah, what do you need first right now: food, rest, or quiet?

Try This: A glass of water and a few bites of protein before your day begins tomorrow.

What is on your heart? What are you grateful for? What changes are you looking for? What came to mind as you were reading?

Gut, Heart, and Energy

Your gut, your heart, and your cells are all listening to how you live.



Your body is in constant conversation with your mind. Three places in particular are worth knowing.

Your gut. Most of your body's serotonin, a chemical tied to mood, is made in your gut. It doesn't travel straight to your brain, but your gut and brain talk constantly, largely through the vagus nerve. Researchers keep finding that a well-fed gut and a steadier mood tend to go together. Small additions help: fiber-rich vegetables, protein with your carbs to keep blood sugar steady, and a short walk after dinner.

Your heart. Your heart has its own network of tens of thousands of nerve cells, and it sends signals to your brain, not just the other way around. Researchers at the HeartMath Institute believe a calm, steady heart rhythm even affects the people around us. Any parent has seen something like it. When you settle, your child often settles too. Coherent breathing, gratitude, and real connection all support that steady rhythm.

Your energy. Inside nearly every cell are tiny structures called mitochondria, which turn food and oxygen into the energy you live on. The three pauses support them. Calm breathing, nourishing food, movement, and less chronic stress all help your cells do their work.

Here's what I came to see. Nourish was never only about food.

To nourish is to give yourself whatever restores your capacity to keep going. A good meal. A full night's sleep. A walk in the sun. A long hug. A friend's laugh. A prayer. The quiet after the kids are asleep.

Your body and your soul both need feeding.

Feed them both, and you'll have more to give.

Gut, Heart, and Energy

Right now I feel:

Reflect: Beyond food, what restores you? List as many things as you can.

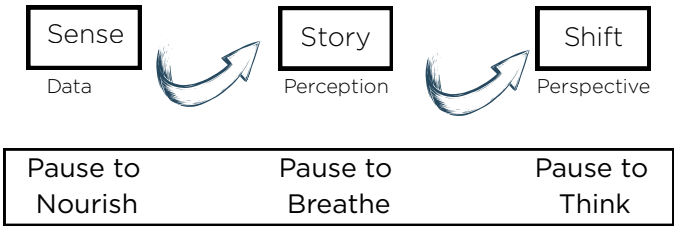
Notice: Which of those has been missing lately?

Try This: Give yourself one of them this week.

What is on your heart? What are you grateful for? What changes are you looking for? What came to mind as you were reading?

Hearing Your Quiet Coach

Sense. Story. Shift. The quiet voice is easier to hear when you know how the noise is made.



The three pauses do more than calm you down. Together, they help you hear your Quiet Coach, and that happens in three steps.

Sense. Everything begins as raw information through your five senses. Your son climbs into the car after practice. His coach mentioned an "attitude problem." Your son's shoulders are slumped. So far, it's all just data.

Signal and Label. Your body reacts first. Neuroscientist Antonio Damasio describes emotion as the body's signal and feeling as the meaning we give it. Your stomach tightens (emotion), and you name it embarrassment (feeling). This is where Notice, Label, Choose helps you catch the moment.

Story. Now your mind builds a story: He's not trying. He's going to waste his talent. You're using Perception here, but on autopilot, seeing today through the lens of yesterday. Your words matter, too. The story you tell yourself is the one you start to believe.

Resistance and Permission. Even when a new thought breaks through, part of you wants to defend the old story. Permission is choosing to let yourself look again.

Shift. Now you pick up Perception on purpose, along with your other spiritual abilities: Imagination, Will, Memory, Intuition, and Reason. You remember the early mornings he practiced alone. You imagine how that comment landed on a twelve-year-old. A quiet nudge says, Ask. Don't tell.

So you ask, "Rough day?" And he finally talks. He isn't lazy. He's discouraged.

Same car ride. A truer story.

That's how you hear your Quiet Coach.

Hearing Your Quiet Coach

Right now I feel:

Reflect: Recall a recent moment that upset you. What was the raw data, and what story did you build from it?

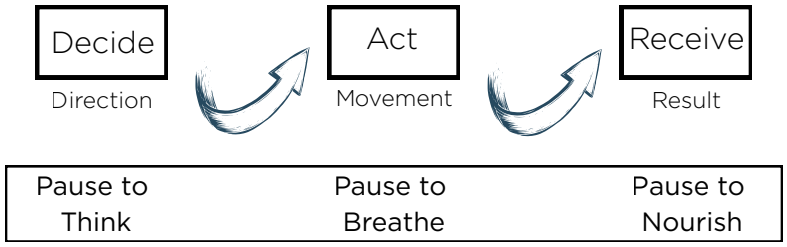
Notice: Which ability could help you see it differently: Perception, Imagination, Will, Memory, Intuition, or Reason?

Try This: The next time a story starts building, ask before you tell.

What is on your heart? What are you grateful for? What changes are you looking for? What came to mind as you were reading?

Following Your Quiet Coach

Most of us know how to decide and act. The step we skip is letting the good land.



Hearing your Quiet Coach is the first half. Following it is the second.

Decide. The word comes from a root meaning “to cut off.” To decide is to choose one path and let the others go. Your discernment tools help: Values, Wisdom, Vision, Counsel, and Timing.

A mother has felt the same nudge for weeks: step back from chairing the school fundraiser. She values evenings with her kids. She prays about it and talks it over with her husband. The new term is about to begin. She decides.

Commit and Move. Then doubt shows up. They’ll think I’m letting everyone down. This is where most of us stall, knowing what to do and not doing it. Courage isn’t the absence of doubt. It’s moving with it. She breathes and sends the email.

Act. The decision becomes real. No toolkit is needed here, only willingness.

Receive. This is the step most of us skip. Her first free Tuesday arrives, and her instinct is to fill it with laundry. Instead, she sits on the porch with her kids. When her daughter says, “I like it when you’re home,” she lets the words land instead of brushing them aside.

Receiving takes Worthiness, believing you’re allowed to have good things. It takes Rest, Gratitude, Faith, and Hope. Last of all, it takes Charity, the pure love of Christ, which means learning to receive love itself, from God and from the people around you. Receiving isn’t a reward for finishing. It’s part of why we’re here: “men are, that they might have joy” (2 Nephi 2:25).

A soul that has been fed hears its Quiet Coach more easily next time.

You don’t arrive. You circle back, stronger every time.

Following Your Quiet Coach

Right now I feel:

Reflect: What nudge have you been feeling but haven't acted on?

Notice: What doubt is holding it back, and what would courage look like?

Try This: When something good happens this week, stop and let it land. Write it here.

What is on your heart? What are you grateful for? What changes are you looking for? What came to mind as you were reading?

The Pause on Purpose System™

Small and steady beats big and someday.



Knowing the pauses is the beginning. Living them is where things change, and the Pause on Purpose System is made to fit inside a full life.

One commitment. Consistency, not perfection. You show up, especially on the hard days. A missed day isn't a failure. It's a reason to begin again tomorrow.

Three reasons. Ask yourself why this matters to you. Your reasons might come from your health, your finances, your growth, your relationships, or your faith. One dad wrote his three: Have the energy to coach my daughter's soccer team. Stop bringing work stress to the dinner table. Feel close to God again. On the days he wanted to skip, those reasons carried him.

Seven daily actions. Choose seven small actions from the three pauses, with at least one from each. For example:

Think: Write three things I'm grateful for. Reframe one heavy thought with Notice, Label, Choose.
Breathe: Coherent breathing morning and evening. 4-7-8 when stress rises.
Nourish: Protein at breakfast. A ten-minute walk after dinner. Lights out by 10:30.

Each action has a smallest version that still counts. Five minutes of breathing can become one. A walk can become a lap around the yard. The small version keeps the rhythm going.

A weekly review. Once a week, take ten minutes to look back. What went well? What felt hard? What will I adjust? And one question most of us forget: What did I let myself receive this week?

Your practice pages are toward the back of this book, ready when you are.

Small and steady.

Day after day.

The Pause on Purpose System™

Right now I feel:

Reflect: Why does this matter to you? Jot your first thoughts on your three reasons.

Notice: Which daily actions already feel natural, and which would stretch you?

Try This: Fill in your Reasons Why and Seven Daily Actions pages at the back of the book.

What is on your heart? What are you grateful for? What changes are you looking for? What came to mind as you were reading?

The Journey

There is no “done.” There’s only the next stone.



Picture a stream with stones stretching across it. The water keeps moving. You don’t need to see the far bank. You only need to find the next stone.

That’s what this journey looks like, and it unfolds in three rhythms.

Day. Each day you practice your seven actions, often in their smallest versions. Some days everything flows. Some days you manage two out of seven and fall asleep on the couch. Both count.

Week. Each week you look back, notice what’s working, and adjust. This is where you start to see patterns you can’t see from inside a single hard day.

Season. Over months, something quietly changes. You realize you breathed through a moment that used to undo you. Your kids come to you a little more often. You feel like yourself again.

Along the way, you’ll feel friction. The first weeks can feel awkward, the new thoughts forced, the breathing mechanical. Friction means a new rhythm is taking hold. Keep going, and it slowly gives way to momentum. What once took effort starts to feel natural.

You’ll also slip. A stressful month, a sick child, or a busy holiday, and suddenly you’re back on the old path. That’s part of the journey, too. You haven’t lost your place. The next stone is right there. Begin again with one breath.

And here’s the freeing part: there is no “done.” You never have to arrive at a perfectly calm life. The pause is a rhythm you return to again and again, the way your heart returns to rest between every beat.

Day by day. Week by week. Season by season.

One pause at a time.

The Journey

Right now I feel:

Reflect: Where are you feeling friction right now?

Notice: What will help you begin again on the days you slip?

Try This: Write one sentence to your future self for a hard day.

What is on your heart? What are you grateful for? What changes are you looking for? What came to mind as you were reading?

What They Inherit

What you practice is what they inherit.



Your children are watching more than they're listening.

They notice how you handle a hard phone call. Whether you snap or breathe when the car won't start. Whether you rest or run yourself into the ground. Long before they can name it, they're learning from your rhythm what to do with their own.

What you practice is what they inherit.

That can feel heavy at first, especially on the days you lose your patience. It's also the most hopeful truth in this book. You don't have to be perfect to pass on something good. You only need to keep returning to the pause.

Picture a few years from now. Your daughter sits at the kitchen table, frustrated over a school project and close to tears. Before you say a word, she closes her eyes and takes a slow breath. Then another. You never sat her down and taught her that. She learned it watching you in the hallway, the pickup line, and at the kitchen sink.

If you care for an aging parent, the same is true. Your kids notice the patience you bring to Grandpa's hard days, and it's the kind of care they'll one day offer you.

The pause reaches in both directions, back to the people who raised you and forward to the people you're raising.

My hope is that steady hearts become a family inheritance, passed from one generation to the next.

Your heart was built to pause.
So were theirs.
Show them how.

What They Inherit

Right now I feel:

Reflect: What did you inherit from the people who raised you that you want to keep, or gently let go?

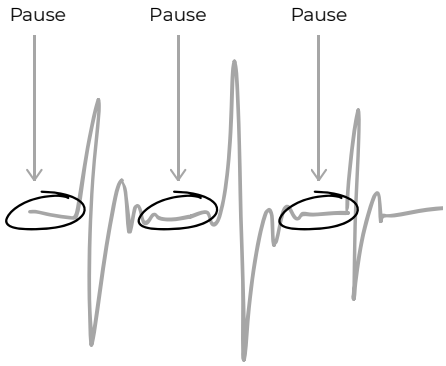
Notice: What do you hope the people you love will inherit from you?

Try This: Let someone you love see you take a pause today.

What is on your heart? What are you grateful for? What changes are you looking for? What came to mind as you were reading?

Going Deeper

Your pause has been with you all along.



You now hold the heart of the practice: One decision to be consistent, three pauses, seven daily actions, and one weekly look back. For many readers, that's enough to begin, and beginning is what matters most.

If you'd like to go deeper, Built to Pause is the full book. It offers more stories from parents and caregivers, the science behind each pause, and complete lists of daily actions to choose from. It also takes a closer look at hearing and following your Quiet Coach.

There's no rush. Start with what's in your hands today. When you're ready for more, the full book will be available.

Your pause has been with you all along.

Your Reasons

Structuring Your Three Reasons

For each of your three reasons, you need two things:

1. WHAT you want to change (specific and concrete)
2. WHY it matters to you (personal and emotional)

What: _____

_____

Why: _____

_____

What: _____

_____

Why: _____

_____

What: _____

_____

Why: _____

_____

Articulating your three reasons isn't just a planning exercise—it's an act of creation.

You're speaking your future into existence. You're clarifying the vision that your daily actions will carry you toward.

Never underestimate the power of a clearly articulated why.

Your Seven Daily Actions

Action 1 -

Action 2 -

Action 3 -

Action 4 -

Action 5 -

Action 6 -

Action 7 -

There are 14 boxes under each action for you to track your progress. Check the box at the end of each day that you practiced your action. Then review after each week to assess how you are doing with your actions.

Pause on Purpose: Weekly Review

Week of: _____ to _____

- Did I show up more days than I missed? □ Yes □ No

(5 out of 7 is progress. 3 out of 7 is still showing up. 1 out of 7 means I'm in a hard season. What support do I need?)

- What's one thing that felt easier or more natural this week?
- What's one small win I can celebrate?
- What did I let myself receive this week? (A moment of rest, a kind word, a good result, a hug, help from someone, a quiet nudge from my Quiet Coach)
- What was hardest this week?
- What do I need next week?

□ Keep the same seven daily actions

□ Adjust one action (which one? _____)

□ I need this support: _____

My commitment for next week:

Next week, I'm showing up for myself by: _____

Keep pausing on purpose.

About the Author

Dr. Chant Williams, DC, is a husband, father, author, and speaker who helps parents, caregivers, and capable people everywhere find calm and steadiness in the middle of full lives.

With a background in chiropractic care and a deep appreciation for the connection between mind, body, and heart, Chant developed the Pause on Purpose System. It's a simple, practical approach built on three pauses (Think, Breathe, and Nourish) that help people return to the steadiness they were designed for.

His work draws on research in neuroscience, breathing, heart-brain coherence, and the gut-brain connection, along with his own journey through loss, burnout, and starting over. After years of being the one who held everything together, he learned that real strength includes knowing how to pause.

Chant is the founder of Resolute Growth and is passionate about generational resilience: helping families pass down steady hearts from one generation to the next.

He lives in Idaho with his family.



Stay Connected

Thank you for spending these pages with me.

Wherever you are on your journey, whether you're just beginning, somewhere in the middle, or finding your way back after a hard season, I hope you remember this: you were built to pause, and your steady heart is always within reach.

If you'd like to keep learning, you'll find more encouragement, practical tools, and short guided pauses here:

Website: chantwilliams.com

YouTube: youtube.com/@chant.williams

And if this book helped you, consider passing it on. Give a copy to a friend, a spouse, or a fellow parent who's carrying a lot right now. Sometimes the most meaningful thing we can share is the reminder that it's okay to pause.

Keep pausing on purpose.

—Chant


Survival mode was never meant
to be a way of life.
Rediscover the pause you
were built with.
Inside, you'll discover:
• Three simple pauses to calm your stress
• Two breathing practices you can use anywhere
• Notice. Label. Choose. — to quiet racing thoughts
• How to hear your Quiet Coach
• A simple daily system that fits a full life
chantwilliams.com
youtube.com/@chant.williams