

Flower Communion: To Be Renewed

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“Renewal” is defined as:

Resuming an activity or state after an interruption, ***replacing*** or ***repairing*** something worn-out, run down, or broken, ***giving new life or vigor***, to ***rejuvenate***, to ***restore***.

You know what it's like to feel the need for renewal - to feel tired, used up, run down, or broken. Yet nature and the cycle of seasons of life around us demonstrate that there are ways to shift our situation, to reboot, to start all over with hope, energy, and enthusiasm.

The simplest method to renew requires little time, virtually no practice, and no money: BREATHE.

The second best way is to sleep – to take a nap.

Our need for renewal is often related to the level of stress we are encountering. High stress leads to burn out, and long term it leads to negative impacts on the body, mind, and spirit. When we face fear or threat, our bodies prepare to fight or flee. This usually happens when we are confronted with an immediate situation that needs to be addressed - say a lion looks at you hungrily.

In a normal cycle, stress hormones are released, usually they abate and we return to a normal state. However, when stress is chronic or continuous, we are under the influence of stress hormone cortisol which impacts our thinking, our attitude, and our body's ability to function effectively.

We can get so caught up in life, in work, family, world events, politics, threats of violence, economics, etc. that we can't seem to unplug, to be calm and at ease, to quiet our minds, to release tension in our bodies, to regain perspective, and reconnect with hope, resilience, joy.

Sometimes, because of the discomfort, the pressure, or the challenge of our situation, we turn to short-term relief: we withdraw or isolate, we overindulge in TV or gaming, become angry and short-tempered, self-medicate with alcohol, or using other substances to excess, sink into worry and depression.

It's common to think that we are the only person who is experiencing stress and it's outcomes. We try to hide it from ourselves and others. We don't want to interact with how deflated, tired, and hopeless we feel, and that just makes it worse.

Strategies for renewal from Dr. Abigail Brenner

1. Streamline your life - declutter your physical space, learn to do with less, clear out our mental and emotional clutter, challenge our limiting beliefs, reframe our attitude, reprioritize and make new choices. Perhaps our gift is the ability to choose one thought over another

2. Begin something new - use your creativity, take better care of yourself, do something for someone else.
3. Start a practice/new discipline/approach with mindfulness - a spiritual pursuit, exercise program, get out of your old patterns and habits.
4. Be in nature - make a connection/be in the moment. The cycle of life reminds us that nothing stays still, that life is in constant flux, and that change is the norm. Go for a nature walk, try forest bathing, plant and work in your garden. Recent research has shown that spending 20 minutes in the outdoors - bare feet on the grass - just observing the now - can result in better sleep - longer, deeper, less interrupted, go back to sleep, etc.
5. Place yourself in new situations - find the newness within yourself - some place you've never been before. Might include travel or a vacation, but it could be a day at the beach for yourself or going to a new restaurant or museum. Doesn't have to be far from home or exotic - just get out of your normal locations and out of your comfort zone. Humans crave growth and learning, as well as creating more meaning and purpose in their lives. Sometimes we can get stuck in a too familiar place/routine/pattern. Then we need to shift ourselves onto a new path of renewal and rejuvenation, to reconnect with ourselves and with life.

Be sure to ask for help. Offer it to others. Uncover your true spirit and live life in joy.

Amen.