



BERLOT GROUP

Coaching Teams . Changing Cultures

Is this a signal to slow down? – Faith Fuller

Source : LinkedIn

Link : <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/signal-slow-down-faith-fuller/?trackingId=ELjMYWvRGtvldvSdDdlmZQ%3D%3D>

The system has been sending us signals for a long-time to slow down. From the mental health crisis to global warming, we've seen the impact of our non-stop 24/7 culture on a personal and social level. Yet, until Covid-19, natural disasters and public health emergencies existed at a localized level. Now, we are being asked- at a global level- to slow down. The virus is forcing all of us to press pause on our busy lives and return to a softer space, with ourselves, with each other and with our relationship with the planet. We may not have the answers we're looking for right now, but what we do have at our disposal is awareness. And from awareness comes conscious *choice*.

Awareness of Choice

The place where choice comes in is consciousness and awareness. And for me right now, I am aware of the level of stress and irritability I'm under. And I have the *choice* to snap at my dogs, my daughter, my partner, my team members because I am under so much pressure. *And* I also have the choice to stop myself, move into empathy, try to understand, ask questions. I can choose how to respond. But I can't make that choice if I am triggered. And I can't *choose* if I am not aware of the choice in the first place. This is one of the reasons why ORSC is such a powerful resource for all of us right now. Because these tools are designed to force us into better awareness. And when we become aware, we become aware of the choices we have.

We're being pushed and pulled in lots of direction and big chunks of our personal and professional lives may feel out of control. But what we can do is slow down. We can slow down in order to see the choices that we *can* make. The things that we can control.

Slow with Self

I think many of us thought we were going to get a school holiday with the self-quarantine measures in place, but the reality for a lot of us is that we're busier than ever! If you're in the process of trying to quickly transition to virtual working, I'm sure that's been stressful. And on top of that, many people are having to suddenly manage the challenges of working from a home whilst also having to look after their kids full-time. So how might we slow down during this period of rapid change?



BERLOT GROUP

Coaching Teams . Changing Cultures

1. **Meditation-** even if it's just for a minute. Ask yourself, what's the minimal amount of meditation I can commit to each day. You don't need a cushion or incense; it doesn't have to be fussy. Meditation is simply stopping and being aware.
2. **Yoga-** anxiety is stored in the big muscles, so practices like yin yoga, that involve stretching and paying attention will help you to slow down, become aware and reduce stress.

And for those of you who aren't into meditation or yoga:

3. **Walk-** if you're on shelter at home this might not be an option. But if you can get outside, take a walk- even if only for 10-minutes- just make sure you stay 6-feet from other people.
4. **Nature-** Get outside and surround yourself in nature. Nature is not freaked out at all right now and it has so much wisdom. Sitting quietly near trees can be hugely healing. Or if you're not a still person a simple walk through a forest can quite literally bring your blood pressure down.
5. **Cleaning** – I hate cleaning...but you can't bring in the new until you take out the old. So, cleaning clutter can be a cathartic experience, particularly during uncertain times. Can you clean one thing every day and create space for the new to come in?

Slow down with your partner

How do I connect with 'WE'?

This 30-minute exercise is a fantastic way to cultivate deep listening with yourself and your partner/close friend/family member because it helps couples (or any pair) to both individuate better and to be intimate at the same time. And it's really simple:

1. *One of you has 30-minutes to talk, only about yourself. (Don't talk about the other person because they're going to be listening with rapt attention and it would be very difficult for them to listen to you moaning about them!) You're going to talk about yourself for 30-minutes which is a shockingly long amount of time to talk about yourself!*
2. *The other person's job is to listen raptly. And there's no crosstalk. If they don't understand something, they can ask you to say it differently, but you're not having a conversation.*
3. *If you're the person talking your job is to drop deeply into "how am I doing? Really?" You might start with "well I've been so busy" and then underneath that there's "I can't believe this is happening, this has never happened before." And then underneath that, "what if the world completely changes?" And if you run out of things to say, sit in companionable silence. You're focused in on yourself until the*



BERLOT GROUP

Coaching Teams . Changing Cultures

next thing bubbles up. And something will eventually bubble up. Peel the layers down.

4. And if you're the person who is listening, your job is to listen with full attention

The most important rule is that you don't talk about what was said for 48 hours. This creates safety and space. You can run the exercise back-to-back, given the extra time we've been given right now, or you can spread it over two evenings. Whatever works for you and your schedules.

What I love about this exercise is that it works our emotional and social intelligence muscles: 'me' and 'we'. It's an individuating exercise because if you've been married for some time, you will know that deep sharing can begin to drop away. So, if we can connect with 'what is going on with me?' and then share that with our partner we create intimacy. We're breaking down the layers of not sharing that have built up because of our busy lives and connecting deeper with our self and the person in front of us.

Slow down with your team

Pause: When I am hosting a call, I often invite everyone to close their eyes and take a deep breath. We take a 30-second pause in order to properly land on the call, which is particularly helpful if we've been 'virtually' running around all day. It's essentially a moment of meditation but I don't call it that. It's simply a moment to step back from all of the things we've been doing, done or need to do, so that we can settle into where we are and focus on what we need to do now.

Check-in: If you're someone who has suddenly found themselves physically separated from their team, you might feel bereft of certain rituals you've been stripped of. Perhaps the walk to work, coffee break, or weekly team meetings. And if you're a sports fan- you may feel like you've lost some of your conversational rituals too. So, at the start of teams calls asking simple questions-that won't scare people- can help teams to slow down and connect from where they are at:

- *What's the best thing about working from home?*
- *What's the most distracting thing about working from home?*
- *What's the funniest Facebook joke you've read about the Covid virus?*

Meet the field where it is: Laughter at the beginning of a call can be a powerful as it instantly creates community. Perhaps everyone can share their fears around their lack of toilet paper! But of course, if someone's family member is dealing with the Covid virus, then humor might not be the most appropriate response. So, slowing down at the start of calls will help you to meet your team where they are. Perhaps there's a moment of reverence or shared



BERLOT GROUP

Coaching Teams . Changing Cultures

angst before you move into the agenda. Meet your team where they are *first* and then you can *shift* the emotional field.

Social calls: Don't forget to schedule virtual coffee catchups with your colleagues. These conversations are also important for your working relationships. Don't just make all of your calls about work. Slow down and socialize virtually!

In defense of slowing down

What is this crisis asking of us? On multiple levels? What is it asking of me? What is it asking of us and our relationships? And what is it asking for us collectively/globally? We can't find out if we don't use this space- these changes to routine, disruptions to our patterns, adjustments to our work environment- to listen. Slowing down helps us to listen deeply. To become aware. And from awareness comes choice.

So, after you finish reading this article, I am going to invite you to take one big breath. One moment to pause. And from there- from that space- you will start to become more aware of what you can create from this crisis.

PhD thesis, soon to be published.

