

## Building Transition Windows Into Our Busy Lives

by Anchal Khanna LCMFT, as posted in Thrive Global

These moments of quiet serenity can cure spillovers of stress and help us  
live more mindfully



**Peace** takes on a whole new meaning when we think about how our day-to-day lives are filled with stress, with a sense of being rushed and a need to perform at every level. We have all had the experience of thinking to ourselves, “I don’t have a minute to breathe and slow down.”

Sometimes we are literally holding our breath and don’t even know it. We live our lives getting pulled in different directions without a break, without a chance to really think about where we are and where we are going. If we don’t know where we are going, how will we know if we get there?

If we don’t pause and wonder if what we are doing on a daily basis really fits with our goals in life, we might find ourselves being impulsive, irritable and directionless. These reactions are nothing but a cue that something is “off” and “incongruent” between our values and passion and the places we invest our time and attention.

At the same time, let’s acknowledge that in the real world, some things need to get done, whether it is a job away from home or a job at home taking care of the family system.

I would like to introduce you to one simple and inexpensive tool that will open up your day-to-day routine. This small, yet mindful alteration to your day will bring you closer to being in the driver seat of your life, and you will find that you are no longer just a passive recipient of your life circumstances.

There is a reason you made it to this sixth paragraph. That means you are able to pause, recognize what you need, and are motivated to bring a change.



The key in bringing about this change lies in identifying your **‘Transition Windows.’** A transition window can be any five-to-ten-minute or longer space between two tasks or events in your day. It is, like the name suggests, a space, a ‘window’ in your small transitional moments of the day.

For example, your transition window could be the time in between:

- a. Your drive from home to work
- b. Your drive for home to school drop-offs
- c. Meetings at work
- d. Getting from one building to another
- e. Chores at home
- f. Right after you wake up in the morning
- g. Right after you leave work and travel back home

Once you have identified your transition window, the next step is to think of something that you can do to take a 'PAUSE' and 'BREATHE' (literally and figuratively).

This could be any of the following activities or practices:

a. Drinking a cup of tea, without doing anything else at the same time. It can be hard to stay away from email or text, but that is the point of this practice.

b. Listening to your favorite author on an audio book in the car. This means avoiding getting on the phone the minute you get in the car, irrespective of where you are going.

c. Going on a walk during your lunch time.

d. Taking a work break and spending a few minutes taking long deep breaths in a private space. You can also use various breathing apps for this purpose.

e. Taking a quick shower when you first get home instead of starting dinner, looking at mail or getting your children started on their next task.

You can get creative with finding your transition windows and identifying the practice that will help you 'Pause.' The main goals of these 'Transition Windows' are to:

a. Avoid a spillover of stress from one task to another

b. Reset your mind and body

c. Increase your awareness of what you are doing next

d. Avoid a buildup of difficult emotions

e. To slow down and take control of your day and your life.

We want to be able to live our life in ways that allow us to savor parts of the journey at the bare minimum and to make changes if we are not on the right path. Your transition window can be one small, but significant step in that direction.