

A Gift by Angela Ahles June 2020

“Yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery, and today is a gift...that’s why they call it the present.”
Author unknown...disputed

“Don’t judge me by my past, I don’t live there anymore.” Zig Ziglar

I often look at my past with regret. I really want to believe that the greatest mistakes in life are the lessons we haven’t learned from our past. I have had trouble moving on from the past. My trauma used to define me. My failures have shamed me. My mental health was my identity. Recently I began to learn to live for the now. It was then I began to learn from my past instead of living there.

“The most reliable way to predict the future is to create it.” Abraham Lincoln

I used to worry for the future and measure my success on perfection. If it wasn’t perfect, I was a failure. Failure meant shame to me. Shame attacks the inner core of who we are. Worry consumed me. What if I am depressed forever? What if something worse happens? What if I lose someone? What if, what if, what if...? Then I started small exercises to live in the present. I still have concerns for the future, but they are not based on perfection and driven by shame. It was when I learned I can live in the present that I lost some of my worry and began to have hope for the future.

“The past can hurt. But the way I see it, you can either run from it, or learn from it.” Walt Disney

“The future depends on what we do in the present.” Mahatma Gandhi

What does it mean to live in the moment? To me it means actively using my senses. I ground myself to live in the moment when worry intrudes, or flashbacks persist. I ground myself into the moment when I sit on my patio or go grocery shopping. I ground myself when eating a meal. I touch the food, smell it, does it make a sound when I cook it, look at how I have arranged the food on the plate, and then I don’t just taste it- I savor it. Enjoy it. By doing this I have learned to eat slower, become full before my plate is empty, and has made me think about what I am nourishing my body with. As a result, I feel better about myself physically and mentally. This exercise of mindful eating is just an example of how I live in the present and applies to anything and everything, in my opinion. I use my senses to live, and even enjoy the now. I try to, anyway. This isn’t easy, and I recognize that. I have been practicing living in the present for seven years and hope to continue to improve but not expect mastery or perfection. I will keep walking my path and continue to learn from past experiences, hope for the future, and live right now.



We are the evidence; We hold the hope.