

Inspirational, original essays, stories, poetry and photographs liken one's life to an hourglass. The sand represents the past, present and future. The only grains that matter are the ones falling through right now. Sand Matters is the awakening to now.

Isn't It About Time Your Sand Matters?

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Isn't it about time your
**SAND
MATTERS?**

by

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Preface

The common denominator of all living things is time.



Now, right now, this very moment as we know it, is available only to the living. This may seem as obvious as gravity, especially if you're the one the falling apple hits. The falling apple in the case of time is sand through an hourglass.

Whether you're standing in a remote desert or a metropolitan intersection, whether you're above or below the equator, a minute of sand weighs .06 ounces and a year of sand weighs a ton.

Whether the hourglass measures a minute, a year, or a lifetime, it has a halfway point.

Consider your life as an allegorical hourglass; the grains of sand are moments you have experienced and have yet to experience. You could see your life as a single hourglass, all your sand in one beautiful glass container.

You could see it requiring a 180-degree turn at your halfway point. Or your lifeglass could turn over with every life-changing event you experience. Maybe you could define your lifeglass as one that gets a fresh turn the moment you awaken each day.



However you view it, the size of your hourglass and the amount of sand you have are unknown. The other unknown is your halfway point. Hence, your sand matters.

Time unifies and equalizes humanity more than anything else. For as long as you live, your sand flows only in the present and is only yours to spend. Time continues no matter what you choose to do and is the only thing that is completely yours and completely someone else's at the same time.

The sand at the bottom of your hourglass is your past and is as unchangeable as the sand at the top.

The only grain of sand that matters is the one falling through right now.



Man alone has the power to transfer his
thoughts into physical reality;
man alone can dream and make
his dreams come true.

~ Napoleon Hill ~



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Chapter One

Only the Living Have Time



Why should I throw now after maybe?
Can tomorrow's sand flow through
the glass before today's?

~ Og Mandino ~



Truly, your sand matters.

First, last and foremost, it begins with you. When you accept how much your sand matters, you will never short-change yourself again. You will discover your life happening for you instead of to you. You will see yourself as the powerful person you are.

When you have gratitude in your pocket, an angel on your shoulder, and forgiveness in your heart, you cannot fail. Dazzling miracles are available in each moment. Hopes and dreams are waiting for their own now.

As you awaken to living consciously in each moment, to appreciating the stillness within a sacred moment of now, you also develop a sense of comfort and balance with the demands of living in your multi-tasking, busy reality.



All that we are is the result
of what we have thought.

~ Buddha ~





Who are you full of?

I recently attended a gallery showing for a well-known artist. As I wandered through the displays, admiring the art, I overheard someone mutter that the artist was 'full of himself.' I stopped as if the phrase had hit me square between my eyes.

Who else should the artist be full of, I wondered? Who am I full of? If someone described you as being 'full of yourself' would you consider it complimentary or degrading? Take a risk and claim it as a compliment.



You are a full-bodied, complete person, different from anyone else and totally unique. Your DNA makes you unmistakably you. You are already full of you! Step into self-realization and declare yourself.

Be full of yourself rather than full of anyone else or full of bits and pieces of other people. No one else's sand is in your hourglass.

You may experiment with a variety of images, behaviors and beliefs in your lifetime as you discover who you really are and what truly resonates with your core self.

When you are full of yourself, you love who you are, what you do and how you feel. You fall in love with yourself, filling yourself even fuller with your own goodness. Being full of yourself is like having your own internal fountain of youth.

Consider affirming, "I deliberately choose to be full of myself. I direct my life. My sand is mine." Lift your chin, shoulders back, take a deep breath; plug into your own power outlet and fill yourself up with you. You may need to say and do this on a daily basis until your heart has no doubt that you are serious about loving yourself.

Success is the quality
of your journey.

~ Jennifer James ~



Be-You-ti-Fully You.



Only you are capable of being you. You are uniquely the only one on the planet who knows you as well as you do. No one can love you as well as you can love and care for yourself. Knowing that you have only your sand in your hourglass may give you more cause to care for your physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual health than any other reason you've found. It's your well-being for which you're living.

You are a walking, breathing compilation of your accumulated beliefs about yourself. Your beliefs originated from early childhood experiences and are most likely out of date.


You may have collected some unwholesome beliefs or similarly denigrating derivatives like, "I'm not good enough, I'm stupid, I'm unworthy, I'm ugly, I'm fat, I'm not loveable, I'm tone deaf, I'm poor, I don't deserve what I want, or I always have to do it."

You're not required to keep the beliefs you took on as a child. You probably kept them because you didn't know you didn't need them. They may be holding you back from achieving your dreams. If your beliefs aren't based in compassion, gratitude, joy, conscious living, and global awareness, they are out of sync with the context of this millennium and with forward progression.

Beauty is not in the face; beauty
is a light in the heart.

~ Kahlil Gibran ~





Take the first step in faith.
You don't have to see the whole staircase,
just take the first step.

~ Martin Luther King, Jr. ~



What part of now don't you understand when you desperately cling to your past?

Do you flog yourself with old moments? Thoughts like "If only I'd said this..." or "It would have been better if I'd done that..." are self-abusive and will unravel the fabric of your self-worth.

Take the grains of sand you might spend beating yourself up with recriminations and spend them listing the top ten or twenty things for which you are grateful.

When the voice of self-doubt threatens your peace of mind, put down the stick with which you beat yourself and take a step toward turning up your gratitude chorus. Let the uplifting power of gratitude replace potentially downward-spiraling thoughts.





Mother Earth knows only Now.

The reigning Queen of Now is Mother Earth. She never stops giving her best, never abandons now for later and is the epitome of vibrant life. She radiates power. She goes by many names and descriptions, both spiritual and scientific. She bears the brunt of our experiments and misadventures for the sake of cosmic experience.

Depression for her is a crater or a canyon and not an emotion. She doesn't know hate or fear or any of our other states of mind. She simply is. She spins in her galactic environment to the rhythm of a vast universe beyond our comprehension.

Her infinite universe asks not that we understand but that we allow.

Allow ourselves to feel joy, to experience abundance, to receive love and to participate fully with her in her now.

Every moment of now, Mother Earth is absolutely there for you. She is there when you think no one cares and you're alone with the incessant chatter in your mind. Her trees listen, her eagles inspire, her dirt grounds and her waters envelope you.

Your thoughts seem to have an endless rippling effect, one thought linking to another.

You can think negative thoughts or you can think positive thoughts. Which would you rather have affect you when the ripples reach you, negative or positive? Which rippling thoughts would you rather be accountable for, the negative ones or the positive ones?

It begins and ends with your choice. Your attitude is your choice.



What we think,
we become.

~ Buddha ~



If we have no peace,
it is because we have forgotten
that we belong to each other.

~ Mother Teresa ~

Living “I” to “I”.



Being present in this now lets you access and master “I” contact. “I” contact is the essential place inside where only you know you. It is where you know you are safe and you are loved. It is the essence of how you feel alive.

Once you own the power of your “I” contact, the challenge is to be present with someone else. Mutual “I” contact is actualized living trust. When you have “I” contact with me and

I have “I” contact with you, the edges of time seem to disappear.

Being so completely present unleashes an energy flow that rejuvenates and radiates love, and it is yours to absorb and direct.

Just as the plus sign’s opposite is the minus sign, being absent is the opposite of being present. Although being absent may be your choice as a down-time strategy, consider being present even when you’re tired.

The more sand you spend being present, the stronger your “I” contact is with now. The more present you live in this now, the more you can activate and actualizes every desire you’ve ever had to feel powerful, successful and loved.

Living “I” to “I” with other living beings takes you into the stillness that now offers. When you live from the center of your “I”, you may find your language changes. You may find you forget your stories and excuses. You may find you attract more positive events, more abundance, more joy and more like-minded people. You may develop a delightful addiction to your quiet awareness.



Simplicity: the end result of wisdom.

“The end result of wisdom is simplicity.”

Our family is known within our walls for collecting inspirational quotations and one-liners, so when my brother offered this one, I automatically asked, “Who said that?”

“I did,” he replied.

I read his face and knew he was serious. I wondered as we shared “I” contact in that moment, just when his hourglass had turned over. Younger than me by nearly a dozen years, we’re both in the ‘middle age’ bracket. I also wondered how he’d gotten so wise for his years.

He’d probably done it the same way I had: standing up, falling down, learning from doing and being, consciously peeling away translucent layers of the onion skin of personal experiences and choices to find the essence of what matters.

Millions of people are hearing the call to mindfulness and simplicity. They want to slow down, work meaningfully, get out of debt, create less wasteful consumption, and engage in inter-personal relationships with family and communities. Marketing experts have long known that the simpler the message, the easier it is understood, the sooner it is wanted and ultimately purchased.



Simplicity reflects the breath of now, right now, this moment. It is the place of solace felt when one releases one’s grip on past nows and lives only in this breath, this now. This here, this now, this sand is simple: breathe in joy, breathe out joy.

In character, in manners, in style, in all things,
the supreme excellence is simplicity.

~ Henry Wadsworth Longfellow ~

Relaxation is the prerequisite for that inner expansion that allows a person to express the source of inspiration and joy within.

~ Deepak Chopra ~

shhhhhh, listen.



Take time to listen to the silence around you. Quiet your heart, quiet the chatter in your mind, quiet your energy and quiet your anxiety. In your inner quietness, you can rest, feel calmer and more at peace. Allow yourself the time to feel the gentleness of a quiet moment.

As you learn to still your mind and body, tiredness seems to melt away and it is easier to meet the next obstacle with clarity.

There are solutions to every problem, answers to every question. There is enough air to breathe.

When you feel rushed, allow yourself a precious moment to pause, give thanks and breathe deeply before continuing. In that breath, step into your center of knowing, your place of quietness, and the answer will be there for you.

Quietness is a non-discriminatory, multi-dimensional resource. You can recharge yourself with a light, cleansing, quiet moment, or use a deeper meditative period for more serious relaxation.

Access your quiet center while you wait for the microwave to ding, for a red light to turn green, for the dentist to arrive, for an expected phone call, at the fast food take-out window. Tapping into your personal reservoir of quietness increases your energy for pursuing your dream.



My name is...

When I turned forty, I became a time junkie. I was obsessed with time. I bought all the books, tapes, CDs and DVDs on Time Management I could find. I wanted to save time for important things, for quality moments and supremely fulfilling experiences.

I wanted to bank my time at a high interest rate, let it multiply exponentially.

To my horror, I realized I used up considerable time learning how to save it. On the other hand, how would I know if I was using time I'd saved? Would saved time have more value when I used it for a special occasion?

If it were possible to save time and access it later, would I spend it when I was young and restless, or old and content?

The last question sent me screaming out of my house and down the beach. I kicked at the sand, embarrassed that I'd fallen for the oldest scam on the planet. I visualized cave people bartering fire, beans and bones for time. Me and who else believes they can save time?

I sucked in my breath as the second stupendous thought of the day hit me: Only the living have time.





And I'm a time junkie.

I walked along the beach, reading the anonymous proclamations and pictures carved in the sand. I stepped over a waterlogged sand castle being reclaimed by the incoming tide. I picked up a weather-worn, storm-beaten stick and drew a simple hourglass. I noticed, as salty cool water lapped at my drawing, that there was more sand under my feet than in my hourglass.

Being contemplative by nature, I imagined that the beach sand inside my hourglass drawing was the living, breathing part of me; the beach sand outside the line was my potential. My hourglass did not limit my destiny; I did. I was standing on infinity, as generations of people had before me and would after me.

I turned and walked toward my house, leaving my footprints and my drawing and taking the best of the moment with me: my sand matters. There was an abundance of sand in my destiny.

I knew then that it wasn't time that defined my life; it was how I valued each moment.

It was now my spiritual challenge to find the value in moments that I'd previously judged as wasted. Just as there are no wasted grains of sand on a beach, there are no wasted grains in my hourglass.

What do I see around me to value when I stand in an endless grocery line with my arms laden? What can I find to appreciate when I pump gas into my car? What is happening around me at a red light or while the microwave is counting down or while my computer is processing?




If I raised my conscious awareness during half of the moments I spend waiting, I would feel more fulfilled, relaxed and probably less stressed. I could say a little prayer of thanks, smile at a passerby, tighten my butt cheeks, take a cleansing breath, or relax my shoulders. I would rather be grateful for a moment's respite than agonize about a delay.

As with other addictions, admitting I was a time junkie was my first step toward change.



The time you enjoy wasting is no wasted time.

~ Bertrand Russell ~



Half our life is spent trying to do something with the time we have rushed through life trying to save.

~ Will Rogers ~

There are no wasted grains of sand.

If you knew then what you know now, would you make the same choices?

If you knew that you would get the most perfect relationship if you were celibate for the next five years, would you do it?

If you knew you could live happily ever after, would you?

If a genie gave you a million dollars with the condition that in order to receive more, you had to give sixty percent of it away, would you?

If you knew your last dying requests would be honored, how many requests would you make?

There are no right answers for any of these questions.

You might have answered them one way twenty years ago and you might answer them differently twenty years from now. Essentially, there are no wasted grains of sand. Every step on your path, every choice you make, takes you somewhere.

You might look back on your life and see behavioral patterns that did not constructively support your intended desires. You might see pivotal events and how they were attached to outcomes months later. Only you hold the emotional understanding of your past. Only you can let go of the guilt you may have attached to those long-ago grains of sand.

Only you have the power to implement change in your life.

If you knew that you created every moment of your reality, would you be more conscious of your choices? If you knew that your emotions assist you in creating your reality, would you choose to emotionally live positively or would you prefer mediocrity?

If you knew there were no wasted grains of sand, would you be more outrageous? Would you be more courageous? Would you say yes more often? Would you allow yourself to feel loved by more people?





Live consciously. Live courageously.

I was reminded last summer that a critical component of living consciously is listening. My partner had just spent a week in the hospital for spinal fusion surgery. With a 10" incision, four screws, two rods and a quart-sized Ziploc baggie of medications, she gritted her teeth while we bounced up our rutted driveway.

I unconsciously slipped into my Physical Therapist mode. I was so focused, so intent on making sure she was safe as she slowly pushed her walker from the car to the house, that I almost missed her request.

She asked, "Can we stop a minute? I'm home. I want to really feel this moment."

Her courage to ask for what she wanted despite her pain, exhaustion and my hovering immediately overrode my need to escort her safely indoors.

As we stood on our deck overlooking the Hood Canal, I was totally aware of the stillness and sacredness of a mutually shared moment as parallel grains of sand sifted down both of our hourglasses.

Only those who partake of the harmony
within their souls know the harmony that
runs through nature.

~ Paramahansa Yogananda ~



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