

Mindset



Documentary filmmaker, cinematographer, and photographer Hope Hall offers a few strategies for when you're feeling stressed out and overwhelmed.

July 18, 2017 - Hope Hall is a documentary filmmaker, cinematographer, photographer, and teacher. Her short films have been selected for over 40 film festivals worldwide and have received numerous awards. From May 2011 onward, she was President Obama's Principal Videographer at the White House. (She began working for President Obama during his 2008 campaign as part of the video road team in the New Media Department.) She is in the research phase of what comes next.

As told to Hope Hall, 522 words.

When I feel overwhelmed or stressed or lose my center, I draw on one or all of these things:

Be kind & be useful.

Slow way, way down.

Let the world speak to you.

Rest your mind on your breath.

I am only as good as the company I keep.

How can I best support my own vulnerability?

Compassion is the highest form of critical thinking.

My life—which includes my work—is only as good as I feel.

Try to put how you want to feel ahead of what you want to be or even do.

This is what I'm doing, this thing, right now; drop the words, stick with the feeling.

Be ready for opportunities & openings as they come along; change is the only constant.

Go toward the good—the good people, the good moments—& let the rest of the static, noise & drama fall away.

While we're breathing—which is miraculous, and won't be happening some day—all we're doing is learning and growing. That's all, learning and growing.

Follow your interests, wherever they lead will be somewhere that lights up your eyes, or floats your cork; notice when you get excited &/or confused by things, write down these moments & let them guide you.

When I realize I am distracted, I ask:

"What is standing between me & being present right now?"

When I'm confused by someone else's behavior:

I try to imagine what it feels like to do or say what they're doing or saying & feel that it is good, correct, right, justified, chosen, the way I typically feel about my own choices. More often than not, we believe we're right. Everyone makes sense to themselves. Sometimes I call this personal logic.

When I'm humbled by a moment when I'm fumbling:

I smile & wave at the world and say, "This is me learning, right here & right now," & to myself, gently, trying to remember to laugh while I say it, "Challenges are opportunities for growth."

When I feel myself shutting down in a stressful situation,
proverbially clenching my fist:

I imagine what it would be like to open my hand, gently, so that a feather or a bird could land on it (I know how cheesy that sounds, but I say it anyway). I dial down the seven inputs of experience (five senses, thoughts, and feelings) and tune in to the constant current of my witnessing consciousness. I notice my heart when it closes, then let the waves of feelings flow through my heart, unstuck.

The gifts my father left me:

I refuse to be insulted;

The trick is to be ready;

How lucky are we to live in this beautiful place?

Name

Hope Hall

Vocation

Filmmaker, Cinematographer, Photographer, Teacher

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