

1.3 – Ways to Find the “GAP”

Here is a guide on how you can find the gap for yourself in life, whether it be in the moment, short-term or long-term.

In the moment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Breathe – Practice breathing in the moment. Focus on exhaling longer than inhaling to activate your parasympathetic nervous system (calming arm). 2. Ask a question – Asking questions in the moment to find out more information is great at many levels. This helps reduce habitual reactions and provides you more time to process your thoughts. 3. Take a drink of water – If you have a glass of water nearby stop and take a drink. This deliberate action may buy 5-10 seconds, which is enough to engage your prefrontal cortex. 4. Go to the bathroom – If you are in a meeting and find yourself getting triggered, simply excuse yourself and go to the bathroom, even if you don’t need to go. It is a great way to create space for yourself. Take 2-3 minutes, do some breathing exercises and come back. 5. Stand-up – If you find yourself sitting at your desk and feeling overwhelmed or stressed, simply stop what you are doing and stand-up. This simple act is enough of a gap to create a pattern interrupt between the stimulus and your response. 6. Count to 10 – This is a method that has been around for a long time and still works well. Inside your head simply count to ten before you respond.
Short-term	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Go for a walk – Get outside and go for a walk. This can be as little as a 1-2-minute walk or 30 minutes. The mind and body are connected by a cybernetic loop, which is a loop that feeds back on itself. By going for a walk (body) you are engaging the mind in more useful ways. 2. Move – You may not be able to go for a walk but just the simple act of moving is creating a gap for yourself. Stand up and stretch, walk to another room or do a lap. 3. Connect with nature – Nature is a calming influence that many people feel a special connection to. Spending as little as 5 minutes in nature can have a deeply calming effect on us. 4. Talk to a friend / partner / manager – Have a conversation with someone about what is happening. It is useful to get another perspective on events. Sometimes the act of just talking things through can allow us to move forward. The KEY is to talk to someone who is helpful and NOT someone who will make the situation worse.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Write it out – This is another great strategy for creating a gap. Write out your frustration, concerns on paper or electronically. It allows us to get stuff that is caught inside, outside of us. Be raw and honest. 6. Be mindful – Pause and take things in around you at a sensory level. 7. Breathe – Practice 3-5 minutes of diaphragmatic breathing exercises to activate the calming arm of the nervous system. 8. Take a day off – If you are struggling and feeling overwhelmed and stressed it is perfectly okay to take a day off to allow yourself some space to recharge. 9. Create a “Third Space” – This is a space between work and home to let go of the stressors of the day.
<p>Long-term</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Plan a weekend away – Create a gap for yourself by planning a weekend away. Remove yourself from your current environment. 2. Plan a vacation – More than just a weekend away, plan a vacation to create a gap for yourself. The key is to make this as relaxing as possible. During this time, you can connect with friends and family as well as exercise in nature. 3. Be of service to others – A great way to create a gap is to be of service to others in a voluntary way. Give your time and attention to someone or something. This takes your mind off yourself and what is happening. 4. Take a sabbatical – Take some time-out longer term (e.g. 2, 3 or 6 Months). Create a big gap for yourself if it is possible.