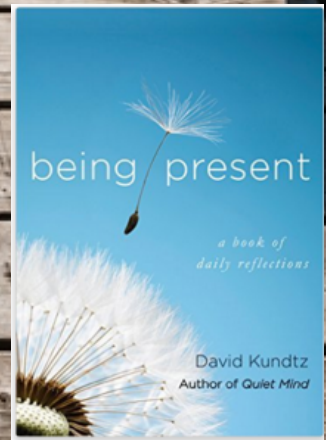
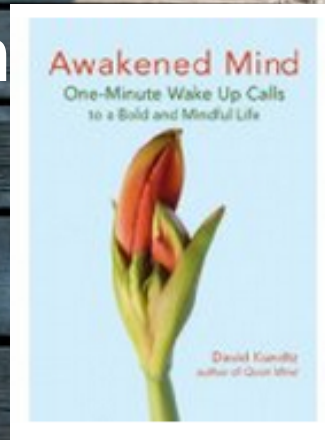
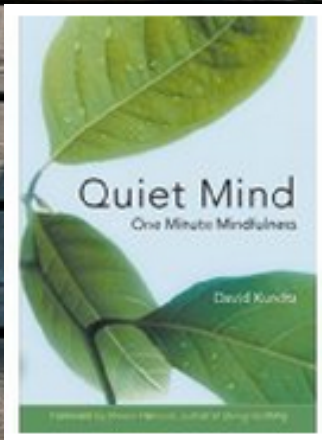


# THE ART OF STOPPING

by Dr. David Kundtz

Best Selling Author and Speaker



## Table of Contents

Welcome	3
Testimonials	6
Meet David Kundtz	8
David's Newest Book	11
Collected Works	12
Stopping Is Actually Quite Simple	13
Why and How Stopping Can Work For You	14
Stillpoints: The Simplest Form of Stopping	16
Aphorisms And What Other People Say And Think About The Art of Stopping	21



# Welcome

I want to convince you to practice Stopping.

I want to convince you that spending part of every day doing nothing is both pleasurable and beneficial, that it can indeed be the difference between simply surviving and thriving.

If you're stressed, overbooked, overworked, anxious, hurried, and harried—if you know you need to create more space for peace and balance in your life—the simple practice of Stopping is for you.

And even if you're not so stressed, Stopping can give you a simple system of improving the balance of your life.

*“Stopping is doing nothing, as much as possible, for a definite period of time—whether a moment or a month—for the purpose of becoming awake and remembering who you are and what you want.”*

Stopping is nothing new, and it's nothing at all like a quick fix or magic cure.

It's based on a logical human process as well as on the teachings of literally all major spiritual traditions; the briefest research into any one of them will reveal rich material on the practice of Stopping, but with other names (for example, meditation, contemplation, retreat, mysticism, inner life, soul work, spirituality, etc.).

Thus Stopping fits with any spiritual or religious tradition, or with none, and is designed specifically with the needs and propensities of the contemporary Western mind and life styles.



**Here's a closer look  
at the definition...**

**Doing Nothing:** spending time with nothing specifically to do. Just how do you do nothing? What do you "do" during these times? Again, nothing.

Just hang out, breathe, walk, sit, mess

around, pace, gaze out the window, wander down the lane, observe, notice, daydream, take a break, slowly drink a glass of water, be still, practice smiling, stretch.... The list is limitless.

**As much as possible:** Probably it's not literally possible to do absolutely nothing, but we want to get as close to that as possible. More than anything, one should have a feeling of freedom, a feeling of having no pressing needs (even though there are often pressing needs), and as complete a state of relaxation as is possible right now. No need to be absolute about this.

**For a definite period of time:** Whether a moment or a month. The stopping time can be from a few seconds to a few hours. These are *Stillpoints*. It can be a few hours or an afternoon, called *Stopovers*. It can even be a longer time, a whole day, a weekend, few weeks, or a month or more, which are *Grinding Halts*.

**For the purpose of becoming awake and remembering who you are and what you want:** This is the ultimate purpose and motive for Stopping—to make sure that we remain as awake and aware of what is going on in our lives as we possibly can, and not allow the considerable and strong distractions of the culture to blind us; to keep in mind—remember—what our ideals and goals and standards are, and not allow them to be gradually and imperceptibly devoured and distorted.

Here are some of the **benefits of Stopping**.

- **It works**—it does what it promises to do.
- **It is totally simple**—you probably already do it in some form or another; now make it intentional and regular.
- **It is easy**—you just do nothing in whatever way you can at the moment.
- **It's enjoyable**—this is time of rest, renewal, with no agenda.
- **No new equipment** is needed.
- **It accommodates** all religions and spiritual systems—or none.
- **You don't have to join** anything.
- And it **costs nothing**.

I guarantee that a day punctuated with little moments-of-doing-nothing (*Stillpoints*) will bring you to its end more refreshed and centered than you might expect.

A whole afternoon of doing nothing (*Stopover*) could become the cornerstone of your week.

And if you get to the point of spending an extended time in quiet retreat (*Grinding Halt*) you've already realized the benefits of Stopping.

Stopping will keep your life, *your* life.

I'm glad your here.

Warmly,

David

## Testimonials



### STOPPING

*“Stopping is the happy marriage of mystical traditions with contemporary psychology...elegant, powerful and simple...just what the world needs right now.”*

—Richard Carlson, *Don't Sweat the Small Stuff*

### STOPPING

*“Stopping is a guide to sanity. Articulate and insightful...”*

—Lauren Artress, *Walking a Sacred Path: Rediscovering the Labyrinth*

### STOPPING

*“Kundtz’s book is an oasis, a stopping off place to heal one’s life and rediscover one’s true purpose for being ‘here’.”*

—Ron Roth, *The Healing Path of Prayer*

### QUIET MIND

*“Kundtz is an innovator in bringing the ancient wisdom of the world’s spiritual traditions to modern readers, using language and concepts familiar to the contemporary, and too often pre-occupied, western mind, a mind like mine. Highly recommended.”*

—Amazon.com Reviewer

### QUIET MIND

*“Quiet Mind is such a thought provoking book. It points out issues that, in our ridiculously busy lives, we forget to even think about.”*

—Amazon.com Reviewer

### STOPPING

*“To do nothing is a great accomplishment. It provides you with great potential. Learn to lose track of time... and read this book.”*

—Bernie Segal, MD, *Love, Medicine, and Miracles*

STOPPING

*"This book is a wonderful way to introduce the concept of meditation as a part of life without ever calling it meditation. I'll be using it with all my clients who are reluctant to try meditation for fear it won't fit with their lifestyles."*

— Amazon.com Reviewer

QUIET MIND

*"This book is a miracle of mindfulness! In short segments that can be read in less than 10 minutes, Kundtz manages to distill the philosophy of Christian, Buddhist, and other religious traditions in a way that is refreshingly non-sectarian."*

— Amazon.com Reviewer

QUIET MIND

*"This book is full of wonderful little "nuggets" of insight and inspiration! I use it all the time in my profession as a resource for opening a discussion. Just love it! Highly recommend."*

— Amazon.com Reviewer

STOPPING

*"This is a beautiful book. It will make a good gift for a busy friend who knows something is lacking from life but doesn't know what that "something" is, or how to get it. It will make a good gift to yourself. Dr. David Kundtz has made this important part of life accessible to all of us. Read it!"*

— Amazon.com Reviewer

QUIET MIND

*"I have enjoyed this book so much, that I bought four more for Christmas gifts. One of those incidental purchases that turned into a real find."*

— Amazon.com Reviewer

QUIET MIND

*"The quick, two-page bursts of thought are perfect. They really are one-minute retreats."*

— Amazon.com Reviewer

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Stopping, Quiet Mind, Being Present and more of David's books are available now at



## Meet David Kundtz



*“Would you please tell me, in understandable language, just what a “feeling” is?”*

My writing career began when a client of my counseling practice, a thirty-something married man who was clearly frustrated, asked me that question.

*“Oh” I responded, “that’s a great question and not so easy to answer.”*

I made some notes for him on the topic and later (1990) turned them into a self-published 40-page booklet, which became a successful small book, which became *Nothing’s Wrong: A Man’s Guide to Managing His Feelings*, which is still selling.

And I’m still writing. Seven books later, I see a common thread that runs through all my work: **Awareness**. Specifically, trying to be as aware as possible of what is actually going on right now, as well as in the whole arc of life, and helping others to do the same.

*(continued...)*

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David Kundtz and His Books Have Been Featured In

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.  
Read ambitiously

REDBOOK

UTNE  
READER

THE PLAIN DEALER

THE IRISH NEWS

heraldscotiand  
TheHerald sundayherald

CLEVELAND.COM



That idea is first and foremost in my writing and is well exemplified in my most recent book Being Present: A Book of Daily Reflections. Awareness is also at the heart of the practice of Stopping.

I've been fortunate to have a couple of best-sellers, Stopping: How to Be Still When You Have to Keep Going and Quiet Mind: One Minute Mindfulness, the latter being the best-selling of all.

Among the others is *Nothing's Wrong*, mentioned above; an autobiographical work, Coming To: A Biomythography; a follow up to *Quiet Mind*, titled Awakened Mind: One Minute Wake Up Calls, and a work with a co-author on ministry.

In total, well over 100,000 books sold. A reviewer commented, "*Kundtz is an innovator in bringing the ancient wisdom of the world's spiritual traditions to modern readers, using language and concepts familiar to the contemporary, and too often pre-occupied, western mind.*"

My books have been translated into Spanish, German, Portuguese, Chinese, and Japanese. My work has been featured in the Wall Street Journal, Redbook, the Cleveland Plain Dealer, The Complete Woman, the Utne Reader, Body, Mind and Spirit, and many more...as well as abroad in the Financial Express, Here's Health, The Irish News, and The Herald (Glasgow).

For some reasons that have faded into the mist of memory, I made a resolution when I was a boy of about nine or ten that I would do my best not to "sit behind a desk" for my life's work. I would try to do something that would get me out and about.

I have more-or-less stuck to that resolution, even though, here I am, sitting at my desk, writing. I believe the feeling behind my youthful decision was a desire to do



something I enjoyed, that had to do with being helpful to people, and allowed a certain amount of creativity.

So at the age of 21, I started out my adult life by choosing something that surprised my family and friends, and in an odd way, even surprised me: I

entered a seminary to become a Catholic priest.

Of course, there are a lot of stories behind that decision, but in any event, so I did, and in 1963, I entered the ordained ministry for some 20 enjoyable years and many wide-ranging experiences. I did make a bid for independence by leaving my secure and family-filled home of Cleveland, Ohio and leapt across the country to do ministry in the unknown, beautiful state of Idaho, with a wonderful three-and-a-half year service in Cali, Colombia.

Not everyone has a mid-life crisis, but I sure did and, as a result, I left religious ministry and entered graduate school at the age of 42, earning a doctoral degree in psychology at a school of the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California.

That led to my second career: marriage and family therapist, a profession that I love to this day. I first worked at a social service agency in Oakland, California and then moved into a private practice in Berkeley for another 20 some years.

So—erstwhile priest, psychotherapist, and writer—Here I am and grateful to be.

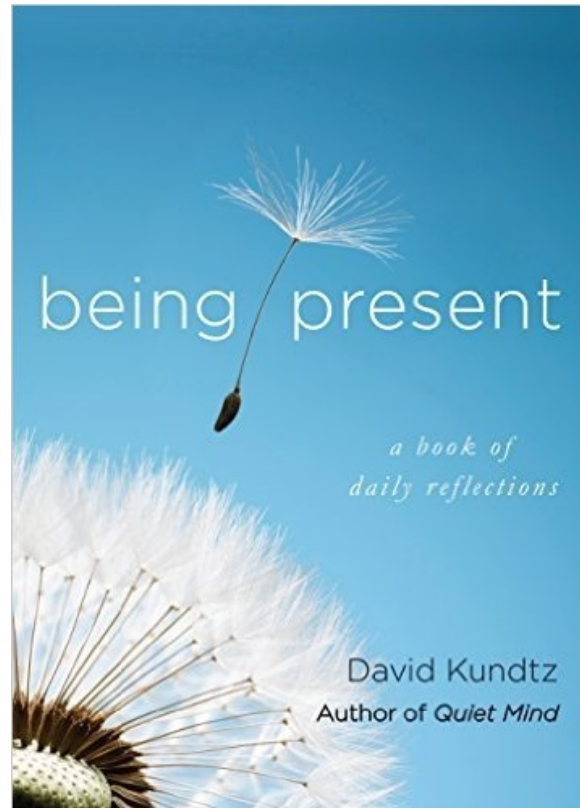
Please feel free to contact me by email: [dk@stoping.com](mailto:dk@stoping.com)

## David's Newest Book

This is a simple book, meant to make your life more peaceful, more rewarding, and more awakened. It has one purpose: to give readers an opportunity to be in the moment once a day, every day.

### Being Present is:

- Paying full attention to what is going on right now
- Staying in the moment
- Observing what is, without criticism or judgment
- Balanced concern for things exactly as they are
- Accepting whatever experience we are having
- Having an awake participation in ongoing life

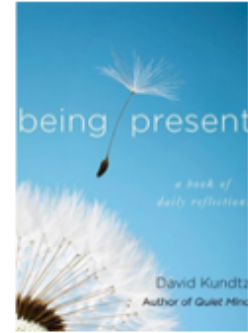
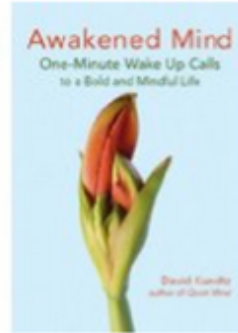
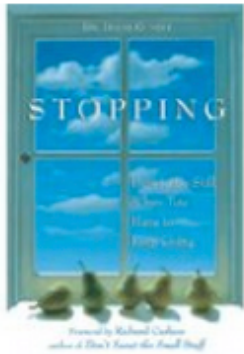


[amazon.com](http://amazon.com)

Longtime therapist and meditator David Kundtz gives you permission not to fret about whether you're getting your meditation practice right or not. It's right. The whole purpose of your meditation is to show up as awake and aware as possible to your everyday life. He reminds us that the reason to meditate is not simply to experience the peaceful moments of the meditation time, but also to maintain the focus, awareness, and equanimity that you need for getting through stressful situations. You become a more mindful person.

In *Being Present*, Kundtz guides us through the seasons of a year—and the seasons of a life—drawing inspiration from poets and scientists, spiritual teachers and children, butterflies and big cities. Each day is a surprise that helps readers to find their own moments in surprising ways.

## More Books by David Kundtz



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## Stopping Is Actually Quite Simple



The easy part of convincing you to practice Stopping is clear: Who doesn't like to kick back, relax with nothing to do, just hang out and chill? It's restful, relaxing, and appealing.

And when we really stop to analyze it, the process of Stopping is logical and conforms to our sense of reality and our understanding of ourselves, of the way human beings are.

Where it gets challenging is in our cultural norms. Stopping goes against almost everything the predominant culture encourages and rewards: speed, getting ahead, getting bigger, and getting it first.

It also may seem like a waste of time; many people, because of the way we were taught, feel guilty or even afraid of doing nothing.

It can also seem, well, sort of simplistic or almost naïve—that is it may seem that way until you try it—for a minute or a week, and allow it's benefits to become evident.

Then the power and truth, the effects and the joys of Stopping become quite clear.

Maybe you're in business and focused on the bottom line, struggling to grow, anxious to gain a competitive advantage. Then maybe you cringe at the thought of Stopping. "Why would I Stop? The idea is to Go!"

But the Going is getting us into deep trouble: physical and mental illnesses, careless decisions, and thoughtless acts.

That is, if you are going without first Stopping.



## Why and How Stopping Can Work For You

The practice of Stopping is based on the following logic:

We all live in a very fast-paced world, we have no choice about that. We are such a rushed society, zooming through life as if running scared. We tend to treat moments of stillness as strangers, even as enemies, or at best as a waste of time.

And the complexity of life is increasing, not leveling off, and certainly not decreasing. Living a fast-paced, unrelenting, and over-full life invariably becomes a *distracted life*. That is, a life that can easily go in an unwanted but un-noticed direction. So before you know it, you are in a situation that you really don't want to be in.

It's a logical, inevitable process: A fast-paced life, leads to a distracted life, which means you easily miss cues and lose awareness—and you forget the reasons why you made your original choices and what is important to you.

Forgetfulness and distraction are no state in which to begin any project, personal or business. It is a set up for failure.

Then comes the last and most harmful stage of the distracted life: You forget that you forgot. One can feel very lost in that state. Thus we risk waking up one cold, gray morning when we think we're too old to change and realize that we missed the life we wanted.

Stopping is the antidote to this state because *it gives you the time and space to remember* what you need to remember and *become more fully awake* to your life. This of course does not happen suddenly or all at once, but gradually, over a



period of time, your original and authentic self will emerge. You will value your Stopping times not only as necessary, but immensely enjoyable.

This kind of quiet time used to be very common to human life. It just naturally happened in the spaces between the events of our lives: the walk to work or school, hours in the fields with a lot of time to think, quiet moments waiting for the pot to boil, the radio to warm up, the rain to stop. Sadly—no, tragically—these Stopping moments, these quiet times, are now rare or non-existent. And if they do come our way, our immediate tendency is to fill them with even more activity.

When you are in the habit of Stopping, you begin to hear the inner promptings that have always been trying to get your attention; but you have been moving too fast, and world around you has been too loud, for you to hear them.

The principle was stated well by the writer Milan Kundera: *Speed is to forgetting as slowness is to remembering*. In other words, the faster you go, the more you forget. When you slow down, you begin to remember.

*“Speed is to forgetting...as slowness is to remembering”*



# Stillpoints: The Simplest Form of Stopping

*“Except for the point, the still point,  
There would be no dance, and there is only the dance.”*

—T. S. Eliot

## 1. Here's how you can do a Stillpoint...



- Pause a moment...and just stay as you are, probably in front of your computer.
- Now, briefly relax your body as much as possible, letting go of tensions.
- Then take a deep, relaxing breath. S-l-o-w-l-y, take another.
- Now take a moment to think of someone, or something, you love or enjoy... Got it in mind?

• Okay, as you gently hold that image of what you love in your mind softly close your eyes for five or ten seconds. That's it ! That's one example of a Stillpoint.

## 2. Here's another, perhaps at work...

• Cease whatever you are doing at the moment, walk to a window and look out. (If there's no window, simply look around you) Just look. Notice what you see.

Just notice, that's all.

- Be still. Simply noticing whatever is before your eyes, nothing more. This is time with no agenda.
- Let some time pass, a few seconds, a few minutes, no matter. Just lose track of time a bit. Doing nothing, your mind wandering.
- Focus on your breathing. Notice yourself breathing in and breathing out. In and out. In and out. Perhaps your eyes have now closed, maybe not.
- A last deep breath...

(You can do them anywhere, any time.)

### **3. This is a good one, whenever you're feeling impatient...**

- Begin with a few deep breaths to relax and bring oxygen to your body.
- Slowly, quietly, with no sense of obligation, begin to count your blessings.
- Keep them coming.
- Breathe....

### **4. Another example, in the car waiting for a red light...**

- Fix your eyes on the red light, a symbol now of a quiet Stopping moment.
- Relax your hold on the wheel and take slow, deep breaths.
- For the remainder of the red light simply Be Here Now. That's all.

### **5. Or while you're at home, just after dinner...**

- Step outside for a few moments, perhaps walking in the neighborhood, or just standing outside.
- Look at the sky. Notice what you see, or what you don't see: Color - black? blue? gray? Are there stars? moon? sun? an airplane? Just notice whatever is there.
- Now just feel yourself as under the sky. Just that.
- Breathe deeply and again be aware of yourself: breathing - now - under the sky.

### **6. Or while you're waiting in line somewhere...**

- Begin with a few deep breaths to relax and bring oxygen to your body
- Slowly, quietly, with no sense of obligation, begin to count your blessings.
- Keep them coming.
- Breathe....

### **7. Or on the weekend, when no one's home...**

- Begin by sitting in a comfortable place for a few moments and focus on your quiet breathing
- Look around you.
- Just look.



- After a little while, quietly get up and take a walk around your home seeing the things you take for granted: an old chair you like, a dresser, a bed, a rug, a lamp from someplace, a photo...
- Return to your comfortable place
- End with a simple wish (or prayer, or desire, or hope, or...)

Now you've got the idea. You can create Stillpoints so they happen any time, anywhere, in any way you want. You can add a prayer you like, or a meaningful gesture. The more personal, the more effective.

The essential ingredients are simple:

1. Stop what you are doing.
2. Breathe.
3. Do Nothing, any way you want to.

When you come to the end of a day with many Stillpoints you'll feel more relaxed, more awake and, most importantly, more ready to go on.

Stillpoints make the dance (life!) successful and satisfying.

Total simplicity! Amazing power!



## **Aphorisms...and What Others Say and Think About (*The Art of*) Stopping**

*"If you can't meditate, vegetate."*

—Men's Health Magazine

*"Each of us needs to withdraw from the cares which will not withdraw from us. We need hours of aimless wandering or spates of time sitting on park benches, observing the mysterious world of ants and the canopy of treetops."*

—Attributed to Maya Angelou

*The fast-paced rhythm of modern life conditions us to skim the surface of experience, then quickly move on to something new."*

—Stephan Rechschaffen, MD

*“If families just let the culture happen to them, they end up fat, addicted, broke, with a house full of junk and no time.”*

—Mary Pipher

*There is a secret bond between slowness and memory, between speed and forgetting.... The degree of slowness is directly proportional to the intensity of memory; the degree of speed is directly proportional to the intensity of forgetting.”*

—Milan Kundera

*“Normal day, let me be aware of the treasure you are. Let me learn from you, love you, bless you before you depart.”*

—Mary Jean Iron

*Health requires this relaxation, this aimless life. This life in the present.”*

—Henry David Thoreau

*“It is good to have an end to journey toward; but it is the journey that matters, in the end.”*

—Ursula K. LeGuin

*Beyond living and dreaming there is something more important: waking up.”*

—Antonio Machado, *Times Alone*

*“What information consumes is...the attention of its recipients. Hence, a wealth of information creates a poverty of attention...”*

—Herbert Simon

*“To live is so startling it leaves little time for anything else.”*

—Emily Dickinson

*“We apprehend Him... in the space that separates the salient features of a picture...in the pauses and intervals between the notes of music.”*

—Aldous Huxley

*“I lean and loafe at my ease....observing a spear of summer grass.”*

—Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass*, 1855

*“Feeling light within, I walk.”*

—Navajo Night Chant

*It's in our idleness...that the submerged truth sometimes comes to the top."*

—Virginia Woolf

*"There is more to life than increasing its speed."*

—Mohandas Gandhi

*"Millions of persons long for immortality who do not know what to do with themselves on a rainy afternoon."*

—Susan Ertz

*"The way to do is to be."*

—Lao Tzu, 600 B.C.E

*"If you are losing your leisure, look out! You may be losing your soul."*

—Logan Pearsall Smith

*"Unlike achieving things worth having, to achieve things worth being usually requires long periods of solitude."*

—Meyer Friedman and Ray Rosenman

*"Finally it has penetrated my think skull. This life-this moment-is no dress rehearsal. This is it!"*

—F. Knebel

*"Life is what happens to you while you're busy making other plans."*

—Attributed to John Lennon

*"I have a very full and busy life and occasionally I am asked, "Scotty, how can you do all that you do?"...The most telling reply I can give is: "Because I spend at least two hours a day doing nothing.""*

—M. Scott Peck

*"I went to the woods because I wanted to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived."*

—H.D. Thoreau

*"Nobody sees a flower, really -- it is so small -- we haven't time, and to see takes time, like to have a friend takes time."*

—Georgia O'Keefe

*"I have discovered that all human evil comes from this, man's being unable to sit still in a room."*

—Blaise Pascal

*We're in such a hurry most of the time we never get much of a chance to talk. The result is a kind of day-to-day shallowness, a monotony that leaves a person wondering years later where all the time went and sorry that it's all gone."*

—Robert M. Pirsig

*"I am doing nothing, I like to be doing nothing to some purpose. That is what leisure means."*

—Alan Bennett

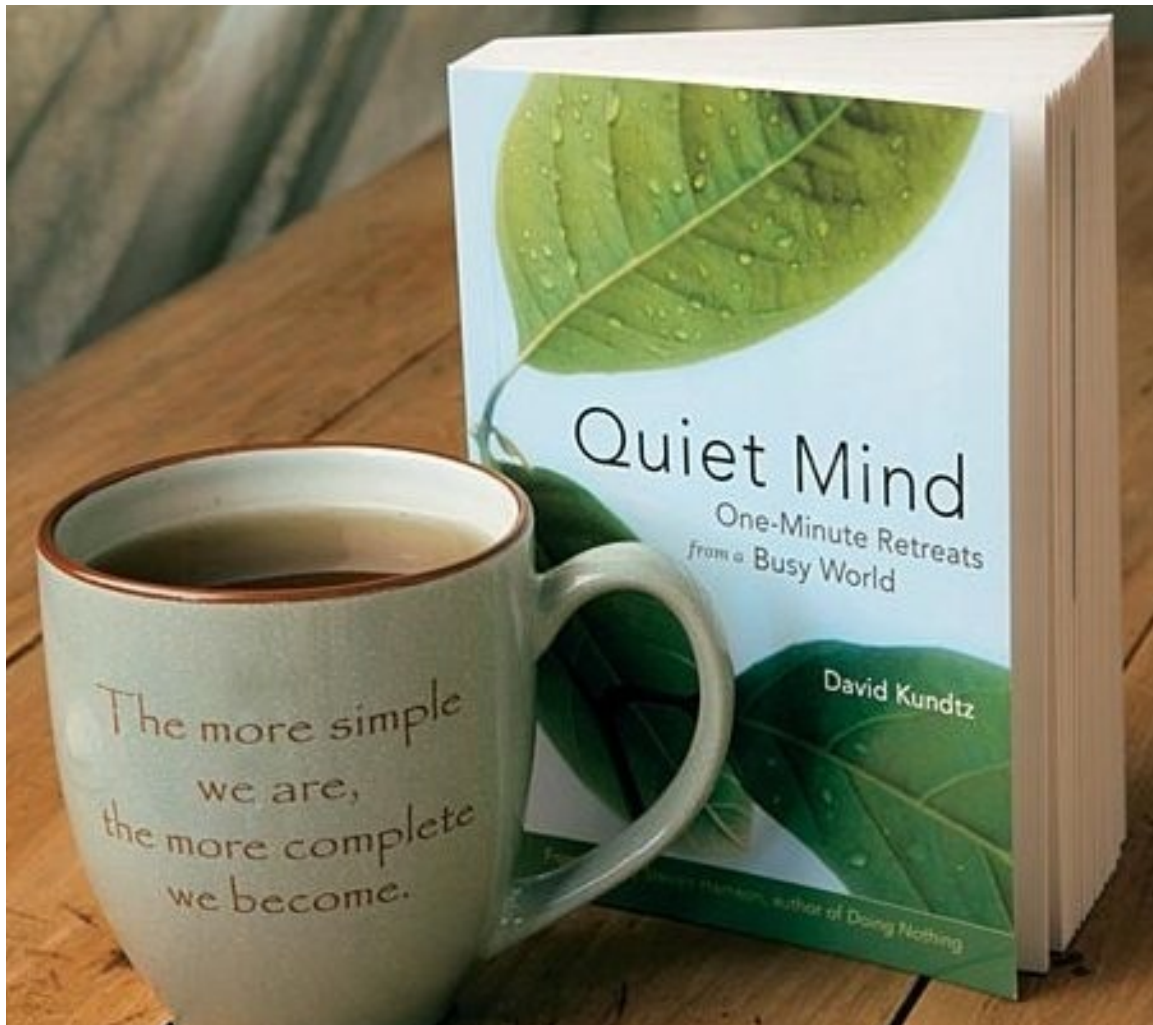


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