

The rhythm of time

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Once there was a time when nature formed the most important rhythm for people. The annual rhythm of planting, harvesting and resting was dictated by the seasons. The weather too was a determining factor for the events of the day.

But nowadays clock time has taken over from nature, and the lives of most people are governed by the clock. The alarm clock determines the moment when our day begins, and the clock ensures that the rest of the day goes as efficiently as possible. Time pressure and the compulsion to cram a maximum amount of activity into a minimum amount of time are the inevitable result.

But this is actually a bizarre situation if you think that people are not by nature so closely bound to clock time. Just try to judge a period of two minutes, without counting. People frequently misjudge it by as much as 25% too long or too short. Then when you look at people's different biological rhythms and the way in which each person experiences time differently, you have to admit that the clock is not the only measure of time.

One interesting way of looking at your personal time differently is by means of the five rhythms. In this approach, developed by Gabrielle Roth, the five rhythms are a way of moving in order to discover the soul of the dancer. Each person has a natural preference for one or more rhythms, even if they have managed to "learn" other rhythms perfectly. Respect for these different rhythms is important, because they are all necessary: there is no good or bad rhythm.

Each of these five rhythms is described briefly below.

Flowing

Flowing is the first rhythm, characterised by round, flowing movements (what else!). It is a process of continuous change, enabling obstacles and distractions to be overcome without much difficulty. It's a rhythm of discovering and going with the flow. The flowing movements are also associated with female energy.

Staccato

Staccato is doing! Forget about thinking and talking, and go straight into action. Staccato is results-oriented. Short, rapid, focused movements within a defined framework. During the dance you make more straight-line movements than circles. Staccato is the predominant rhythm in the business world, associated with male energy.

Chaos

The flowing rhythm and the staccato rhythm combine to form chaos. You abandon rational thinking and act on pure feelings. Patterns are broken, and intuition determines the force and direction of the movement. This is a rhythm that brings you entirely into the present moment, strongly connected to the world around you.

Lyrical

The lyrical rhythm consists of airy, flexible movements. It's about accepting yourself (after the chaotic period, in which you let go of your own patterns) and making room for pleasure and enthusiasm. This lyrical energy is characteristic of many children.

Stillness

The last rhythm is stillness, in which you turn inwards upon yourself. Serenity and calmness take possession of your body, and you breathe in a very controlled way. No lists of things to do, no mental noise, just ... being. Your inner wisdom ensures that you come entirely to rest, and then take the right decisions and actions. This rhythm is often called up during moments of reflection or meditation.

Which of the rhythms do you prefer? Are your work rhythm and your personal rhythm different? Which rhythm really doesn't suit you?

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