



Now Here or Nowhere?

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Oklahoma & North Texas

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Do you find yourself at home with the family but thinking about work? When you are at work for the fiftieth or sixtieth hour do you feel that you are slighting your family? Does your smart phone spend so much time telling you what others think that you don't have time to think for yourself? Is your calendar so full that you have no time to pray, to meditate, or to rest?

Sometimes I feel so distracted by what's behind, by what's ahead, and by what's competing for my immediate attention that I fail to be present in the here and now, and that can hinder me from accomplishing my goals. I must be *now here*, or risk being *nowhere*.

We face constant challenges to being now here. One challenge is being distracted by worries and regrets, by fretting about the past or being anxious about the future. Another challenge is multi-tasking. When we are perpetually distracted by the past, the future, and all of the tasks

"Wow, God is using you in powerful ways. I deeply appreciate your courage and the truth of your message, your good work and your sensitive character. Keep up your good work, my friend. Your voice is desperately needed in our time."

*Mike E. O'Neal, President Emeritus
Oklahoma Christian University*

on our To-Do lists, we cannot muster enough focus to do a task well or to make a difference in the lives of people who need us. Our spouses and our children need our undivided attention. Employers, employees, and customers require our undivided attention. Lost and dying people need our undivided attention. So what do we do?

In 2005 I began a tradition of using the holidays to find a wise saying to meditate on and live by for the coming year. It's not so much a New Year's Resolution as it is a spiritual discipline. This last year I decided to *Give Presence*. I wanted to carefully manage my time so that I could give undi-



**Practicing Presence with a
Colorado State Student**

vided attention to God, to my family, to others, and to myself. When you determine to be present, you are determining to focus right now on just one person.

That decision to begin being present in every moment paid off this year. I felt more in touch with students on campus during outreach. I felt more in touch with my children when we played games. I felt more certain that God loved me because of the time I spent with him.

It's a small space between the *now* and the *here*, but it makes a big difference in the meaning. Determining to give the gift of presence has helped me maintain that important space.

Where are you? Are you purposefully *now here*, or are you *nowhere*?



**Focusing Fully on JFA Seminar
Students in San Antonio**



Penelope and Nadia Making
JFA Outreach Signs



Now Here for my JFA Colleagues



Undivided Attention in Phoenix?



Giving Presence to Neighbors
in the City Park



Right Here Right Now

A Family Affair

Given a few days here at Thanksgiving to reflect, I can really see how much support is involved in my being able to carry out the mission to save lives and save souls.

It begins at home with Jayne and Penelope and Nadia. The girls are long-suffering with my trips away from home, and when I am home, they jump right into the work with me, helping me prepare for the next project.

From there, our parents, siblings, and other immediate family rally us to the work. Aunts and cousins, lifelong friends, work colleagues from the past, fellow activists, and many church congregations are all a part of this work.

I feel grateful to you, encouraged by you, and beholden to you for your many forms of help. Grace and peace to you all.

-John Michener