

**DECEMBER MONTHLY THEME:**  
**ATTENTION—*THE VALUE OF SLOWING DOWN***

In her book, *How to Do Nothing—Resisting the Attention Economy*, author-artist Jenny Odell writes, “My experience is what I agree to attend to. Only those items which I notice shape my mind.” To what will you attend this month? Where will you place your attention? What happens when we make more deliberate choices about the direction of our attention? Often the holidays are a very busy time. What if we used the changes wrought by the pandemic as an opportunity to slow down? What might we notice something about December or about ourselves, our family, our neighborhood that we did not perceive before? By slowing down and choosing to be deliberate with our attention, perhaps we might receive an unexpected gift of spirit.

**Which question is calling to you? Where is it leading you?**

1. Pause. What is one thing you notice in your environment this moment?
2. Where in your life are you feeling a strain on your attention? What seems to be competing for your sense of being present?
3. What enables you to pay closer attention to people, projects, or places?
4. Who or what in your life could use a little more of your attention in this season?

**Wise Words:**

Tell me to what you pay attention and I will tell you who you are.

*Jose Ortega y Gasset*

To pay attention, this is our endless and proper work.

*Mary Oliver*

Of the millions of things you do not understand, may today be the day you embrace the unplanned. Find in new moments not only new things, but space to slow down and room to breathe. *Morgan Harper Nichols*

The more clearly we can focus our attention on the wonders and realities of the universe about us the less taste we shall have for the destruction of our race. Wonder and humility are wholesome emotions, and they do not exist side by side with a lust for destruction.

*Rachel Carson*

One day our descendants will think it incredible that we paid so much attention to things like the amount of melanin in our skin or the shape of our eyes or our gender instead of the unique identities of each of us as complex human beings.

*Franklin Thomas*

Attention is the ability we have to discriminate and to focus only on that which we want to perceive.

*Miguel Angel Ruiz*

Miracles... seem to me to rest not so much upon... healing power coming suddenly near us from afar but upon our perceptions being made finer, so that, for a moment, our eyes can see and our ears can hear what is there around us always.

*Willa Cather*

I began to think that there was something awesome about my timing. How was it that, at the exact moment of my stopping, such incredible things were happening? It took me longer than I am prepared to admit to realize that such things were always happening. It was only that I was finally paying attention. *Mark Epstein*

The best way to capture moments is to pay attention. This is how we cultivate mindfulness. Mindfulness means being awake. It means knowing what you are doing.

*Jon Kabat-Zinn*

I don't have to chase extraordinary moments to find happiness - it's right in front of me if I'm paying attention and practicing gratitude.

*Brené Brown*

Attention is a limited resource, so pay attention to where you pay attention. *Howard Rheingold*