



THE POWER OF  
**Pause**

DISCUSSION & STUDY GUIDE

**TERRY HERSHEY**

author of *The Power of Pause*  
and *Soul Gardening*

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# Contents

	A Letter to the Reader <i>from Terry Hershey</i>	iv
	How to Use This Guide	v
<b>PART 1</b>	Early Winter	
	Letting Our Souls Catch Up with Our Bodies	1
	Two Spaces	2
	New Rules	3
	1st Pause: <i>I Choose to Practice the Art of Doing Nothing</i>	4
<b>PART 2</b>	Late Winter	
	Sanctuary	5
	I'm Closed Now	6
	Changing the Questions; Simplicity	7
	2nd Pause: <i>I Choose to Guard the Places I Am Nourished and Renewed</i>	8
<b>PART 3</b>	Early Spring	
	If There's a First Step, It's "Just Be"	9
	Broken and Crippled	10
	Pause Button; Damage Control	11
	3rd Pause: <i>I Choose to Be Gentle with Myself</i>	12
<b>PART 4</b>	Late Spring & Early Summer	
	If There's a Second Step, It's "Pay Attention"	13
	We See What We Want to See; Five More Minutes	14
	Time Management; It's the Little Things	15
	4th Pause: <i>I Choose to Be on a Journey</i>	16
<b>PART 5</b>	Late Summer	
	The Challenge of Permission	17
	Holy Longing; Rested Mules	18
	No Cows to Lose; Play	19
	5th Pause: <i>I Choose to Give Myself Permission to Pause</i>	20
<b>PART 6</b>	Early & Late Autumn	
	Grace & Joy	21
	The Seven Wonders of the World; Glory in the Gray	22
	Kiss Still Works; The Farmer's Miracle Dog	23
	6th Pause: <i>I Choose to Be Lost in Wonder</i>	24
	TerryHershey.com & Additional Resources	25

# A Letter to the Reader

Hi Friends,

Thanks for picking up this guide and my book, *The Power of Pause*. I'm inviting you, through these resources, to go on a journey with me. My hope is that we're going to laugh and we're going to cry and you're going to talk to people and share some real stuff. On this journey, I hope you find deeper insight into *The Power of Pause* and explore some of its themes, messages, and challenges. But mainly I hope you're going to embrace the NOW and have an Experience—one of refreshment, renewal, and recharging.

What I'm not here to do is to tell you how to be. I'm not here to tell you how I've got it all figured out. I'm not here to give you an action plan for your life. And I'm not here to tell you what you already know: that you have a life and it has meaning and purpose. I'm here to be a companion, to sound the bell for the quietly subversive message that More-Bigger-Faster is not always better, and to give permission—to those who think they need it—to stop, relax, and refuel.

We're all a little road-weary. We're all partially gummed-up inside. So if any of these pages, or the discussions they prompt, help you to feel a bit like you're having a cold beer on warm day . . . or a cool glass of water in the hot sun . . . or relaxing in a place of quiet and calm—then I will be very, very pleased.

I invite you also to sign onto my website at [www.TerryHershey.com](http://www.TerryHershey.com) and tell me about your experiences. Tell me of your discussions, questions, or stories about pausing. Tell me how the journey is going. Together, we can become a community supporting each other as we pause in our daily lives and try to “do less, live more.”

—**Terry Hershey**, Vashon Island

# How to Use This Guide

## For Use with Groups

This Guide was designed to help you reflect more deeply on the themes and messages contained within *The Power of Pause*, to reveal different perspectives, to inspire, and to build community and support through group discussion and sharing.

### **Tips for Group Members**

As I've learned, you needn't be an expert, or even experienced at group discussion, to be a good contributor. You just have to read the materials, *listen* and *share*. Just be yourself. Also, it goes a long way if group members respect each other's points of view, no matter how different they might be. So be kind and enjoy the diversity.

### **Tips for the Group Leader**

This Guide requires very little preparation time on your part: in addition to reading the appropriate selection in advance of your gathering, you need only review the discussion questions beforehand, choose the ones you'll use, and consider potential responses.

The structure of the gathering is up to you. You can hold short sessions—such as 30-minute lunchtime discussions—or longer sessions—such as typical book discussions of 1 hour-and-15 minutes in length. Whatever you choose, remember: you're not obligated to address every question within. The most important thing is to enjoy engaged, meaningful conversation.

The “Questions for Discussion” guide your group deeper into the writings. They are not meant to address every chapter or theme in the book. Feel free to add or substitute your own. Each “Part” ends with a “Pause page” that also helps illuminate the text while adding a practical bent by showing readers how to take ownership of and apply the messages within. If you wish, you may open discussion sessions by asking participants to share experiences from the previous week's Pause Exercise.

Be aware that one of your most important roles as facilitator is to encourage an atmosphere of *hospitality* and *trust*. For example, how you prepare the meeting room or greet people coming into the space will set the tone for your gathering.

Naturally, it's important to be inviting and to encourage some informal social conversation before you begin. Don't be afraid to keep the conversation moving by calling on people or offering food for thought. Speaking of food, light snacks or refreshments are always appreciated. Establish clear ground rules for discussion at the beginning of your session, such as mutual respect, supportiveness, and—should you be addressing any sensitive subjects—confidentiality. It helps if there's an understanding that since everyone is sharing their perspective, there is no such thing as a “wrong answer.” Finally, enjoy your role as facilitator by listening, drawing attention to key themes, and keeping group members engaged.

### For Use as an Individual

This guide can also be a helpful tool for individuals. If you are an individual reader of *The Power of Pause*, use the discussion questions as queries to ponder after having read each corresponding book section, and, in lieu of discussion, consider journaling your responses. Or, consider taking each question into your prayer-time for a more meditative approach.

### TerryHershey.com

Visit **[www.TerryHershey.com](http://www.TerryHershey.com)** for additional resources—such as Terry's blog, short videos that illuminate a particular theme, stories and anecdotes shared by other *The Power of Pause* readers, links, and more.

## Early Winter

# Letting Our Souls Catch Up with Our Bodies

CHAPTERS 1–7

*“Time cannot be cut with your tired scissors.”*

—PABLO NERUDA (ADAPTED) *TOO MANY NAMES*

There’s a wonderfully telling story recounted in *The Power of Pause* (pg xix) about a tribe from Africa who, after being pushed by a compulsive American to maintain a hard-and-fast pace of life for three days, stubbornly refused to move on the fourth day in order to let their “souls catch up with their bodies.” This wisdom of the tribal members is one we very much need today as we strive, and urge, and scratch, and stretch, and push ourselves to the breaking point or beyond in order to keep pace with a world that is constantly telling us we are inadequate.

*Do more, give more, get more, own more, serve more, produce more—because you can’t possibly be enough as you are.*

I’m reminded of the Hopi word: *koyaanisqatsi*. For most of us it’s easy to relate to: it means “living life out-of-balance.” When we’re all doing without any *not*-doing, we’re out-of-balance human beings. Half alive. Half HERE. Have you ever been talking to someone and realized: “*I’m not really here. My body is here, but I’m not present in this moment or to this person at all.*”? We have lost something in this race to “make it” or to be this image we hold in our heads of our successful selves.

Many of us sense this problem. But what do we do? We rush faster and push ever harder to find this lost thing. Ironic, when all we’d have to do is stop moving . . . and it would be there.

# QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

## CHAPTER 2 Two Spaces

---

1. In this chapter, I refer to the complimentary opposites of *doing* and *not-doing* as “spaces,” not “places” (pg 8). What does this difference mean to you?
2. Thinking about creation and the natural world, where (or how) do you observe these two distinct spaces?
3. Do you regularly work exhausted? If so, why do you feel this is more rewarding than other choices you could make? Or, if not, describe a time when you had work to do, but felt totally spent, and made an alternative choice.
4. Do you feel time is your friend, your enemy, or neutral? Discuss.
5. In this chapter’s story, the rabbi’s son says that although God is the same everywhere, he is not (pg 8). In what ways is the “you” in the *doing* space different than the “you” in the *not-doing* space?

~~~~~  
“You are now running  
on reserve power and  
your screen has been  
dimmed. Please plug  
in your power adapter  
to begin recharging  
the battery. OK?”

— message on an  
Apple Computer  
PowerBook Screen

~~~~~

## CHAPTER 5 New Rules

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1. Consider this statement: “We have ingested the notion that balanced living is about a technique or strategy” (pg 18). What do we find attractive or comforting about techniques and strategies? What is missing when we rely on these or in what ways do these limit us?
2. This chapter contains the story of an Amish community that forgave a tragic killing without “a plan” or strategy of forgiveness (pg 19). How has forgiveness occurred in your life, and from what did it root?
3. Do you value having an experience that does not produce anything but is simply you and the experience itself? Discuss.
4. Taking a pause—such as the given example of a coffee break—is “a sensual moment” (pg 20). What does this mean to you?
5. Think about the upcoming couple weeks in your life and the amount of empty space or empty time you see there. What observations can you make about the balance between your plans, commitments, and physical requirements (i.e. sleep and food) and the amount of empty space?
6. Consider the question, “Is it possible that we change the way we live, not by addition, but by subtraction?” (pg 18). What are some things in your life that you could let go of, “subtract,” to allow for more authenticity and balance?

~~~~~  
*Rhythm—the  
alternation between  
movement and rest,  
doing and not doing, is  
a basic law of nature  
and of life.”*

— Ronald E. Kotzsch  
~~~~~

## 1ST PAUSE

# *“I Choose to Practice the Art of Doing Nothing.”*

### Points for Reflection

- Say to yourself: *“I choose to practice the art of doing nothing.”* How does saying this sentence make you feel?
- In what ways are you capable of practicing the art of doing nothing in your life?
- What, if anything, do you find difficult or scary about a commitment to occasionally pause and do nothing?
- Why might this practice be “an art” and not a science?

~~~~~  
*“And Jesus withdrew to  
a solitary place.”*

—The Gospel of Mark  
~~~~~

### Exercise

Commit yourself to practicing the 1st Pause—“I choose to practice the art of doing nothing”—sometime this week.

Make a conscious act to clear time on your “personal digital assistant” or “smart phone.” Or, if you’re old school like me, take a red pen and draw an “X” over a day on your physical calendar. Whatever your method, on this day give yourself at least 20 minutes in which you plan no work, no agenda, no To Do list. When the time comes, find a quiet place. Relax your body. Take a few deep breaths. Then just be. See what happens. If you feel like doing something—like singing a song, stretching, napping, or taking a walk—do so. If you don’t—don’t. For 20 minutes, follow your bliss.

## Late Winter

# Sanctuary

CHAPTERS 8–13

*“God leads me to still waters, that restore my spirit.”*

—PSALM 23

The Power of Pause reveals itself in a place I call “Sanctuary.” Your sanctuary can be a physical place, but it doesn’t have to be. It can be a time of day, but it doesn’t have to be. Most important, Sanctuary is state a mind. It’s a state in which you—the real you—consciously stops “doing” and allows yourself to simply be nourished and fed.

There are two types of Pauses that happen in Sanctuary: **one is passive, one is active.** These two are like flip-sides of a coin—and they are equally valuable.

*The Passive Pause is like a breath out.* We release, we let go, we relax. We let ourselves be ourselves in this body, in this life, in this existence. We don’t need to “do” anything—not a thing—to give ourselves value, because our value is already predicated on the very existence of that breath. It is inherent. And we allow that. We just be.

*The Active Pause is like a breath in.* We receive. We accept this moment, this day, this life. We don’t fight it—we don’t run from it. We take responsibility for what is, and in doing so we affirm Life. In this, we receive the ability to enjoy the moment or let it transform into something else.

Both types of Pause are conscious, *intentional* actions. We do these with full awareness, our full being, and with all of our senses. The good news is this: both are natural acts. They require no special training, no special skill, no special equipment, and everyone can do them.

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

### CHAPTER 9 I'm Closed Now

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1. In what ways are we trained to believe “that we derive our worth and value from what we do or produce” (pg 40)?
2. In what ways are we “addicted” to the adrenaline rush or the rewards of being needed? If you weren’t needed by others, would you feel less validated a human being?
3. Why would you feel guilty if you said “no” to a requested commitment? What does it mean that “no will be said for you by default” (pg 40)?
4. Do you believe that others might think you’re being selfish when you withdraw to have Sanctuary time? Discuss how you would respond to someone who thinks you’re selfish.
5. In the Biblical story cited, when Jesus is told that all the townspeople are looking for him, he says, “Let’s go somewhere else” (pg 40). What do you think of Jesus’ withdrawal from his “doing” space?
6. I believe we miss the point if we see Sanctuary as a means to an end: *I’ll rest so I can produce more later* (pg 41). Do you agree, and why or why not?

~~~~~  
“Within you there  
is a stillness and  
sanctuary to which  
you can retreat at any  
time and be yourself.”

—Hermann Hesse,  
*Siddhartha*

~~~~~

## CHAPTER 10 Changing the Questions

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1. “What did I achieve?” “Was it successful?” —In what ways are these questions tempting but detrimental to the practice of pausing?
2. What are some differences between having a goal and having a relationship (pg 43)?

## CHAPTER 12 Simplicity

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1. Think about a time in your life when simplifying led to a fuller experience, enabled you to pause, or allowed you to be more authentically yourself. Share your story.
2. What’s the difference between “the endeavor of simplifying” and “just simplifying?” (pg 50) . . . The endeavor of pausing and just pausing?
3. What is child-like about Sanctuary and the act of pausing?

*“All of man’s troubles  
originate from his  
inability to sit  
quietly in a room  
with himself.”*

—Pascal

## 2ND PAUSE

# *“I Choose to Guard the Places I Am Nourished and Renewed.”*

### Points for Reflection

- Where in your life are you nurtured and cared for?
- Do you have a special place that relaxes and feeds you? If not, what can you do to find or reclaim one?
- What are some things you can do in your life “to guard the places I am nourished and renewed”?
- How can you be an advocate for the Sanctuary spaces of the people closest to you?

*“Every family should have a peaceful space or breathing room, where any member can take refuge.”*

—Thich Nhat Hanh,  
*Creating True Peace*

### Exercise

Commit yourself to practicing the 2nd Pause—“I choose to guard the places I am nourished and renewed”—throughout this week.

Be intentional and name the places or times in your daily life in which you are nourished and renewed. Observe what happens within you and in your life when you experience Sanctuary time. Also observe what keeps you from experiencing these Sanctuaries. What obstacles or internal conflicts do you confront? Make a conscious choice to detach and practice Sanctuary. Find a physical way to signify to yourself and others that you are entering Sanctuary time and unavailable to the demands and claims of the world—whether it’s a ritualistic walk or movement, the shutting of a door, the lighting of a candle, an “I’m Closed Now” sign, a special sentence or mantra or prayer, a physical position you assume, a type of breathing, or other transitional act.

## Early Spring

# If There's a First Step, It's "Just Be"

CHAPTERS 14–20

*"If the only prayer you said in your whole life was,  
'thank you,' that would suffice."*

—MEISTER ECKHART

We're all familiar with one type of addition in our lives that can affect us negatively: the accumulation of unnecessary stuff. We all know this "stuff" is excess baggage—draining us under its weight, making us own and owe, until it owns us. But still, we pile it on our lives.

There's another kind of addition we experience, however, that is more insidious. It's the carrying around of the persona (whatever we need to do or say) to let everyone around us know that all is well—whether it is or not.

*And the next thing I know, I say yes, when I mean no.*

*And I project an image of strength, when deep down inside something is shaking.*

*And I ask myself what I'm supposed to feel, instead of what I am feeling.*

*And in the end, I schlep red herrings, as a way of avoiding conflict or contradictions.*

Of what are we afraid? Think about it: whatever terrible thing we think we are and want to keep hidden *already* exists, already is, already is *known* by God (and probably others), right now . . . and yet here we are—still breathing, alive, and loved. Immeasurably loved.

These additions and burdens would melt if we just dropped the baggage sack and allowed ourselves to be real. To be ourselves, as we are. Completely—both what we like about ourselves and what we don't. To own it and just be.

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

### CHAPTER 14 Broken and Crippled

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1. The world “sees imperfection as an indictment” (pg 61). Why do we see our weaknesses as liabilities?
2. In what ways in your life are you attempting to hide or deny your weaknesses?
3. How does the vulnerability we feel in our state of imperfection and the lack of power we feel (“no power, no leverage, nothing to bargain with”—pg 62) help us to receive?
4. Is there a difference between enabling a negative behavior or harmful choice, and accepting a weakness? Explain.
5. Consider the statement, “We can’t change anything until we love it . . . can’t love anything until we can know it . . . can’t know until we can embrace it” (pg 62). Discuss how you have embraced a weakness in the past, and share what resulted.

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*Ring the bells that still*

*can ring*

*Forget your perfect*

*offering*

*There is a crack, a*

*crack in everything*

*That’s how the light*

*gets in.*

—Leonard Cohen,  
*Anthem* lyrics

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## CHAPTER 15 Pause Button

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1. What connection do you see between pausing and receiving? Between just *being* and receiving?
2. I describe discernment as “the pause that allows us to separate, to distinguish, to sift through” (pg 66). What does discernment mean to you? In what way does hitting the pause button on our lives allow us to see ourselves and our world more clearly?

## CHAPTER 19 Damage Control

---

1. In what ways are we spending time and energy on damage-control campaigns to compensate for who we are? How is this making us more, or less, “self-conscious”?
2. In what ways is damage control different from repenting for something you’re sorry about?
3. People often find God in the pressure points of their lives (pg 80). Share a time when you found grace or an unexpected gift in a place in your life that felt damaged or chaotic.

~~~~~  
“This is the categorical imperative of the Christian faith: You shall lovingly accept the humanity entrusted to you.”

—Johannes Metz

~~~~~

### 3RD PAUSE

## *“I Choose to Be Gentle with Myself.”*

### Points for Reflection

- What do you desire more in your life: perfection or wholeness? Why or in what ways?
- What false personas are you carrying and feeding in your life today? Can you let these go?
- Do you believe that you are loved and will be cared for, just as you are right now? If the gifts of life are already given to you, who decides your worthiness to accept them?
- When or how did you last allow yourself to “just be”?

### Exercise

Give yourself the permission to practice the 3rd Pause—“I choose to be gentle with myself”—this week.

How can you be more tender, patient, accepting, forgiving, and loving to yourself this week? Can you give yourself an extra hour of sleep one night—and *not* calculate what things do not get done? Can you take a long relaxing bath—and *not* feel guilty about it? Can you treat yourself to a favorite pleasure—and *not* count the cost? Can you forgive yourself for something you did or didn’t do—just because you, like everyone, deserves empathy and compassion? Or can you simply be good to yourself this week . . . just because? Try it.

## Late Spring & Early Summer

# If There's a Second Step, It's "Pay Attention"

CHAPTERS 21–32

*"The aim of life is to live, and to live means to be aware, joyously,  
drunkenly, serenely, divinely aware."*

—HENRY MILLER, *TROPIC OF CAPRICORN*

We've been trained that the grass is always greener (and lacks the dreaded dandelion) in the next yard. That the next moment is more exciting, more rich, more sexy, more valuable and more rewarding than this moment in our lives. I could easily take issue with that idea—I could tell how the yellow dandelion makes the green grass brighter by contrast—but let's suppose for a second that the former is true. Why should that stop you from enjoying *this* moment you're in right now? You're here. It's happening. So why not also enjoy the wonderful things this moment holds? If you don't find wonderful things here, well—are you looking?

To pay attention is the key to noticing the graces of the day. We cannot accept a gift without first becoming aware of it. We only have to approach the present moment without preconceived expectations and demands ("just be") and then open ourselves and our senses to the endless possibilities of life.

*What do we see, hear, taste, touch, and smell? How do we feel—and how much of ourselves are we feeling with?*

If there's a doorway to receiving the gifts and wonders of this life, it's paying attention. The best part is that it's so easy to do. You're born with all you need. The hard part is remembering to do it.

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

### CHAPTER 23 We See What We Want to See

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1. Like the suspicious man in the story of the missing golf clubs (pg 94-95), seeing without distortion can be a challenge. Thinking about your life today, what things distort your view of the present moment?
2. How does “what you want to see” both enable and prohibit your full experience of the moment?

### CHAPTER 26 Five More Minutes

---

1. In the story of the father at the playground with his son, the father’s focus was on his son, Todd, and on the current five minutes—not on himself, the next five minutes, or the concerns or worries of the day (pg 104–105). Discuss how our ability to pay attention sometimes hinges on where we put our focus.
2. I like to walk in my garden, notice things I hadn’t the previous day, and enjoy this personal Sanctuary (pg 106). What places or people or circumstances help you to pay attention more fully? Why and in what ways?

~~~~~  
“Life moves pretty fast.  
If you don’t stop and  
look around every  
once in a while, you  
could miss it.”

—Ferris Bueller, *Ferris  
Bueller’s Day Off*

~~~~~

## CHAPTER 28 Time Management

---

1. Having a well-planned day doesn't mean you are paying attention or that you are present to your life (pg 117). What connection do you find between paying attention and being present to the people or circumstances around you?
2. How do you find the messages of advertising and mass consumption changing the way you see the world? In what ways do the ads enliven or deaden your senses?
3. Share a story of a time when something made a lasting change in the way you saw the world. Did the change originate from within or without?
4. Is "pay attention" a realistic life plan? How does it compare or measure up to your current life plan?

## CHAPTER 29 It's the Little Things

---

1. Paying attention specifically includes the simple, the easily-overlooked, the minutiae, the quiet and recessive things. Why might this be important?
2. What are some ways you can "stop the noise" in your life, or the urge to "focus only on your destination" in order to pay attention along your way?

*"It's always the simple things that change our lives. And those things never happen when you are looking for them to happen. Life will reveal answers at the pace life wishes to do so. You feel like running, but life is on a stroll. This is how God does things."*

—Donald Miller,  
*Blue Like Jazz*

## 4TH PAUSE

### *“I Choose to Be on a Journey.”*

#### Points for Reflection

- Some people seem to get all the good moments in life. Is this true—or are they (or you) just paying attention in a different way?
- What makes you forget to pay attention?
- Do you find that you focus more on the goals of your life, and on what you and your life are to become, than on the journey and your “becoming”? Why?

*“Life is not about a destination, but the direction you are going. Success does not require arrival.”*

—Terry Hershey

#### Exercise

This week, practice the 4th Pause—“I choose to be on a journey.”

Begin by cultivating a habit of paying attention. Forget your internal scorekeeper and observe without judging. Try to see differences without making distinctions or forming preferences. As you pay attention, practice noninterference and allow the moment to unfold. Consider your five senses: what do you see, taste, touch, hear, and smell? Consider how that which is around makes you feel or enlivens your spirit. How are you moving or not moving—physically, emotionally, spiritually—in response? You don’t have to keep a journal (you can if brings you joy), and you don’t have to tally up how many things you can notice (it’s not a contest). Just pay attention and see where the moment takes you. Forget the destination and the report card—for this week, enjoy the ride.

## Late Summer

# The Challenge of Permission

CHAPTERS 33–39

*“If only we’d stop trying so hard to be happy,  
we could have a pretty good time.”*

—EDITH WHARTON, ADAPTED

One of the greatest obstacles to pausing in our lives is the idea that we can’t, because it’s not allowed. That somehow taking time for oneself would be selfish or undeserved or that *not-doing* is an unacceptable use of one’s time. We know we *need* a break, but we wish someone would just give us permission, so we’d know that it’s OK. This is because we’ve been listening all the while to outside voices telling us things, like: *More, faster, better* and: *What have you done for me lately?* So it’s not surprising that it’s also to outside voices that we look when we’re hoping for some release from our relentless pace.

Well, if it helps, here it is: I give you permission. I give you permission to set aside your obligations and worries and commitments for a moment and drink from the well of stillness, rest, and restoration.

But here’s the real truth: you don’t need it from me. You already have *everything* you need inside you. The permission is there. Just turn your listening inward and you’ll find it.

Not only do you deserve this, it’s necessary and natural. You’re *supposed* to have this right. Isn’t that freeing? You can ignore the outside voices selling their illusions. The only one that’s stopping you . . . is you.

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

### CHAPTER 33 Holy Longing

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1. How do you feel or behave when your unmet desires (a state of longing) are foremost in your mind?
2. Given our many desires, we are often “waiting for a life ‘not yet’” (pg 140). We view our “real” life beginning some other time—when we have gotten *this* or have done *that*—and we don’t embrace our life now. In what ways do you see yourself doing this or not?
3. What does it mean to you to “rest in disquiet”? Is that possible or an oxymoron?

### CHAPTER 34 Rested Mules

---

1. This chapter contains stories about the effects of speed and urgency in our lives. Describe a time when you felt compelled to give in to the urgent at the expense of the important.
2. How do you decide when it’s time to pause? When certain external conditions are met (i.e., my commitments are fulfilled or managed), or when certain internal conditions become apparent (i.e., I need a break), or it is systematic (i.e., after every lunch)? Discuss.
3. I call the birds that visit my pond “the benediction to my day” (pg 144). What are the benedictions to your day?

~~~~~  
*“I wish that life should  
not be cheap, but  
sacred. I wish days  
to be as centuries,  
loaded, fragrant.”*

—Ralph Waldo  
Emerson

~~~~~

## CHAPTER 36 No Cows to Lose

---

1. The voice of Grace tell us: You are loved and accepted, period. Deal with it (pg 151). How has this simple truth influenced or not influenced your life?
2. What is the difference, if any, between living *for acceptance* and living *from acceptance*?

## CHAPTER 38 Play

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1. Think back to when you were a young child. What games, or in what ways, did you typically play? How do you play in your life today?
2. After you have played, do you feel guilty or feel you've wasted time? Or do you want to play more frequently? Why or why not?
3. Do you believe that play is important for an adult, as it is for a child? Explain how important or unimportant?
4. A witty observer once said that in our culture, "we worship our work, we play at worship, and we work at our play" (pg 162). It's as though someone switched around our priorities and price tags on activities. Do you agree? If so, what do you see as a remedy?

*"The things that matter in a bad life, we know, are: gaining power over others, accumulating as much stuff as you can, getting revenge on your enemies (who are everywhere), and drugging yourself one way or another to forget the pain of not quite being human."*

—Gene Logsdon,  
*All Flesh is Grass*

## 5TH PAUSE

### *“I Choose to Give Myself Permission to Pause.”*

#### Points for Reflection

- What does “permission to pause” mean to you?
- What would it take to give yourself permission to pause when a job is undone, a goal unmet, a desire unfulfilled? Will there ever be a time when these conditions are met?
- When do times of spontaneous play occur in your life? For example, what is going on, has just occurred, or will occur? Or what is the setting, who are you with, or what is your mood?

#### Exercise

This week practice the 5th Pause. Say the words aloud to yourself—“I choose to give myself permission to pause”—and allow yourself to believe it.

Make a special commitment to practice pausing this week, even on days when you think Sanctuary time is an unrealistic choice. For one week (a short time in your overall life) permit yourself the freedom to detach—no matter what the circumstances—and for a few minutes slow life down to a standstill. Stop and breathe. If the spirit moves you, play. If not, just rest. Don’t withhold from yourself the joys of the moment for one week, then observe at its conclusion if anything was or felt different.

*“We may ignore, but we can nowhere evade, the presence of God. The world is crowded with Him. He walks everywhere incognito. And the incognito is not always hard to penetrate. The real labor is to remember, to attend. In fact, to come awake. Still more, to remain awake.”*

—C.S. Lewis,  
*Letters to Malcolm*

## Early & Late Autumn

# Grace & Joy

CHAPTERS 40–52

*“At the side of the everlasting why, is a yes and a yes, and a yes.”*

—E. M. FORSTER, *A ROOM WITH A VIEW*

Grace is what happens when you internally do this: *whew!* A whole self *whew!* Because whatever it is that is in your life at that moment—whatever you perceive, whatever you get, whatever you don’t get, whatever weighs you down, whatever troubles you, whatever pains you, whatever delights you, **WHATEVER** it is—when there’s some voice in the universe that lets you set that aside and go *whew!*—in that moment you do not have to justify a thing to anyone.

At that moment you are completely non-self-conscious. The ego is not involved at all. Because you know that your value is *already* predicated on that movement, that flow, on the very existence of that breath. And because your value is already predicated, you know nothing is required of you in that moment—nothing to give yourself value, to justify yourself, or to give the moment value. Once that is acknowledged or owned, you move from that place *very, very differently*. If you felt a sadness before, you still may feel a sadness afterward, but it’s a different sadness. Somehow, there’s a peace within it. If you felt a busy-ness before, you may still feel a busy-ness afterward, but there’s a calm center to it. If you felt an aching loneliness before, you may still feel an aching loneliness afterward, but there’s a joy within it somewhere.

So grace *is* that freedom. *Whew!*

And riding on the back of grace comes joy—filling the empty spaces that grace opens up. Grace & joy. They work together.

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

### CHAPTER 43 The Seven Wonders of the World

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1. Share some things that caused you to feel wonder (awe) in the past few weeks.
2. Do you experience wonder frequently? Rarely?
3. This chapter is a reflection on finding wonder and the sacred in the mundane of our lives. Why is it particularly important to become aware of wonder and grace in the ordinary?

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“Sell your cleverness  
and buy  
bewilderment.”

—Rumi  
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### CHAPTER 46 Glory in the Gray

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1. Our world preaches “the gospel of exhaustion” (pg 205), and this is one of the “grays” in my life. Name some “grays” in your life today.
2. We can find something positive, beautiful, and nurturing in the “grays” of our lives—or at least something humorous. What enables you to embrace the negative in your life and allow beauty and grace there?
3. This chapter contains cautions against “manufactured good cheer,” “trying to recreate religious moments and environments,” and “looking away from creation to a spiritual realm beyond” to find joy and the sacred in our lives (pg 206). Do you find these actions tempting? How are real joy and grace different?

## CHAPTER 49 Kiss Still Works

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1. Most of us will readily agree that the image and goodness of God is within us—as long as we’re talking about *after* we get that makeover we deserve (pg 219). Do you find you don’t let the light of God within you shine, because you don’t believe you are God-worthy? Why not shine?
2. In my fearful younger days—ones lacking in apparent grace—my whole game plan was getting into heaven and doing anything to “keep God from being less than thrilled” (pg 219). Do you believe God is less than thrilled when we fail? Explain.
3. Think about the analogy of the kiss in the story that opens this chapter. In your life, how has God kissed your twisted, imperfect mouth today?

## CHAPTER 50 The Farmer’s Miracle Dog

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1. Where are the miracles in our current lives? How does pausing in the midst of an out-of-breath life help us to become more aware of miracles?
2. I make the point that grace should not be an effort, “like squinting hard to see the mother of Jesus imprinted in a cheese sandwich” (pg 223). Grace is effortless upon arrival, like the joy of the farmer with his miracle dog. Discuss.
3. What connections do you find between letting go, grace, and gratitude?

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*“Children live in a world of dreams and imagination, a world of aliveness. . . . There is a voice of wonder and amazement inside all of us; but we grow to realize we can no longer hear it, and we live in silence. It isn’t that God stopped speaking; it is that our lives become louder.”*

—Mike Yaconelli,  
*Dangerous Wonder*

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## 6TH PAUSE

### *“I Choose to Be Lost in Wonder.”*

#### Points for Reflection

- Do you believe it’s possible to be more fully alive? More than your current existence?
- Do you fear being lost, even if it’s lost in wonder?
- In what ways does a need for security close you off from grace?
- Where or how do find yourself able to go *whew!* (as described on pg 21 of this guide)? How can you affirm and celebrate this action in your life?

#### Exercise

This week practice the 6th Pause—“I choose to be lost in wonder.”

Let go.  
Let Life.

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*“The glory of God is  
man or woman fully  
alive.”*

—St Irenaeus

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# TerryHershey.com & Additional Resources

## **www.TerryHershey.com**

Terry's official website—offering his blog, products, inspiring short videos, anecdotes, e-newsletters, and much more. Lots of fun and funny stuff for everyone. For the best value, check out membership.

## **www.LoyolaPress.com/The-Power-of-Pause.htm**

The publisher's website, offering a book trailer, an audio slideshow of Terry reading Chapter 5 "New Rules," and a fun interactive quiz to learn if you need to pause more in your life.

## **Other Websites**

[www.MeaningToPause.com](http://www.MeaningToPause.com)

[www.Gratefulness.org](http://www.Gratefulness.org)

[www.SlowDesign.org](http://www.SlowDesign.org)

[www.BlessingCenter.org](http://www.BlessingCenter.org)

[www.Theology.ie/prayer.htm](http://www.Theology.ie/prayer.htm)

[www.theInterviewWithGod.com](http://www.theInterviewWithGod.com)

[www.CallofStory.org](http://www.CallofStory.org)

[www.DreamKeeperImages.com](http://www.DreamKeeperImages.com)

[www.StepBackFromtheBaggageClaim.blogspot.com](http://www.StepBackFromtheBaggageClaim.blogspot.com)

[suchinrai.ZenFolio.com](http://suchinrai.ZenFolio.com)

[www.SacredSpace.com](http://www.SacredSpace.com)

[www.SlowDownNow.org](http://www.SlowDownNow.org)

[www.SlowFood.com](http://www.SlowFood.com)

[www.Leunig.com.au](http://www.Leunig.com.au)

[www.QuietMindCafe.com](http://www.QuietMindCafe.com)

[www.MertonInstitute.org](http://www.MertonInstitute.org)

[www.WorldPrayers.org](http://www.WorldPrayers.org)

[www.RonaldJoseph.net](http://www.RonaldJoseph.net)

## **Books**

*A Holy Way—Practices for a Simple Life*, Pamela Huston

*Sabbath*, Wayne Muller

*Soul Gardening*, Terry Hershey

*The Power of Now*, Eckhart Tolle

## **Films**

*A River Runs Through It* (1992)

*Amélie* (2001)

*Babette's Feast* (1987)

*Being There* (1979)

*Smoke* (1995)

*Wall-E* (2008)

## About the Author

**Terry Hershey**—writer, inspirational speaker, and ordained protestant minister—juggles his time between designing sanctuary gardens and leading Hershey & Associates, a team that provides resources and support (TerryHershey.com), inviting us all to “do less and live more.” He is the author of ten books, including *The Power of Pause: Becoming More by Doing Less* (Loyola Press), *Sacred Necessities* (Ave Maria Press), and *Soul Gardening: Cultivating the Good Life* (Augsburg Fortress). But most days you’ll find Terry out in his garden on Vashon Island in the Puget Sound—where he lives with his wife and son—because there’s something fundamentally spiritual about dirt under your fingernails.

