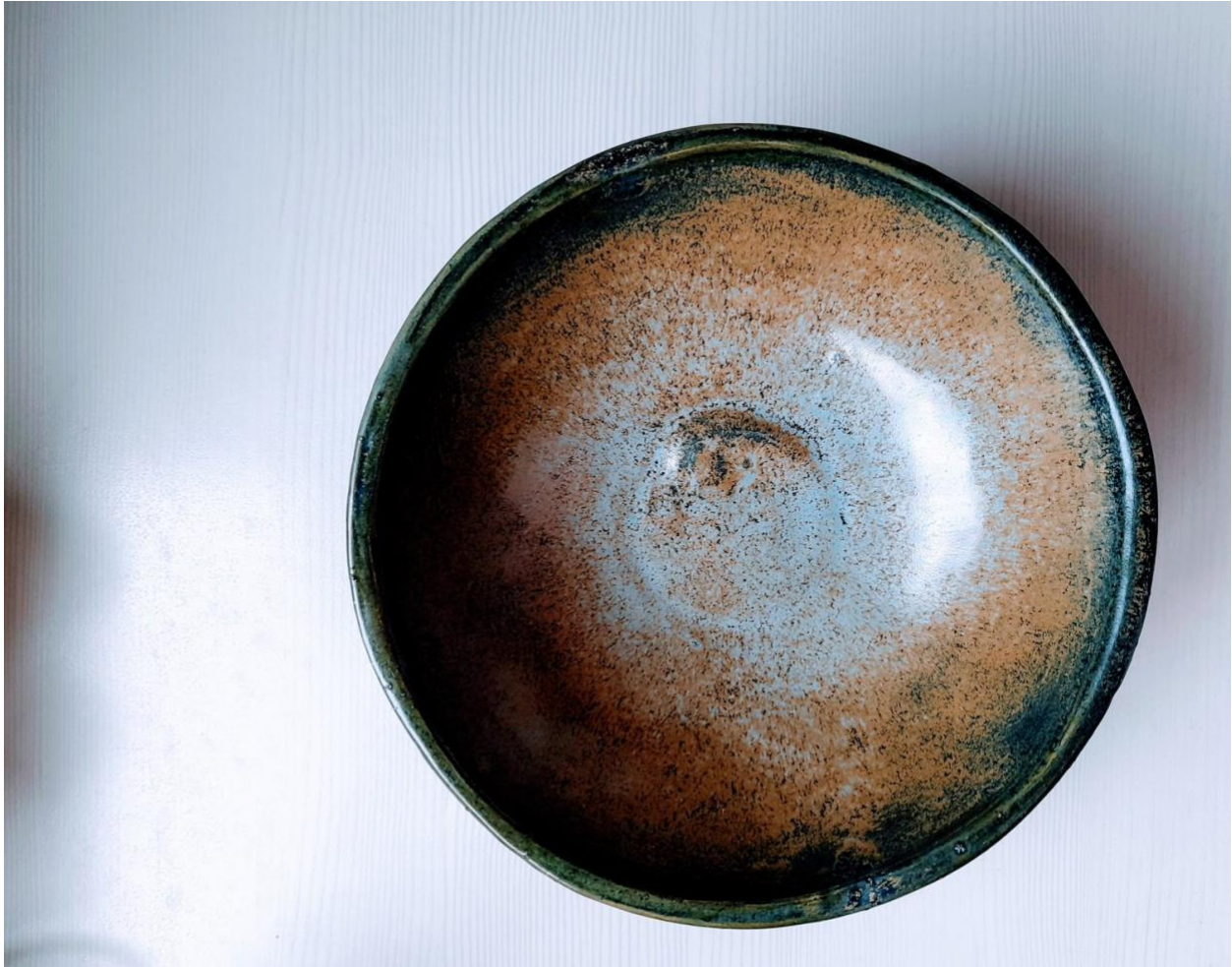




One Dish at a Time



Although I am a parent and a meditator, I am not a mother. However, when our son was born, I watched my wife, a businesswoman, a meditator and now a new mom plummet into despair. Previously always on the go, she now felt as though her wings had been abruptly clipped. Relegated to sleepless nights and 40-minute nap cycles, her sense of independence, her internal clock and her privacy had come, suddenly, to a hard stop. Even



though her maternal instinct was in full play, there was a level of depression that slowly embedded itself into her psyche.

Having previously meditated in silent retreat for months at a time in Burma and Insight Meditation Center, she could not find the bandwidth or quiet time to sit for even a minute.

What happened next was astounding. She implemented a practice that I had learned in clinical training.

“One of my professors suggested that we focus on every time we walk through a threshold. It could be a passing through a doorway, going down a flight of stairs, or slipping back into our car after dropping our children at school. For each threshold, we were to acknowledge and say good-bye to what was ending and then turn forward and greet what was to come. This powerful practice is worth experimenting with in your own life.” (Dukes, *The Present Parent Handbook*, p. 116)

Moments... it was in these mindfulness moments, these sacred transitions that my wife began to find herself, again. She began to slowly see the beginnings, middles, and ends. The demarcation of events, ever so insignificant, significantly helped her to rebuild her world.

Another unfolding took place. The presence of our child began to teach my wife how to stay present and mindful in the moment.

“The practical how-to is this: listen deeply to yourself as you are revealed in your child’s experience of you. He or she speaks a language that is constantly refreshing itself. It is seldom known or easily understood, but it is always informative. Trust that at any given moment, your child’s voice will bring you closer to the parent you hope to be — this is your next opportunity to know your child and to understand yourself.” (p. 5)



During these times so many years ago, I would often observe my wife washing one dish at a time in full concentration. How much easier, I would wonder, would it be to just toss those plates in the dishwasher? And then so quickly I realized that she was mindfully washing while in a meditative mind state. She was harnessing the opportunities as they were presented, not waiting for the time and space to unfold in the future.

Being a mother demands putting to the side one's needs and wants. Over time, this cumulative act in and of itself can suppress the psyche and cause degrees of depression. The three best ways to implement a mindfulness practice while mothering?

1. Mindfully demarcate and acknowledge your transitions.
2. Listen deeply and mindfully to yourself as you are revealed in your child's experience of you. You will soon learn that you have your very own mindfulness teacher.
3. Harness any opportunity to practice mindfulness: washing the dishes, chewing your food, walking your child.

Mindfulness is made up of one mindful moment at a time. Start now.

Practice

While sitting with a friend yesterday, I was reminded of how important it is to honor the threshold - the thing that symbolizes that which we are leaving and the beginning of where we are going.

Stop, next time you walk through the front door of you apartment, condo, home or office - just short of the threshold. Stop and gain a sense of the reality of what is happening in this moment of your life. There is no guarantee that from where you are leaving you will ever return. So pause a moment, turn around and "claim" the life you have lived in this



context, the people who are saying "good-bye." Just a moment - to recognize your life as it unfolds.

A threshold is a gift and an opportunity to awaken the mind.

Now imagine that our internal states are just as noticeable. You awaken in the morning, perhaps with the dream - a moment, a feeling, or an image - a moment away from this day that you are slowly becoming conscious of. Can you pause to mark the transition? Can you recognize that you are betwixt-and-between? What was - is ending. What will be - is emerging! Simply pause and claim these unfolding moments.

Reference

Dukes, Timothy (2016). *The present parent handbook*, CA: Familius.

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The Tim Dukes Method provides an opportunity for self-reflective individuals to cultivate the capacity to receive into consciousness hidden aspects of the self, claiming your unique gifts – ensuring that today's brilliance successfully transitions into tomorrow's wisdom. The Tim Dukes Method is designed and implemented by Dr. Timothy Dukes for determined creatives to ensure long-term viability — as a continuing investment in the well-being of yourself, your family, organizations, culture, society, and the Earth itself.