



Go, Go, Go

On a recent visit to a friend's home, I was entertained with her 16 month old son. He was quite pleased with himself, seemingly aware that his vocabulary and motor skills were increasing daily. He would run to a toy, pick it up briefly, and then drop it, quickly proclaiming "GO!" and off he ran to the next thing, repeating the process with a new toy. The morning was a delightful flurry of "Go," "Go," "Go," as he ran from one toy to another.

I couldn't help but think that what was so charming on this 16 month old, becomes deadly to those of us whose lives look like a similar flurry of "Goes." It's almost as if we wake up in the morning and jump out of bed with thoughts of "Go, Go, Go" replaying themselves in our mind as we rush from one activity to the next, creating a jagged trail of activities. In this process we wreak havoc on our nervous systems, create scatteredness and lack of focus in our minds, and rob ourselves of any chance at real joy and delight.

Contrast this image with the breath. The breath is the glue that holds our body, mind, and spirit intact while we have this experience of human life. It is a truism in Yogic thought that if you know the breath, you know everything. On a less philosophical side, the well-known Dr. Weil has said that if he had to limit all of his advice to one thing, it would be to learn to breathe well.

A breath which facilitates a clear, healthy mind and a vital, healthy body is deep, smooth, slow, without jerkiness, without pause, and quiet. If the breath is shallow, jerky, or chaotic, it is a sign that we are out of integrity with ourselves. Somehow we are engaged in our "going" in a way that is harmful to our well-"being."

The breath is an amazing tool for beginning to bring our lives into integrity. By paying attention to the breath, we can notice when we are pushing ourselves too much. By consciously practicing a breath that is slower, deeper, smoother, without jerks or pauses, we can begin to impact our health and the well-being of our lives.

Can you imagine if the breath led our movements, rather than the command of "go"? Can you imagine what a life lived a little slower and deeper, without jerkiness might look like? The next time you begin to rush off to another thing, check in with your breath first. Let the breath guide you into a life lived in more integrity with your own body, mind, and spirit.

Deborah Adele is an engaging, lively, and thought-provoking speaker who is not afraid to share stories from her own years of living and learning. She facilitates thoughtful and tangible ways of showing up to life in new ways, leaving participants with a dynamic combination of hope, inspiration, and practical knowledge. She is the author of *The Yamas & Niyamas: Exploring Yoga's Ethical Practice*, 2 CD's: *The Art of Relaxation* and *The Practice of Meditation* and authored a regular wellness column for the Duluth News Tribune.