

# Stop, Chill, and Smile

by Brian Germain



In daily life, we often find ourselves losing our good feeling. We get ourselves in a bit of a panic simply because we are going too fast. This kind of feeling can only lead to failure, since it is this feeling in which our plans are made. The visualizations that occur in the moments prior to crucial action are the ones that determine what ultimately happens. If we are to re-direct the course of events, we need to establish a new feeling, a fresh frame of reference from which to plan our next moves if we are to change the way things are going, and turn things in the general direction of better.

In short, you are capable of changing the direction of any situation simply by changing your mood. This can only be done by altering your focus of attention, while allowing a feeling of relief to come over you. This is the product of what might be called "a good stop". Often we pause to collect ourselves before proceeding. It is a natural consequence of negative emotion to desire to get our feeling under control. We have all seen the disastrous consequences of pushing a bad emotional position, but how often do we truly stop and take the time to let go of all of our previous momentum and wait for a good feeling to come over us before proceeding? This is the meaning of a "good stop", and it is a very powerful tool for bringing out our highest potential.

Life is all about speed. If we are going too fast, we cannot feel safe, simply because we aren't. When I rush to the airplane with my leg-straps hanging loose and scramble to get my gear together as the airplane taxis out to the runway, it is hard to have a perfect skydive. I am operating above my sustainable speed, and consequently I do not feel good. I need to slow down. I still must do all the preparatory tasks that keep me safe, like checking my handles, but I must do them in slow motion.

In truth, I am not in slow motion. I am moving at the correct speed for a dangerous situation. When we are taking on an increased level of risk, whether it is an important meeting with the boss or preparing to jump

off a Fjord in Norway, we need to move slower than other times. We need to stop when the speed is too fast, and calm our heart rate and respiration before resuming our forward motion; progressing slower than before. If we do this we automatically start to feel better, and that feeling always leads us toward where we want to go.

Our best performances in life, and our best insights, all come as a result of this positive mindset. We must recognize our inner speed at all times so that we can maintain this feeling of controlled, graceful motion. When Tom Hanks spoke of his lead role in Apollo 13, he commented on how slow and methodical the preparation for launch was. He said it felt: "...almost like performing a Mass". All moments of transcendent beauty share this quality. The slow rhythm and ritual create a quiescent response in our bodies and minds, and our parasympathetic systems kick in to bring us back into focus and good feeling. The unbalanced activity in our prefrontal cortex becomes balanced "Gamma Synchrony", and we resume being the most competent version of ourselves. This is because when we are in slow motion, we notice the details of our surroundings, and thus we are far less likely to forget key steps in the process. This makes us safer, and we know it. Therefore, the secret to doing dangerous and important things is: ***SLOW DOWN***

If you come away with anything specific from this article, let it be this. It is the core meaning of the points I am making that will be there for you when life is coming at you hard. Hopefully, sometime in the future, when you are not feeling good leading up to an important situation or in the midst of it, you will remember to:

STOP  
Chill  
Breathe  
and Start Again  
...this time a bit slower  
with a smile on your face.

If you don't feel good, you must not settle for the bad feeling. It is far too dangerous to be in a bad mood when you are doing dangerous things. And since everything we do has consequences, everything we do is dangerous. Another way to put all of this is:

You Are Doing Yoga Right Now  
*chew on that for a while...*

BSG