BEING HERE

Just because you're busy and distracted, that doesn't mean you have to miss out on life

By Lisa Lombardi

W E HAVE ALL HAD THOSE MOments of: I'm here, but I'm not here.

Mine came while I was in the bleachers at my then-7-year-old's baseball game. "Mom," my son called out from the field, "look up from your phone. I don't want you to get hit with the ball!"

The other parents around me laughed—because I was busted, and also because who couldn't relate?

We live in a time when we can be present in so many moments, almost as they happen, across the globe. Watch a college roommate reach the summit of Mount Rainier in real time. Skype with the kids from a business trip in Asia. See a streaming video of your newborn niece wriggle 30 seconds after she comes out into the world. We have access to those astonishing moments, and we wouldn't have it any other way. But what about the moments unfolding right in front of us? The ordinary ones. That Little League game. The last out and the nice hustle off the field, the sound of the players' rhyming chants and the warmth from having parked yourself in the last patch of afternoon sunlight.

Being mindful in the real world isn't always easy, but if we get even a little better at it, we benefit in crucial ways. A growing body of research attests to the profound mind-body benefits of getting centered. Mindfulness techniques, including meditation and deep, rhythmic breathing (see pages 23 and 44) are some of the best lifestyle tools we have to control stress (page 16), improve sleep (page 24) and even avoid illness (page 30).

Clearing your mind can also lead to deeper thinking, reveals a new study published in *Psychological Science*. Researchers Moshe Bar and Shira Baror set up experiments in which people were given a collection of numbers to remember and then asked to free-associate words. Some groups were asked to remember fewer numbers than the other groups. The people who had more numbers in their head consistently gave the least creative, most statistically common replies (such as "white"/"black"), while the ones with