

# Good vibes: When anxiety mounts, take the time to pause

My late parents always reminded me that I was a fidgety kid. And I was.

Stillness was never my style.



**Sally Friedman**

I regret to say that I don't relax easily. Take a pause. Breathe deeply. Decompress.

I always vow to do better. But then I don't, and go rushing though my life and the world more frenzied than I'd like to be and surely less tranquil.

As most of us know, change comes hard ... or not at all.

So when a friend who shares this pattern directed me to a website with the words "meaning to pause" in it, I paid attention.

Unlike my daughters and my grandchildren, I don't visit many websites — they make me dizzy. But I did visit this one.

And instead of shrugging it off and rushing back to ... well, rushing, I read about the joy and value of pausing. It made sense.

The site offered a series of bracelets — quite pretty and dainty in most cases — that remind you to pause via a signal every so often that you actually feel.

The little bracelet quietly but firmly vibrates.

Still, I didn't rush to order it.

But after a few more days, and a few more bouts of feeling a bit hyper, I returned to that website.

And I did something I've done perhaps five times in my

life: I ordered something online.

Call me crazy but I generally prefer the shopping experience — the seeing, touching, studying the object.

This time, however, it was strictly a web buy or nothing — this virtual "store" was all the way across the country in California.

So I placed my order at [www.meaningtopause.com](http://www.meaningtopause.com).

And I couldn't wait for my bracelet to arrive. There's definitely a certain fascination in this process of ordering the unseen, and I was beginning to understand it.

One day, the little package arrived. I admit I felt an adrenalin rush as I opened the box that was going to calm me down and soothe those rushes ... maybe.

The Pause bracelet I chose is composed of little silver beads. Very simple and lovely.

On the back is printed the word "Pause," and there's a small function button that can turn the bracelet's internal clock on — or off. Off is its "sleep mode."

I pushed the "on" button, put the bracelet on my wrist and went about my business. Phone calls. Emails. Pressure. Stress.

And just when I'd forgotten all about it, my silver bracelet sent out its message. It began vibrating on my wrist.

I was, of course, startled. Even a little annoyed.

But I forced myself to pay attention. I heeded the call to pause.

I left my desk, walked the few yards to the breakfast room and made myself a cup of tea. It's something I almost never do.

I picked up a novel I've been reading in fits and starts and read a chapter. I had "wasted"

about half an hour when I pulled myself back to my desk.

I have to admit I felt fresher. More alert. Less jangled.

I kept the bracelet on that entire day, took it off that night, and almost forgot to put it on again the next day.

Habits can be as hard to form as they are to break.

But I pushed myself that first week to wear my silver bead bracelet most of my daytime hours.

My middle daughter, who is very much like her mother, wondered whether it wasn't akin to having an alarm clock go off every 90 minutes, with the end result of making the wearer feel more anxious, more jangly.

It honestly wasn't. At least not for me.

I've had my bracelet for more than a month now. I wear it almost every day.

I'm watch-watching much less, which is, in itself, relaxing.

On my pause alerts, I sometimes just take some deep breaths. I sometimes take a walk, even if it's inside the house. Or I read or just daydream.

And there are times when I go on doing just what I was doing before.

Has my bracelet changed my life?

Yes. No. Well, maybe.

I'm certainly more aware of the pauses that now punctuate my weekday life. But I've had occasional times when I chose to ignore the vibe on my wrist — and even mildly resent it. Most days, I rejoice in the reminders.

This I know for sure:

I'm no longer just meaning to pause — I'm actually doing it most days.

Wish me luck.

Reach Sally Friedman at [pingander@aol.com](mailto:pingander@aol.com)