

# WellesleyWeston

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# Finding the Deep River Within

Weston author helps women slow down  
and lead more satisfying lives

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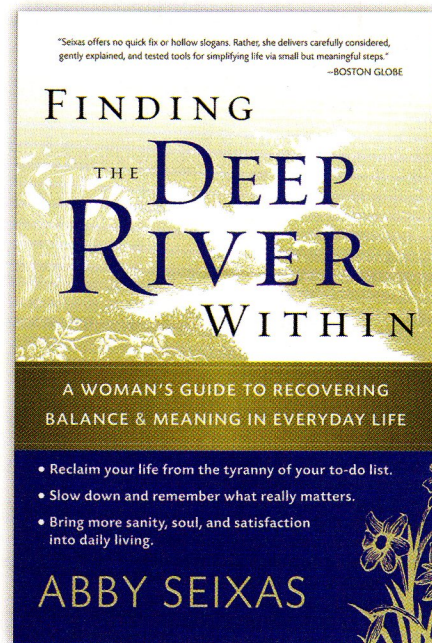
**attention ladies:** Do you churn through your days attending to a myriad of details, jumping from one activity to the next without a pause, caught up in the whirlwind of your to-do list and its endless demands? Is your life a vortex in continuous motion—circling and circling but never quite arriving at a peaceful destination? Do you feel you've lost an essential connection to your inner self, the deep core within you that understands what matters most—*your* place of clarity, sustenance, and purpose? If this describes your daily life, you are not alone and help is at hand. A recently published book by Weston author Abby Seixas can provide both the inspiration and the skills you need to slow down and restore balance.

If the popularity of Seixas' book, *Finding the Deep River Within: A Woman's Guide to Recovering Balance & Meaning in Everyday Life* (Jossey-Bass/Wiley 2006)

is any measure, there is an epidemic of "crazy busy-ness" and many of the afflicted are searching for guidance. Fed by our incessant 24/7 culture, we are overscheduled, overwhelmed, and overwrought. We suffer from what Seixas calls "the disease of a-thousand-things-to-do." She assures readers who may wonder, "What is *wrong* with me? Why can't I keep up?" that they are asking the wrong question. While the propensity for self-blame is common, the real problem lies instead with our fragmented, fast-paced culture. We are moving at warp speed and there are no speed bumps in our daily routines. Nothing can slow us down except....ourselves.

With wisdom and patience, Seixas' book presents a series of practical exercises that empower women to slow down and nurture contact with what she calls the "deep river within, the soul nourishing dimension that flows beneath the busyness of daily life." Seixas notes, "The strange irony in our sped-up lives is the fact that while our technology has enabled us to get things done faster and faster, we seem to have less and less time." She suggests that perhaps "it isn't just more time that we need but a different way of experiencing the time we have."

Seixas is a psychotherapist and licensed mental health counselor who has been in private practice for over twenty-five years. Twelve years ago, she founded the "Touching the Deep



The hardcover version of Abby Seixas' book was published in 2006, and the paperback version will be available this fall.



River" seminars and workshops, in which she helps women learn and practice the art of slowing down. Using examples drawn from the experiences of women who have been transformed by these programs, Seixas' book illustrates the ways in which we can learn to re-ignite the richness and depth that many of us are missing.

Seixas suggests several preliminary exercises to initiate the process of reclaiming your life from the tyranny of your to-do's. For example, while lists of things that *need* to be done can be useful, Seixas suggests occasionally making a list of what you *have* done each day, so that you can experience the cup as half full rather than half empty in relation to the ever-present to-do list. At the heart of the book are six "Deep River" practices or tools. "These tools have a reciprocal relationship to slowing down—that is, slowing down makes it easier to do each practice, and doing each practice helps us to slow down," she writes. One practice is *taking time in* which involves allowing oneself to pause and

take "uninterrupted alone time to drop below the surface of daily activity." Another is to *create the time and space* to do something you love just for the fun of it. A third, *practicing presence*, asks that we focus on the moment and be present in it—"life is happening right *now*—and it is inviting us to wake up and notice." Befriending negative feelings that may rise to the surface when we slow down, establishing personal boundaries, and taming self expectations are the other three practices that Seixas encourages us to pursue. The book offers a chapter on each, with a series of exercises to help the reader develop and grow within each practice. The goal is to integrate these practices and establish a rhythm—or habit—of regularly tapping into one's source of depth and meaning in order to live a more satisfying life.

Why is this important? "At our current pace, we risk a future in which our ability to think deeply, feel deeply, and listen deeply—to one another and ourselves—will be seriously compromised," Seixas asserts.

She does not view these practices as a selfish pursuit because she believes that only through slowing down and nurturing ourselves can we find the compassion and strength we need in our interactions and relationships with others. Seixas also takes a longer term view. She believes that modeling the "art of slowing down" has important implications for our children and for the future of our culture.

Seixas immediately impresses one as a good listener. She has always been introspective, she says, and has kept a personal journal since childhood. Seixas marketed her book concept to a number of agents and, ironically, received an affirmative call from one of them on the day her youngest child graduated from high school. "I was finished raising two children, so it was time to have another different sort of child!" she laughs.

This is her first book and she is surprised and delighted by the popular response it has received. "I really struck a chord," she says. The book received excellent reviews and jacket endorsements, Seixas has appeared on the TODAY show, and she is in demand as a speaker and workshop leader.

Writing the book was a painstaking process, she says. "I thought it would be easy to just write what I say when I'm leading the workshops. It wasn't! Speaking is much easier than writing. I found that writing forced me to clarify my thinking, and many concepts came into much sharper focus." Throughout the project, her husband, Mark Horowitz, was a support beyond measure.

When asked which of her "Deep River" practices is the most challenging for Seixas, she says: "While I was raising my children I

had the most difficulty with doing what I love. I just lost sight of it." And what does she love to do? "I like to dance—west coast swing. It's fun and relaxing and I don't really care if I'm any good at it. I also enjoy doing calligraphy, playing music, and gardening."

Since writing her book, Seixas says "I am busier than I've ever been, but I have the tools I need to keep balance and perspective. For me, as for everyone, it is an ongoing practice." **WW**

For more information on **ABBY SEIXAS**, the "Deep River" seminars and testimonials, please visit [www.deepriverwithin.com](http://www.deepriverwithin.com).