THE INTENTIONAL PAUSE PODCAST • RESOURCE

# Breaking Autopilot & Keeping Your Word to Yourself

Practical insights from Dr. Chris Sopa & Guest Dr. Julia King

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**What is an Intentional Pause?** It is the crucial moment right before you follow an automatic neural pattern, catching the "tiger by the tail." Instead of reacting on autopilot, you pause, breathe, and choose a response aligned with the life you actually want to live.

## 1 Anchor to a Powerful "Why"

- **Ditch Shame-Based Goals:** Self-criticism ("I'm so out of shape") never creates lasting change. Root your "why" in vibrant, realistically positive imagery.
- **Benefits vs. Consequences:** Identify what motivates you—either gaining future vitality (feeling energized tomorrow) or avoiding negative outcomes.
- **Keep It Immediate:** A goal 30 years away won't stop you from hitting snooze today. Connect your choice to how you want to feel *tomorrow*.

## 2 Embrace "Slow Magic"

- **Start Too Small to Fail:** Overhauling your life overnight backfires. Pick a micro-habit (like 5 squats a day) and lock it in before adding more.
- **Drop the 21-Day Myth:** Rewiring neural pathways takes a minimum of **60 to 90 days** of consistent repetition.
- **Reject All-or-Nothing Thinking:** One off-plan meal or missed workout doesn't ruin your progress. Reset at your very next choice.

## How to Navigate Urges & Resistance in the Moment

**1. Pause & Breathe**
Inhale for 4 counts, exhale for 6 counts (3×). A longer exhale calms your nervous system.

**2. Name the Feeling**
Say it out loud: *"I am feeling a craving/dread right now."* Naming it removes its power.

**3. Allow Discomfort**
Don't try to force the feeling away. Remind yourself that discomfort is temporary and safe.

**4. Keep Your Word**
Gently redirect your focus and follow through on your boundary to build self-trust.

## Your Pause With Purpose Reflection

**1. One area where I am currently living on autopilot (breaking my word to myself):**

**2. My vibrant, realistic "Why" for making a different choice in that moment:**

**3. My "Slow Magic" micro-habit (so small it feels almost impossible not to do):**

*"Tell me, what is it you plan to do with this one wild and precious life?" — Mary Oliver*