By [Karen Clark Cole](#)

I was recently asked how I cope as a busy person in a world that is becoming increasingly complex. I had to think about this. I'm not sure the actual world has become more complex, but how we communicate certainly has.

The trouble starts when we add in all of our new and modern ways to communicate: email, social media, videos, chat, you name it. So many substitutions for face-to-face conversations. It often feels like more power, less person. Miscommunications, misunderstandings, wrong assumptions or completely missing the mark happens more frequently than getting a great message across. No wonder the world seems more complex.

The sadder problem is that we are missing the beautiful details in people's lives; the spaces between the words get lost when we are typing. A text message has no "pause" to take a breath or to just look at the person sitting in front of you. No time for an idea to hatch, or to see the twinkle in someone's eye when he or she stumbles onto something big. You miss all the smiles, the laughs, and you also miss the tears. The words have replaced the person.

I am convinced the only way out of this is to get back to having real, live face-to-face conversations. In my life I have chosen to be fully present, and that's a commitment I take seriously. It means that I am with the person in front of me, fully. No multitasking, no planning or working on my to-do list. I'm all eyes and I'm all ears.

The difference? I see and hear things no email or text could ever convey. Not in a million years. I understand and care about the people around me. I know their stories and I remember them. I get the chance to look at the world from their perspectives, if only for a few minutes, and when I'm lucky, it's for hours. I may not make much progress on my to-do list, but my days are richer. My life is richer. It's worth it. Small things become big. It's why we are all here.

I recommend trying it. Start small, ask someone in the hall how their day is going, ask someone for feedback. When you go to write an email, look around, get up and walk over to that person instead. He or she may be surprised, but I bet they'll like it, and hopefully you'll cause a chain reaction of getting back to being real.

When not serving as CEO of Blink UX, you can find Karen organizing events to inspire young girls or training to become a professional kiteboarder.