

Now Is All There Is



“These words are an attempt to describe an experience which was beyond words”

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Why Do Personal Development?

Part of the nature of humans is to be constantly developing, growing and moving toward a balanced and mature way of being. Our present personality is determined by both who and what we have been and by the person we strive to become. The goal of personal development is to learn and apply that which enables us to attain emotional wellbeing, understanding and effectiveness, and to share this knowledge with others.

Personal development is the conscious evolution of human nature, and yet throughout history it has been sorely lacking! Although it is in our nature to learn and grow, we are held back by our culture, which is predominantly focused on survival needs, each of us in competition with others, and our spiritual inner nature is repressed. The animal rules. We make no room for unconditional love.

Even though the culture may have evolved with technological advancement and administrative complexity, human nature has not moved forward as it might. We are now paying the price for human selfishness and inconsideration. Going forward, the quality of our lives on this planet - even our survival - now depends on each of us taking responsibility for our personal growth.

The human being needs to awaken to the soul that inhabits each body and is our true self and source of inner knowing. Awaken through a process of self-discovery, leading to one's own, self-directed spirituality. We need to become mindfully conscious instead of ruled by the dictates of instincts, past habits and fixed beliefs. We need to throw away dogma, open our minds and reconsider. Instead of fear about our survival and competitive angst, we will then be motivated by compassionate understanding and creative love.

For those that do move forward, the next epoch - that is almost upon us as we move into 2012 - will be a celebration of human cooperation and shared love. It's our best hope for the future - and it's in our hands.

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Now Is All There Is

The statement “Now Is All There Is” is contrary to how most of us think, and live.

*“An utter
peacefulness
filled the
mind and
the body”*

Let me tell you a story of how I first came to know the truth of this statement.

One beautiful sunny day in 1984, I was having a long run in nature. During the run, I had a satori, a glimpse of enlightenment.

Here is what happened. As I was running along, my mind was busy, as it always seemed to be, day and night. My mind was always thinking about something, or a number of things. Much of the thinking was actually worrying, trying to figure things out. The details would vary, but there was always a rushing river of thoughts going through the mind.

Without any warning, there was a sudden shift in consciousness. What happened was so profound and powerful, that it is difficult to describe it in words. Actually, during the duration of this shift of consciousness, all thinking stopped. The words that I use to describe the experience in this writing were not going through the mind at the time. These words are an attempt to describe an experience which was beyond words.

There was profound silence and peacefulness

In contrast to the noisy thoughts of the busy mind, there was a profound and blissful silence. An utter peacefulness filled the mind, and the body. I had never known such peacefulness. It felt quiet, delicate, pure, and all pervasive. It was as if everything was made of this peacefulness. It felt utterly light, as in light weight. And, it also felt somehow, like it was light itself. Crystal clear, - pervading everything, everywhere, not only within the body, but beyond the body in all directions, with no limits.

The ‘me’ who had always been caught in thought had also
vanished!

*“Never
before had
the mind felt
so tiny and
confined.
Never
before had
the self felt
so limited
and so
limiting.”*

It was amazing for once, to have no thoughts in the mind. Even more astonishing, - the “me” who had always been caught in thought had also vanished. It was as if the separate package I called myself no longer had a ‘me’, a ‘self’ in it. In place of this separate entity that I had identified myself as there was an expanded field of awareness.

This field of awareness seemed to be within the body, and beyond the body. It was as if the body was running in this expanded field of awareness.

In this expanded state, there was a profound, ecstatic oneness with all there is. The body was no longer separate. There was no separation, no distinction between the body, the vastness of the deep blue sky, the warmth of the sun, the vibrancy of the air, the beauty of the earth and nature all around. All was one. There was nobody anymore who was running. It was as if the body was running, effortlessly, lightly, with out a ‘me’ who was doing it.

So, thoughts had disappeared. The worry and problems that went with the thoughts had disappeared. The sense of the separate self had vanished, without a trace. And, the feeling of time was also no where to be found. There was a feeling of timelessness, of eternity. It was as if Now, this moment, was all there is.

It was as if the entire Cosmos was one entity, an organic whole, a dance of light and form, form and light.

At some point, the mind came back into action. Thoughts returned to the mind. The mind began trying to figure out what was going on, and protesting that this couldn’t be happening. The experience had been so radically different from what the mind is familiar with, that the mind was questioning, and doubting the experience.

In this instant of the mind thinking again, the expansive space, - the feeling, -the being one with all that is, vanished as instantly as it had appeared. Never before had the mind felt so tiny, confined, limited, and limiting. Never before had the self felt so limited and so limiting.

I was shaken to the core of my being.

“It was awareness recognizing that there is no one and nothing separate from the totality of this moment.”

Even though the experience has faded into memory, on a deeper level, I was no longer the same. There was a knowing-ness now, that there is a reality far greater, far more magnificent than the world which I knew as the mind, and which I called my self. There was a recognition that the Now is all of life itself, - that all the energy, purity, light and love of the Cosmos is present in this moment. The experience of the tremendous life force of the Now was infinitely richer than anything I had known as past and future.

The satori which occurred on that fateful day in 1984 was a profound experience of the Now. It was much deeper than what we call living in the moment. It wasn't 'me living in the moment.' It also wasn't 'me being in the moment.'

In that state of oneness, there was no 'me' who could claim, "this is me living in the moment!" or "this is me being the moment."

It was awareness recognizing that there is no one and nothing separate from the totality of this moment.

Awareness is the Now simply being as it is.

My life was changed forever!

This experience changed my life forever. Up until this point, I had not had any inkling that my mind and my identity really were confining and limiting. For much of my life, I had been so deeply absorbed in compulsive thinking, that the now, seemed pretty much irrelevant. It was something you put up with, in your efforts to get to the next moment, to some future goal. In any case, there wasn't time for the now. Why? Because the mind was so busy with more important things.

I had always been so identified and preoccupied with my mind and its worries. I had not noticed that the present moment is actually the source of the peacefulness that I was hoping to find through all of my busyness, striving and effort. This insight was so stunning! In avoiding, denying, and rushing through the moments of my life, I was stumbling over the very source of the solace I was looking for.

*“I was so
preoccupied
with my
future
goals...”*

I was preoccupied with my future goals for career, income, success, relationship, a house... In one way or another, I was hoping that in attaining these things, that finally, my life would be complete. Then, and only then, my mind told me, would I be able to relax. Then and only then would I be able to stop and smell the roses.

When a goal was attained, I would experience some happiness for a little while. Before I knew it, I was back on the treadmill of the future, hoping that some pay off down the road would finally give me the peace that I was looking for.

In the intensity of the chase for ‘more’, I was too busy to notice that no matter what I attained, gained, learned, and accomplished, I never felt truly fulfilled. I never felt satisfied. I never felt that this was finally enough.

So, the satori had turned what I called my life, upside down. It challenged everything I valued. It challenged all of my core assumptions about myself, and about life. It was the most profound experience of my life up to that time.

It was as if all of existence was making it crystal clear that my ideas, habits and patterns were completely out of touch with reality. It was as if all of existence was experientially pointing out that Now Is All There Is.

Fortunately, I took notice.

Since 1984, I have dedicated my life to the Now. I am of service to those people who want to become free of the mind, and to be present in this moment.

How can we come into alignment with this moment? During my sessions and workshops, people ask great questions about living in the moment. We can explore a few of them here.

Question:

If Now is all there is, how come I and everybody I know, thinks there is a past?

This is not the first time, humanity has lived in the grip of a mis-perception.

For generations, everyone on the planet believed that the earth was flat. At the time, this seemed so obvious, it was not even spoken about. Yet, no matter how many millions of people were

spoken about. Yet, no matter how many millions of people were convinced that the earth was flat, it is round.

Similarly, just because most people believe that there is a past, does not necessarily mean that there is one.

“We believe that there is a past because we are identified with memory.”

There is no Past

What we have is this moment.

In this moment, our minds have memories. These memories are stored at the subconscious level.

We believe there is a past because we are identified with memory. We believe that memory is reality. Even if, on a conscious level, we know that memory is not reality, our subconscious mind doesn't know that.

What are the consequences of believing that memory is reality? When something happens, a memory is formed. This memory is a record of the event. It is NOT the event.

Believing that memory is reality means that we think that there is something there. The event is gone, but there is a feeling that something remains. This is most noticeable with traumatic events. Long after a traumatic event no longer exists, we continue to be traumatized by the memory of the event. This is only because the subconscious mind believes the memory is the event. The instant the subconscious mind sees that the memory is not the event, all the negative emotions about the memory disappear. In the sessions and workshops I have helped countless people become free of the impact of these memories, using a technique called The Memory Freedom Method.

Here is a simple awareness exercise you can do right now, to explore the belief that there is a past:

Make a genuine attempt, right now, to take a breath one week ago.

When I present people with this experiment, in the workshops, they conclude that they were not able to take a breath a week ago. In talking about this, they conclude that they can only take a breath right now.

When I ask, “How come you can only take a breath right now?” Someone typically answers, “Because there is only now.”

“Make a genuine attempt, right now, to take a breath one week ago.”

In letting go of your identification with memories, you become present to what is right now. In being present with the now, you are in alignment with all of life.

Question:

If now is all there is, how come it seems like there is a future?

Just as there is no past, there is no future.

The future appears to be different from the past. However, at the core, they are both expressions of the same thing. Something wonderful happened. The mind clings to the memory, and wishes for that wonderful thing to happen again.

Or, something negative happens. The mind does not want it to happen again. The mind creates anxiety worrying about this happening again. So, the future is an artificial expression of the desires and fears of the mind.

The mind’s capabilities for imagination and projection creates the feeling that there is a future.

When our future projections don’t match up with what is, we experience frustration and upset. However, we are doing this to ourselves. It is not life that is creating our disappointments when things don’t happen the way that we think they ‘should’, or the way in which we want them to.

Here is a simple awareness exercise you can use to challenge any assumption you may be holding onto, that there is a future.

Make a genuine attempt, right now, to take a breath next week.

As with the previous breath experiment, when I suggest people play with this in a workshop, they discover that they are not able to do it. Yes, they can imagine taking a breath next week.

However, the breath you are taking, is always, and only right now. You are either breathing now, or not at all. The participants conclude that they are not able to take a breath next week, because there is no next week. Yes, there is the idea, or concept of next week. But the idea, or concept is simply something held in the mind.

Think of it this way. When you think of a glass of water, is that a real glass of water there, in your mind?

real glass of water there, in your mind?

No, it is just an idea, thought, or concept.

Similarly, thinking about next week, does not mean that there is such a thing in reality. It is just an idea, thought, or concept.

“When our future projections don’t match up with what is, we experience frustration and upset.”

What would your life be like if this moment is all there is?

After reading this question, close your eyes, and notice whatever response comes up for you. Asking the question of yourself, will take you deeper and deeper into this moment.

Some insights people have in exploring this question:

- *simple
- *easy
- *relaxed
- *peaceful
- *the pressure is off
- *open to infinite possibilities
- *light
- *expansive
- *nothing to worry about
- *accepting

Question:

How can I learn to be in the Now, during the busyness of my day to day life?

There are many ways.

I would say, start simply. One simple, highly effective way to pull your self out of your compulsive mind habit is to focus attention on sensory awareness, in this moment.

Ask yourself:

What are my eyes seeing right now?

In response to the question, simply see what is here right now.

See, without putting words to what the eyes are seeing.

See, without thinking about what the eyes are seeing.

See, without interpreting, or judging what the eyes are seeing.

This is a powerful exercise for you to learn to be present with what is right before the eyes in this moment.

Here is the question adapted for your auditory sense:

*“...simply
see what is
here right
now.”*

What are my ears hearing right now?

Really be present with what the ears are hearing.

Simply hear without thinking.

This is about being present with sounds, without thinking about the sounds.

This is about being present with sounds, without labeling, interpreting, or judging them.

Even though these exercises are simple, using them day to day can be a powerful means to assist you in being present in this moment.

As you become more present to the moment, the mind becomes quieter, and there are moments during which there are no thoughts at all.

Cherish this inner silence.

This silence is the depth within you.

This silence is the essence of the Now,

You are the silence.

*“Simply
hear without
thinking.”*

You are the depth.

You are the Now....

...The Now That Is All There Is

With the blessings of this moment...

Ron Wypkema,
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