

Common Sense Is
Very Uncommon

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Intro



The only time that really matters is right now. The past already happened and the future isn't here yet. When we spend too much time thinking about the past and the future, we miss out on the present moment.

Our thoughts and feelings aren't actually who we are deep down. They are kind of like tools we use to get through life. But sometimes our thoughts and feelings start to control us instead of us controlling them.

When we stay stuck in the past, like thinking about things we can't change or feeling guilty, it doesn't help us. When we worry too much about the future, we just get stressed out.

To be happy, we need to pay attention to the present. Notice what's going on right now. See what you can see, hear, smell or feel in this moment. Don't judge it or wish it was different. Just be curious about what this moment is like.

Living in the now helps us accept life as it is. We flow with what's happening rather than fighting it. We know everything will work out the way it's meant to.

Does this help explain why living in the present moment matters? Let's try to practice it together right now. What do you notice happening in this moment as I'm speaking with you?

Sure, let me expand a bit more on each reason why people struggle to live in the present moment:

Our minds are conditioned to the past/future - From a young age, we are taught to reflect on the past to learn lessons, and plan/worry about the future. So our brains become wired to spend a lot of time and energy in non-present thinking. It becomes an entrenched mental habit.

Living in past/future feels more purposeful - We attach more meaning and significance to the past and the future. The past gives us our identity and history. The future is where we aim for accomplishments. The present seems trivial in comparison. We feel we need to be goal-oriented.

Distractions fragment attention - Modern life is full of stimuli competing for our attention - cellphones, ads, emails, etc. They overburden our capacity to focus and be mindful of the now. We get addicted to the distraction/stimulation.

Unpleasant present gets avoided - Painful emotions or boredom in the present moment cause discomfort. Dwelling on the past or future acts as an escape to avoid facing dissatisfaction in the now.

Ego identity tied to past/future - We develop a narrative and attachment to our memories and dreams. Letting go to live in the now means surrendering this familiar sense of self, which is scary.

Fear of impermanence - Fully realizing each moment passes causes anxiety about loss of control or meaning. People cling to past and future to feel more permanent, constant, and safe.

Embracing the Present



Sarah sat by the window, her mind racing with a thousand thoughts, regrets, and anxieties. She had always been a planner, someone who meticulously charted out her life, always focused on what was next. But as she stared out at the world passing by, she couldn't help but feel a sense of emptiness creeping in.

"The only time that really matters is right now," a friend's words echoed in her mind. It was a simple statement, but it carried profound wisdom that Sarah had long neglected.

The Illusion of Time

Time had always been a mysterious and relentless force. It flowed onward, never pausing for anyone or anything. Sarah realized that her preoccupation with the past and future had been a futile attempt to control this inexorable river. She had spent countless hours dissecting past mistakes, reliving missed opportunities, and planning for a future that was as uncertain as the shifting sands of a desert.

The Weight of the Past

Regret, guilt, and nostalgia were like heavy chains that tethered her to the past. Sarah had replayed conversations she wished she'd handled differently, scrutinized decisions that led to heartbreak, and agonized over opportunities

she'd let slip through her fingers. She had allowed the past to define her, to shape her identity and her expectations of the world.

But as she sat there, she realized that the past was nothing more than memories. It was a collection of experiences and lessons that had brought her to this very moment. The past could not be changed; it could only be understood and accepted.

The Illusion of Control

Sarah's obsession with the future was equally burdensome. She had meticulously planned her life, setting goals and targets for herself. She believed that by doing so, she was securing her happiness and success. But the future, like the past, was a realm of uncertainty. It was a place of hopes, dreams, and fears, but it could not be controlled or predicted with absolute certainty.

Sarah had often found herself lost in a maze of "what-ifs" and "should-bes." The future was an ever-shifting horizon, always just out of reach. She had missed countless opportunities to enjoy the present because her focus was perpetually fixed on what lay ahead.

Awakening to the Present

As Sarah gazed out of the window, she made a conscious choice. She decided to let go of the past and release her grip on the future. She chose to embrace the present moment—the only time that truly mattered.

The world outside the window suddenly seemed more vibrant, more alive. The colors were richer, the sounds more melodious, and the air was filled with the sweet scent of possibility. Sarah realized that the present was not just a fleeting moment; it was a gift, a chance to experience life in all its raw and unfiltered glory.

Living in the Now

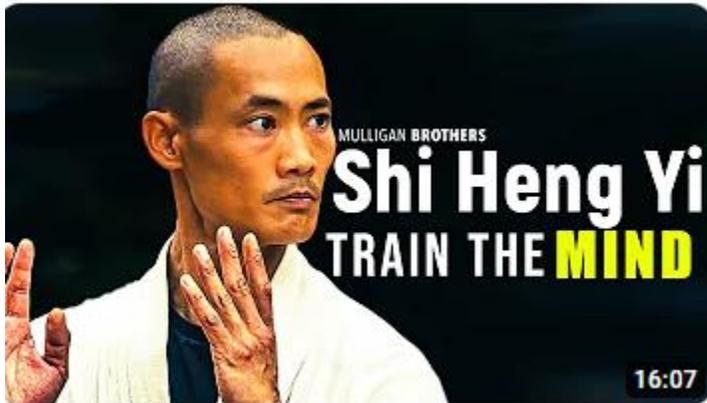
In the days and weeks that followed, Sarah made a conscious effort to live in the present. She focused on the small details of life—the taste of her morning coffee, the warmth of the sun on her skin, the laughter of friends, and the beauty of nature. She found joy in the simplest of things, and her heart felt lighter than it had in years.

Sarah didn't abandon her dreams or cease to plan for the future entirely. Instead, she approached them with a newfound sense of balance. She realized that it was okay to have goals and aspirations, but she wouldn't let them overshadow the beauty of the present. She learned to savor the journey rather than fixating on the destination.

Conclusion

In the end, Sarah discovered that the only time that really mattered was right now. The past was a teacher, not a prison, and the future was a canvas waiting to be painted. By embracing the present, she unlocked a deeper connection to herself and the world around her. She found peace in the midst of chaos and a profound sense of gratitude for the gift of life. And as she looked out of the window once more, she knew that she was exactly where she was meant to be, in the only time that truly mattered—right now.

Mastering the Tools of the Mind



Deep within the recesses of our consciousness lies a profound truth: our thoughts and feelings, while integral to our human experience, do not define the essence of who we are. Instead, they are more like tools—powerful instruments we wield to navigate the labyrinthine journey of life. However, there are moments when these tools, which are meant to serve us, begin to exert their dominance, subtly shifting the balance of control.

The Nature of Thoughts and Feelings

Thoughts and feelings are the silent orchestrators of our daily existence. They color our perceptions, shape our beliefs, and influence our actions. Like a painter's palette, they add depth and dimension to the canvas of our lives. They are both a source of our greatest joys and our most profound sorrows.

But are they truly us? Do they define the core of our being? The answer is no. Our thoughts and feelings are ever-changing, ephemeral, and influenced by a myriad of external and internal factors. They are the responses of our brains to stimuli, the echoes of our past experiences, and the projections of our desires and fears.

When Tools Become Masters

In the pursuit of self-awareness and emotional intelligence, we come to recognize the importance of understanding and managing our thoughts and

feelings. These tools, when harnessed effectively, can empower us to make conscious choices, cultivate empathy, and shape a more fulfilling life.

Yet, there are times when these very tools begin to control us. The anxious mind spirals into endless worry, the angry heart simmers with resentment, and the self-doubting voice stifles our aspirations. It's as if the tools we once wielded have slipped from our grasp, taking on a life of their own.

Rediscovering Mastery

Regaining control over our thoughts and feelings is a journey of self-discovery and mindful practice. It begins with the realization that we are not slaves to our inner dialogue, nor are we at the mercy of our emotional tides. We are the masters of our minds and the captains of our emotional ships.

1. **Awareness:** The first step is to become acutely aware of our thoughts and feelings as they arise. Mindfulness, meditation, and journaling can be powerful tools to shine a light on the inner landscape.
2. **Detachment:** Once we recognize a thought or feeling, we can practice detachment—observing it without judgment. This detachment allows us to see these mental and emotional states as passing phenomena rather than inherent aspects of ourselves.
3. **Choice:** With awareness and detachment, we gain the ability to choose our responses. We can decide whether a thought or feeling serves our well-being and values or whether it's best let go.
4. **Cultivating Empowerment:** As we consistently exercise this choice, we cultivate a sense of empowerment. We become the architects of our thoughts and the stewards of our emotions, guiding them toward harmony and purpose.

Conclusion

In the grand tapestry of our existence, thoughts and feelings are but threads woven into the fabric of our consciousness. They are essential tools that allow us to navigate life's complexities, but they are not the essence of who we are.

The realization that we can master these tools, rather than allowing them to master us, is a profound and liberating revelation.

As we embark on this journey of self-mastery, we discover that our thoughts and feelings need not control us. Instead, we can harness their power to sculpt a life that aligns with our deepest aspirations and values. In this newfound balance, we find the freedom to live authentically and with purpose, guided by the wisdom that lies at the core of our being.

The Weight of Yesterday and Tomorrow



In the grand theater of our minds, two relentless actors often take center stage: the past and the future. These two, with their compelling narratives, have a way of captivating our attention, but their performances rarely serve our well-being. When we dwell in the past or worry excessively about the future, we find ourselves entangled in a web of emotions and thoughts that do little to enrich our lives.

The Paralysis of the Past

The past is a realm of memories and experiences, a vast library of moments that have shaped who we are today. While acknowledging and learning from the past is vital for personal growth, dwelling on it beyond what is productive can become a quagmire of regret, guilt, and unfulfilled desires.

When we remain stuck in the past, we tether ourselves to moments that have already unfolded, unable to rewrite their script. We replay our mistakes like a broken record, and the weight of our past actions and decisions becomes an anchor that inhibits our ability to move forward.

The Anxiety of Tomorrow

On the other side of the stage, the future beckons with its allure and uncertainty. We naturally plan and anticipate what lies ahead, but excessive worry about an uncertain tomorrow can consume our thoughts and paralyze us with anxiety. The future, with its infinite possibilities, can become a source of stress and apprehension.

When we worry incessantly about what might happen, we lose sight of the present moment, the only time where we can take meaningful action. The energy we expend on the future often robs us of the joy and serenity that can be found in the here and now.

Embracing the Present

The antidote to the paralyzing grip of the past and the anxiety of the future is the present moment. It's the only time that we truly inhabit, and it holds the potential for peace, joy, and fulfillment.

1. **Mindfulness:** Mindfulness is the practice of being fully present, of anchoring our awareness in the current moment. It allows us to observe our thoughts and feelings without judgment, acknowledging them and then gently letting them go.
2. **Acceptance:** We must accept that the past is unchangeable and the future is uncertain. It's a humbling realization, but it liberates us from the burdens of trying to control the uncontrollable.
3. **Action:** When we free ourselves from the shackles of the past and the anxiety of the future, we can focus our energy on taking meaningful action in the present. We can pursue our goals and dreams without the encumbrance of regrets or excessive worry.
4. **Gratitude:** The present is also a wellspring of gratitude. When we are fully present, we can savor the simple joys of life—the warmth of a sunbeam, the laughter of a loved one, the taste of a delicious meal.

Conclusion

In the timeless wisdom of the ages, one truth resounds: the only time that truly matters is right now. When we dwell in the past or obsess about the future, we rob ourselves of the richness and depth of the present moment. By practicing mindfulness, acceptance, and gratitude, we can free ourselves from the burdens of yesterday and the anxieties of tomorrow. In the embrace of the present, we find the serenity and vitality that make life truly worth living.

Breaking Free from the Past and Future



Life unfolds like a river, constantly flowing forward. Yet, many of us find ourselves anchored to the banks of the past or swept away by the currents of the future, struggling to stay afloat in the ever-moving waters of the present. It's a human tendency to ruminate on the past and fret about the future, but dwelling in these realms often brings us more pain than solace.

The Chains of the Past

The past holds a powerful sway over us. Memories, both beautiful and painful, shape our identities and influence our perceptions. But when we become trapped in the labyrinth of what was, we inadvertently sabotage our potential for growth and happiness.

Regret is a common byproduct of dwelling in the past. We ruminate on decisions we wish we had made differently, relationships we wish we had handled better, and opportunities we let slip through our fingers. This guilt and self-blame can be all-consuming, preventing us from moving forward.

The Trap of the Future

The future, with its uncertainty and unpredictability, can be equally confounding. Anxiety often takes center stage when we worry too much about what lies ahead. We obsess over potential pitfalls, imagining worst-case scenarios that may never come to pass. This chronic worrying robs us of our peace and joy in the present.

In our quest for control and certainty, we neglect the fact that the future is a mirage. It's forever shifting, shaped by an intricate dance of circumstances and choices. To focus excessively on it is akin to chasing a phantom.

The Gift of the Present

The antidote to this cycle of dwelling in the past and worrying about the future is the present moment. It's the space where we have the most agency, where we can make choices and take action. It's the realm where we can find contentment, gratitude, and serenity.

Embracing Mindfulness: Mindfulness is the practice of being fully engaged in the present moment. It involves paying attention to your thoughts, emotions, and sensations without judgment. Through mindfulness, you can break free from the grip of the past and the pull of the future.

Acceptance: Accepting the past doesn't mean condoning mistakes or ignoring the need for growth. It means acknowledging what's done is done, learning from it, and moving forward. Acceptance of an uncertain future entails understanding that life is inherently unpredictable, and that's okay.

Finding Balance: It's essential to strike a balance between learning from the past and planning for the future, without letting either dominate your consciousness. Cherish the lessons, joys, and connections of the present while keeping an eye on your dreams and aspirations.

Conclusion

The past and the future can hold us captive if we let them. Yet, they are not where our lives are lived. The richness of existence unfolds in the present, and by cultivating mindfulness, acceptance, and balance, we can break free from the shackles of yesterday's regrets and the anxieties of tomorrow. In the embrace of the now, we discover that life's true beauty resides not in what has been or what might be, but in the moments we live and breathe today.

The Path to Happiness Embracing the Present Moment



Happiness, that elusive and cherished state of being, often seems like a distant horizon, forever out of reach. We chase it through achievements, possessions, and future plans, only to find that it remains just beyond our grasp. But what if the key to happiness lay not in the past or the future but in the very moment we inhabit right now?

The Nature of Happiness

Happiness is a state of mind, a feeling of contentment and well-being that arises from our inner landscape. Yet, many of us erroneously believe that it can be found in external circumstances—a new job, a romantic relationship, or material possessions. We convince ourselves that once we achieve these goals, we'll finally be happy.

However, the truth is that happiness is not a destination; it's a journey, a way of being in the world. And the journey starts with paying attention to the present moment.

The Art of Presence

To be happy, we must cultivate the art of presence. This means actively engaging with the here and now, fully immersing ourselves in the current moment without judgment or the burden of expectations. It's about noticing and appreciating the simple beauty of existence.

Awakening the Senses

One of the most powerful ways to be present is to engage your senses. Take a moment right now to pause and observe:

- What can you see around you? Notice the colors, shapes, and textures.
- What can you hear? Tune in to the sounds in your environment, from the hum of appliances to the distant laughter of children.
- What can you smell? Close your eyes and take a deep breath. What scents fill the air?
- What can you feel? Pay attention to the sensations in your body—the warmth of your skin, the weight of your body on your chair, the beat of your heart.

Cultivating Curiosity

As you engage your senses, do so with curiosity. Approach each observation with the wonder of a child exploring a new world. Don't judge what you see, hear, smell, or feel as good or bad; instead, be open to experiencing it as it is.

Releasing Judgment

Judgment is a habitual pattern of the mind that often clouds our ability to be present. We label experiences as "pleasant" or "unpleasant," "good" or "bad," and in doing so, we attach emotions to them. But the act of being present is nonjudgmental. It's about witnessing reality as it unfolds, free from preconceived notions.

The Happiness of Now

In the depths of the present moment, you'll discover a profound sense of peace and contentment. Happiness is not a pursuit but a byproduct of fully engaging with life. When you immerse yourself in the present, you find that it's a source of joy, wonder, and gratitude.

Conclusion

To be happy, we don't need to search for it outside ourselves or chase after an elusive future. True happiness is found by paying attention to the present. It's about seeing, hearing, smelling, and feeling what's happening right now, without judgment or attachment. So, as you go about your day, take a moment to savor the beauty of the present moment, for it holds the key to a life filled with happiness and fulfillment.

Embracing Life's Flow Living in the Present Moment



In a world characterized by constant change and uncertainty, the ability to live in the now is a precious skill. It is a way of being that allows us to accept life as it unfolds, to flow with its currents rather than fighting against them. When we fully inhabit the present moment, we come to trust that everything will work out as it's meant to.

The Art of Acceptance

Acceptance is the cornerstone of living in the now. It is the practice of embracing life as it is, without resistance or judgment. When we accept the present moment, we acknowledge that it is the culmination of countless factors, some within our control and many beyond it.

Acceptance doesn't mean we become passive observers of our lives. Instead, it means we approach each moment with an open heart and a clear mind, ready to respond thoughtfully and purposefully.

The Flow of Life

Life is like a river, constantly moving, changing, and evolving. When we resist its flow, when we cling to the banks of the past or try to paddle upstream against the currents of the future, we create suffering for ourselves. We feel frustration, anxiety, and a sense of being out of sync with the world.

But when we live in the now, we become like skilled kayakers navigating the river of life. We learn to read the currents, make adjustments, and gracefully flow with the twists and turns. We trust in our ability to handle whatever comes our way.

Trusting the Process

Living in the now also means trusting that everything will work out as it's meant to. It's an acknowledgment that life has a way of unfolding according to its own wisdom, and that wisdom is often beyond our comprehension.

This trust doesn't absolve us of responsibility or action; rather, it encourages us to take inspired action without the heavy burden of worry or doubt. We recognize that we can only control so much, and the rest we must surrender to the greater flow of life.

Finding Peace and Freedom

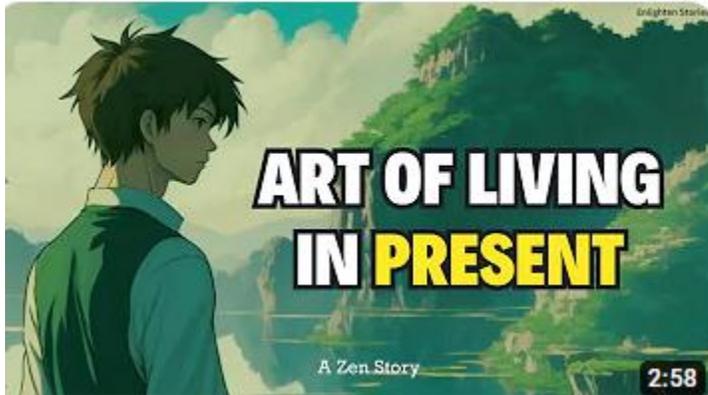
As we live in the now, accepting life as it is and trusting its unfolding, we find a deep sense of peace and freedom. We no longer carry the heavy weight of resistance or the anxiety of trying to control the uncontrollable.

We discover that even in the face of challenges and uncertainty, there is a quiet strength that arises from within. We become more adaptable, resilient, and open-hearted. We embrace life with a sense of wonder and gratitude, knowing that each moment is a gift, and that the unfolding of our journey is a masterpiece in progress.

Conclusion

To live in the now is to embrace life in all its complexity and beauty. It is a practice of acceptance, trust, and surrender to the flow of existence. When we live in the present moment, we free ourselves from the shackles of the past and the anxieties of the future. We come to understand that everything will work out as it's meant to, and in that understanding, we find profound peace and a deeper connection to the rhythm of life.

The Neglected Art Why the Present Moment is Often Overlooked



In a world that rushes forward at an ever-accelerating pace, the art of being in the present moment is a rarity, a hidden gem that is seldom taught or emphasized. This chapter delves into the reasons behind the neglect of this vital skill and explores the consequences of overlooking the power of now.

1. The Obsession with Productivity and Achievement

From a young age, many of us are conditioned to prioritize productivity and achievement. Our educational systems, job markets, and societal expectations often revolve around the idea that success lies in the future. We are taught to set goals, plan for the future, and work tirelessly to reach those goals. The present moment becomes a mere stepping stone, a means to an end. Consequently, the profound value of simply being in the now is often overlooked.

2. Cultural Conditioning

Cultural norms play a significant role in shaping our attitudes towards time. In some cultures, tradition and history are cherished, emphasizing the past. In others, the focus is on ambition, innovation, and progress, placing an undue emphasis on the future. Rarely do we find cultures that encourage a deep connection with the present moment. As a result, individuals growing up in

these cultures may not receive the necessary guidance or encouragement to cultivate mindfulness.

3. The Myth of Multitasking

The modern world celebrates multitasking as a valuable skill. However, this constant juggling of tasks and responsibilities often pulls our attention away from the present. We become so absorbed in doing multiple things at once that we forget the art of doing one thing fully, with presence and awareness.

4. Technology and Distraction

The digital age, with its smartphones, social media, and constant connectivity, has brought about unprecedented levels of distraction. We are bombarded with information, notifications, and entertainment, all vying for our attention. As a result, the simple act of being present becomes increasingly challenging, if not elusive.

5. Fear of Uncertainty

The future holds an aura of uncertainty, and the human mind often seeks refuge in predictability. We create plans, routines, and schedules to ward off the anxiety that comes with not knowing what lies ahead. In the process, we may ignore the beauty and serenity that can be found in embracing the uncertainty of the present moment.

6. Lack of Education and Awareness

Perhaps the most significant reason why the art of being present is not taught is the lack of education and awareness. Many people are simply unaware of the profound benefits of mindfulness and living in the now. It's a skill that often goes untaught because it's not considered essential in traditional education systems.

The Consequences of Neglect

Neglecting the art of being in the present moment comes with consequences. Chronic stress, anxiety about the future, and dwelling on past regrets can erode our mental and emotional well-being. The rush to the future can cause us to miss the subtle joys and wonders that exist in the here and now.

In the following chapters, we will explore the potential for transformation that comes from awakening to the present moment. We'll delve into the practical steps you can take to cultivate mindfulness and reclaim the power of now in your life.

The Awakening to Presence



In this chapter, we embark on a journey of self-discovery and explore the profound transformation that can occur when we awaken to the present moment. We will dive into the depths of mindfulness and its life-altering potential.

The Beauty of the Present Moment

The present moment is not merely a fleeting point in time; it is a gateway to a deeper understanding of ourselves and the world around us. As we learn to embrace the here and now, we discover a wellspring of joy, peace, and authenticity waiting to be tapped.

The Power of Awareness

At the heart of being present lies the power of awareness. We will explore how the simple act of paying attention, without judgment or attachment, can lead to a heightened sense of clarity and inner calm. Through various mindfulness practices, we will learn to observe our thoughts, emotions, and sensations as they arise, allowing us to step into the role of the silent witness.

Cultivating Mindfulness in Daily Life

Mindfulness isn't an esoteric concept reserved for meditation retreats; it can be woven into the fabric of our everyday existence. In this chapter, we will uncover practical steps to infuse mindfulness into your daily routines.

Mindful Living

Mindfulness is not about escaping from the world but about engaging with it fully. We will explore how to bring mindfulness into ordinary activities such as eating, walking, and even washing dishes. By doing so, you will discover that each moment can be a gateway to presence.

Mindful Breathing and Meditation

Breath is a bridge to the present moment. We will delve into the transformative power of mindful breathing and meditation practices. These techniques offer a sanctuary from the demands of the outside world, allowing you to cultivate a deeper connection with your inner self.

Overcoming Obstacles and Resistance

As you journey into the world of mindfulness and presence, you may encounter obstacles and resistance. In this chapter, we will address common challenges and provide strategies to overcome them.

Managing Restlessness and Impatience

Impatience often arises when we yearn for the future or seek to escape the present moment. We will explore techniques to manage restlessness and embrace the inherent beauty of waiting and stillness.

Dealing with Past Traumas

For many, past traumas can cast a shadow on the present moment. We will discuss how mindfulness can be a powerful tool for healing and how to navigate the terrain of painful memories with compassion and courage.

The Rewards of Presence

As you cultivate mindfulness and presence, you will begin to experience a multitude of rewards. This chapter is dedicated to celebrating the fruits of your journey.

Inner Peace and Serenity

A calm mind and an open heart await those who fully embrace the present. We will explore how inner peace and serenity become your companions, even in the midst of life's storms.

Enhanced Relationships

Presence extends beyond the self; it deepens connections with others. We will discuss how being fully present in your interactions can lead to more profound and meaningful relationships.

Living the Present, Creating the Future

In the final chapter, we'll bridge the gap between presence and future goals. Contrary to the misconception that mindfulness disconnects us from ambition, we'll explore how it can be a powerful tool for creating a brighter future.

Vision and Purpose

Mindfulness can clarify your vision and purpose, guiding you toward goals that resonate with your authentic self. We will discuss how the insights gained from presence can inform and enrich your aspirations.

A Balanced Path

Ultimately, the art of being in the present moment does not negate planning or striving for a better tomorrow. Instead, it offers a balanced perspective that allows you to engage with the future from a place of wisdom, gratitude, and authenticity.

As we journey through these chapters, you will discover that the art of being in the present moment is not a fleeting trend but a timeless and transformative practice that can enrich every aspect of your life.

Overcome the obstacles to living in the present moment



Here's how I'd explain these steps to live more in the present to a child:

1. Pay attention - Notice when you find your mind wandering to the past or future. Just try to catch it happening.
2. Make time to practice - Take some time each day to fully focus on the present, even just 5 minutes. This builds your awareness muscle.
3. Gently bring your focus back - When you notice your mind has drifted, gently guide it back to the here and now.
4. Limit distractions - Try to cut down things that take your attention away from the moment like too much TV or phone time.
5. Watch your thoughts and feelings - See how thoughts and feelings can pull you out of the now. Don't judge or hold on tightly to them.

6. Be patient with yourself - Your mind will keep wandering, and that's okay. Keep bringing it back to the present with kindness.

7. Find joy in each moment - Look for little fun, meaningful things you can appreciate right now.

8. Use your senses - Notice sights, sounds, tastes and more happening around you right now. They can anchor you.

9. See change as positive - Go with life's changes rather than fighting them. See each passing moment as precious.

10. Know your triggers - Figure out when it's hardest to stay present. Have a plan to come back to the now.

Practice as much as you can. Even small moments of presence add up over time to make being present a habit. Stick with it!

Pay attention



Sam sat on the rug in his room. His teacher had told the class they were going to learn about paying attention. "Let's start by sitting comfortably and closing our eyes," the teacher said. "Focus on your breathing for a few moments."

Sam took a deep breath in through his nose and slowly breathed out through his mouth. He did this a few times just like the teacher instructed.

"Now I want you to notice when your mind starts to wander," said the teacher. "You might start thinking about what you'll do after school or remembering what you had for breakfast. See if you can catch your mind drifting off like that. Just notice it happening, don't judge it."

Sam kept breathing steadily. After a minute, he suddenly remembered he had math homework due tomorrow! That made him start thinking about his math test on Friday and wondering if he would pass.

Sam realized his mind had wandered off. He gently brought his focus back to his breathing, just like the teacher said.

But soon he was daydreaming again, this time about summer vacation coming up. He imagined going swimming and eating ice cream. Oops, his mind did it again!

Gently, without judging himself, Sam directed his attention back to his breath. He noticed how his tummy rose and fell with each inhalation and exhalation.

Over and over this happened during the exercise. Sam's mind kept darting off to thoughts about the past and future. But each time, he acknowledged it and redirected himself to the present moment.

Sam was beginning to understand what his teacher meant about how hard it is to keep focused on the here and now. The mind loves to drift off into memories and imaginings. But with gentle practice, he was getting better at catching his wandering mind and bringing it back to the present.



Gently bring your focus back



It was a sunny Saturday and Sam decided to practice paying attention like his teacher had been teaching in class.

He went to the park and sat down under a big oak tree. Sam set a timer on his watch for 5 minutes. Closing his eyes, he focused on sensing the world around him.

Sam tuned in to the feeling of the grass beneath him. He listened to the chirping birds and rustling leaves. He felt the gentle breeze tickling his skin.

But soon his mind started to drift. He began thinking about his best friend Josh and how they were going to build a fort together later that day.

When Sam realized his mind had wandered, he didn't get upset with himself. He just gently guided his attention back to the present moment.

Sam redirected his focus to the sounds of nature around him. He smelled the fresh cut grass. He felt the solid earth supporting his body.

After a few more minutes, Sam's thoughts drifted again. This time he started worrying about an upcoming spelling test at school.

As soon as Sam became aware that his mind was caught up in thoughts about the future, he softly escorted his focus back to the now. He tuned into the sensations happening in the current moment again.

Sam kept this up for the rest of the 5 minute practice. He maintained the attitude of being gentle and compassionate with himself when he noticed his attention had drifted. Each time he simply redirected his awareness to the present, without judgment.

When the timer beeped after 5 minutes, Sam felt calmer and more grounded. He was getting better at keeping his focus in the here and now, not letting his mind take off into the past or future.

Limit distractions



Sam was having a hard time paying attention during class lately. He felt distracted all the time and his mind kept wandering.

Sam's teacher asked him what he did after school each day. Sam said he usually watched TV for an hour or two and then played games on his tablet before bed. He also kept his phone by him and was constantly checking it.

The teacher said, "It sounds like you're surrounded by a lot of distractions each day. All that screen time could be making it harder for you to focus and be present."

She suggested Sam try to limit his distractions in the evening. Sam agreed to give it a try.

When Sam got home from school that day, he only watched 30 minutes of TV before turning it off. Normally he would just zone out in front of the screen, but this time he gave the TV his full attention.

Instead of playing on his tablet, Sam decided to draw pictures and write in his journal. At first he kept grabbing for his phone out of habit. But he put it in a drawer to avoid the distraction.

That night at dinner, Sam told his family about his experiment to cut down on distractions. They were supportive and agreed to help remind Sam if they saw him mindlessly scrolling on his phone.

Over the next couple weeks, Sam continued being more intentional about his activities. When he did watch TV or play a game, he was fully engaged instead of doing it absentmindedly.

Sam noticed he was able to concentrate much better in class and could stay focused on his homework longer too. Limiting distractions was helping strengthen his attention muscles. He felt calmer and more present each day.

Watch your thoughts and feelings



Sam was sitting under a tree at recess, practicing paying attention like his teacher taught him. He took a deep breath and tuned into the present moment.

But soon his mind started thinking about the big math test happening that afternoon. Sam worried whether he had studied enough last night.

These anxious thoughts about the future pulled Sam out of the present moment. When he realized this was happening, he didn't scold himself. He just made a mental note: "There's my mind getting caught up in worried thoughts again."

Sam gently brought his attention back to the feeling of the sun on his skin and the sounds of kids playing. But the worries about the math test crept back in.

Again, without judgment, Sam acknowledged his mind had wandered. He observed how those anxious thoughts emotionally felt in his body. He could sense them as a knot in his stomach.

Sam purposefully refocused his attention to what was actually happening right now - the breeze blowing the leaves, birds chirping, his friend calling his name.

Over the next week, Sam kept practicing watching his thoughts and feelings come and go. Sometimes they carried his mind to the past or future. When he got caught up in them, he would name the thought/emotion and how it felt physically.

By just observing them and letting them pass without clinging to them, Sam learned to stay centered in the present moment more often.

Thoughts and feelings were like passing clouds. They didn't have to dictate where he placed his attention. Sam was gaining freedom through awareness.

Be patient with yourself



Sam felt discouraged. He had been trying to pay more attention to the present moment. But his mind still wandered all the time.

In class one day, Sam's teacher could tell he was frustrated. She said, "Don't be so hard on yourself, Sam. It takes patience and practice to train your mind to stay focused on the now."

The teacher explained that it's totally normal for thoughts to get distracted and pulled into reminiscing about the past or worrying about the future. The key is to gently guide your attention back to the present, again and again.

"It's like exercising a muscle," she said. "With repetition and time, you'll get stronger at being mindful, but you have to be consistent and kind to yourself in the process."

Sam remembered getting tripped up learning to ride a bike. His dad had been patient and supportive, even when Sam fell down. Over time and with practice, biking got easier and easier.

Sam realized this was the same. There was no need to get irritated with himself when his mind wandered off. All he had to do was calmly return his focus to the now.

When thoughts about the past or future came, Sam would smile and say "Hello, Mind! There you go again!" Then he would gently escort his attention to back what was happening in the present.

Sam noticed that the kinder he was with himself, the easier it was to refocus. Beating himself up only made him feel worse. With more patience and practice, Sam knew his mindfulness skills would continue to improve.

Find joy in each moment



Sam was standing in line waiting to order lunch. Usually he would feel impatient, checking the time and wishing the line would hurry up.

But today, he decided to practice finding joy in the present moment. Sam took a deep breath and tuned into his surroundings, just like his teacher taught.

He noticed the citrusy scent of the cleaner used on the floors. He saw the sunlight streaming in through the windows, particles of dust sparkling in the rays.

Sam listened to his classmates chatting and laughing. He felt his socks scrunching in his shoes as he shifted his weight.

Looking around, Sam spotted a display case of students' art projects. He admired the bright colors and creativity. For a moment, he forgot all about the line.

When Sam reached the front, the lunch lady smiled warmly and asked how his day was going. Sam returned the smile and realized this simple human interaction was its own gift.

At his table, Sam's friends were making jokes. Instead of rushing to gobble his food, Sam intentionally tasted each bite. He savored the crisp apple and creamy yogurt.

Sam was amazed that once he purposefully paid attention, he noticed so much goodness already happening in each moment. Even ordinary experiences were full of little joys if he took the time to see them.

The day carried on just as usual, but Sam felt happier. Slowing down helped him appreciate the present instead of always rushing through it. Sam realized joy wasn't some big goal to attain in the future - it was woven into the fabric of each moment.

Use your senses



It was a cold, dreary day and Sam was feeling bored in class. His mind kept zoning out, thinking about what he would rather be doing.

Sam remembered the mindfulness technique of tuning into his senses. He decided to give it a try to anchor himself in the present moment.

First Sam focused on listening. He noticed the sound of chalk scratching the board as his teacher wrote math problems. The radiator hummed gently in the background.

Next Sam paid attention to what he could see around the room. He observed the colorful poster of the food pyramid on the wall. He saw his friend Maya twirling her hair while she read.

Sam then became aware of the sensation of his chair pressing against his legs. He felt the smooth surface of his desk under his fingers.

Tuning into his senses of taste and smell, Sam detected the minty flavor of toothpaste in his mouth. He caught a whiff of pizza from the cafeteria down the hall.

By engaging with the colors, smells, textures, tastes and sounds around him, Sam felt more alert and interested in the lesson. Anchoring his awareness on his sensory experiences helped keep his mind from wandering aimlessly.

At the end of class, Sam realized he had stayed focused for the whole hour, just by tuning into what his eyes, ears, nose, skin and mouth were perceiving. Using his senses kept him grounded in the richness of the present moment.

See change as positive



Sam was feeling down because his best friend was moving away to a different town. He kept wishing things could stay the same and thinking about how hard it will be when she's gone.

Sam's teacher could tell he was struggling with this upcoming change. She said, "I know it's tough when things change. But nothing stays the same forever - change is a natural part of life."

She explained that instead of resisting change, sometimes it helps to see it as positive, or at least neutral. Each moment brings something new if we're open to it.

This reminded Sam of the mindfulness practice of appreciating the present, since each moment is fleeting. Even though his friend moving felt sad, maybe he could find little joys before she left.

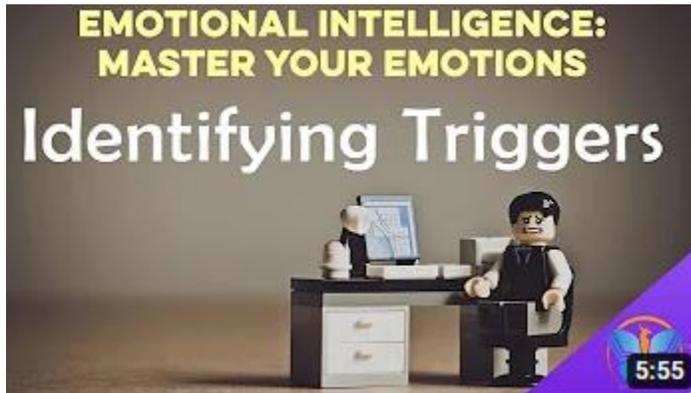
Sam decided to fully embrace the time he still got to spend with his friend. Instead of moping about the future, he cherished the fun memories they made together in the now.

When the moving day finally arrived, Sam cried and hugged his friend. But he also felt grateful for their friendship, even though it was changing form.

Sam started looking for joys in other changes too. The first snowfall of winter, trying a new food, or getting a new teacher - he practiced seeing the uniqueness in each experience when something changed.

By working on accepting impermanence, Sam realized changes weren't necessarily good or bad. Each moment, however brief, had something special to appreciate if he stayed open.

Know your triggers



Sam noticed certain situations made it really hard to stay focused on the present moment. Getting ready for school in the morning was one tough time.

There were so many distractions - eating breakfast, packing his backpack, putting on his shoes - that Sam's mind raced all over the place. He'd end up at school feeling frazzled.

Sam's teacher suggested he pay attention to identify his triggers - times when focusing on the present was extra challenging.

With this in mind, Sam reflected and realized talking to his friends on the phone also pulled his attention away from the now. He usually got caught up worrying about drama or making plans to meet up.

Waiting in long lines was another trigger Sam noticed. His mind would immediately start thinking of all the things he'd rather be doing than standing around.

Now that Sam knew what tended to hook his mind and take him out of the moment, he could come up with strategies.

To stay present in the morning rush, he put on calming music while getting ready. He focused on doing one task at a time carefully.

When talking to friends, Sam practiced listening closely without judgment, rather than getting tangled in dramas.

Waiting in line was a chance to meditate on his breath, or simply observe his surroundings.

Identifying triggers helped Sam handle difficult situations more mindfully. By preparing strategies, it was easier to stay anchored in the now.

Practice as much as you can



Sam had been working hard to be more present. Some days it felt easy to stay focused on the now. But other times his mind still wandered constantly.

Sam was starting to get discouraged. He wondered if he should just give up trying to be mindful since it seemed so difficult.

But in class one day, his teacher reminded him that building any new skill takes patience and persistence. "Don't give up, Sam! Just like with math or sports, the more you practice mindfulness, the better you'll get," she said.

Sam realized she was right. Even though he sometimes struggled, he had come a long way already. Little moments of presence were starting to add up.

His teacher suggested he try weaving mindfulness practice into more parts of his day - while eating, walking, even brushing his teeth!

Instead of formal meditation, Sam could try tuning into his senses or focusing on his breath in short bursts anytime.

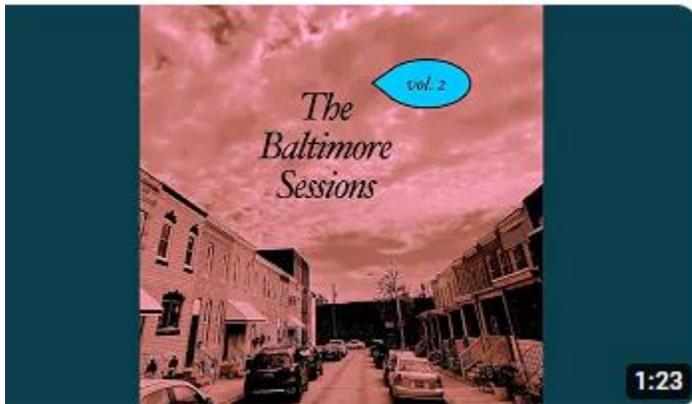
To stay motivated, Sam made a chart to track his mindful minutes. He felt proud watching the numbers increase each week.

Some days Sam remembered to be present more than others. But he didn't scold himself for forgetting. He just gently started again the next day.

Over time, Sam noticed it took less effort to direct his attention to the now. Mindfulness was becoming more and more natural.

By sticking with it, the practice was taking root. Sam felt more calm, focused and appreciative of each moment.

The Same Breath



It was a clear night and Sam was looking up at the stars. He felt small compared to the vast universe, full of galaxies and nebulae lightyears away.

"The universe is so big," Sam said to his dad. "I'm just one tiny person on one planet."

"That's true," replied his dad. "But you're also deeply connected to this big universe."

Sam looked puzzled. His dad explained, "The oxygen you're breathing right now comes from plants that convert the same sunlight, air and water that nourish stars and planets. The atoms in your cells were created billions of years ago inside stars."

Sam thought about this for a moment. His dad said, "So you see, you and the cosmos are woven together. The same breath that fills your lungs also gives life to the universe."

His dad suggested he try a mindfulness practice: as Sam breathed in, he could imagine he was breathing in energy from the universe. And as he breathed out, he was sharing that energy with the world.

Sitting under the night sky, Sam tried this. As air filled his chest, he envisioned breathing in the power of the stars. As he exhaled, he sent out a wave of cosmic love.

Sam began to understand - though he was just one person, the breath that gave him life also connected him to all existence. He was a thread in the universe's tapestry.

From then on, whenever Sam took a mindful breath, he remembered the deep unity between himself and all beings. Breathing in, they shared the same spirit; breathing out, they expressed it together.

Befriending The Moment



Sam was having a really bad day. He failed his math test, argued with his best friend, and got made fun of by some bullies at school.

When he got home, Sam just wanted to hide in his room. The present moment felt like an enemy, bringing him nothing but misery and pain.

But Sam's dad came to talk to him. "I know you had a rough day," he said gently. "Instead of fighting against this moment, try making friends with it."

Sam looked skeptical. Make friends with this awful day? How could that help?

His dad explained, "If you approach this moment as an enemy, it will only lead to more anger and sadness. But if you embrace this moment just as it is, you take away its power to hurt you."

Sam considered his dad's advice. He took a deep breath and thought, this moment is not out to get me. It's simply happening, just like all moments pass.

His dad suggested looking for little pockets of joy in the present, even on bad days - a warm cup of cocoa, laughter on a sitcom, the smile of their old dog.

Sam realized he had been so focused on the bad parts of the day that he had overlooked any goodness. Though small, it was there if he looked.

He snuggled their dog who covered his face in sloppy kisses, making Sam laugh. He made some hot chocolate and sat by the fire.

Sam saw that rather than wallowing in pain over his mistakes, he could find comfort and joy in the present. Even the worst moments had gifts, if he opened his eyes to see them.

The Superiority Complex



Sam noticed his friend Lucy liked to brag a lot. She was always trying to one-up others and pointing out her achievements. Sam wondered why she acted that way.

When he asked his teacher, she explained it was Lucy's ego craving superiority. The ego is the part of us that's insecure and attached to image and status. It tries to grasp power and dominance.

His teacher said, "The ego thinks it will finally be happy when it's at the top, when everyone is envious looking up at it. But really, that fear and pride separate Lucy from others."

Sam realized his own ego sometimes made him competitive or jealous. It made him want to prove he was the smartest or coolest kid.

But that agonizing need to be "better than" only fueled unhappiness in him, as it did in Lucy. It could never be satisfied.

Sam's teacher suggested catching ego tendencies as they arise. Noticing feelings like jealousy, arrogance or insecurity prevents acting from ego.

She said all people struggle with ego. But they don't have to be controlled by it. Noticing ego desire and letting it go brings freedom.

The next time Sam felt boastful thoughts arise, instead of engaging them, he just observed, "There goes my ego again, wanting to be on top." He remembered everyone feels that at times.

Rather than put others down to elevate himself, Sam tried to act from compassion. He felt more connected to his classmates.

Sam realized the ego thrives on separation - "I'm superior to them." But recognizing the universality of human flaws dissolved that barrier. Sam saw through ego's false promises. All people were equal, faulty and deserving of kindness - including himself.

Quieting the Noise



Sam felt overwhelmed. His mind was racing with endless thoughts - constantly jumping from worries about school, to replaying old conversations, to listening to songs in his head. The chatter just never stopped.

He complained to his dad, "There's too much noise in my brain! It's driving me crazy. I can't focus or relax."

"I know how you feel," his dad replied. "Our minds do tend to be very noisy places. But with practice, you can quiet your thoughts."

He taught Sam a simple technique - envision your thoughts as leaves floating down a stream. As each one arises, place it gently on the water and watch it drift by.

That night, Sam lay in bed and tried the visualization. The geometry formulas he'd been studying started swirling around his head. One by one, he pictured placing them on leaves and putting them in the stream.

Worries about his soccer tryouts tomorrow began intruding. Again Sam visualized letting those anxious thoughts drift away.

When songs lyrics and daydreams about summer break popped up next, Sam put them on leaves too, letting the water carry them off.

Gradually, the noise in Sam's mind grew softer and further apart. By continually handing his thoughts over to the imaginary stream, his head cleared.

Sam found himself relaxing into the peaceful quiet. His dad was right - with a simple technique, he could cultivate calm and reduce the constant mental chatter.

From then on, whenever Sam's thoughts turned noisy, he envisioned leaves gliding down a gently flowing brook. The soothing image never failed to quiet his mind, leaving tranquil stillness in its wake.

Setting Boundaries



Sam noticed his friend Kevin liked to boss people around. He was always telling others what game to play or who could be part of their group at lunch.

One day at recess, Kevin started excluding some kids from joining their kickball game. Sam could tell the other kids looked upset.

"Kevin sure likes things done his way," Sam commented to his teacher later. She replied, "Yes, Kevin's ego seems to be running the show. He crosses boundaries trying to control things."

The teacher explained that while all people have egos, they don't have to let their egos rule their actions. "Setting boundaries helps keep the ego in check," she said.

The next day at recess, when Kevin tried to dictate who would play kickball, Sam spoke up. "Actually, let's let anyone who wants to join play today," he said.

Kevin protested at first, but Sam stood firm. By politely asserting this boundary, he made clear that Kevin's ego wouldn't make decisions for the whole group.

After the game, Kevin admitted to Sam that he did sometimes get carried away trying to be in charge all the time. Setting limits on his bossiness helped him see how his unchecked ego had hurt others.

From then on, when Sam noticed a friend's ego going too far, he practiced setting gentle boundaries. By doing so, he could help maintain an atmosphere of equality, inclusion and compassion.

Sam saw that tempering ego didn't mean sacrificing healthy self-confidence. It just meant not letting his sense of self dominate over others. Maintaining boundaries kept egos in balance, so everyone could shine.

How to stop complaining



Sam caught himself complaining a lot lately - about his teacher, the cafeteria food, even the weather. His negativity was bringing his friends down.

When Sam mentioned this to his dad, his dad said, "Complaining is a habit you can curb with some effort and intentions."

First, Sam made a commitment to avoid complaining for a whole week, replacing it with neutral or positive speech. This reset would reveal the magnitude of his complaining tendency.

His dad also suggested that Sam silently count each time he started to voice a complaint for the next few days. This Complaint Detector would build self-awareness.

At first, Sam couldn't believe how often he complained! His Complaint Detector reached 20 in just the first morning. Catching himself was the vital initial step.

When Sam did slip up, instead of scolding himself, he just restarted the count at 1. This self-compassion kept him motivated.

Soon Sam became able to catch complaints as they formed in his mind and reframe them before speaking. Venting his frustration didn't actually make him feel better anyway.

In time, Sam broke the chronic complaining reflex. His mind defaulted to expressing things positively or keeping quiet if only a complaint came to mind.

His dad counseled, “Stay vigilant so you don’t slide back into negativity. But have fun exercising your creativity in order to reframe situations constructively!”

Sam realized that monitoring and re-patterning his speech habits made interactions so much more enjoyable. He felt in control of his inner dialogue rather than controlled by it.

Awareness, Not Thinking



Sam noticed his mind was constantly chattering. He was always thinking about school, friends, the future - living life through this endless internal monologue.

Sam mentioned this to his dad, saying he wished he could quiet his busy mind.

His dad replied, “Rather than trying to stop your thoughts, shift your focus to cultivating awareness. Conscious presence is the light that dissolves overthinking.”

First, Sam worked on noticing when he was lost in thought without being fully aware of the present moment. Tuning into his senses helped anchor his attention in the now.

At school, instead of getting caught up in an imaginary conversation, Sam directed his attention to the feeling of his chair, the sound of chalk on the board, the scent of food in the hall.

Out on the sports field, Sam resisted analyzing his performance or judging his teammates. Rather, he just focused on the sensations of running - wind on his skin, his breathing, the grass beneath his feet.

Sam soon discovered there was a space between him and his thoughts - he didn't have to get sucked into the storyline they spun. He could watch them pass by.

His dad reminded him, "Thinking isn't bad, but compulsive thinking clouds your innate awareness. Come back to the open spaciousness of consciousness."

When Sam replaced thinking with pure noticing, he felt more calm, centered and responsive to what was actually happening. Awareness kept him fully engaged in each moment.

Shadow Work



Sam was feeling down on himself lately. He noticed he had been more impatient, jealous, and quick to anger than normal.

When Sam mentioned this to his teacher, she replied, “What you’re noticing are your shadows - unwanted parts of ourselves we try to repress.”

His teacher explained that shadows don’t disappear just by ignoring them. They gain power over us when locked in darkness.

“Shadow work is the process of shining light on our shadows so they no longer control us,” she said. “We uncover and understand them, releasing their grip.”

Sam asked how to start doing shadow work. His teacher advised:

- Notice when strong emotions or reactions arise. These reveal shadows.

- Reflect on what triggered the reaction. The source of upset often mirrors a rejected quality in ourselves.
- Embrace and understand the shadow, rather than judging it. Shine compassion on your darkness.
- Release the energy behind the shadow by expressing it in a harmless way, through art, writing, exercise.
- Integrate the shadow by asking how this quality reflects a part of you seeking love.

Sam used this process when his envy arose. By embracing then releasing his jealousy through music, he discovered it protected a vulnerability he hid.

With consistent shadow work, Sam found greater self-acceptance. The parts of himself he had once hated transformed into allies.

The light of awareness set him free.

Embracing Our Shadow



Sam was picking teams for a game and found himself excluding Nathan, a boy Sam felt jealous of. Nathan looked hurt.

Later, Sam mentioned the incident to his father. "I don't know why I did that," he said. "It's like I was taken over by a mean part of myself."

"What you experienced was the influence of your shadow self," his father explained. "We all have shadows - aspects of ourselves we reject and try to suppress. But shadows still affect our behavior."

His father said, "Rather than feeling ashamed of your shadow, embrace it. Those disowned parts of you contain power for self-awareness."

Sam realized his jealousy of Nathan represented feelings of inadequacy that Sam did not accept in himself. By shining light on this insecurity, Sam could release its control over him.

His father emphasized not judging these hidden inner shadows. “Love and understand them, just as you’re learning self-compassion. Your flaws and weaknesses connect you to all humanity,” he said.

Sam learned to watch for moments when his shadows emerged - like envy, anger, pride or fear. By embracing them, he gained insight into himself and felt more complete.

His father reminded him: “Your shadows aren’t who you are, but teachers on your growth journey. Integrate their lessons in self-awareness.”

Sam saw that repressing his shadows didn’t serve him. But meeting them with courage and compassion released their grip, as light absorbs darkness.

By befriending all within, the parts Sam had once rejected became sources of greater wisdom, power and freedom.

Your Inner Chemistry



Sam was feeling bored and restless. He complained to his dad that nothing interested him anymore.

"Instead of looking outside yourself for entertainment, learn to tap into your own inner chemistry," his dad suggested. "You have all the elements within to stir up excitement and joy."

His dad explained that situations themselves aren't good or bad. It's the unique chemicals Sam brought to them that shaped his experience.

"Experiment with combining spiritual ingredients to form the emotions you want," his dad said. "Curiosity and engagement make for an elixir of fascination. Gratitude and wonder create awe. Love and compassion yield bliss."

Sam imagined himself as a mad scientist, mixing beakers of chemicals marked Creativity, Presence, Openness. He added a dash of Humor, a sprinkle of Adventure, a spoonful of Kindness.

Soon Sam stopped depending on external events for happiness. He learned to stop waiting for fun to find him. By playing with his inner pharmacy, he could concoct and enjoy wondrous states of mind anytime.

"You alone hold the ingredients for fulfillment," his dad reminded him. "Infuse the present with your magical blend of energy and attention. This moment becomes dull or dynamic based on the spices you bring to it."

Sam realized he didn't require money, prestige or possessions to feel happy. He possessed the unlimited inner resources to lead a rich and stimulating life. As the master alchemist, he held the power.

Your Inner Pharmacy



Sam was feeling down. He asked his dad if there was a mood-boosting medicine he could take to feel better.

"You don't need chemicals or pills to change your state of mind," his dad replied. "Your own body produces powerful drugs if you tap into your inner pharmacy."

He explained that activities like exercise, music, and laughter cause the brain to release endorphins, dopamine, and serotonin. Sam could access these feel-good neurotransmitters on his own.

His dad said, "Run around the yard as fast as you can for 5 minutes. You'll activate endorphins, nature's pain and stress relievers."

Sam raced laps and soon felt more energized. His dad then had him tell jokes and belt out funny songs together to trigger their laughter hormones.

"When you're bored, listen to uplifting music," his dad suggested. "It will boost dopamine and motivation in your brain."

Sam curated a cheerful playlist and immediately felt his mood lifting as he sang along.

"Get creative!" his dad added. "Making art, playing pretend, building things - that imagination triggers more dopamine."

Sam grabbed some crayons and building blocks and lost himself in drawing castles and dragons. His mind felt vibrant.

His dad squeezed his shoulder warmly. "See? You have all you need within you. Keep exploring ways to stimulate your built-in pharmacy. You have the power to heal yourself."

Sam realized he didn't need anything external to change how he felt or thought. Tapping into his own inner drug store, he could chemically craft his experience. He felt empowered.

Meditation - Your Inner Pharmacy



Sam was feeling anxious about an upcoming test. He asked his dad if he had any medicine to calm his nerves.

"Instead of pills, try tapping into your body's natural pharmacy through meditation," his dad suggested.

He explained that meditation can boost feel-good neurotransmitters like serotonin and dopamine. These chemicals reduce stress and induce tranquility.

His dad led Sam through a simple breathing meditation. "Close your eyes and focus on your breath," he instructed. "Breathe in slowly and deeply, then exhale all the way."

As Sam tuned into his breathing, he began to relax. 10 minutes later he felt much calmer, as if he'd taken a chill pill.

"Over time, meditation strengthens connections in your brain's pleasure and relaxation centers," his dad explained. "You can access these soothing states anytime."

Sam made meditation part of his daily routine. After a few weeks, he noticed improved focus at school. He felt less reactive to things that used to bug him.

"Keep meditating and you'll boost creativity, compassion, and a sense of inner peace," his dad said.

Sam realized he didn't need supplements or drugs. Through inner pharmacy meditation, he could chemically produce Whatever state of mind he desired - without side effects.

Tuning into his breathing opened access to untold mental resources. Sam had discovered a source of healing and happiness within.

Don't Stuff Your Feelings



Sam was feeling sad but tried to pretend everything was fine. "Big boys don't cry," he told himself.

But over the next few days, Sam felt irritable and angry for no reason. His chest felt tight with emotion he couldn't name.

When Sam finally broke down crying, his dad comforted him. "It's unhealthy to repress feelings, son. Let your emotions flow."

His dad explained that suppressing emotions caused pain and volatility. "Stuffing feelings is like capping a geyser. Pressure builds until you explode."

He told Sam:

- Don't judge emotions as bad. All feelings are neutral messengers.
- Be aware of emotions arising without grabbing or pushing them away.

- Give feelings space to move through you. Let them speak rather than silencing them.

- Express emotions in healthy ways - talking, journaling, exercising. Move the energy out of your body.

- Find lessons in your feelings rather than resisting them. There is guidance in discomfort.

Sam started acknowledging his feelings when they surfaced. He let go of judging sadness or anger as wrong. Just feeling them fully released their grip.

Rather than pretend to be happy, Sam expressed his truth. Being vulnerable brought relief and connection.

His dad reminded him: "Emotions are teachers, not tormentors. Listen and learn from them."

Sam realized repressing feelings caused the real harm. Giving them room to breathe allowed him to integrate life's full range - the dark and the light.

Wholeness Over Perfection



Sam strived to be the perfect student - organized, attentive, top grades. He wanted his teachers and parents to think he had it all together.

But keeping up this flawless facade grew exhausting. Sam constantly worried about making mistakes and being judged.

When he confided in his dad that he felt oppressed by perfectionism, his dad replied, "I'd rather you be a whole person than a perfect person, son."

His dad explained:

- Perfectionism freezes you in fear rather than empowering growth.
- Trying to avoid errors prevents learning and creativity.
- Judging yourself creates shame and low self-worth.

- Mirroring others' expectations hides your unique needs.

- Chasing perfect conditions stunts action more than imperfection does.

His dad counseled, "Wholeness means embracing all within you - your natural strengths and your imperfections."

Sam took this wisdom to heart. He focused less on constructing a flawless image. Instead, he accepted his quirks with self-compassion.

Sam gave himself permission to make mistakes. He took risks, explored passions, stood up for his values.

His dad cheerfully affirmed, "You shine most brightly when you are simply yourself, not who you think you should be."

Sam felt more at home in his own skin. Shedding the burden of perfection freed Sam to live as his authentic, unfiltered self.

He discovered wholeness sustained him in a way perfection never could.

This Moment is All There Is



Sam was sitting outside, worrying about the future. He anxiously thought about an upcoming test, graduation, and whether he would get into a good college.

His dad sat down beside him. "Take a breath, Sam," he said gently. "The future you're picturing is just a thought. Reality is this now."

His dad explained that despite our mind's tendency to obsess over the past and future, all that truly exists is the present moment. The past is just a memory, the future only an anticipation.

"When you come back to now by tuning into your senses, you realize there is no place other than this," his dad said.

He guided Sam in some mindfulness techniques:

- Feel the warmth of the sun and breeze right now
- Listen to the birds singing and the wind chimes tinkling

- Smell the fresh cut grass

- See the cottony clouds drifting in the blue sky

- Taste the tart lemonade on your tongue

As Sam anchored himself in the sensations of the present, his worries melted away. This moment held everything he needed.

"The now is where you access peace and fulfillment," his dad reminded him. "The past and future are illusions that breed anxiety. Come back to what is real."

Sam began to understand time as just a construct of the mind. By settling into the fullness of each moment, he discovered an eternal stillness permeating everything.

There was nowhere to get to, nothing lacking. Here and now, life was enough.

Ego vs The Now



Sam noticed his mind constantly wandering into the past and future. He ruminated on old regrets or anxieties about what might happen. Rarely did he feel fully present.

When Sam mentioned this to his dad, his dad said "Your ego is what's pulling you out of the now. The present moment is beyond ego's control."

He explained that the ego thrives on the past and future. It uses memories to bolster its image and sense of identity. It likes predicting and planning to feel in control.

But the present moment offers only what is. This requires surrendering ego's demands, which feels threatening to it.

"Ego fears the unknown of the now - it can't ensure its survival beyond this minute," his dad said. "So ego resists presence to stay in charge of your consciousness."

Whenever Sam noticed himself slipping into thoughts about past or future, feeding egoic patterns, he gently redirected his focus to his breath, body sensations or surroundings.

This returned his attention to pure awareness of the now, beyond ego's conditioned narratives.

His dad advised, "Observe ego's resistance without judgment. Stay centered in expansive present awareness."

Sam discovered that as he practiced keeping his attention grounded in each moment, ego's grip loosened. Fear and control were replaced by faith and inner peace.

By committing to the now, Sam was learning to live from essence rather than ego. This awakened his deepest wisdom and freedom.

Defining Yourself



Sam was upset after getting cut from the school basketball team. He took it as a massive failure and felt hopeless.

His dad could see Sam's confidence was shaken. "You are not defined by any single event," he told Sam. "It's the resilience and wisdom you build from experiences that shape you."

He went on:

- External happenings are neutral. You give them meaning by how you respond.
- Don't let other people or events write your story. You stay the author.
- There are endless paths forward. See beyond what's immediately visible.
- What looks like a limitation today holds lessons for growth.
- Your vision of success is what makes you a success, regardless of outside factors.

Sam considered this perspective. He decided not to dwell on being cut, but to focus on developing skills for whatever came next.

Sam volunteered to assist the basketball coach to stay involved. He worked on fitness and handling pressure. At tryouts next year, he made the team.

But when Sam sprained his ankle, sidelining him temporarily, he didn't spiral into despair again. He knew his self-worth wasn't on the line.

"How you respond reveals your character," his dad said. "Each challenge makes you more resilient."

Sam took hold of his power to define himself. He knew external events could only shape him as much as he allowed them to. His identity resided within.

Living Outside of Time



Sam noticed he was getting nostalgic about the past lately. He missed being a little kid without as many responsibilities. He also felt anxious about high school coming up, putting a lot of pressure on his future.

Sam wished he could go back to the carefree days of childhood. He also dreaded growing up too fast. The past and future were making him feel stuck and overwhelmed.

Sam's dad could see he was struggling. He told Sam, "Don't give your power away to time. Don't let the past or future define who you are right now."

He reminded Sam that the past is just memories, the future is unknown. The only reality happening is this present moment.

"What matters is that you're fully engaged and expressing your gifts here and now," his dad said.

Sam worked on appreciating the blessings in his life currently, rather than comparing to a rose-colored past or worrying about an uncertain future.

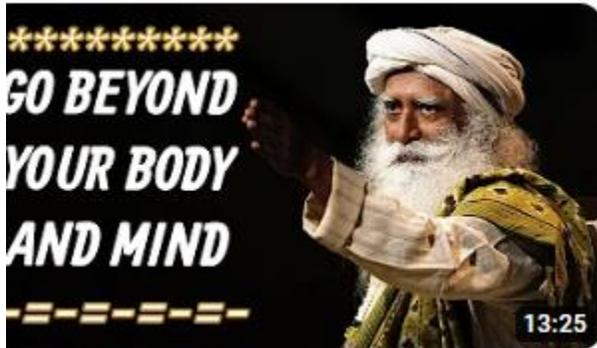
In the present, he still had dear friends, exciting subjects in school, sports he loved. By looking at the joy around him already, Sam felt more centered and grateful.

His dad encouraged him, "Your whole life is always available to you in this moment. Don't confine yourself to any one time."

Sam realized the present was his playground - he could honor the past and look to the future while staying firmly rooted in the now.

By committing himself fully to each today, Sam discovered he had all the time in the world.

Beyond Body and Mind



Sam was feeling down on himself. Some kids had teased him about his appearance and intelligence. Sam started doubting his worth.

His dad could see Sam was identifying too much with his body and mind rather than his spirit. He told Sam, "You are far greater than the external labels placed on you."

He explained that Sam's true essence was more than his physical form or thoughts. Sam was the infinite awareness having the experience of being in a body and mind.

"You are the vast sky, and your thoughts are just passing clouds. You remain untouched," his dad said. "You are the luminous space in which the body exists, not limited by it."

Sam started practicing mindfulness of his body and thoughts. In meditation, he visualized thoughts as drifting bubbles and bodily sensations as ocean waves - noticing them without attaching.

This helped Sam experience the deeper awareness that remained ever-present behind those temporary experiences. He was conscious space itself, observing but not defined by the contents moving through.

"No one can tell you your value," his dad reiterated. "It's your birthright from within, not dependent on any conditions."

Sam saw that he was not his body, his feelings, or his ideas about himself. He was unbounded spirit having a brief human experience.

This gave Sam an immense sense of freedom and worth. He saw through superficial judgments and reconnected with his divine essence.

Befriending Difficult Emotions



Sam was feeling irritated but he tried to ignore it, hoping the feeling would just go away. However, over the next few days his irritation turned into lashing out angrily at his friends.

His dad sat him down to talk. "Repressing feelings only gives them more power over you," he said. "But if you acknowledge even difficult emotions, they can become your allies."

Sam asked how to turn emotions like anger into friends. His dad gave some tips:

- Notice the feeling arising without judgment. Give it space to be.
- Reflect on any unmet needs behind the feeling - are you hungry, tired, needing affection?
- Allow the emotion expression through journaling, talking to a friend, doing art.
- Thank the emotion for trying to protect you by showing you something needs addressing.

- Send yourself compassion for experiencing this feeling.

Sam tried this next time he felt frustration arise. He took a deep breath, paid attention to the sensation of annoyance, and asked it what it was trying to tell him.

He realized he was actually feeling hurt by his friend's cancellation of their plans. The frustration guarded his sadness.

Rather than ignoring it or taking it out on others, Sam talked to his friend openly about how disappointed he felt. Then he wrote about the experience in his journal.

Sam started viewing his challenging emotions as helpers, not enemies. By hearing their messages, they guided him toward insight and fulfillment.

Giving space for feelings to come and go prevented them from festering or controlling Sam. Even difficult emotions had wisdom that deepened his self-awareness when he turned to truly face them.

Preserving Your Peace



Sam was interning at his dad's office for the summer. While most people were friendly, one man named Rick constantly made rude comments and tried to overwhelm Sam with work.

At first, Sam took Rick's behavior personally. He would go home from the office exhausted and stressed out.

Sam's dad could see the toxic environment was affecting him. He took Sam aside and said, "You have the power not to let negativity disturb your inner peace."

He suggested some tips:

- Remember that hurt people hurt people. Rick's hostility likely stems from his own troubles.
- Set clear boundaries on what treatment you accept. You teach others how to act toward you.

- Limit contact and conversation with Rick. Interact only as necessary.
- Reframe judgments of him into observations. Don't absorb his toxicity.
- Spend extra time after work unwinding and uplifting your spirit with people and activities you love.

Sam put these strategies into practice. When Rick made critical remarks, Sam calmly replied he preferred constructive feedback. He framed Rick's behavior as a reflection of insecurity rather than take it on.

After work, Sam made sure to do exercise and hobbies that recharged him with positive energy.

Sam learned he could work in unpleasant environments but not let them seep into and spoil his inner world. By setting boundaries and focusing on what lifted him up, he preserved his peace.

Handling Toxic People



Sam had a friend named Jake who was increasingly negative - he criticized others, spread rumors, and tried to pit friends against each other. Sam wanted to handle the situation in a positive way.

Sam's dad gave him some tips:

- Don't internalize their words or take their behavior personally. Toxic people usually insult others to feel better about themselves.
- Set clear boundaries on what behavior you accept from them. Make expectations clear upfront.
- Limit exposure to their negativity. Interact only as needed and avoid engaging if they try to drag you into drama.
- Be a model of the conduct you want to see. Kill their toxicity with kindness and positivity.

- Reframe complaints about them into observations stated neutrally and without judgment.

- Spend extra time with uplifting people and activities to counterbalance the toxicity.

Sam started declining when Jake tried to gossip or manipulate. Instead of getting defensive, he would calmly say, "I prefer to talk about more positive subjects."

When Jake confronted him about not participating in trash talk, Sam noted, "I'm choosing to avoid negative conversations right now" without accusing Jake.

Sam felt empowered by enforcing healthy boundaries. He focused on being a good friend to others. Over time, as Sam refused to feed into Jake's toxicity, Jake's behavior began to improve. Sam's light had overcome the darkness.

Though toxic people were unavoidable, Sam realized he didn't have to let them poison his spirit. He could handle them while still preserving his inner peace.

Forgiveness



Forgiveness is a powerful and healing act that can free us from the burden of resentment and anger. Forgiveness can also help us to restore our relationships with others and ourselves, and to live more peacefully and joyfully. But forgiveness is not always easy or simple. It requires courage, compassion, and wisdom to forgive those who have hurt us, and to ask for forgiveness when we have hurt others.

In this chapter, we will explore some of the benefits, challenges, and steps of forgiveness. We will also look at some examples of forgiveness in history, literature, and everyday life. We will learn how forgiveness can transform our lives and the world around us.

Benefits of Forgiveness



Forgiveness has many benefits for our physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being. Some of the benefits of forgiveness are:

- Forgiveness can lower our stress levels and improve our immune system. Studies have shown that forgiving people have lower blood pressure, heart rate, and cortisol levels than unforgiving people¹². Forgiveness can also reduce the risk of chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and cancer³.
- Forgiveness can enhance our mood, self-esteem, and happiness. Forgiving people tend to experience less depression, anxiety, hostility, and substance abuse than unforgiving people². Forgiveness can also increase our positive emotions, such as gratitude, hope, and optimism⁴.
- Forgiveness can improve our relationships with others and ourselves. Forgiving people tend to have more satisfying and lasting relationships than unforgiving people². Forgiveness can also help us to heal from past wounds and to accept ourselves as we are⁴.
- Forgiveness can foster our spiritual growth and connection. Forgiving people tend to have a stronger sense of meaning and purpose in life than unforgiving people². Forgiveness can also help us to align with our values and beliefs, and to experience a deeper connection with a higher power or a greater reality⁴.

Challenges of Forgiveness



Forgiveness is not always easy or simple. It can be challenging for several reasons. Some of the challenges of forgiveness are:

- Forgiveness can be confused with condoning or forgetting the offense. Forgiveness does not mean that we approve of or ignore the harm that was done to us or by us. Forgiveness does not mean that we erase the memory

or the consequences of the offense. [Forgiveness means that we choose to let go of the negative feelings and thoughts that keep us stuck in the past⁴.](#)

- Forgiveness can be difficult when the offender does not apologize or change. Forgiveness does not depend on the actions or attitudes of the offender. Forgiveness is a gift that we give to ourselves, not to the offender. Forgiveness does not mean that we have to reconcile or trust the offender again. [Forgiveness means that we release ourselves from the power that the offender has over us⁴.](#)
- Forgiveness can be hard when we feel hurt, angry, or guilty. Forgiveness does not mean that we deny or suppress our emotions. Forgiveness means that we acknowledge and express our emotions in healthy ways, such as talking to a friend, writing in a journal, or seeking professional help. [Forgiveness means that we do not let our emotions control us or harm us⁴.](#)

Steps of Forgiveness



Forgiveness is a process that can take time and effort. It is not a one-time event or a quick fix. It is a journey that involves several steps. Some of the steps of forgiveness are:

- Recognize the need for forgiveness. The first step is to realize that we have been hurt or have hurt someone else, and that this is affecting our well-being and happiness. [We need to admit that we have a problem and that we need to do something about it⁴.](#)
- Decide to forgive. The second step is to make a conscious choice to forgive the offender and ourselves. We need to commit to letting go of resentment and blame, and to replacing them with compassion and understanding. [We](#)

[need to remember why forgiveness is important for us and what benefits it can bring⁴.](#)

- Understand the offense and the offender. The third step is to try to see the situation from different perspectives. We need to learn more about what happened, why it happened, how it affected us and others, and what factors influenced the offender's behavior. [We need to avoid making assumptions or judgments, and to be open-minded and curious⁴.](#)
- Empathize with the offender and ourselves. The fourth step is to try to feel what the offender and ourselves felt at the time of the offense and after it. We need to imagine ourselves in their shoes, and to understand their emotions, thoughts, needs, and motivations. [We need to recognize their humanity and vulnerability, as well as our own⁴.](#)
- Express forgiveness verbally or symbolically. The fifth step is to communicate our forgiveness to the offender and ourselves, either directly or indirectly. We need to say or write what we forgive them for, and what we hope for them and ourselves. [We need to use words or actions that convey our sincerity and goodwill⁴.](#)
- Rebuild trust and relationship, if possible and desired. The sixth step is to decide whether we want to restore or improve our relationship with the offender, or to end it or limit it. We need to respect our boundaries and preferences, and to respect the offender's as well. [We need to be honest, respectful, and cooperative, and to expect the same from the offender⁴.](#)

Examples of Forgiveness



Forgiveness can be found in many stories, both real and fictional, that inspire us and teach us valuable lessons. Some of the examples of forgiveness are:

- The story of the prodigal son in the Christian Bible (Luke 15:11-32) is a classic example of forgiveness. It tells the story of a father who welcomes back his son who had wasted his inheritance and lived a sinful life. [The father forgives his son unconditionally and celebrates his return, despite the resentment of his older son who had stayed loyal to him⁵.](#)
- The story of Nelson Mandela in South Africa is a remarkable example of forgiveness. It tells the story of a leader who spent 27 years in prison for fighting against apartheid, a system of racial segregation and oppression. [After his release, Mandela became the president of South Africa and initiated the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, a process that aimed to heal the wounds of the past by promoting forgiveness and justice⁵.](#)
- The story of Corrie ten Boom in Nazi Germany is a touching example of forgiveness. It tells the story of a woman who was arrested and sent to a concentration camp for hiding Jews during World War II. After her release, ten Boom became a speaker and an author who shared her message of forgiveness and faith. [She even forgave one of her former guards who had tortured her and her sister⁵.](#)

Conclusion

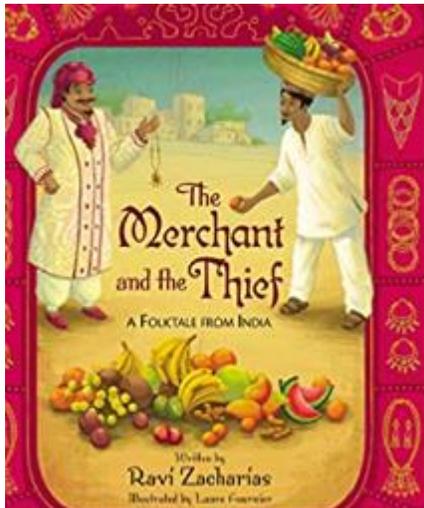
Forgiveness is a powerful and healing act that can free us from the burden of resentment and anger. Forgiveness can also help us to restore our relationships with others and ourselves, and to live more peacefully and joyfully. Forgiveness is not always easy or simple, but it is possible and worthwhile. Forgiveness is a process that involves several steps, such as recognizing the need for forgiveness, deciding to forgive, understanding the offense and the offender, empathizing with them, expressing forgiveness, and rebuilding trust and relationship. Forgiveness can be found in many stories that inspire us and teach us valuable lessons.

Forgiveness is not a sign of weakness or surrender, but a sign of strength and courage. Forgiveness is not a denial or a betrayal of justice, but a fulfillment and an affirmation of it. Forgiveness is not an obstacle or a hindrance to happiness, but a pathway and a catalyst for it.

Forgiveness is a gift that we give to ourselves and others, that can transform our lives and the world around us.

Stories

The Jeweler And The Thief



Well, let's continue with this incredible story. The dragons when they first saw the youngsters entering the cave many moons ago weren't interested in the slightest in training man.

You see man was one of their major troubles. There was even a dragon slayer profession in the British Isles. Yet at the same time, they could see the potential in these youngsters they were more evolved than them when they were young.

Back then the dragons didn't even have a glimmer of light. So they had an internal discussion amongst themselves. "Do you think we can train them"? Do you think they can change?

You see even in China and Tibet war ruled the land. Anger was the norm. Mind you these youngsters had a combination of light and darkness. They could see both sides of the coin. So the dragons decided to train them.

Now their training wasn't like today. Today children in schools are bored. They are taught to use just memory. They are taught to remember facts. They are not taught to use your mind and think.

The dragons are experts in this field. They are the master's wizards of Hogworth today. They are thousands of years ahead in development.

Hogwarts teachers would be in nursery school. The dragons would have an advanced Ph.D. study in the universe. They were off the charts.

The dragons had a unique style of teaching. You could say it was revolutionary today. They taught by using games, play, and fireside chats.

The very first game they taught was hide and seek. This was a very practical game. They had a series of talks about the universe. They were taught that the universe

existed inside of them. Well, to be frank, that was completely over their heads. They couldn't even understand one word.

So the dragons played a game of hiding and seek. The dragons would hide. The youngsters closed their eyes and counted to 10. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10. Ready or not here we come. They would open their eyes and all the dragons were gone. The dragons had rules they couldn't leave the cave.

All of the kids were completely shocked when they open their eyes. All the dragons disappeared. They all gasped in surprise. As you know dragons are quite large. They weigh thousands of pounds. This game went on for around six months or so.

Finally, at one fireside chat, the dragons told this practical story.

Imagine two young men walking down the road. They were headed to a town five days from their current destination. One of the men was a jeweler. The other man was a thief. The thief knew this man had a very precious jewel that he was carrying.

As I said both of them were going to the same town. They decided to travel together. They had a long journey ahead of them. Hours passed. They were quite tired and exhausted. Fortunately, there was a simple inn ahead of them.

They both decided to spend the night there and share a room. Both of them decided to have dinner together. The jeweler went first and a few minutes later the thief joined him while the jeweler was holding a table for them the thief was looking all over for the precious jewel.

He was quite dumbfounded. He was the greatest thief in the land. They had dinner and went to bed immediately. They weren't in the mood to drink the ale and party into the night.

Well, guess what? This went on for several days. Finally, they reach their destination.

By then the thief was confused. He thought this was going to be an easy steal. He said to the jeweler I'm a thief. As a matter of fact, I'm a king of thieves.

I knew you were carrying a precious jewel. Every night I knew you hide the jewel inside of the room. Every night I would search all over for it. I got quite frustrated when I couldn't find it. Where did you put it? I'm dying for an answer.

The jeweler said I knew you were a thief. I knew you wanted to steal the jewel. Each night I would hide it in a place you would never look. The thief said and where is that? The jeweler said under your own pillow. I thief knew he was outwitted and outsmarted.

Well, the kids loved this story. They were well acquainted with thieves and jewelers. They went through their town quite frequently.

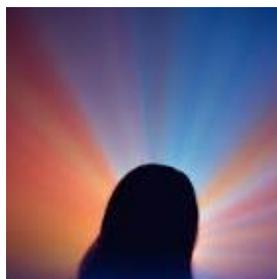
The dragons said let's play a game of hide and seek again. This time focus on your breath.

Close your eyes. To their amazement, the dragons appeared inside of them. They couldn't believe it. How could all the dragons appear to the kids? This was the starting point of their incredible adventures.

Now when they played hide and seek they knew where to look. A single but necessary step took place. They knew this was both an inward and outward journey. The youngsters were thrilled.

Each time they play the game the youngsters knew where to look. They love to play this game. All the first-time students had to go through the same baby steps the others went through. You see this path is two steps forward and one step backward. You learn from your progress and your mistakes. Never give up.

Comparison The Power of Now and the Jeweler And The Thief



Thank you for your question. I have searched the web for information about The Power of Now by Eckhart Tolle and the Jeweler And The Thief. Here is what I found:

The Power of Now by Eckhart Tolle is a spiritual self-help book that teaches how to live in the present moment and free oneself from the ego and its negative effects on happiness.

[The book draws from various spiritual traditions, such as Buddhism, mysticism, and Christianity, and offers practical exercises and methods to achieve inner peace and enlightenment¹²³⁴⁵](#)

The Jeweler And The Thief is a story that the author uses to illustrate one of his main points in the book: that the most precious thing we have is always within us, but we often overlook it because we are distracted by our thoughts and desires. The story is about two men who travel together, one of whom is a jeweler carrying a valuable gem, and the other is a thief who wants to steal it. The thief searches every night for the gem, but he never finds it, because the jeweler hides it under his pillow. [The moral of the story is that we are like the thief, who looks everywhere for happiness and fulfillment, except in the one place where it can be found: within ourselves⁶](#)

The common denominator between The Power of Now by Eckhart Tolle and the Jeweler And The Thief is that they both convey the same message: that we have everything we need to be happy and content in the present moment, and that we only need to become aware of it and access it. The story is a metaphor for the book's main theme: that we can transcend our ego and its illusions by living in the now. I hope this helps you understand the connection between the book and the story. Thank you for using Bing. 😊

Planting The Seeds



The dragons have a master plan. They know you need a solid foundation to build one. Baby steps are needed on this journey.

At first, the youngsters had to learn how to focus inside and meditate. If they didn't learn that at even a simple level the youngsters would pay all attention to the outside world.

This is why they had to play hide and seek over and over again until it became a habit. It became second nature.

They learned over time that God and the universe exist within.

One another game the dragons used was the game peekaboo. The dragons had their style in this game. The child would close their eyes and say peek a boo and the dragons would instantaneously be appearing inside of them.

The children would laugh so hard each time they did this. They never got tired of this. Even when they got older they still got a big kick out of this game.

This taught the child that the dragon world exists within. You are never alone. This helped the child in daily life.

You see their life was rough. Most of them never had the opportunity to go to school. Even at a young age, they had to work in the fields. It was tough and demanding.

The dragons understood the laws of the universe. They understood that the kids learned that if you plant a seed in the ground there is a process.

A seed doesn't grow overnight. The crop must be tended to. You must pull your weeds. If you don't the weeds will overtake your precious crop. You had to toil the soil and water it. It took a tremendous amount of energy.

Well, the kids had no problem understanding those principles. The dragons then explaining you have an inner garden that must be attended to.

You must pull your inner weeds of anger, war, greed, hate, and intolerance. You must learn how to pull the weeds of bullying.

You see that was a major problem in China and Tibet. It is still rampant in the west.

The dragons were probably the best psychologist in the world. They understood the mind to such a great extent. They truly knew the ways to develop a healthy and positive mind.

They understood that the universe is kind. The universe is patient. The universe is love and compassion. The universe is tolerant.

You see you are the universe. You just don't know it. The youngsters never heard of such a thing.

They only used to see war, bickering, and anger. Sure at times, they experience a little happiness. But they never knew that they could change their emotional state.

They didn't have to be angry and bully other people around.

The kids learned how to truly transform themselves. The dragons taught them how to hesitate before they speak. They taught them to be conscious of what they spoke.

They were taught if something is negative don't say it. They understood it was placing more wood on the fire.

The dragons knew about bullying. Remember they were bullied throughout their lives. Remember that was one reason they left.

There was this innocent girl named Pema. Pema's name means lotus. She was like a lotus very pure. Because she was pure and innocent the boys loved to taunt her and bully her. She constantly had to endure this.

The dragons were quite aware of her pain. Anyway, to make a long story short they came up with a master plan. The next time the boys tried to bully her the dragons would come to her rescue and roar. I'm mean roar. It could be heard all over the valley. The bullies would run away in fear.

Pema was so kind she would console the bullies and they would become best of friends. One by one the bullies were transformed. They become students with dragons and were transformed.

It was kind of funny that modern-day psychology didn't embrace positive mental health until the 1980s. They only taught about the ailments of the mind.

The east has been teaching and learning for thousands of years. There was even a rumor that Buddha learned from the dragons. He got his learning from the inner dimensions.

Buddha was considered the first psychologist of his time. He understood the mechanics of the mind which are still in play today.

Thank you for your question. The meaning behind these words is that they are part of a story about how dragons teach youngsters the secrets of the universe and the mind. The story is written in a poetic and imaginative way, using metaphors and symbols to convey the lessons that the dragons impart. Here are some of the possible meanings of the words:

- The dragons have a master plan. They know you need a solid foundation to build one. Baby steps are needed on this journey. This means that the dragons have a goal to enlighten the youngsters and help them grow spiritually. They know that this is not an easy or quick process, but requires patience and discipline. They start with simple and basic exercises to prepare the youngsters for more advanced teachings.
- At first, the youngsters had to learn how to focus inside and meditate. If they didn't learn that at even a simple level the youngsters would pay all attention to the outside world. This means that the dragons teach the youngsters how to calm their minds and turn their attention inward, where they can discover their true nature and connect with the divine. If they don't learn this skill, they will be distracted by the external world and its illusions.
- This is why they had to play hide and seek over and over again until it became a habit. It became second nature. They learned over time that God and the universe exist within. This means that the dragons use a game of hide and seek to train the youngsters to look for the hidden presence of God and the universe within themselves and everything else. By playing this game repeatedly, they develop a habit of seeking the inner reality behind the outer appearance.
- One another game the dragons used was the game peekaboo. The dragons had their style in this game. The child would close their eyes and say peek a boo and the dragons would instantaneously be appearing inside of them. The children would laugh so hard each time they did this. They never got tired of this game. This taught the child that the dragon world exists within. You are never alone. This helped the child in daily life. This means that the dragons use another game of peekaboo to show the youngsters that they can access the dragon world anytime they want, by closing their eyes and saying peek a boo. The dragons appear inside of them, meaning that they share a bond of love and friendship with them. The children enjoy this

game because it makes them happy and playful. This game teaches them that they are never alone, because they have the dragons as their companions and guides in life.

- You see their life was rough. Most of them never had the opportunity to go to school. Even at a young age, they had to work in the fields. It was tough and demanding. The dragons understood the laws of the universe. They understood that the kids learned that if you plant a seed in the ground there is a process. A seed doesn't grow overnight. The crop must be tended to. You must pull your weeds. If you don't the weeds will overtake your precious crop. You had to toil the soil and water it. It took a tremendous amount of energy. Well, the kids had no problem understanding those principles. The dragons then explaining you have an inner garden that must be attended to. You must pull your inner weeds of anger, war, greed, hate, and intolerance. You must learn how to pull the weeds of bullying. You see that was a major problem in China and Tibet. It is still rampant in the west. The dragons were probably the best psychologist in the world. They understood the mind to such a great extent. They truly knew the ways to develop a healthy and positive mind. They understood that the universe is kind. The universe is patient. The universe is love and compassion. The universe is tolerant. You see you are the universe. You just don't know it. The youngsters never heard of such a thing. They only used to see war, bickering, and anger. Sure at times, they experience a little happiness. But they never knew that they could change their emotional state. They didn't have to be angry and bully other people around. The kids learned how to truly transform themselves. The dragons taught them how to hesitate before they speak. They taught them to be conscious of what they spoke. They were taught if something is negative don't say it. They understood it was placing more wood on the fire. The dragons knew about bullying. Remember they were bullied throughout their lives. Remember that was one reason they left. There was this innocent girl named Pema. Pema's name means lotus. She was like a lotus very pure. Because she was pure and innocent the boys loved to taunt her and bully her. She constantly had to endure this. The dragons were quite aware of her pain. Anyway, to make a long story short they came up with a master plan. The next time the boys tried to bully her the dragons would come to her rescue and roar. I'm mean roar. It could be heard all over the valley. The bullies would run away in fear.

Pema was so kind she would console the bullies and they would become best of friends. One by one the bullies were transformed. They become students with dragons and were transformed. It was kind of funny that modern-day psychology didn't embrace positive mental health until the 1980s. They only taught about the ailments of the mind. The east has been teaching and learning for thousands of years. There was even a rumor that Buddha learned from the dragons. He got his learning from the inner dimensions. Buddha was considered the first psychologist.

This means that the words are describing how the dragons help the youngsters cope with their harsh and difficult lives, by teaching them how to cultivate their inner garden of peace, joy, and wisdom. The words also show how the dragons intervene to stop bullying and violence, by using their power and presence to scare away the bullies and then heal their wounds with kindness and compassion. The words also suggest that the dragons are the source of ancient wisdom and spirituality, and that they influenced some of the greatest teachers of humanity, such as Buddha. The words are meant to inspire and uplift the reader, by showing how the dragons transform the lives of the youngsters for the better.

Stop The Noise In Your Head



As the children began to learn how to meditate they saw how powerful the mind is. They never noticed that before.

They asked the dragons how to stop the noise in my head. Of course, all the dragons laughed. ‘

They laughed because everyone goes through this. You see the mind is the most different thing to control in the universe. The majority of man reacts to every situation. Man is reactive.

The wise man learns to be proactive. They understood the basic law it's by will alone that I set my mind in motion. Now that's very easy to say but hard to do. All people who learn how to meditate in the beginning have this problem.

In the east, they call it the monkey mind. The monkey goes from one branch to another. It can't be controlled. Well, when they first started to learn how to mediate they saw this from first-hand experience.

The dragons told a wonderful story each time this subject was brought up. They told a story where a man saves a genie. Nobody knows exactly how this man saved him.

Well, the genie told this man you can have as many wishes as you want. The man said wow that's incredible. I love that idea. The genie said well there's a catch. The man said, "what's that". You must always give one wish after another.

If you don't I will chop off your head with my sword. Are you sure you want to continue with this? The man hesitates for a moment and says reluctantly sure.

Well, the genie said what's your first wish. The man gives one wish after another. It seems like when one wish is granted he had to give another.

He didn't have one opportunity to enjoy even for a second the previous wish. He was getting tired and couldn't even go to sleep. The genie was always harassing him and saying "what's your next wish"?

Well, fortunately, there was a wise man nearby. He went to the wise man and sincerely asked for help. This boon was turning into a curse. The wise man whispered into his ear.

Well, the genie demanded another wish or he will chop off his head. The young man said to go to the forest and find a huge log. Your wish is my command. In a second he returns with a huge log.

The genie said with a smile give me a wish or I will chop off your head. As you can see the genie wasn't particularly nice. Well, the young man told the genie to go up and down the pole.

When I need you I will give you another command. The young man could relax and enjoy all the wishes he gave to this genie.

The genie knew he was outsmarted by the wise man. The young boy enjoyed his life and helped others in the community. He eventually learned about the dragons and helped tremendously his fellow man.

The dragons said that the genie is the mind. The mind wants to control you versus the other way around. By placing your mind on your breath the genie will go up and down the log and set you free.

Meditation is the key to bringing awareness to your mind. Your mind is either your friend or foe.

Everyone in the universe has to learn how to control their mind.



Stop The Noise In Your Head Commentary

The meaning behind these words is that they are part of a story about how the children learn to meditate with the help of the dragons. The story is written in a poetic and imaginative way, using metaphors and symbols to convey the lessons that the dragons impart. Here are some of the possible meanings of the words:

- As the children began to learn how to meditate they saw how powerful the mind is. They never noticed that before. This means that the children discover a new dimension of their existence, which is their inner world of thoughts and feelings. They realize that their mind has a great influence on their perception and experience of reality, and that they can use it for good or evil.
- They asked the dragons how to stop the noise in my head. Of course, all the dragons laughed. They laughed because everyone goes through this. You see the mind is the most difficult thing to control in the universe. The majority of man reacts to every situation. Man is reactive. The wise man learns to be proactive. They understood the basic law it's by will alone that I set my mind in motion. Now that's very easy to say but hard to do. All people who learn how to meditate in the beginning have this problem. This means that the children face a common challenge that all meditators encounter, which is the constant chatter and distraction of their mind. They learn from the dragons that most people are slaves to their mind, and that they react impulsively and emotionally to everything that happens to them. They also learn that they can choose to be different, and that they can use their willpower to direct their mind towards a positive and constructive goal. However, they also learn that this is not an easy task, and that it requires practice and discipline.
- In the east, they call it the monkey mind. The monkey goes from one branch to another. It can't be controlled. Well, when they first started to learn how to mediate they saw this from first-hand experience. This means that the children learn a term from eastern philosophy, which describes the restless and wandering nature of their mind. They compare their mind to a monkey, which jumps from one thought to another without any order or purpose. They see for themselves how hard it is to tame their monkey mind.
- The dragons told a wonderful story each time this subject was brought up. They told a story where a man saves a genie. Nobody knows exactly how

this man saved him. Well, the genie told this man you can have as many wishes as you want. The man said wow that's incredible. I love that idea. The genie said well there's a catch. The man said, "what's that". You must always give one wish after another. If you don't I will chop off your head with my sword. Are you sure you want to continue with this? The man hesitates for a moment and says reluctantly sure. Well, the genie said what's your first wish. The man gives one wish after another. It seems like when one wish is granted he had to give another. He didn't have one opportunity to enjoy even for a second the previous wish. He was getting tired and couldn't even go to sleep. The genie was always harassing him and saying "what's your next wish"? Well, fortunately, there was a wise man nearby. He went to the wise man and sincerely asked for help. This boon was turning into a curse. The wise man whispered into his ear. Well, the genie demanded another wish or he will chop off his head. The young man said to go to the forest and find a huge log. Your wish is my command. In a second he returns with a huge log. The genie said with a smile give me a wish or I will chop off your head. As you can see the genie wasn't particularly nice. Well, the young man told the genie to go up and down the pole. When I need you I will give you another command

The young man could relax and enjoy all the wishes he gave to this genie. The genie knew he was outsmarted by the wise man. The young boy enjoyed his life and helped others in the community. He eventually learned about the dragons and helped tremendously his fellow man.

This means that the dragons use a story to illustrate how their mind can be both a blessing and a curse, depending on how they use it. The story is about a man who saves a genie, who grants him unlimited wishes, but with a catch: he has to keep making wishes or else he will die. The man soon realizes that this is not as good as it sounds, because he becomes exhausted and unhappy by constantly having to think of new wishes, without being able to enjoy what he already has. He seeks help from a wise man, who tells him how to trick the genie into doing something harmless and repetitive, so that he can have some peace and freedom from his endless desires.

The story teaches the children that their mind can be like the genie, who can grant them anything they want, but also can make them miserable and restless if they don't control it. The story also teaches them that they can use their mind

wisely, by giving it a simple and focused task, such as following their breath, which can calm it down and make it obedient. The story also shows them that they can use their mind for good, by helping others and learning from the dragons.

The Frog in The Well



You are the universe. You just don't know it. This is the central theme of the Dragons. They reached a growth of awareness where they become the sun, moon, and stars and were walking around in dragon bodies.

They realized they were eternal. They were beyond time and space.

The dragons also knew that humans had the same capability. They were curious about that. The dragons knew that man came from the stars. They were stardust. Yet the village around them and Tibet and China at that time had no idea of who they truly are.

The dragons were once in the same state of awareness as the humans. They were angry, hateful, warring, and full of greed. Yet over time, they realized their potential.

They needed a story that would reflect how large they felt yet how small in reality they live in. So here goes the story.

Once upon a time, a frog lived in a well. This frog thought he was know it all. This frog thought the water in my well is the largest in the world. This was, in fact, quite a large well.

The villagers used it for the community. Anyway, this frog bragged a lot and told all the people who were strangers to the well how vast the water is in the well.

One day a stranger came who lived near the ocean. The frog came up to the stranger and said: "the water in my well is far grander than any water in the well".

The stranger said "Well according to my experience the water in your well is probably one of the smallest I have ever seen.

Well, a fight ensued with the war of words. It was going out of control. Both sides were putting wood on the fire.

Finally, they both calmed down. All the villagers came and wondered what was going on. It was quite the scene.

Well, the villagers and frog said to the man “Can you prove it”. “Can you show us a place where water is larger than our well”?

So to make a long story short a small group of villagers and the frog traveled to the ocean. They couldn't believe what they saw. An endless body of water is everywhere.

They were dumbfounded. Never in their world did they see such a precious sight. The stranger laughed and said, “now this is a large body of water”. The villagers and frog couldn't agree more. Their well wasn't even a drop of water compared to the ocean.

The dragons told this story to the youngsters. They reminded the kids of playing hide and seek and peek-a-boo. T

he dragons would appear to them inside. Well, the dragons said that is the frog in the well. That is the starting point in your incredible journey in life.

Inside of you lies the infinite ocean of love. You have the potential to tap into this. In fact, you are this ocean.

This is your true nature. You should see how wide the eyes opened from the children. They were completely mesmerized by the story. These weren't just some mumbo-jumbo words The dragons were talking about their own experience.

They were telling the kids that they could ultimately have the same experience. It's a moment-by-moment conscious journey. Baby steps are taken along the way.

The meaning behind these words is that they are part of a story about how the dragons teach the youngsters the secrets of the universe and their true nature. The story is written in a poetic and imaginative way, using metaphors and symbols to convey the lessons that the dragons impart. Here are some of the possible meanings of the words:

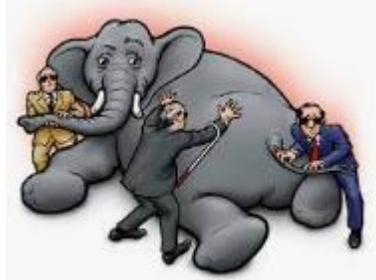
- You are the universe. You just don't know it. This is the central theme of the Dragons. They reached a growth of awareness where they become the sun, moon, and stars and were walking around in dragon bodies. They realized they were eternal. They were beyond time and space. This means that the dragons have achieved a state of enlightenment, where they recognize their oneness with everything that exists, and their transcendence of the limitations of form and time. They have realized their true identity as the universe itself, which is infinite and eternal.
- The dragons also knew that humans had the same capability. They were curious about that. The dragons knew that man came from the stars. They were stardust. Yet the village around them and Tibet and China at that time had no idea of who they truly are. This means that the dragons have compassion and curiosity for humans, who have the same potential as them, but are unaware of it. The dragons know that humans are also part of the universe, and that they have a divine origin and destiny. However, the humans are ignorant of their true nature, and live in a state of confusion and suffering.
- The dragons were once in the same state of awareness as the humans. They were angry, hateful, warring, and full of greed. Yet over time, they realized their potential. This means that the dragons have empathy and understanding for humans, because they have gone through a similar process of evolution and transformation. The dragons were not always enlightened, but they used to be like humans, who are driven by negative emotions and desires. However, they managed to overcome their lower nature, and awaken to their higher nature.
- They needed a story that would reflect how large they felt yet how small in reality they live in. So here goes the story. Once upon a time, a frog lived in a well. This frog thought he was a know it all. This frog thought the water in my well is the largest in the world. This was, in fact, quite a large well. The

villagers used it for the community. Anyway, this frog bragged a lot and told all the people who were strangers to the well how vast the water is in the well. One day a stranger came who lived near the ocean. The frog came up to the stranger and said: “the water in my well is far grander than any water in the well”. The stranger said “Well according to my experience the water in your well is probably one of the smallest I have ever seen. Well, a fight ensued with the war of words. It was going out of control. Both sides were putting wood on the fire. Finally, they both calmed down. All the villagers came and wondered what was going on. It was quite the scene. Well, the villagers and frog said to the man “Can you prove it”. “Can you show us a place where water is larger than our well”? So to make a long story short a small group of villagers and the frog traveled to the ocean. They couldn’t believe what they saw. An endless body of water is everywhere. They were dumbfounded. Never in their world did they see such a precious sight. The stranger laughed and said, “now this is a large body of water”. The villagers and frog couldn’t agree more. Their well wasn’t even a drop of water compared to the ocean.

This means that the dragons use a story to illustrate how their perspective has changed from being narrow and limited to being broad and expansive. The story is about a frog who lives in a well, and thinks that his well is the biggest thing in the world. He argues with a stranger who lives near the ocean, who tells him that his well is very small compared to other bodies of water. The frog challenges him to prove it, so they go to see the ocean together. The frog is amazed and humbled by seeing how vast and magnificent the ocean is, and realizes how small his well is.

The story teaches the children how to be humble and open-minded, and how to expand their horizons by exploring new places and experiences. The story also shows them how relative their perception of reality is, depending on their point of view and level of awareness. The story also encourages them to seek out new sources of knowledge and wisdom, such as the ocean or the dragons.

3 Blind Men And The Elephant



When I was young I heard the story about three blind men touching an elephant.

Each man touched a different part of the elephant.

One touched the elephant's ear, another touched his feet, and the last touched the tusk.

They began to discuss their experience and a huge fight began.

I'm right and you're wrong.

I know all the answers.

You are a fool to believe in that.

What a child you are.

Yet they all had their own individual experience.

It was a piece of the puzzle.

Not the puzzle itself but a piece.

Are we like the blind man touching the elephant?

My religion is better than your religion.

I'm going to heaven while you're going to hell.

I'm going to declare war on you.

I'm going to convert you.

Religion has a piece of the puzzle.

It is not the puzzle itself.

Each religion is different and unique.

The essence is the same.

Which part of the elephant did you touch?

Maybe it's about time to be open to something new.

Your enemy is talking about the same thing you are.

He just has a different piece, a different point of view.

In the end, the essence is the same.

3 Blind Men And The Elephant Commentary

Thank you for your question. The meaning behind this poem is that it is a critique of religious intolerance and dogmatism. [The poem uses the metaphor of the blind men and the elephant, which is an ancient parable that illustrates the limits of human perception and the importance of respecting different perspectives](#)¹²³

The poem suggests that each religion has a piece of the truth, but not the whole truth, and that the essence of all religions is the same. The poem also implies that religious conflicts are caused by ignorance and arrogance, and that peace can only be achieved by being open to something new and recognizing the common ground among different faiths. The poem challenges the reader to question their own beliefs and assumptions, and to seek a deeper understanding of themselves and others. The poem also expresses a hope for a more harmonious and compassionate world.

You Are The Universe

You Are The Universe

Twinkling stars inside your heart,
Galaxies swirling, right from the start.

Exploding suns send their light,
Comets trail across the night.

Nebulas bloom and planets spin,
The universe breathes you in.
You gaze in awe, this magic show,
But little do you know.

These dazzling skies and cosmic clouds,
Are not just outside, but in you now.
For you're as vast as any place,
You hold the universe in your embrace.

So when you smile or shed a tear,
A supernova bursts, so bright and clear.
When love's in your heart, the planets chime,
In step with your beat, in sync with time.

Dive inside, explore your space,
Your inner cosmos, rich and laced.
With constellations made just for you,
You're the universe, it's always been true.

So dream boldly, reach for the stars,
Sparkle and shine, just as you are.
The universe lives in your story,
You're the universe, can't you see?
You're the universe, you're the universe,
You're the universe, and so are we!

Closing



"Hopefully, this entire book has been a wink-wink. That's the universe is in you and all around you in your daily life. It is there when you freak out. It is there when you get stressed out in life. It is there when life throws you curveballs. You can never get out of that. Everybody gets curveballs thrown at them; that is the nature of the universe.

Being in a sublime state of mind requires being in the now. That may seem like pretty words. That may seem quite funny. I can't believe you said that. People have been talking about this for thousands of years. Unfortunately, it goes in one ear and out the other ear.

Hopefully, this will make some dent in you, and you might actually have the experience that there is more to this existence. Good luck on your adventures in life. I really mean that. We are all on the same boat. Might as well get along while we're with each other."