

Practicing the Power of Now

by Eckhart Tolle

LEARN TO DISIDENTIFY FROM YOUR MIND

PART ONE: ACCESSING THE POWER OF NOW

CHAPTER ONE: BEING AND ENLIGHTENMENT

Practice:

Emotion: The Body's Reaction to Your Mind

CHAPTER TWO: THE ORIGIN OF FEAR

CHAPTER THREE: ENTERING THE NOW

Don't Seek Your Self in the Mind

Practice:

Let Go of Psychological Time

Practice:

CHAPTER FOUR: DISSOLVING UNCONSCIOUSNESS

Practice:

CHAPTER FIVE: BEAUTY ARISES IN THE STILLNESS OF YOUR PRESENCE

Realizing Pure Consciousness

Connecting with the Inner Body

Practice:

Going Deeply into the Body

10-15 Minute Meditation:

Practice:

Have Deep Roots Within

Strengthening the Immune System

Meditation:

Creative Use of Mind

Let the Breath take You into the Body

PART TWO: RELATIONSHIP AS SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

CHAPTER SIX: DISSOLVING THE PAIN-BODY

Breaking Identification with the Pain-Body

Transmuting Suffering into Consciousness

Ego Identification with the Pain-Body

The Power of Your Presence

CHAPTER SEVEN: FROM ADDICTIVE TO ENLIGHTENED RELATIONSHIPS

Relationships as Spiritual Practice

Give Up the Relationship with Yourself

PART THREE: ACCEPTANCE AND SURRENDER

CHAPTER EIGHT: ACCEPTANCE OF THE NOW

Impermanence and the Cycles of Life

[Using and Relinquishing Negativity](#)

[The Nature of Compassion](#)

[The Wisdom of Surrender](#)

[CHAPTER NINE: TRANSFORMING ILLNESS AND SUFFERING](#)

[Transforming Suffering into Peace](#)

[The Way of the Cross - Enlightenment through Suffering](#)

[The Power to Choose](#)

LEARN TO DISIDENTIFY FROM YOUR MIND

- The beginning of freedom is the realization that you are not the thinker.
- The moment you start watching the thinker, a higher level of consciousness becomes activated.
- You then begin to realize that there's a vast realm of intelligence beyond thought, that thought is only a tiny aspect of that intelligence.
- You also realize that all the things that truly matter: beauty, love, creativity, joy, inner peace, arise from beyond the mind.
- Learn to disidentify from your mind and you begin to awaken.

PART ONE: ACCESSING THE POWER OF NOW

CHAPTER ONE: BEING AND ENLIGHTENMENT

- There is an eternal, ever present, one life beyond the myriad forms of life that are subject to birth and death.
- Many people use the word God to describe it, Eckhart often calls it Being.
 - The word Being explains nothing, it is an open concept.
 - Unlike the word God, it does not reduce the infinite invisible to a finite entity.
 - It is impossible to form a mental image of it.
 - No one can claim exclusive possession of being.
 - It is your very presence.
 - And it is immediately accessible to you as the feeling of your own presence.
 - So it's only a small step from the word being to the experience of being.
- Being is not only beyond, but also deep within every form, as its own essence.
 - This means it is accessible to you now as your own deepest self, your true nature.
 - Don't seek to grasp being with your mind or understand it.
 - It can never be understood mentally.
 - You can know it only when the mind is still.
 - When you are present and attention is fully in the now, being can be felt.
 - To regain awareness of being and to abide in that state of feeling realization is Enlightenment.
 - It is your natural state of felt oneness with being.
 - It is a state of connectedness.
 - Paradoxically it is essentially you, and yet is much greater than you.
 - It is your true nature beyond name and form.

- The inability to feel this connectedness gives rise to the illusion of separation from yourself and the world around you.
 - You then perceive yourself as an isolated fragment.
 - Fear arises and conflict becomes the norm.
- The greatest obstacle to experiencing the reality of your connectedness is identification with your mind, which causes thought to become compulsive.
 - It creates a false mind-made self that casts a shadow of fear and suffering, and the illusion of separateness.
 - You believe you are your mind, and this is the disease.
 - You are one with all that is. (we have forgotten this essential fact)
- To free yourself from your mind, start listening to the voice [the thoughts] in your head as often as you can without judgment.
 - Pay attention to repetitive thoughts.
 - Be there as the witnessing presence.
 - Notice there's the voice in the head, and here I AM witnessing the voice, watching it.
 - This I AM realization is not a thought, it arises from beyond the mind.
 - When in presence, thoughts lose their power over you because you are no longer energizing the mind through identification with it.
 - When a thought subsides, you experience a discontinuity in the mental stream, a gap of no mind.

Practice:

you can measure your success by the degree of peace you feel within

- Watch and listen to the voice [the thoughts] in your head without judgment
- Taking any routine activity and giving it your fullest attention, for example:
 - Every time you walk up and down stairs, pay close attention to every step
 - When you wash your hands, pay attention to the sound and feel of the water, the movement of your hands, the scent of the soap, etc.
 - When getting into your car, pause for a few seconds after closing the door and observe the flow of your breath
- Learn to disidentify from your mind.
 - Every time you create a gap in the stream of mind, the light of your consciousness grows stronger.
- The Ego is our false self, it is created by unconscious identification with the mind.
 - It can only be kept going through constant thinking.
 - To the Ego, only the past and future are considered important.
 - It misperceives the present moment because it looks at it through the eyes of the past, or it reduces the moment as a means to an end, an end that is always in the future.

- Enlightenment means rising above thought.
 - Only using the mind for practical purposes.
 - No mind is consciousness without thought.
 - This is the only way to think creatively.

Emotion: The Body's Reaction to Your Mind

- Emotion is the body's reaction to your mind, a true reflection of your mind in the body.
 - The more identified you are with your thinking, likes/dislikes, judgments and interpretations, the stronger the emotional energy charge.
 - If you are cut off from your emotions, you will experience them as a physical problem/symptom.
 - Focus your attention on the inner energy field of your body to get in touch with your emotions.
 - If there is a conflict between your thoughts and emotions, the thought is the lie, the emotion is the truth.
 - It's not the ultimate truth of who you are, it's the relative truth of your state of mind at that time.
 - Make it a habit to ask yourself, what's going on inside me at this moment?
 - Don't analyze, just watch, focus your attention within, feel the energy of the emotion and the inner energy field of your body.

CHAPTER TWO: THE ORIGIN OF FEAR

- The Psychological condition of fear is divorced from any true immediate danger.
- Fear comes in many forms:
 - Unease, worry, anxiety, nervousness, tension, dread, phobia, etc.
- Psychological fear is always of something that might happen.
 - It is not happening in the here and now.
 - Mind is in the future creating an anxiety gap.
 - We cannot cope with a mind projection.
 - We cannot cope with the future.
- When you are identified with your mind, Ego runs (ruins) your life.
 - Ego feels constantly under threat.
 - It's vulnerable and insecure.
 - The more mind identified you are, the more pain and suffering you'll experience.
 - Ego is the mind-made false-self.
- Emotion is the body's reaction to your mind.
 - Body receives messages of danger.
 - It feels it's under threat from the Ego, the emotion of fear is the response.

- All fear is the Ego's fear of death.
 - The need to be right in an argument, and make the other person wrong, is the Ego's fear of death.
 - To be wrong is to die.
 - Take notice of any defensiveness within yourself.
 - Once you disidentify from your mind, no aggressiveness or defensiveness occurs about how you feel or what you think.
 - Disidentify from your mind by witnessing it, making it conscious.
 - It will end all arguments and power games
- Mind seeks to deny the now and escape from it.
 - To stop creating time, realize deeply that the present moment is all you ever have.
 - Make the now the primary focus.
 - Time and mind are inseparable.
 - To be identified with your mind is to be trapped in time.
 - Living in memory - the past gives sense of identity
 - Living in anticipation - the future holds promise of salvation and fulfillment.
 - Now is all there is, it's precious.
 - Life is Now.
 - It's the only point of access into being, beyond the mind.
- The moment you grasp this there's a shift from mind to being.
 - Aliveness is being.

CHAPTER THREE: ENTERING THE NOW

Don't Seek Your Self in the Mind

- The timeless dimension offers a different type of knowing.
 - It contains a deep love and reverence for all that is.
 - A knowing of which the mind knows nothing.

Practice:

- Make it a practice to withdraw attention from the past and future whenever they are not needed.
- Step out of the time dimension as much as possible in everyday life.
- Observe the habitual tendency of the mind to want to escape from the now.
 - Through self observation, more presence comes into your life automatically.
- The moment you realize you're not present, you are present.
- Be present as the watcher of your mind, thoughts, emotions, and reactions.

- Be as interested in your reactions as you are in the situation/person that causes you to react.
- Notice how often your attention is in the past or future. Don't judge or analyze.
- Watch thoughts, feel emotions, observe reactions and the emotional charge.
 - Unconscious reactive patterns are:
 - justifying, making someone else wrong, attacking, defending
 - Observation of the mind withdraws energy from unconscious reactive patterns and opens up the dimension of the timeless.

Let Go of Psychological Time

- Use clock time for the practical aspects of your life.
 - Scheduling appointments, planning trips, setting goals.
- Let go of psychological time.
 - Continuous/habitual identification with the past.
 - Continuous/habitual projection into the future.
 - The obsessive need to arrive, to achieve, to attain, to make it.
 - Making your doing as a means to an end.
 - Waiting for a relationship to give meaning to life and feel complete.
 - Consumed with pursuing sex, food, drink, drugs, thrills and excitement.
- Find life underneath your life situation.
 - You cannot be both unhappy and fully present in the Now.
 - Your life is now and is real.
 - Your life situation is mind-stuff and exists in psychological time.
 - The mind loves problems because it gives you an identity.

Practice:

- Ask yourself: is there joy, ease, and lightness in what I am doing?
 - If there isn't, then time is covering up the present moment, and life is perceived as a burden or struggle.
- Give your full attention to whatever you are doing, rather than to the result that you want to achieve.
 - How you are doing something is always more important than what you are doing.
- Give your full attention to whatever the moment presents.
- Completely accept what is.

CHAPTER FOUR: DISSOLVING UNCONSCIOUSNESS

Practice:

- Bring more consciousness into your life during ordinary situations when things are going smoothly.
- Observe the way unease, discontent, and tension arise within you.
 - Through judgment, resistance to what is, and denial of the Now.
- Monitor your mental-emotional state through self-observation.
 - Ask yourself frequently:
 - Am I at ease at this moment?
 - What's going on inside me at this moment?
 - Am I feeling resentment or unwillingness?
- Deep unconsciousness (pain-body, the loss of a loved one) usually needs to be transmuted through acceptance and the light of your presence - your sustained attention.
- Ordinary unconscious patterns can simply be dropped once you know that you don't want or need them.
 - Once you realize that you have a choice, that you are not a bundle of conditioned reflexes.
- When you are able to access the power of Now, you have a choice. Without it, you have no choice.

CHAPTER FIVE: BEAUTY ARISES IN THE STILLNESS OF YOUR PRESENCE

- Presence is needed to become aware of the beauty and sacredness of nature.
 - The mind needs to be still and you have to put down your personal baggage of problems, as well as your knowledge.
 - Total presence is required; otherwise, you will see but not see, hear but not hear.
- Beyond the beauty of the external forms, there is more: something that cannot be named, something ineffable, some deep inner, holy essence.
 - Could it be that this nameless essence and your presence are one and the same? Go deeply into it and find out for yourself.

Realizing Pure Consciousness

- Whenever you watch the mind, you withdraw consciousness from mind forms which then becomes what we call the Watcher or the Witness.
- Consequently the watcher, Pure Consciousness beyond form, becomes stronger, and the mental formations become weaker.
- When we talk about watching the mind, we are personalizing an event that is truly of cosmic significance. Through you, consciousness is awakening out of its dream of identification with form and withdrawing from form.
- This foreshadows, but is already part of, an event that is probably still in the distant future as far as chronological time is concerned. The event is called the end of the world.
- To stay present in everyday life, it helps to be deeply rooted within yourself.
- Otherwise the mind, which has incredible momentum, drags you along like a wild river. It means to inhabit your body fully.
- To always have some of your attention in the inner energy field of your body.
- To feel the body from within so to speak. Body awareness keeps you present and anchors you in the now.
- The body that you can see and touch cannot take you into being, but that visible and tangible body is only an outer shell, or rather a limited and distorted perception of a deeper reality.
- In your natural state of connectedness with being, this deeper reality can be felt every moment as the invisible inner body. The animating presence within you.
- So to inhabit the body, is to feel the body from within.
- To feel the life inside the body and thereby come to know that you are beyond the outer form.
- You are cut off from being as long as your mind takes up all your attention.

- When this happens, and it happens continuously for most people, you are not in your body. The mind absorbs all your consciousness and transforms it into mind stuff. You cannot stop thinking.
- To become conscious of being, you need to reclaim consciousness from the mind. This is one of the most essential tasks on your spiritual journey.
- It will free a vast amount of consciousness that previously had been trapped in useless and compulsive thinking.
- The very effective way of doing this is simply to take the focus of your attention away from thinking and direct it into the body, where being can be felt in the first instance as the invisible energy field that gives life to what you perceive as the physical body.

Connecting with the Inner Body

Practice:

- Direct your attention into the body and feel it from within.
 - Is it alive? Is there life in your hands, arms, legs, and feet - in your abdomen, your chest?
 - Can you feel the subtle energy field that pervades the entire body and gives vibrant life to every organ and every cell?
 - Can you feel it simultaneously in all parts of the body as a single field of energy?
 - Keep focusing on the feeling of your inner body for a few moments.
 - Do not start to think about it, feel it.
 - The more attention you give it, the clearer and stronger this feeling will become.
 - It will feel as if every cell is becoming more alive, and if you have a strong visual sense, you may get an image of your body becoming luminous.
 - Pay more attention to the feeling than to any image that may arise.
 - An image, no matter how beautiful or powerful, is already defined in form, so there is less scope for penetrating more deeply.

Going Deeply into the Body

10-15 Minute Meditation:

- Make sure there are no external distractions.
- Sit on a chair, but don't lean back.
- Keep the spine erect.
- Make sure the body is relaxed.
- Close your eyes.
- Take a few deep breaths.
- Feel yourself breathing into the lower abdomen.
- Observe how it expands and contracts slightly with each in and out breath.
- Become aware of the entire inner energy field of the body.
- Don't think about it - feel it.
- By doing this, you reclaim consciousness from the mind.
- When you can feel the inner body clearly as a single field of energy, let go of any visual image and focus exclusively on the feeling.
- Drop any mental image you may still have of the physical body.
- All that is left is an all-encompassing sense of presence or "being-ness", and the inner body is felt to be without a boundary.
- Take your attention even more deeply into that feeling.
- Become one with it.
- Merge with the energy field, so that there is no longer a perceived duality of the observer and the observed, of you and your body.
- The distinction between inner and outer also dissolves now, so there is no inner body anymore.
- By going deeply into the body, you have transcended the body.
- Stay in this realm of pure Being for as long as feels comfortable;
- then become aware again of the physical body, your breathing and physical senses, and open your eyes.
- Look at your surroundings for a few minutes in a meditative way - without labeling them mentally - and continue to feel the inner body as you do so.

Practice:

- As you go about your life, don't give 100 percent of your attention to the external world and to your mind.
- Keep some within.
- Feel the inner body even when engaged in everyday activities, especially when engaged in relationships or when you are relating with nature.
- Feel the stillness deep inside it.
- Keep the portal open
- It is quite possible to be conscious of the Unmanifested throughout your life.
- You feel it as a deep sense of peace somewhere in the background, a stillness that never leaves you, no matter what happens.
- You become a bridge between the Unmanifested and the manifested, between God and the world.
- This is the state of connectedness with the Source that we call enlightenment.
- Don't get the impression that the Unmanifested is separate from the manifested.
- It is the life within every form, the inner essence of all that exists.
- It pervades this world.

Have Deep Roots Within

- The key is to be in a state of permanent connectedness with your inner body, to feel it at all times.
- This will rapidly deepen and transform your life.
- The more consciousness you direct into the inner body, the higher its vibrational frequency becomes. Much like a light that grows brighter as you turn up the dimmer switch, and so increase the flow of electricity.
- At this higher energy level, negativity cannot affect you anymore, and you tend to attract new circumstances that reflect this higher frequency.
- If you keep your attention in the body as much as possible, you will be anchored in the now.
- You won't lose yourself in the external world, and you won't lose yourself in your mind.
- Thoughts and emotions, fears and desires may still be there to some extent but they won't take you over.
- Do not give all your attention away to the mind and the external world.
- Focus on what you're doing, but feel the inner body at the same time.
- Stay rooted within, then observe how this changes your state of consciousness and the quality of what you're doing.
- Don't just accept or reject what Eckhart is saying, put it to the test.

Strengthening the Immune System

There is a simple but powerful self-healing meditation that you can do whenever you feel the need to boost your immune system. It is particularly effective if used when you feel the first symptoms of an illness, but it also works with illnesses that are already entrenched if you use it at frequent intervals and with an intense focus. It will also counteract any disruption of your energy field by some form of negativity. However, it is not a substitute for the moment-to-moment practice of being in the body; otherwise, its effect will only be temporary.

Meditation:

- When unoccupied, especially last thing at night before falling asleep and first thing in the morning before getting up, “flood” your body with consciousness.
- Close your eyes.
- Lie flat on your back.
- Choose different parts of your body to focus your attention on briefly at first: hands, feet, arms, legs, abdomen, chest, head, and so on.
- Feel the life energy inside those parts as intensely as you can.
- Stay with each part for 15 seconds or so.
- Let your attention run through the body like a wave a few times, from feet to head and back again. This need only take a minute or so.
- Feel the inner body in its totality, as a single field of energy.
- Hold that feeling for a few minutes.
- Be intensely present during that time, present in every cell of your body.
- Don't be concerned if the mind occasionally succeeds in drawing your attention out of the body and you lose yourself in some thought.
- As soon as you notice that this has happened, just return your attention to the inner body.

Creative Use of Mind

- If you need to use your mind for a specific purpose, use it in conjunction with your inner body.
- You can only use your mind creatively if you are able to be conscious without thought.
- The easiest way to enter that state is through your body.
- Whenever an answer, a solution, or a creative idea is needed, stop thinking for a moment by focusing attention on your inner energy field.
- Become aware of the stillness.
- When you resume thinking, it will be fresh and creative.

- In any thought activity, make it a habit to go back and forth every few minutes or so between thinking and an inner kind of listening, an inner stillness.
- Don't just think with your head, think with your whole body.

Let the Breath take You into the Body

- If you are finding it hard to get in touch with the inner body, it is usually easier to focus on your breathing first.
- Conscious breathing, which is a powerful meditation, will gradually put you in touch with the body.
- Follow the breath with your attention as it moves in and out of your body.
- Breathe into the body, and feel your abdomen expanding and contracting slightly with each inhalation and exhalation.
- If you find it easy to visualize, close your eyes and see yourself surrounded by light or immersed in a luminous substance - a sea of consciousness.
- Breathe in that light.
- Feel that luminous substance filling up your body and making it luminous also.
- Gradually focus more on the feeling.
- You are now in your body.
- Don't get attached to any visual image.

PART TWO: RELATIONSHIP AS SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

- Love is a state of Being.
- Your love is not outside; it is deep within you.
- It is not dependent on some other body, some external form.

CHAPTER SIX: DISSOLVING THE PAIN-BODY

- Pain that you create now is always some form of nonacceptance, some form of unconscious resistance to what is.
- The mind always seeks to deny the Now and to escape from it.
- The more you are identified with your mind, the more you suffer.
- The more you are able to honor and accept the Now, the more you are free of pain, suffering, and free of the egoic mind.
- Emotional pain is the main cause of physical pain.
- There are 2 levels of pain: pain you create now, and the pain from the past.
 - Every emotional pain you experience leaves behind a residue of pain that lives on in you. It merges with the pain from the past and becomes lodged in your mind and body as a negative energy field. (the emotional pain-body)
- The Pain-Body has 2 modes of being: dormant and active.
 - Anything can trigger it, particularly if it resonates with the pain pattern from your past.
 - A thought or innocent remark can activate it.

Breaking Identification with the Pain-Body

- The pain-body doesn't want you to observe it directly and see it for what it is.
- The moment you observe the pain-body, feel its energy field within you, and take your attention into it, the identification is broken. A higher dimension of consciousness has come in.
- Some pain-bodies drive their hosts to suicide.
- Watch out for any sign of unhappiness in yourself, in whatever form - it may be the awakening pain-body. (irritation, impatience, somber mood, desire to hurt, anger, rage, depression, need to have some drama, etc.)
 - Catch it the moment it awakens from its dormant state.
- The pain-body can only survive if it gets you to unconsciously identify with it.
 - It needs to get its "food" through you and will feed on any experience that resonates with its own kind of energy, anything that creates further pain in whatever form: anger, destructiveness, hatred, grief, emotional drama, violence, illness, etc.
 - When it takes you over, you want more pain, it will create a situation in your life that reflects back its own energy frequency for it to feed on.

- You become a victim or a perpetrator.
 - Pain can only feed on pain. Pain cannot feed on joy.
- The pain-body, which is the dark shadow cast by the ego, is afraid of the light of your consciousness. It is afraid of being found out.
 - Its survival depends on your unconscious identification with it, as well as on your unconscious fear of facing the pain that lives in you.
 - If you don't face it and don't bring the light of your consciousness into the pain, you will be forced to relive it again and again.
- When you become the watcher and start to disidentify, the pain-body will continue to operate for a while and try to trick you into identifying with it again.
 - Although you are no longer energizing it through your identification, it has a certain momentum, just like a spinning wheel that will keep turning for a while even when it is no longer being propelled.
 - At this stage it may also create physical aches and pains in different parts of the body, but they won't last.
 - Stay present, stay conscious.
 - You need to be present enough to be able to watch the pain-body directly and feel its energy. It then cannot control your thinking.
 - The moment your thinking is aligned with the energy field of the pain-body, you are identified with it and again feeding it with your thoughts.
- For example: if anger is the predominant energy vibration of the pain-body and you think angry thoughts, dwelling on what some did or what you are going to do, then you have come unconscious, and the pain-body has become "you".
 - Where there is anger, there is always pain underneath.
- Another example: when a dark mood comes and you start getting into a negative mind-pattern, thinking how dreadful your life is, your thinking has become aligned with the pain-body, and you have become unconscious and vulnerable to the pain-body's attack.
- "Unconscious" means to be identified with some mental or emotional pattern.
 - It implies a complete absence of the watcher.

Transmuting Suffering into Consciousness

- Sustained conscious attention severs the link between the pain-body and your thought processes and brings about the process of transmutation.
 - The ancient art of alchemy: the transmutation of suffering into consciousness.
 - The split within is healed and you become whole again.
 - Your responsibility is not to create further pain.
- Focus attention on the feeling inside you.
 - Know that it is the pain-body.

- Accept that it is there.
- Don't think about it - don't let the feeling turn into thinking.
- Don't judge or analyze.
- Don't make an identity for yourself out of it.
- Stay present and continue to be the observer of what is happening inside you.
- Become aware not only of the emotional pain but also of "the one who observes", the silent watcher.
- This is the power of the Now, the power of your own conscious presence.
- See what happens.

Ego Identification with the Pain-Body

- Understand the basic principle: Being present as the watcher of what happens inside you. You "understand" it by experiencing it.
- You may encounter intense inner resistance to disidentify from your pain, particularly if you have lived closely identified with your emotional pain-body for most of your life, and the whole or large part of your sense of self is invested in it.
 - Unconscious fear of losing your identity will create strong resistance to any disidentification.
 - You would rather be in pain - Be the pain-body - than take a leap into the unknown and risk losing the familiar unhappy self.
 - Observe the resistance within yourself.
 - Observe the attachment to your pain.
 - Be very alert.
 - Observe the peculiar pleasure you derive from being unhappy.
 - Observe the compulsion to talk or think about it.
 - Resistance will cease if you make it conscious.
 - You can then take your attention into the pain-body.
 - Stay present as the witness and initiate its transmutation.
 - Only you can do this. Nobody can do it for you.
 - If you can be with someone who is intensely conscious and join them in the state of presence, that can be helpful and accelerate things.
 - Your own light will quickly grow stronger.
- As long as you make an identity out of the pain, you cannot become free of it.
- The pain-body is an energy field, almost like an entity, that has become temporarily lodged in your inner space.
 - It is life energy that has become trapped. Energy that is no longer flowing.
 - It is the living past in you. If you identify with it, you identify with the past.

The Power of Your Presence

- The victim identity is the belief that the past is more powerful than the present, which is the opposite of the Truth.
 - It is the belief that other people, and what they did to you, are responsible for who you are now, for your emotional pain, or your inability to be your true self.
- The Truth is the only power there is is contained within this moment.
 - It is the power of your presence.
 - Once you know that, you also realize that you are responsible for your inner space now, nobody else is. And that the past cannot prevail against the power of the now.
- Unconsciousness creates the pain-body.
- Consciousness transmutes the pain-body into itself.
 - Saint Paul expressed this universal principle:
 - Everything is shown up by being exposed to the light, and whatever is exposed to the light itself becomes light.
- Just as you cannot fight the darkness, you cannot fight the pain-body.
 - Trying to do so would create inner conflict and thus further pain.
 - Watching it is enough.
 - Watching it implies accepting it as part of what is at that moment.

CHAPTER SEVEN: FROM ADDICTIVE TO ENLIGHTENED RELATIONSHIPS

- Until you access the conscious frequency of Presence, all relationships are deeply flawed and ultimately dysfunctional.
- Love can turn into savage attack, feelings of hostility, or complete withdrawal of affection.
- If you experience love and the opposite of love: attack, emotional violence, etc. then it is likely that you are confusing Ego attachment and addictive clinging with Love.
- You cannot love someone one moment and attack them the next; True Love has no opposite.
- If your love has an opposite, then it is not love, but a strong Ego need for a more complete and deeper sense of self.
 - The need that the other person temporarily meets.
- Every addiction arises from an unconscious refusal to face and move through your own pain.
 - Every addiction starts and ends with pain.
- Relationships and addictions do not cause pain, they bring out the pain that is already within you.
- Most people are trying to escape the present moment because the first thing they might encounter is their own pain. This is what they fear.
- The power of Presence dissolves the past and its pain.
- Avoiding relationships in order to avoid pain is not the answer.
- For love to flourish, the light of your presence needs to be strong enough so that you no longer get taken over by the thinker or the pain body and mistake them for who you are.
- To know yourself as the being underneath the thinker, the stillness underneath the mental noise, the love and joy underneath the pain, is freedom, salvation, enlightenment.
- First stop judging yourself, then stop judging your partner.
- The greatest catalyst for change in a relationship is complete acceptance of your partner as they are without needing to judge or change them in any way.
 - That takes you beyond Ego.
 - All mind games and addictive clinging are then over.
 - There are no victims or perpetrators anymore.
 - No accuser or accused.
 - This is also the end of codependency. Being drawn into someone else's unconscious pattern.
 - You will either separate in love or move deeply into the now together, into Being.

- Love is a state of Being.
 - It is not outside, it is deep within you.
 - You can never lose it, and it can never leave you.
 - It is not dependent on another body, another form.
- In the stillness of your Presence, you can feel your own formless and timeless reality as the Unmanifested life that animates your physical form.
 - You can then feel the same life deep within every other human and every other creature.
 - You look beyond the veil of form and separation.
 - This is the realization of Oneness.
 - This is Love.
- Although brief glimpses are possible, love cannot flourish unless you're permanently free of mind identification and your Presence is intense enough to have dissolved the pain body, or you can at least remain present as the watcher so the pain body cannot take you over and be destructive of love.

Relationships as Spiritual Practice

- Humans have become increasingly identified with their mind, most relationships are not rooted in Being, and turn into a source of pain and become dominated by problems and conflict.
- If relationships energize and magnify egoic mind patterns and activate the pain-body, why not accept this fact rather than try to escape from it?
 - Cooperate, be in acceptance, there's no need to avoid relationships or continue to pursue the phantom of an ideal partner as an answer to your problems or a means of feeling fulfilled.
- You cannot transform yourself, and you cannot transform your partner or anybody else.
 - All you can do is create a space for transformation to happen, for grace and love to enter.
- Whenever your relationship is not working, whenever it brings out the "madness" in you and your partner, be glad.
 - What was unconscious is being brought up to the light.
- Every moment, hold the knowing of that moment and of your inner state.
 - If there's anger, know there is anger.
 - If there's jealousy, defensiveness, the urge to argue, the need to be right, an inner child demanding love and attention, or emotional pain of any kind - whatever it is, *know* the reality of that moment and hold the knowing.
 - The relationship then becomes your *sadhana*, your spiritual practice.
- If you observe unconscious behavior in your partner, hold it in the loving embrace of your knowing so that you won't react.

- Unconsciousness and knowing cannot coexist for long - even if the knowing is not in the other person who is acting out the unconsciousness.
- If you react to your partner's unconsciousness, you become unconscious yourself.
- Relationships are not here to make you happy or fulfilled.
- If you continue to pursue salvation through a relationship, you will be disillusioned again and again.
- If you accept that the relationship is here to make you *conscious* instead of happy, then you will be aligning yourself with the higher consciousness that wants to be born into this world.
 - For those who hold on to the old patterns, there will be increasing pain, violence, confusion, and madness.
- Sanity - consciousness - can only come into this world through you.
 - You do not need to wait for the world to become sane, or for somebody else to become conscious, before you can be enlightened.
 - Do not accuse each other of being unconscious.
 - The moment you start to argue, you have identified with a mental position and are now defending not only that position but also your sense of self. The Ego is now in charge and you have become unconscious.
- When your partner behaves unconsciously, let go of all judgment.
 - Judgment is confusing someone's unconscious behavior with who they are or to project your own unconsciousness onto another person and mistake *that* for who they are.
 - Letting go of judgment does not mean you don't recognize dysfunction and unconsciousness, it means "being the knowing" rather than "being the reaction" and the judge.
 - Being the knowing creates a clear space of loving presence that allows all things and all people to be as they are.
 - If you practice this, your partner cannot stay with you *and* remain unconscious.
 - At times, it may be appropriate to point out certain aspects of your partner's behavior, you can do so without ego involvement - without blaming, accusing, or making the other wrong.
 - Accusing, defending, attacking - are all patterns designed to strengthen or protect the ego or to get its needs met.
- Let your relationship be your spiritual practice.
 - Express your thoughts and feelings to each other as soon as they occur, or as soon as a reaction comes up, so that you don't create a time gap in which an unexpressed or unacknowledged emotion or grievance can fester and grow.

- Learn to give expression to what you feel without blaming.
- Learn to listen to your partner in an open, nondefensive way.
- Give your partner space for expressing themselves.
- Be present.
- Giving space to others and to yourself is vital.
 - Love cannot flourish without it.
- Two factors that are destructive to relationships.
 - The pain-body and identification with mind and mental positions.
 - When you have removed these two factors, you will reflect back to each other the love that you feel deep within, the love that has no opposite, the love that comes with the realization of your oneness; instead of mirroring to each other your pain and your unconsciousness, and satisfying your mutual addictive ego needs.
 - If one partner is identified with the mind and the pain-body while the other is free, it will present a major challenge to the one still mind & pain identified.
 - The ego finds the enlightened person extremely threatening.
 - The ego needs problems, conflict, and enemies to strengthen the sense of separateness on which its identity depends.
 - The ego needs argument, drama, and conflict.
 - Beware: some people who are unresponsive, withdrawn, insensitive, or cut off from their feelings may think and try to convince others that they are enlightened or “there is nothing wrong” with them and everything wrong with their partner.

Give Up the Relationship with Yourself

- Is being gay a help or a hindrance in the quest for enlightenment?
 - Realizing you are “different” from others may force you to disidentify from socially conditioned patterns of thought and behavior.
 - In this respect, it can be a help.
 - Being an outsider, someone who does not “fit in”, or is rejected, places you at an advantage because it takes you out of unconsciousness.
 - On the other hand, if you develop a sense of identity based on your gayness, you have escaped one trap only to fall into another.
 - You will play roles and games dictated by a mental image you have of yourself as gay.
 - You will become unconscious and unreal.
 - If this happens, being gay will have become a hindrance.

- Is it true that you need to have a good relationship with yourself and love yourself before you can have a fulfilling relationship with another person?
 - If you cannot be at ease with yourself when you are alone, you will seek a relationship to cover up your unease.
 - That unease will then reappear in some other form within the relationship, and you will likely hold your partner responsible for it.
 - All you really need to do is accept this moment fully.
 - You are then at ease in the here and now and at ease with yourself.
 - Just be yourself.
 - When you have a relationship with yourself, you have split yourself into two: “I” and “myself”, subject and object.
 - That mind-created duality is the root cause of all unnecessary complexity, of all problems and conflict in your life.
 - In the state of enlightenment, you *are* yourself - “you” and “yourself” merge into one.
 - You do not judge yourself, you do not feel sorry for yourself, you are not proud of yourself, you do not love yourself, you do not hate yourself, and so on.
 - The split caused by self-reflective consciousness is healed.
 - There is no “self” that you need to protect, defend, or feed anymore.
 - When you are enlightened, there is one relationship that you no longer have: the relationship with yourself.
 - Once you have given that up, all your other relationships will be love relationships.

PART THREE: ACCEPTANCE AND SURRENDER

- When you surrender to what is, become fully present, the past ceases to have any power.
- The realm of Being, which had been obscured by the mind, then opens up.
- Suddenly a great stillness arises within you, an unfathomable sense of peace.
 - Within that peace, there’s great joy.
 - Within that joy, there’s love.
 - At the innermost core, there’s the sacred, the immeasurable, that which cannot be named.

CHAPTER EIGHT: ACCEPTANCE OF THE NOW

Impermanence and the Cycles of Life

- There are cycles of success - when things come to you and you thrive.
- There are cycles of failure - when things wither or disintegrate and you have to let them go in order to make room for new things to arise, or for transformation to happen.
- If you cling and resist at that point, it means you are refusing to go with the flow of life, and you will suffer.
- One cycle cannot exist without the other.
- Failure lies concealed in every success, and success in every failure.
- Everybody “fails” sooner or later, and every achievement eventually goes. All forms are impermanent.
- You can enjoy manifesting and creating without the need to be identified with new forms and circumstances, without the need for it to give you a sense of self.
 - They are not your life - only your life situation.
- A cycle can last from a few hours to a few years.
- There are large cycles and small cycles with these larger ones.
- Many illnesses are created through fighting against the cycles of low energy, which are vital for regeneration.
- The compulsion to do, and the tendency to derive your sense of self-worth and identity from external factors such as achievement, is an inevitable illusion as long as you are identified with the mind.
 - This makes it hard for you to accept the low cycles and allow them to be.
 - As a self-protective measure, illness can be created in order to force you to stop so regeneration can take place.
- When the mind judges a condition as “good”, the mind attaches itself to it and identifies with it.
 - But nothing lasts in this dimension - identification . It either ends or it changes or has a polarity shift.
 - The same condition that was once good and made you happy, is suddenly or gradually turned into bad and makes you unhappy.
 - When a condition or situation that the mind has attached itself to and identified with changes or disappears, the mind cannot accept it.
 - It will cling to the disappearing condition.
 - It will resist the change.
 - This means your happiness and unhappiness are in fact one. Only the illusion of time separates them.
- To offer no resistance to life is to be in a state of grace, ease, and lightness.
 - This state doesn't depend upon things being in a certain way, good or bad.

- Being takes you beyond the polar opposites of the mind and frees you from dependency on form.
- If everything were to collapse and crumble all around you, you may not be happy, but you will feel a deep inner core of peace and you will be at peace.

Using and Relinquishing Negativity

- All negativity is resistance.
 - Irritation, impatience, anger, depressed mood, resentment, despair, etc.
 - Resistance can trigger the emotional pain-body and a minor situation may produce intense negativity.
- The ego believes it can manipulate and get what it wants through negativity.
 - Negativity strengthens the ego and that is the only reason the ego loves it.
- A common and insane phenomenon occurs when you have identified with negativity - you do not want to let go, and on a deeply unconscious level you do not want positive change because it would threaten your identity - so you will ignore, deny, or sabotage the positive in your life.
- Whenever you notice some form of negativity has arisen within you, see it as a helpful signal telling you to “Wake up, get out of your mind, Be Present.”
 - Acknowledge and look at even the slightest irritation as significant; otherwise there will be a cumulative buildup of unobserved reactions.
 - You may be able to just drop it once you realize that you don’t want to have this energy field inside you and it serves no purpose.
 - If you cannot drop it, just accept that it is there and take your attention into the feeling.
 - As an alternative, you can imagine yourself becoming transparent to the external cause of the reaction. Allow the cause of negativity to pass right through you.
 - Instead of having a wall of resistance inside you, let everything pass through you.
- The ego unconsciously believes resistance will somehow dissolve undesirable conditions. This is a delusion. The resistance only makes things worse.
- The moment you *completely* accept your non-peace, your non-peace becomes transmuted into peace. This is the miracle of surrender.

The Nature of Compassion

- The next time you think you have nothing in common with another person, remember that both of your bodies at some point will have become rotting corpses, then piles of dust, then nothing at all.
- A powerful spiritual practice is to meditate deeply on the mortality of physical forms, including your own. It is called - Die before you die.
 - The physical form dissolves, then all thoughts also dissolve, yet *you* are still there - the divine presence that you are - radiant, fully awake.
 - Nothing that was real ever died, only names, forms, and illusions.
- You teach through Being, through demonstrating the peace of God. You become the Light of the World.

The Wisdom of Surrender

- Surrender is the wisdom of yielding to, rather than opposing, the flow of life.
- The only place you can experience the flow of life is the Now.
- To surrender is to accept the present moment unconditionally and without reservation.
- Relinquish inner resistance to what is.
- Surrender occurs within, not at the outer level. Resignation is not surrender, it is masked resistance and negativity.
 - For example, if you're stuck in the mud, you wouldn't resign yourself to being stuck in the mud. You don't need to accept an unpleasant life situation, you just accept the isness of the present moment.
- If you can never accept what *is*, you will not be able to accept anybody the way they are.

CHAPTER NINE: TRANSFORMING ILLNESS AND SUFFERING

- Life is this instant - not the conditions or circumstances of your life.
 - Eckhart calls your life situation the conditions or circumstances.
 - Illness is part of your life situation, it is not your life.
 - Underneath the various conditions that make up your life situation, there is something deeper, more essential: your Life, your very Being in the timeless Now.
- As there are no problems in the Now, there is no illness either.
- The belief in a label that someone attaches to your condition keeps the condition in place, empowers it, and makes a seemingly solid reality out of a temporary imbalance.
 - It gives it reality, solidity, and continuity in time that it did not have before.

- By focusing on this instant and not labeling it mentally, illness is reduced to: physical pain, weakness, discomfort, or disability.
 - That is what you surrender to - Now.
 - You do not surrender to the idea of “illness”.
 - Allow the suffering to force you into the present moment, into a state of intense conscious presence. Use it for enlightenment.
- Surrender does not transform what is, it transforms you.
 - When you are transformed, your whole world is transformed, because the world is only a reflection.
- Illness is not the problem. You are the problem - as long as the egoic mind is in control.
- When you are ill or disabled
 - Do not feel that you have failed in some way
 - Do not feel guilty
 - Do not blame life for treating you unfairly
 - Do not blame yourself either
 - All that is resistance
 - Use the illness and anything “bad” that happens in your life - use it for enlightenment.
 - Withdraw time from the illness.
 - Do not give it any past or future.
 - Let it force you into intense present-moment awareness - and see what happens.
 - Become an alchemist - turn suffering into consciousness, disaster into enlightenment.
 - If you feel angry about all of the above, that is a clear sign that the illness has become part of your sense of self and you are now protecting your identity - as well as protecting the illness.
 - The condition labeled “illness” has nothing to do with who you truly are.
- Whenever disaster strikes or something goes seriously “wrong” - illness, disability, loss of home, loss of fortune, loss of a socially defined identity, breakup of a close relationship, death or suffering of a loved one, or your own impending death
 - Know there is another side to it
 - You are just one step away from something incredible
 - A complete alchemical transmutation of the base metal of pain and suffering into gold
 - That one step is called surrender
 - Eckhart does not mean you will become happy in these situations, you will not.

- But fear and pain will become transmuted into an inner peace and serenity that comes from a very deep place - from the Unmanifested itself.
 - It is “the peace of God, which passes all understanding.”
 - Compared to that, happiness is a shallow thing.
 - With radiant peace comes the realization that you are indestructible, immortal.
 - Not on the level of mind, but within the depth of your Being.
 - This is not a belief. It is absolute certainty that needs no external evidence or proof from some secondary source.

Transforming Suffering into Peace

- Your first chance is to surrender each moment to the reality of that moment.
 - Knowing that what *is* cannot be undone - because it already *is*
 - You say yes to what *is* or accept what isn't
 - Then you do whatever the situation requires
 - Abiding in this state of acceptance, you no longer create more negativity, suffering and unhappiness. You live in a state of nonresistance, a state of grace and lightness, free of struggle.
- Your second chance at surrender: if you cannot accept what is outside, then accept what is *inside*.
 - Accept the internal condition, if you cannot accept the external condition.
 - This means: do not resist the pain. Allow it to be there.
 - Surrender to the grief, despair, fear, loneliness, or whatever form the suffering takes.
 - Witness it without labeling it mentally. Embrace it.
 - See how the miracle of surrender transmutes deep suffering into deep peace.
 - Let your crucifixion become your resurrection and ascension.
- When your pain is deep
 - Talk of surrender will probably seem futile and meaningless
 - You will likely have a strong urge to escape from it rather than surrender to it
 - You don't want to feel what you feel, but there's no escape, no way out.
 - Pseudo escapes - work, drink, drugs, anger, projection, suppression, etc - these do not free you from the pain.
 - Suffering does not diminish when you make it unconscious.
 - When you deny emotional pain, everything you do or think becomes contaminated with it.
 - There is always a way *through* when there is no way out.
 - Don't turn away from pain - Face it

- *Feel* it fully - don't *think* about it
- Give all your attention to the *feeling*
 - Not to the person, event, or situation
- Don't let the mind use the pain to create a victim identity
- Feeling sorry for yourself and telling others your story will keep you stuck in suffering
- It is impossible to get away from the feeling, the only possibility of change is to move into it; otherwise nothing will shift.
- Give your complete attention to what you feel, refrain from mentally labeling it.
- Be intensely alert as you go into the feeling
- It may seem like a dark and terrifying place at first
- When the urge to turn away from it comes, observe it but don't act on it
- Keep putting your attention on the pain, keep feeling the grief, the fear, the dread, the loneliness, etc.
- Stay alert, stay present - present with your whole Being, with every cell of your body.
- As you do so, you are bringing a light into this darkness. This is the flame of your consciousness.
- At this stage, surrender has happened already because Full Attention is full acceptance, is surrender.
- By giving full attention, you use the power of the Now, which is the power of your presence. No resistance can survive in it.
- Presence removes time. Without time, no suffering, no negativity, can survive.
- Acceptance of suffering is a journey into death
 - Facing deep pain, allowing it to be, taking your attention into it, is to enter death consciously.
 - When you have died this death, you realize that there is no death - and there is nothing to fear.
 - Only the ego dies.
 - Imagine a ray of sunlight that has forgotten it is an inseparable part of the sun and deludes itself into believing it has to fight for survival and create and cling to an identity other than the sun.
 - The death of this delusion is incredibly liberating.
 - To have an easy death without pain and agony, die to the past every moment, and let the light of your presence shine away the heavy, timebound self you thought of as "you."

The Way of the Cross - Enlightenment through Suffering

- The way of the cross is the old way to enlightenment, and until recently it was the only way.
- The way of the cross is a complete reversal - meaning the worst thing in your life, your cross, turns into the best thing that ever happened to you.
 - By forcing you into surrender, into “death”, forcing you to become as nothing, to become as God - because God too is no-thing.
- Enlightenment through suffering - the way of the cross - means to be forced into the kingdom of heaven kicking and screaming.
 - You finally surrender because you can't stand the pain anymore, but the pain could go on for a long time until this happens.
- Enlightenment consciously chosen means to relinquish your attachment to past and future and to make the Now the main focus of your life.
 - It means choosing to dwell in the state of presence rather than in time
 - It means saying yes to what *is*
 - You then don't need pain anymore.
- How much more time do you think you will need before you are able to say, “I will create no more pain, no more suffering”?
 - How much more pain do you need before you can make that choice?
 - If you think you need more time, you will get more time - and more pain.
 - Time and pain are inseparable.

The Power to Choose

- Choice implies consciousness - a high degree of consciousness
 - Without consciousness, you have no choice
 - Choice begins the moment you disidentify from the mind and its conditioned patterns - the moment you become present.
 - Until you reach that point, spiritually speaking you are unconscious
 - Meaning you are compelled to think, feel, and act in certain ways according to the conditioning of your mind.
- Nobody *chooses* dysfunction, conflict, pain, insanity.
 - They happen because there is not enough presence to dissolve the past, not enough light to dispel the darkness. You are not fully here.
 - You have not quite woken up yet, the conditioned mind is running your life.
 - If you have an issue with your parents, still harbor resentment, then you still believe they had a choice - that they could have acted differently.
 - It always *looks* as if people had a choice, but that is an illusion.
 - As long as your conditioned mind runs your life, as long as you *are* your mind, you have no choice. You are not even there.
 - The mind-identified state is severely dysfunctional. It is a form of insanity.

- Almost everyone is suffering from this illness in varying degrees.
- The moment you realize this, there can be no more resentment. The only appropriate response is compassion.
- If you are run by your mind, you have no choice, you will suffer the consequences of your unconsciousness and create further suffering.
 - You will bear the burden of fear, conflict, problems, and pain.
 - The suffering you create will eventually force you out of your unconscious state.
- You cannot truly forgive yourself or others as long as you derive your sense of self from the past.
 - Only through accessing the power of the Now, which is your own power, can there be true forgiveness.
 - This renders the past powerless, and you realize deeply that nothing you ever did or that was ever done to you could touch even in the slightest the radiant essence of who you are.
 - The past ceases to have any power when you surrender to what *is* and so become fully present.
 - Presence is the key. The Now is the key.
- Since resistance is inseparable from the mind, relinquishment of resistance, surrender, is the end of the mind as your master.
 - The imposter pretending to be you.
 - The false God
 - All judgment and all negativity dissolve.
 - The realm of Being, which had been obscured by the mind, then opens up.
 - Suddenly a great stillness arises within you, an unfathomable sense of peace.
 - Within that peace, there's great joy.
 - Within that joy, there's love.
 - At the innermost core, there's the sacred, the immeasurable, that which cannot be named.