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## THE HOW OF NOW

### GATEWAYS INTO THE PRESENT MOMENT

There was a fellow who attended a major 3-day workshop in Vancouver, Canada, where the teacher helps the participants look at their past, determine the burdens they are still carrying from it, and facilitates their letting go of these impediments to their happiness. It is quite cathartic.

After the workshop was over, this fellow went up to the teacher and said, “I just don’t know how to let go of a major hurt.”

The teacher replied, “Just be here Now.” The student continued, “But I don’t know HOW to be here Now.”

The teacher reiterated, “Just be here Now.”

The student could only respond again, “But I don’t know HOW.”

Many of us talk about the importance of living in the Now – the only real, powerful, and creative instant of our life, yet what does that mean? We can utter the words, “I am here now”, look around us and notice what and who is in front of us, yet still not come from the animating presence we experience when truly in the Now.

Credit and gratitude must be given to spiritual teacher Eckhart Tolle for helping us come into the felt *experience* of the Now. He presented to us 5 portals or gateways into the experience of the present moment.

### *THE BREATH*

On average a person takes 2,300 breaths a day. Yet how many of us stop even a couple of times a day to take a conscious breath? To take a conscious breath means simply to become aware of your breath, to notice it. Breathing is required for human life and it is also an avenue to the spiritual life. Our autonomic nervous system operates without any effort on our part. It includes such things as our digestive, pulmonary, and respiratory systems.

Although our breathing is automatic, at this time in human evolution, it is the one part of the autonomic bodily systems that we have some conscious control over. For example, we can choose to lengthen or shorten our inbreath and outbreath and extend the time we hold the breath after intake. There are many different forms of breathing we have control over, all which can fall under the category “Breath Work”. Each form of breath work has a specific purpose and benefit, many of which are to help us release past pain still held in the body and also to bring us into a state of inner calm and stillness.

## **PRACTICE**

When you have the time to be quiet and sit alone for 10 minutes, observe your breath. Just gently notice it. In doing so, you are taking attention away from the compulsive thinking mind while noticing the life force in your body. This in itself is an excellent meditation. Do it as often and as long as you are prompted to do so.

In terms of the above practice, you may come to notice the outbreath being longer than the inbreath and that at the point of your nostrils when you take in a breath, the air is cooler than when you exhale. You may become aware of your torso rising and falling with each complete inhale and exhale. You may notice that as you watch your breath, you started to feel calmer, more relaxed. As you continue in this practice you may also notice the outbreath getting even longer; additionally, you may notice that at the end of the outbreath, there is a pause of stillness.

When you come from the witness position, you are watching, not thinking or judging and therefore coming from a higher state of consciousness. If in doing the above practice you notice that there is, indeed, a pause of stillness after the outbreath and before the inbreath – the longer you continue in this meditative practice, the longer the pause usually gets. How wonderful! We have stillness built right into the process of our breathing, our very source of physical life. Stillness is not just an aspect of who we truly are: stillness enables us to access all the aspects of our Being. As such, we could look upon stillness as the bedrock of our true Self.

## **SILENCE**

Ahh, silence. What a rare thing to experience in our modern world,

especially in urban settings. We are bombarded by noise: the roar of traffic, the noise of numerous machines, the varied noises that fill our malls, restaurants that blare out loud music that, combined with the chatter of those at tables nearby, can make it difficult to even hear our guest across the table, the noise of construction, the roar of jet planes overhead, the numerous and loud noises that fill our airports, the often heightened volume and frenetic tone of what we watch on TV, especially the news and commercials. In addition to living with all this outer noise, we have the noisy thinking mind to contend with.

Where can we go to find silence? Walks in nature, keeping our own homes quiet, stepping into our quiet meditation space and going inward. The space within us is noiseless. When we are aware enough to notice the silence around and in us, we are in the present moment. And we find ourselves alert. Silence is also a segue into inner stillness.

### *STILLNESS*

How do we know when we are in a state of inner stillness? Inner stillness means *no thought*. It is a *felt* state. Inner stillness is not static or boring. It is extremely active, full of the energy frequency of higher consciousness. An apt analogy is of a fan when we start it up. First the blades go slowly, then speed up, going increasingly faster until we see just a still round disk.

### *THE INNER BODY*

The inner body? What is that? I am not referring to our lungs, knees, kidneys and so forth but the animating life force within us

that is consciousness itself. We are conscious beings. However, I know of only a few spiritual teachers like Eckhart Tolle and Barry Long who have brought our attention to the inner body, its import, and how to activate consciousness through Inner Body Meditation. When you are feeling your inner body, attention is taken away from the thinking mind.

### *ACCEPTANCE*

When we do not resist life, when we fully accept our experiences and others just as they are, we are in the present moment. Full attention to something without judging is acceptance as well.

When we fully accept our life and others just as they are, we have no resistance to them. Then, life can flow more easily, effortless, and joyfully through us.

In addition, when we experience joy, sincere gratitude, heartfelt appreciation, laughter, and peace, we know we are in the present moment.