

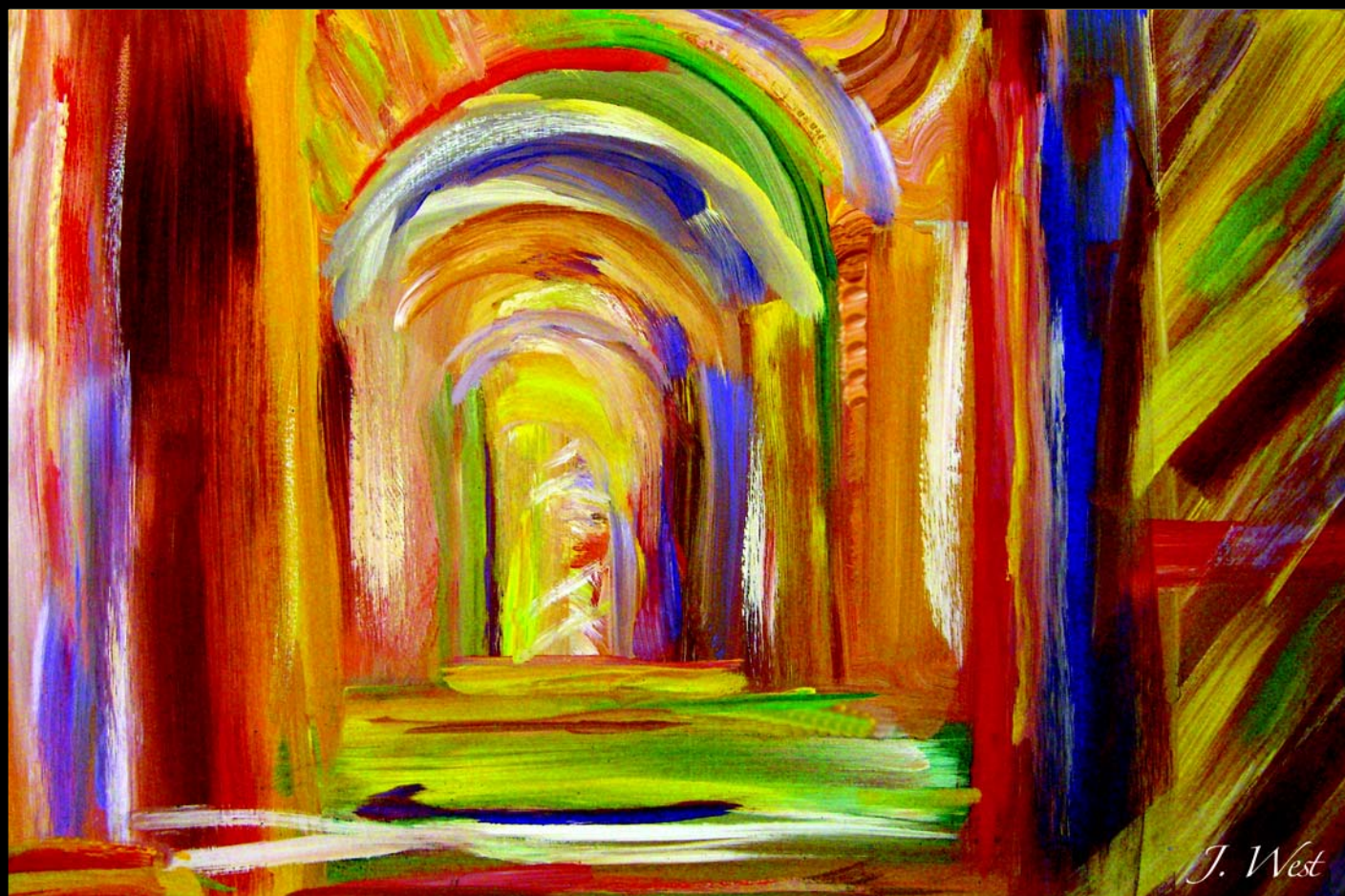
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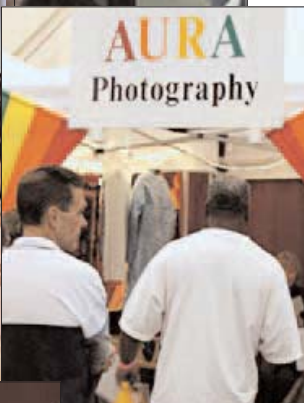
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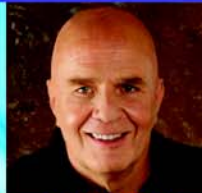
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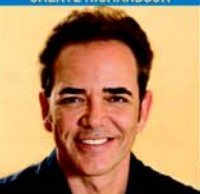
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WORDS FROM THE PUBLISHER.....

One of the people who I consider to be a spiritual teacher is a man named Jack Boland. Jack was the founder of The Church of Today, now called Renaissance Unity, in Warren, Michigan. This is a metaphysical church that grew from about 30 people to over 6,000 by the time he passed away in 1992.

I never met Jack when he was alive, but I have listened to his tapes, read his books and seen his videos many times. One of the videos is a talk called "If Not Now – When?" This is actually a video of his funeral. It's a bit of an unusual service — Jack was still alive. This talk took place at a church service ten days before his actual passing, attended by many of his closest friends including Wayne Dyer, Dr. Joyce Brothers, Les Brown and Larry Gatlin, to name a few.

Jack spoke about the importance of living each moment to the fullest extent and incorporating everything, even pain, as a catalyst to ultimate fulfillment and enlightenment. Then each of those friends stood up and eulogized him, speaking of what he had meant to them in their lives. All of this occurred, I am sure, with Jack totally present and in the moment, allowing his friends to validate and express their gratitude for him having been in their lives. It was a very moving and thought-provoking experience that I have watched many times.

"A Course in Miracles" says that in each moment we have a choice to live in the reality of love or the illusion of fear. Jack, I believe, understood that message from the "Course." Rather than succumbing to the illusion of fear, he perpetuated opportunities such as his pre-death funeral to fully experience expressions of love. We each have these same opportunities 24/7, each and every moment, with every choice we make.

As Dan Millman says in The Way of the Peaceful Warrior, "There are no ordinary moments." May we each live our moments with awareness, creativity and acknowledgement of the beauty of our life's experience.

– Namaste' Clyde

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'Passages' - Organic Abstract painting symbolic of being in the moment. By Jan West - artist, commercial and Force Field photographer. Online gallery & store at www.JanWestArt.com. You may also contact her by phone at 216-496-2671 or by e-mail at JanWestArt@mac.com. See her ad on page 24 of this issue of the Journey.

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Our Theme for the Next Issue...

Courage

CONTRIBUTORS



Leisa Clymer

First time contributor to the Journey, Leisa Clymer, a PhD life development coach in Columbus, distinguishes the “present moment” from the “now.” She discusses present moments as gifts, part of clock time, whereas “the now” is timeless. It is within the present moment that one finds a door to “the now,” once fears are conquered, Clymer says.



Alexandra Leikermoser

We all breathe, right? Well, that’s the best tool to help take you into the present moment, says another first time contributor, Alexandra Leikermoser, an eco designer and Yoga teacher from Toronto. And it helps to think outside of the box, a suggestion that Leikermoser adopts in the middle of her column when she launches into a free-flowing writing exercise. Don’t try it at home, she cautions, but maybe you will, or should.



Jan West

The cover art, entitled “Passages,” was produced by Jan West, an artist who specializes in mandalas, organic abstract paintings, murals, commercial photography and the new frontier of Force Field Photography. “Passages” is painted in a style West coined as “organic abstract.” It symbolizes the paradox of transition — a sense of entering a gateway and having arrived at the same time. West likes to shift existing paradigms, one photograph at a time. For more information go to www.JanWestArt.com

OSHO

Life is a school. You have to learn something. Don’t postpone it till tomorrow – tomorrow may never come. Use this moment to learn. And the only thing life wants you to learn is to know yourself, to be yourself. Then whatever comes, you will be joyful. Whatever happens, you will find ecstasy in it. Don’t think in terms of the future; the future is nonexistential. Only the present is.

My whole approach is rooted in the present. Hence I don’t have anything to promise you. You have to learn to live now, this very moment, as totally, as intensely as possible. Burn your life torch from both the ends together. That very intensity will make you afire, aflame. And to be aflame with the intensity of life is to know what godliness is, is to know what religion is, is to know all that spirituality has in it, the whole mystery. There is nothing more to it.

– *The Sword and the Lotus*

Be Present With Yourself And Embrace the Moment



By wah!

What I like most about writing for the Journey is that it encourages me to experience the elements of holistic living, one by one. When Clyde, the magazine publisher called and asked, “Can you write about being ‘in the moment’?” I was immersed in the experience of it as soon as I said “yes.”

I realized that this moment is all there is. Walking along a road in Vermont, thinking about the future and all its possibilities, both good and bad, it dawned on me that I was walking down a road in Vermont.

The power of now gripped me with all its glory. I looked up and saw the majestic white pines swaying in the wind, I noticed birdsongs and activity, saw the poison ivy on the side of the road, watched a cricket jump.

I suddenly felt incredibly happy. I felt I was here, right now participating in this. This seemed indisputably alive and relevant to everything. Life itself was happening and I was in it.

Oprah Winfrey has a series of shows with Eckhart Tolle, and in one of them she asks, “Where do we go when we die?” Tolle says, “I have no idea.” A little taken aback, Winfrey says, “Wait a minute. You call yourself a spiritual teacher and you have no idea where we go when we die?” Tolle replies simply, “I’ve never really thought about it. I guess when I get there, I’ll be doing that.”

It’s not wrong to plan; even Tolle must arrange projects and tour dates. It’s simply where your focus is – if you are focusing on where you are in this moment, you will experience it.

If you focus yourself on the future, you will fret and plan and scheme for some other day which may or may not actualize in the way you imagined. And then, you will have missed this moment.

This moment is about being present with yourself. If you are washing dishes, then you wash the dishes. You notice the soap bubbles, the way the water comes out of the faucet, the beauty of the well dug so many years ago, the replacement of lead pipes to copper, the feel of the water on your hands and the utensils for scrubbing or wiping or drying.

You notice your breathing, the rise and fall of your breath,

the expansion of your ribcage, the relaxed way your ears hear the noises of the room and the air on the surface of your skin and face.

All You Need to Know

If you are in this moment, it is full. It is enough. You don’t look further than that. Everything you need to know is right here in this moment. Where you will go and how you will be is a result of how you experience this moment.

Will you still be married next year? I don’t know; how does it feel right now? Will this job work out? I don’t know; how do you like the part you are working on right now? One thing leads to another. One moment experienced fully leads to the next full moment. Many full moments could add up to a very full life.

It’s true for the bad stuff, too. Cleaning out the basement of a friend’s house was an unpleasant moment. Flea bombs and anti-mold chemicals and a cat residing in the basement made for less than ideal circumstances.

But the moment was embraced fully and the problem was solved methodically and with grace. If you are present for whatever shows up in the moment, it will be satisfying in the sense that energy will move.

A week ago I was leaving a coffee shop and a seemingly trivial incident triggered a rush of grief. At first I stifled it. This was an incident I thought was sufficiently resolved in my heart. But then I gave into the situation and heaved and sobbed in the privacy of my car.

Five minutes was all it took to empty my heart of sadness, but what a full five minutes it was! I showed up to witness the grief in my heart.

Barometer of Emotions

When you embrace the moment fully, you experience it. If your mind is so busy with its story lines, you miss the experience of the moment. This moment. And you do long to experience this moment. When you fully feel it in your bones, in your heart, in your being, the energy permeates and evolves into something else entirely.

It is hard to believe that there is something going on in every moment. But there is. The coming moments of your life will be full of whatever it is. It – that is, your evolving being – will always be there.

If what the yogis says is true – the seed knows how to become the tree – then everything is contained within. If a deity resides within you, it is your duty to serve and be present for its evolution. Becoming a witness to your own sacred self allows you to be present for whatever it is.

Abraham, the teachers of Esther and Jerry Hicks, say that our emotions are the barometer of how well aligned we are with our path. In other words, it is a constant awareness of, “How do I feel now?” “What am I really feeling about this situation?” “Does this feel like what I was hoping to experience? Am I close to feeling wonderful?”

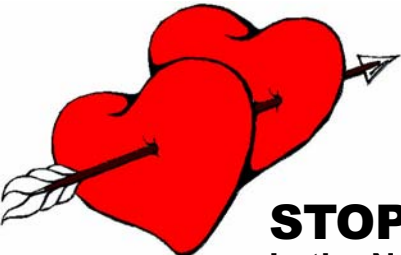
You may feel that the process of life is happening so quickly and so intensely that you forget to ask yourself how you truly feel. Keep asking. Take a moment and ask yourself. Be present with whatever comes up as an answer to that question. If you can spend some time alone each day – walking, running or meditating – it may bring your emotions and desires to surface. It will bring you up-to-date with yourself.

There is one saint I know who says she blesses her footsteps. As she walks, she blesses each and every step on her path. In this way, wherever she is, it is the right place. Whatever she is doing it is the only thing she is doing. She has no concern for what is coming.

When she gets there, she will bless that moment too. She stays present by showing up fully and completely for whatever is happening in the present moment.

You will find the moment, feel the moment, miss it, try again, capture it and search for it. As you seek the split-second experience, you will develop an awareness of your breath, your presence here in this life and your own unique evolution.

Wah! is a musician and spiritual seeker who travels the world singing and expanding sacred intention. Nutone Records released her new CD Love Holding Love in September 2008. www.wahmusic.com



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FIRST HIT PAUSE THEN STOP, THEN PLAY

By Eva Starr

A Japanese warrior, captured by enemies, was thrown into prison. That night he remained sleepless out of fear that the next day he would be interrogated, tortured and executed. Then the words of his Zen master came to him, “Tomorrow is not real. It is an illusion. The only reality is now.” Heeding those words, the warrior became peaceful and fell asleep.

I start with this story to illustrate the simplicity of the phrase *in the moment*. The Zen story above suggests that it is indeed a simple task to be in the moment. But unless you’re a certified Dali Lama devotee, a Zen master or a Buddhist Monk, I beg to differ with the ease and simplicity of the above story. Is there anyone else out there beside myself who may be more than just a little bit troubled in knowing that you could be tortured and executed upon awakening? I thought so.

Many of us strive to live in the moment, don’t we? But challenges can get in the way. Since my relocation to California, I’ve experienced far more dark nights of the soul than I care to count. Don’t get me wrong, I absolutely love California, and it’s everything I’ve heard it to be: God’s country, the land of milk and honey, and yes, it is 72 degrees and sunny every day. That is a weather pattern that is never boring or tiring.

My point is, I have thought about what tomorrow is going to bring, and yes, I’ve read the books, attended the lectures and know that I need to live in the moment. Some days I’m better at it than others, even on the sunny West Coast.

Let’s look at it this way, the past was in the moment when it was happening. Today is definitely in the moment and tomorrow will be in the moment when it comes. If I’m understanding myself correctly, then aren’t we always living in the moment? This reminds me of another Zen story. During a book tour in which Roshi Bernie Glassman gave a reading, a woman stood up and asked him, “What does it

take to live in the Now?” Glassman answered, “Would anyone who is not living in the Now please stand up?”

Allow me to share some times in my life where I feel I am in the moment, and hopefully this will engage your thinking processes for your own self examination. I actually think we can make this more difficult than it needs to be. For example, when I’m doing the dishes, I’m totally lost in the moment of scouring whatever grease or grime coats a skillet or pan. The same thing happens when I’m on my hands and knees scrubbing the kitchen or bathroom floor with a toothbrush. Not much room to start visualizing about a trip to Tahiti in those scenarios is there? Those experiences are not necessarily exhilarating either, but definitely in-the-moment living.

Why do you think the Zen monks have only two chores - sweep the floors and rake the sand? Now you know why those little Zen gardens you buy only come with a little rake and a bag of sand.

Let’s quit all this multitasking that we do, day in and day out and just be in the moment. A friend of mine came over the other day and was performing surgery on my severely blistered feet, the result of a barefoot, five-mile hike. I was amazed that while he was trying to lance my blisters, he was talking on his iPhone and taking notes at the same time. I was hoping that my blisters were getting most of his attention and not the guy on the phone. Now, you tell me, was that living in the moment?

Let’s look at this process from the perspective of awareness or being mindful. When we are mindful of what we are doing, we are actually *in the moment*. This being said, one could easily hypothesize that we are in the moment when we agonize over “spilt milk,” are troubled by the past or fantasize about the future. When we are mindful of being angry, then we are indeed in the moment, *if* we are observing our irritation and recognizing that we are reacting in an angry manner. The situation would be improved, and we would be more in the moment, *if*, after recognizing anger, we then chose peace.

Here’s a question. Are we in the moment when our actions are robotic? Not so much. Think of the old film “The Stepford Wives.” There wasn’t anything close to resembling mindful behavior or in-the-moment experiences in the robotic town depicted in that movie.

Compare that to your last drive through at a McDonald’s or Burger King. You scarfed down a Big Mac or Whopper while speeding down the freeway. Please don’t tell me you were *in the moment*. I don’t think so. Let’s face it, if you were really being mindful of the moment, and of your health, when you ate fast food, you wouldn’t have ordered it and



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then tried to inject it intravenously, figuratively speaking, while going seventy miles per hour.

"It would be best if you could practice being in this moment and then in the next moment and so on. Try to be here, right now. Focus upon a leaf fluttering, light reflected on the waves. Things are more beautiful, afterwards. Make it your own experience. Things will taste, feel better. Colors will be brighter and you'll feel more alive." ~ Kuan Yin

Let's try some visualization. I am a huge brie fan. I am totally in the moment when I seductively spread it on my French bread, take a bite and then slowly savor the melted brie with almonds and butter. I feel the sensation of every taste bud in my mouth as it comes alive. Some of you may do this with chocolate. I can also experience this same type of Nirvana with a vintage Cabernet.

The bottom line is that we have many opportunities during our daily lives to pause and reflect on what we are doing, saying or feeling. Let's quit hitting fast forward and instead hit pause, then stop and then play.

Eva Starr's spiritual journey has taken her coast-to-coast to study the various schools of thought. Starr has recently relocated to San Diego, CA. Visit reachforthemoon.net for up-dates & to be added to her mailing list. Contact Eva Starr at evastarr24@yahoo.com 440-930-8865 for speaking engagements.

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LOSE YOUR MIND AND COME TO YOUR SENSES

By TC Brown

Can someone please explain to me why it is so hard to live in the moment? Considering that we actually do only exist from one second to the next, why on earth is it so hard to remain in the present?

If you are anything like me, I often find myself hours, days or even years away from my present experience – in my head of course. And that “existence” can lie on either side, past or future, of my present, real-time experience.

When that happens, as it often does, I have left reality. Or in a spin on Timothy Leary’s 1960s counterculture mantra, I’ve dropped out and am neither turned on nor tuned in.

It seems to me, when that happens, I am missing much. In “The Power of Now,” Eckhart Tolle correctly points out that “nothing” happens outside of the present moment. The past is a reactive memory trace and the future is an imagined, mind projection of the now.

“Just as the moon has no light of its own, but can only reflect the light of the sun, so are past and future only pale reflections of the light, power and reality of the eternal present,” Tolle says. “Their reality is ‘borrowed’ from the Now.”

Another way to describe this situation is to call it what it is – mind games. I know I often spend too much time living in, or identifying with, my mind. I am mind; mind is me. But most mystics have a lot to say about that, which can be summed up very simply in contemporary terms. Mind identification is a load of garbage. Anthony De Mello, who coined the phrase used as this column’s headline, says that we all need to slow down, taste, smell and hear.

“If you want a royal road to mysticism, sit down quietly and listen to all the sounds around you. You do not focus on any one sound; you try to hear them all,” says De Mello in his book “Awareness.” “Oh, you’ll see miracles that happen to you when your senses come unclogged. That is extremely important for the process of change.”

I’ve always been a bit of a day dreamer and those dreams can intrude at any time or place. Scary as it may sound, more than once I’ve “woken up” while driving my car to the realization that I had gone a good distance without “seeing” the passing miles. It’s not that I’m driving with my eyes closed, or even totally oblivious to my surroundings, but I’m just not totally dialed in. It’s akin to having a cell phone conversation while motoring along. I’m awake, but not fully aware, while engaged in a conversation with someone on the other end.

I’m not suggesting I always walk around bumping into walls and stuff; it’s more like I’m mentally wandering from

time to time taking leave of my present situation, literally. It’s become so much of a habit that I’ve rarely stopped to analyze why or even when this might occur.

Reality — What a Concept

I find it much easier to be present when I am experiencing something new, different, exciting or fun. For instance, I recently returned from a week in the San Francisco Bay Area. I was pretty much “there” the whole time. Wasn’t thinking about what might be occurring at home or focused on what I had to do down the road or feeling guilty about something in the past. I was present with family and friends, enjoying the moments we had together.

During early morning strolls in San Francisco’s Marina District, I was particularly focused on the walk, absorbing the sounds, smells and vistas of the Bay and the Golden Gate Bridge, an environment that I can only experience in memory from Columbus. It was fantastic, and even as I write this, the experience pops up fresh in my mind. (Wandering, once again.)

Whenever I go somewhere on a vacation, I find it especially hard not to relive moments and highlights of the trip upon my return. Making it all that much harder to adjust to the “reality” of being back home. Or, as once put by Robin Williams, “Reality, what a concept.” Indeed.

No doubt mind wandering is a natural part of being human and isn’t always necessarily a bad thing. Creatives certainly dive into introspection to be able to do their thing, but those mental musings must be focused to some extent to accomplish the goals they have set for themselves in creating. And, in reality, they are experiencing the present by their creative focus.

For me, an easier way to plug back into the now without traveling halfway across the country, is to do something simple. There’s a small lake a short drive from my home that is surrounded by a tree-lined path. It is an easy and relaxing walk and the banks of the lake are dotted with benches at various spots.

I love to go there on a sunny day and park myself at a bench at the north end of the lake. As I take a deep breath, I watch diamonds of sunlight reflect and dance on top of the water. My mind empties and all I see is the beauty of surrounding nature. I am totally in the presence of the present moment and it is one of the most peaceful times I ever experience. Being in that moment helps me more fully appreciate the little things around me that so often go unnoticed in the hustle of daily living.


Living more fully and more often in the moment has been

a goal for me for a long time. I'm not yet close to doing it enough. It's no easy task, to be sure. In "Here and Now" author Henri Nouwen points out that if we are to live in the present, we must harbor a deep belief that the here and now are of utmost importance. The reward is great, Nouwen says.

"If we could just be, for a few minutes each day, fully where we are, we would indeed discover that we are not alone and that the One who is with us wants only one thing: to give us love."

I look forward to the day when I can declare on a regular basis, without sarcasm and with no pun intended, "I've lost my mind." That will, indeed, be a "present."

TC Brown, editor of the Journey, is a free-lance writer, editor, consultant and multimedia producer. He can be reached at tcbrown88@yahoo.com.



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DROP FEAR AND OPEN A DOOR TO THE NOW

By Leisa Clymer

How we say the word “tomato,” tom-ay-to or tom-ah-to, doesn’t change what it *is*: A vegetable, or as some would argue, a fruit. What does it matter? When we argue over who is *right*, how tomato “should” be pronounced, or how it is defined, we engage in judgment and conflict. We disengage from each other, but also from ourselves.

When we are compelled to divide and conquer our brothers and sisters, even over something as small as a tomato, we lock ourselves out of the Now. We become spiritually separated and disconnected from the Source.

When I was asked to contribute a piece on the “Now” I couldn’t decide what to write. The Now is simple and much of my work involves helping people get in touch with Now. For me, nothing compares to the feeling of being in the Now. The experience is priceless. The frenzied activity of the world can be tiring. I feel sad when those I love are so occupied with striving and yearning that they simply can’t be with me.

We are locked out of the Now and into perpetual struggle by fear. Whether we call it anxiety, stress, anger, pressure, frustration, worry, nerves, phobia, obsession, being overwhelmed or in panic, in the end it doesn’t matter; it boils down to fear. Being afraid of Now has never made sense. My experience has taught me there is nothing to fear, and much to gain. The Now makes life so much more interesting and fun.

My central question for this assignment became, “What is the *root* of all the fear?” I pondered it, but the answer wouldn’t come. Finally, I did what I always do when my thinking mind is stumped. I dissolved into the Now and from there I re-asked my question ... “What is it that people fear?”

And the Now answered, as it always does, whispering softly, “*The unknown. They fear the unknown.*”

I allowed the Now to wash through me so that I would know more fully. I felt an inner peace that opened my heart. Through knowing, I was filled with compassion.

In one expanded moment, the idea for this essay surged through my head. It flowed like a lovely, haunting song. There were no specific words, but the song’s beauty was profound, its meaning imprinted in my being. It needed only to be written down.

The Now gave me structure, a map to share. Like a raft at sea, structure helps us to feel safe when we explore the unknown. And by shining light on fears of the unknown, they can be seen clearly and often will evaporate, allowing for expanded awareness. The unknown simply becomes something we’ve not yet explored, an adventure to be experienced.

Explore the Magic

We think of “now” as the present moment. It has been said that the past is lost and the future has no guarantee, but the present moment is a precious gift. Thus, it’s called the “present.”

So much energy can be wasted on the past and the future that the present moment is lost. The past is organized, rewritten, manipulated and controlled. The future is planned, pursued, argued over and can be obsessive. The present moment is fleeting...tick-tock ... here and gone. We develop a wistful sense of emptiness and loss, though we’re not quite sure what’s missing or when it was lost.

Past, present and future are all related to “clock” time, but the Now has no connection to time as we know it. Secret and mysterious, the Now is *timeless*. If the present moment is a gift, the word “gift” falls far short of describing the wealth it contains. However, we can’t receive the gift until we learn to open the moment.

Within the present moment is the door to a Now that is utterly magical; full of riches and pregnant with potential. Yet all too often the possibilities go unrealized, the riches lie unexplored. Sadly, the moment falls silent and barren. Strung together, these moments become a sterile, lifeless flow that slips away like sand in an hourglass.

The magical Now has no past, present or future, nor is it confined by clocks. Drop the tether of time and something amazing happens – the Now expands. Why should we care if time stands still or the moment expands? What’s so magic about this and more importantly, what does it mean for us?

The Now is a wellspring of rest and rejuvenation. It is the conception ground of creativity. It is where our heart can be content and where new dreams are born. It is the place of Divine union that sparks the seeds of our Soul’s potential. In the Now we find regeneration and rebirth. With regular practice, “Be here now” has tremendous practical benefits for our health, well being, body and soul. Most of us, however, have learned that this simple phrase is easy to say, but challenging to attain.

The Great Unknown

The Now is impartial and equally available to all, and it exists everywhere. We don’t need a key because we *are* the key. Our awareness finds the present moment; our state of being and our inner process opens the door.

Awareness grounds us and holds our being steady. Attitude gives us the inner strength and flexibility to join the universal flow of life.

Leisa Clymer...Continued on page 34

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The Breath: Our Guide Into The Now

By Alexandra Leikermoser

Hurry, hurry don't be late. Go here, do this. Go there, do that. Don't forget this and don't forget that. Did you remember to do what you were supposed to do, or did that errand slip by you? Does any of this ring bells of familiarity? Often our days are crammed with so many things to do and so many places to go and a host of people to see, that it seems like it might be easy to forget to breathe. Here's a few ideas to consider that can help slow the pace and help us touch base:

- Stop.
- Breathe.
- Be.
- Savor the moment.

Ahhhh. . . being in the moment. It is so easy to forget, yet it is most important and it is really what makes up the fabric of our lives. A moment in time. Momentary. A piece of time. Do we know exactly what a moment is? Can it truly be defined? I can share my personal definition.

For me a moment is synonymous with breath and breathing. It is being present enough to enjoy what is happening in the moment – the now. I can try to let go and not worry about doing things like trying to capture it on camera or in writing. I can release the need to feel like I must go somewhere or accomplish some task. I can just enjoy “being” to the point where I am in a complete state of “allowing.”

For me, these moments come more easily when I am out in nature connecting with it on a personal level. When I walk on the beach, I can feel each tiny grain of sand between my toes. I feel the sensation of the wind's soft touch, gently caressing my cheek.

These moments also come when I am in a balancing yoga pose that requires me to breathe deeply and be really present, or else risk falling over. Capturing and enjoying a present moment isn't so easy when you find yourself in a pressure-and-stress filled situation, like being caught in a jam of city traffic. Those are the moments where the good habits I formed in meditation and yoga practice come in very handy. There is one central key that is very helpful:

- This is where we call on the breath.
- The breath is the key to the moment.
- We cannot breathe in the past.
- We cannot breathe in the future.

Think Outside the Box

The breath is an excellent tool to take us into the present. The breath helps us to move more mindfully and slowly. Fast is an illusion. Slow isn't so bad. It may seem surprising

but when we move slowly we are able to get more done. Everyone knows Aesop's Fable, “The Tortoise and the Hare.” Slow and steady wins the race. Be a turtle and try it sometime; observe the outcome.

If the present is truly all there really is, why are we so caught up in what could be or what could have been? Perhaps the element missing in our lives is the ability to be free-flowing human beings. Maybe we are too uptight and spend too much time confined by the “box” of our habits.

It's complicated, made more so by deadlines, appointments and, well, this, that and the other. I am being fully in the moment as I write this piece. But what about taking this task “out of the box” to a free flowing, freeform writing exercise? What happens?

Disclaimer:

Please do not try this at home unless you are prepared to be in the moment! Here goes: The truth is all there is. The moment is all there is. Discover the power of being present. Being in the now. Listening. Being. Breathing. Feeling. Ahhhhh. Letting go. Breath. Listen. Honor your place. Letting be. Tuning into our intuition. Playing. Seeing with fresh eyes. Gratitude. Grace. No goals. No desires. Contentment. Surrender. Freedom to be. Singing. Dancing. Playing. Now I am in the moment. . . with very short sentences!

The truth is that there are so many ways to just “be.” But often we are stuck in the only way we know. Part of the beauty of our journey is experimenting and finding new modes for self-expression that give us new or expanded abilities to be who we are, while staying present and fully awake, aware and in the moment.

We really can't live in the past or the future. We can only live in the moment. Today as you walk in you present moments, don't draw from the past or project to the future; do your best to stay in each of those moments. Allow yourself to experience a kind of temporary amnesia and watch your day shift. I leave you with one last thought to gnaw on: if the answer is being in the moment, then what is the question? Hmmmm... Thank you for your precious time! Thank you for sharing this moment with my words.

Alexandra Leikermoser, an eco designer and Yoga instructor, also produces inspirational writing, clothing and accessories, aimed at promoting a serious “practice” while keeping the ability to laugh at one's self. When she is not facilitating creative goddess retreats and workshops, you can find her playing on the beach, drumming and singing to the waves.

Points to Ponder

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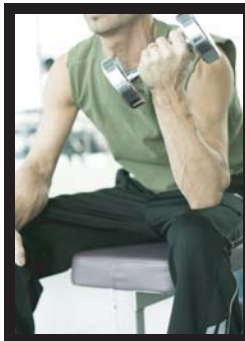
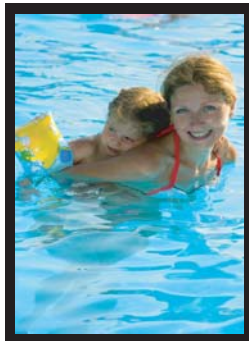
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HEALTH & NUTRITION

DOWNSIZE TO MAKE ROOM FOR MOMENTS

By Janee Kuta-Iliano

Being in the moment is where life is most illuminated. All anxieties, thoughts and judgments cease. Ordinary sights, sounds and smells flood the senses. Negative emotions disappear and a feeling of awe and wonder take their place. Peace and appreciation pervade.

Being in the moment is such a beautiful experience. So why can't it happen all the time? How can we go from complete awareness to utter chaos in an instant? Calm, cool and collected one moment, and freaking out the next. Becoming more present to my life has made me realize how much I have been missing.

These past few years have been true transformation and healing for me. We all have our baggage and this just happens to be my time to unpack. Deciding to no longer carry around burdens and making a commitment to actively participate in my life has become my focus. I am devoted to purposefully creating the life of my dreams, and being in the moment has become a vital part to my success.

There are reasons I want to share about why I have not been able to be in the moment. One major obstacle was my schedule! I have spent many years living on a very tight string. My life has been very regimented with work, activities, commitments, etc. Who doesn't have a busy schedule these days? Even our children's days have become over scheduled, leaving little room for any of us to get sidetracked.

My unrealistic schedule not only made me late to events, but continually created a sense of panic that had me rushing around all the time. I hated it because I felt like something was wrong with me. My family teased me about how I was always late to functions. There were times when I wanted to talk to the salad bar guy at Heinen's but couldn't because I had to get somewhere. It felt like I was running around with my head down, going over what was next and missing out on all the beauty, wonder and lessons that surrounded me.

Floating Dust

After having Jude, my schedule had to change. My daughter has become one of my best teachers because she is always, always in the moment. I remember early on when

she would sit peacefully and grab for bits of dust that floated by her face. I was in awe as she looked at the dust with pure wonder, laughing as she tried to reach for it. Being with Jude has been refreshing because she truly is going with the flow of life.

Creating a realistic timetable, saying no to events and spending more time doing nothing versus scheduling all these activities has been a saving grace. It is now okay if Jude wants to take a minute to sit on those big red balls at Target whereas before, there would have been no time for it. Downsizing and doing less instead of more has been my goal and a nice way to help me stay present and in the moment.

Another issue that has personally kept me from being in the moment has been holding on to grudges. I would like to consider myself a forgiving person, but when I took a good look in the mirror, could I say that I really was? Forgiving others for past issues and most importantly, forgiving myself for things, has taken the weight of the world off my shoulders. Talk about lightening up! It has been like freeing up space on a computer.

Forgiving has given me room to breathe. Forgiving has allowed me to start really liking myself as a person, which is a very positive thing. When we are peaceful, we are in the moment. This is how we are supposed to be: happy, humble, giving, loving. Not tortured, harassed, dejected and helpless. "The harvest is indeed plentiful, but the laborers are few." (Matt 9:37)

Living a life of gratitude bears a lot of fruit as well. Our give-me-give-me society appears to be driven by the idea that the world owes us something. This collective thought pattern keeps us focused on what's next and how much more will we get. Society expects us to be at a certain place in life at a certain age, so we keep striving and reaching for the next level instead of appreciating what we have now.

I realize that I am here to impress one person in my life, God. Focusing less on myself and living in gratitude for all my blessings has taken the edge off and has begun to open up powerful insights to life as I go along.

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Being in the moment allows us to look at everything with a fresh mind. A fresh mind is like a new mind in each second because it does not replay the same old thought patterns, judgments and assumptions over and over again. Our habits are well-paved paths and cease to exist when we focus on the here and now.

So take a peek, explore what is keeping you from being in the moment. Are you over-scheduled and running on empty? Do you feel forced to do everything for everyone else with no time for yourself? Do you hold on to bitterness that is taking up space in your mind and body? There is a solution to these questions. Start letting go of baggage and begin to ask for help. As has been said, "Let go and Let God." I am overwhelmed at how much that can help.

Janee Kuta-Iliano is the director of ALIVE ONE whose purpose is to empower others to take control of their health and well-being. She is a holistic health educator, offering Internal Cleansing & Detoxification Programs, Juice Plus Nutritional Products and instruction on Raw Foods Cooking Classes. Visit her website at "http://www.aliveone.net" www.aliveone.net. For more information contact Janee at 440-478-9802 or "mailto:janee@aliveone.net" janee@aliveone.net

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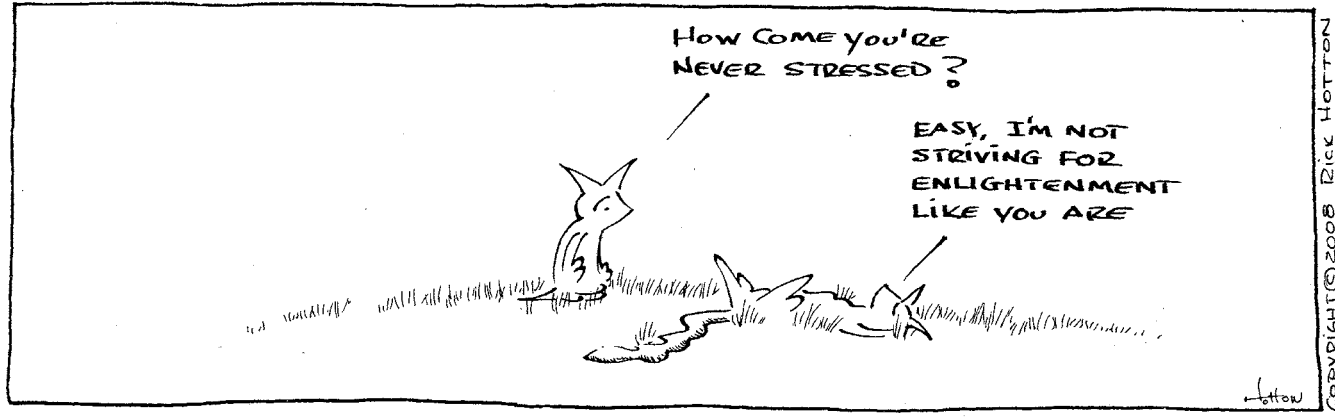
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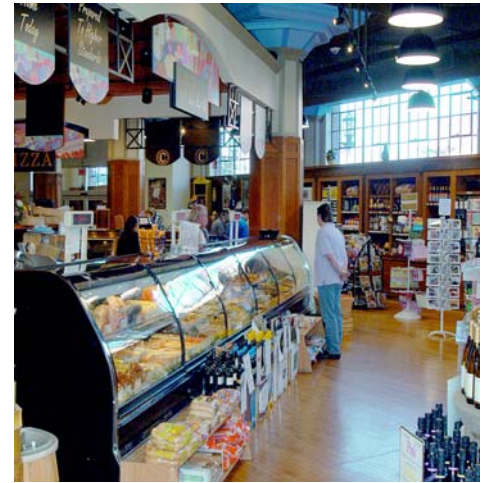
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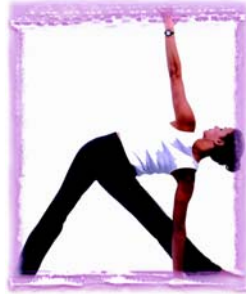
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THE YOGA PAGES



The Yoga of Politics: Possibility in a World of Polarity

By Laurel Hodory

In this time of intense political debate, we may find ourselves acting or speaking with great fervor on behalf of a particular position or party. Polarity exists between two platforms, with each side proclaiming that their version of the truth is the correct one. Strikingly, yoga teaches that multiple truths can exist simultaneously.

Like the political schism, we can each hold mutually exclusive beliefs that are in conflict with one another, causing turmoil in the “moments” of our lives.

A schism common in the yoga world and in the healing arts revolves around health and wealth. When I hear yoga teachers and students speak about goals and priorities, I hear, “To create wealth, I need to work very hard and forego tending to my mental, physical and spiritual health. But I’m not willing to compromise my health, so I am not building wealth.” Or alternately, they reason that in order to be mentally, physically and spiritually healthy, they cannot work the hours necessary to attract wealth. This creates a world of impossibility.

From a yoga perspective, these opposites can be viewed in a couple of different lights. A classical yoga view might suggest that health and wealth are attachments of the limited self. Rather than engaging with these desires, one should practice *aparigraha*—non-grasping or non-attachment—to desires and aversions to avoid suffering.

By simply releasing one’s grip on the world of illusions, the practitioner can be freed from this inner conflict and suffering. Furthermore, these desires and aversions arise not from the eternal Self, but from the limited, ego-based self. The practice or non-attachment to desire (“this”) and aversion (“that”) is sometimes called, “neti-neti”: not this and not that. So through neti-neti, the practitioner identifies

more deeply with the eternal, cosmic Self and not so much with the limited self.

Using the example of health and wealth, the classical meditation approach concentrates on recognizing those goals as impermanent longings of the little, unexpanded self. By refusing to grasp onto the limited self, we begin to identify with the big, expanded and transcendent Self, thereby elevating our consciousness, which also helps us to maintain our presence in the now. This approach may be most effective for those who are able to renounce the worldly life, such as monks, but may also find limited use for those of us fully engaged in the demands of the mundane life.

But another very different yoga philosophy exists, which is steeped in the Tantric tradition and arises out of Kashmir Shaivism. It says that these desires and aversions that sometimes manifest as our beliefs are actually an expression of the divine, eternal Self. Instead of trying to shun those desires, we might instead examine them more closely and attempt to discern which ones move us into alignment with the deepest yearning of our hearts and ultimately the divine.

According to Douglas Brooks, a practitioner and philosophy professor, the great yoga texts describe discernment as a skill that can be cultivated through: study of scripture, talking to those with experience, a deep in dwelling within our emotions and by making choices informed by all these steps. Fundamental to the Tantric view is the idea that the *one* undifferentiated self manifests as the *many*. Thus, there will always be many truths that will forever be expanding, growing richer and more complex.

The Tantric practice then, is to hold space for more



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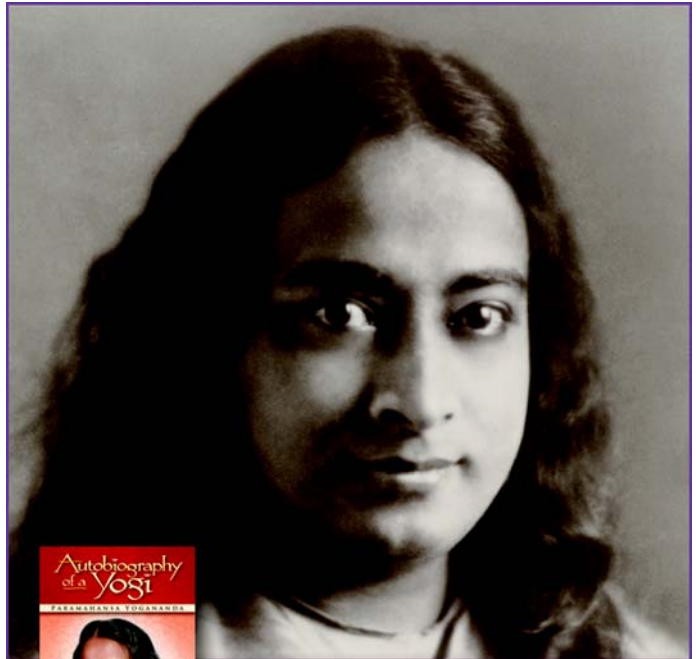
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than one possibility. Simply put, it is a “both-and” approach in lieu of the classical neti-neti approach. From the Tantric perspective, embracing complementary opposites expands our awareness and our ability to receive and open to multiple possibilities.

Using the example of health and wealth, the meditation practice would include both a recognition of the existing truth as experienced by the practitioner, *and* an invitation to experience a bigger truth that might include something that is simply not yet comprehensible. This invitation allows the practitioner to make space for an experience that might instantaneously transform one’s current understanding of health and wealth as mutually exclusive, to an *experience* of them as complementary and co-existing opposites. The invitation is one that welcomes the creative process and recognizes our capacity to evolve.

As far as applying the latter philosophy to politics, one thing is certain — surely we can all agree that no candidate or platform knows how it is going to get us out of this grand crises of economic, foreign affairs and environmental situations. But by holding space for the possibility of a larger truth to emerge right alongside the truth with which we currently identify within our hearts, we open up to expansion and unity.

We invite the possibility that a bigger truth, far greater than what we can imagine in this moment, exists. With this awareness and creation of space for possibility, we have the opportunity to invite the alchemy of transformation – in ourselves, in our relationships and in our communities. We can sit in meditation and hold space for both this *and* that. And



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we can listen to our friends and family, who hold different political opinions, with openness, while speaking to them with kindness and compassion. That will create fertile soil for the truth to emerge.


When we can embrace the bigger Self along with our participation as a member of our wider community, it is like becoming one of many individual colors in a rainbow, which in itself is created by a single source of light. We are all of that light, with no one color being better than another. In this recognition, we create the possibility of spontaneous revelation, an “aha” moment that transports us to the highest mountain peak where we can see from a completely different and expanded perspective.

Please note that Tantra is a broad term that encompasses a wide range of philosophies and practices. The range is so broad that it is sometimes described as having two poles that express the range: left-handed and right-handed. Some of the unusual practices for which Tantra has gained notoriety, such as cannibalism or sexual excesses, would be associated with left-handed Tantra. The Tantra I refer to here is more of the right-handed school.

Laurel Hodory, MS, is a Yoga teacher who owned and directed It's Yoga Columbus for seven years. She worked in the environmental field at the Ohio EPA and as a consultant in water resource protection. She currently teaches Yoga in Columbus and internationally, leading retreats and workshops that unbind the body and awaken the spirit. For more information go to www.laurelhodory.com.

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By Eva Starr

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December: New Moon in Capricorn December 27th 7:22am/Full Moon in Gemini December 12th 11:37am

ARIES

November – Ram you're all about being first, and being #1...so honor your top priorities...when in doubt, do without...in other words if it's NOT an absolute YES this month then it's a NO...love thy self, being self-centered is different than being selfish...*take charge Ram...you know what's right and what isn't*

December – The Ram is overseeing his world, similar to last month...there's still a little resistance on top of the summit, heed those signs, take your time to check out all the facts, sometimes NO action is the best action of all...and we know how hard it is for the Ram to wait...*Let it Snow, Let it Snow, Let it Snow...then decide*

TAURUS

November – The Bull is infamous for staying close to the Bull Pen...sorry there Mr. Bull, it's time to step out of your comfort zone and start heading toward that red cape...take a leap of faith, your courage will see you through, no more standing around, look straight ahead, get them feet ready...then charge, baby...charge full speed ahead

December – Too much action in the Bull Pen last month makes for a weary Bull this Holiday season...slow down, smell the pine trees, build a fire, relax in that way too comfy easy chair of yours, release all guilt, making your needs a top priority, rest and relax and make it a *Silent Night...leave the hustle & bustle for the others*

GEMINI

November – Who said two minds are better than one? This is the time for the Twins to exert some independence and choose for yourself...nobody knows better than the dualistic Twins what's good for you but you...exercise your right to choose, you and only you, can decide who's going to show up, *Dr. Jekyll or Mr. Hyde*

December – Now doesn't that feel better listening to your own damn self, take some time this Holiday season to nurture your own soul, yea that's right, a little self-love is what the Dr. ordered...care for that Twin body of yours, after all if you can't love yourself, you're no good to anyone else, make the *Twelve Days of Xmas* all about loving you

CANCER

November – The Celestial Heavens are turning the reigns over to the Crab...no more skirting the issue, assert some of that Crab independence, start listening to you for a change,

make a decision based on what's good for the Crab, you've got what it takes this month to be the natural born leader you were meant to be, *exercise your right to choose*

December – The Stars are aligned, the Moon is shining...it's time to loosen up your grip on those Crab pinchers of yours, release your ties to the past...when you let go of the old, you make room for the new...clear out the clutter, people, places and things who no longer serve who you are, then start singing *Auld Lang Syne*, opportunities abound

LEO

November – You're King of the Jungle, start acting like it...that's right it's time to take action, reclaim your throne...the journey to *find your lost Lion self* begins with one step...get that Roar back, move those feet, get that Lion blood moving, the Heavens are aligned to help you, take the initiative and watch that Jungle of yours grow baby grow

December – That's more like it, doesn't it feel good to have your Jungle back? Think BIG, like only the Lion can, there are unseen celestial forces ready to support your dreams, how big is your cup? The bigger the dream, the more people in that Jungle of yours ready to back you up...it's time to cash in on that *Silver and Gold*

VIRGO

November – How can you practice *present-moment awareness* if you're too busy analyzing everything to death...the meaning you yearn for lives in the ever present now...how can you possibly move forward with your eyes in the rearview mirror? Take time to appreciate living in the moment, smell the flowers, taste life, reap the Harvest

December – What are you afraid of, nothing ventured nothing gained, I know Virgo is one of the most practical signs of the Zodiac, but *Santa Claus is Coming to Town...you have the power within you to move mountains this month, come out of your comfort zone, the stars are aligned, the Universe is behind you, just look at a snowflake to believe*

LIBRA

November – It's true what they say, a goal not written down is only a wish, quit vacillating, sit yourself down, set a goal for yourself, WRITE it down, yes in back & white on paper...then release the outcome, the planets are magnificent in themselves, trust, then put one foot in front of the other, *small steps make a big difference*

December – Put on your dancing shoes Libra and step

into the light, the Universe is calling you to share your talents with the world...nobody shines in the cultural arena of dance and music like you, lover of the arts...tis the season to sing out your song and dance the night away while the *Nutcracker Suite* beckons your heart

SCORPIO

November – The Scorpion's plate is quite full this month, with an extra dose of planetary activity...the Sun, Mercury and Mars have arrived in your sign with full head dress...don't be afraid to ask for help, come out of hiding in that deep dark world of yours...*receiving is an act of generosity*, don't take the gift away from the giver

December – Slow down my dear Scorpion...patience is a virtue...the planets are aligning something extra special up for you, steady...be willing to pass up good for great, no need to hop on the first bus that comes around the corner, they'll be another, then another one...you'll know when the *Three Kings of Orient* arrive bearing their gifts

SAGITTARIUS

November – Is the Centaur feeling a bit overwhelmed? Aim that bow and arrow right toward the *self-care bulls eye*...the Heavens say slow down, take a deep breath, it's OK to make your needs top priority this month, you need to take some R & R time for yourself or you'll be too whipped for the upcoming Holiday season

December – The Sun, Mercury & Mars have moved into your sign, the Heavens have arranged plenty of joy for the Centaur this Holiday season, you're just looking for the red box when the blue box is staring you in the face, keep your eyes open & reflect, for joy lives in small places...there you go, now it's time to sing *Joy to the World*

CAPRICORN

November – It's time for the Goat to start *seeing the glass half full*, don't let the skepticism sink in...Lady Venus arrives mid-month, and Jupiter is still in your sign, cash in on the last couple of months of opportunity Jupiter brings with it, keep your eyes & ears open, look for the rainbow amongst the clouds, & dig out your best outfit

December – Venus is still lingering for just a tad longer, love is all around you, start with loving yourself first, then chose love in every situation...let love become a powerful force for change in your life...the stars above are shining in your favor...don't let the Goat get in your way...open your heart and sing *Kiss Me at Midnight*

AQUARIUS

November – Take some of that sudden Uranian energy you Aquarians are famous for and do some major clearing...no better time than now to get ready for the upcoming Holiday season...the planets are with you, *clear the clutter*...when in doubt, throw it out, get rid of everything that no longer serves who you are and who you are becoming

December – Getting rid of the old did you some good, now get ready for the new to come into your life in the love department...that's right Venus is at your door and she's knocking, get plenty of sleep, rejuvenate that body of

yours...you're going to need it when you stay up all night *Roasting Chestnuts on an Open Fire* with your lover

PISCES

November – It's time to swim over to another pond; you've been swimming with the guppies for too long. Take a risk, it's time to *swim with the whales*, quit playing small, you're ready for a bigger pond...the stars are aligned to back you up...take a deep breath and dive right in...the water is warm, what is the Fish waiting for?

December – There now, didn't that swim feel good...you've taken a risk, now it's time to resurrect a childhood dream...ask what makes you come alive & go do it, follow your passion, if it gets you excited it's there for a reason, follow your pull wave and let this Holiday season be *The Most Wonderful Time of the Year*

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Awareness and attitude combine to form beliefs, feelings, behaviors and intentions, a solid foundation leading us to the Now. A strong base makes it easier to slip that tether of time. Only fear holds us back.

When we step out of time we walk into the Great Unknown where anything can happen. What will it be, the chaos of danger, destruction and death? Or inner peace that gives rest, rejuvenation and rebirth? Thoughts seesaw back and forth. Try weighing the options in the heart. There we find faith to soften our fears and gain trust that allows us to spread our wings.

When we trust in a Higher Power, a unified force, a loving universe or something called "God," the process simply unfolds. No "doing" is necessary! We enter the Now through spiritual union; we become one with it. Our being expands and as a result all is honored, allowed and savored.

Let go, allow and just be. Become receptive, remaining still but aware; opening up, feeling, knowing and keenly observing the dynamic flow of what IS. With an attitude of honoring, allowing and savoring, being in the Now is as easy as shifting the gears on a bike. It takes practice to find the right gear to shift smoothly, but eventually it becomes effortless.

For our thinking mind, "remaining still" can be a challenge. The intellect wants to define and analyze. Tell the intellect to take a vacation. Don't be surprised when it fights back. But when the intellect rests, the broader mind can allow in multiple and contrasting perceptions, at the same time, without judgment.

Our senses of sight, sound, smell, taste and touch tell us about the physical world and those perceptions bring that outer world within. But the Now exists beyond the physical world and must be perceived through our broader, non-physical *experiential* perceptions, also known as intuition.

Connecting Visible and Invisible

Intuition involves the whole self. Each moment, we have at least four different experiences of Now – the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual. To enter the Now, these distinct yet contrasting perceptions must work in unity and harmony. Intuitive perception is the bridge between physical and subtle realities. It connects us to what quantum physics calls the implicate order, from which all matter is born. Intuitive perception allows us to see the invisible and enables us to manifest our potential.

When we slip through time and enter the Now we don't leave the physical world, we simply expand our boundaries. We invite the quantum world to join our inner world; we allow light to join with matter. We release the world we know and open to the unknowable. This Now is ephemeral, it *almost* exists, but not quite. Yet moment-by-moment this reality gives birth to the physical world in which we live and breathe. The Now, quite literally, is everyone's Mother.

Through intuition, we know reality through "wholes" rather than "parts." It is not better or worse than sensory perception, which knows reality through "parts" rather than "wholes." Different perceptions have different roles; one cannot do the job of the other. The Now can be entered *only*

through our inner experience and intuitive perception. The following are the four modes of intuitive perception:

Mentally we perceive the world through thinking and intellect. Thoughts can take us to *any time* in the blink of an eye ... infancy, middle school, old age, death. Mediators call this chaotic quality "monkey mind" because, like monkeys chattering and jumping about in trees, it distracts us from our path. To enter the Now we must learn mental stillness.

The Emotional body perceives through our feelings and emotions. Emotions are highly charged when we feel strongly about something. We become pressured and driven, caught in a perpetual storm of pure experience that has *no time*. Whether positive or negative, emotional intensity pushes or pulls us out of the Now. It drives us to do something. To experience the Now we must cultivate the power of emotional neutrality.

The Physical body perceives through the senses. Unfortunately, it is often *locked in time*, riddled with unresolved hurts and trauma of which we may be unaware. Of the four bodies, the physical is most affected by clock time. It can also be the most healed by the Now. To be in the Now, the physical body must learn to become open, receptive and conscious.

The Spiritual body is connected to all that is and it perceives through subtle energy. It is inseparable from eternity. Separation from our spiritual self creates a monster that controls life force, ensnaring us in drama, conflict and endless battles of superiority-inferiority. To join the universal flow of the Now, we must become humble and release the need for control. The Now teaches us that true greatness is born of genuine humility.

It is difficult to develop the qualities of stillness, neutrality, receptivity and allowing. Few are born with even one of these qualities. Learning requires tremendous effort, discipline and practice. But anyone who has succeeded in their development will tell you the effort paid off. Why? Because they hold keys to the Now.

When we are able to still the mind, open the heart and be fully present in the body we gain a deep sense of inner peace. When we are also willing to enter the Now, true magic begins to happen. Being in the Now requires spending some time and energy. But this is an investment guaranteed to pay back, and just imagine what can be accomplished with a little magic!

Leisa Clymer, PhD, is an expert coach, mentor and guide in Columbus. She focuses on developing potential, guiding transformations and non-linear changes. Dr. Clymer is a skilled practitioner who uses a unique approach to clearly identify the most effective ways to resolve issues, achieve goals, and explore potential for individuals, groups and small or large organizations. For more information visit www.IAmInfinitePotential.com

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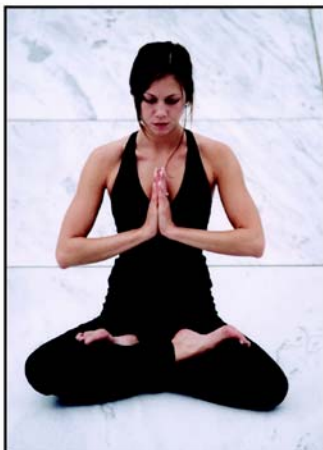
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