

Gateways to Now

For a very long time, the dilemma of humankind has been that we identify almost exclusively with mind activity. If you look at the nature of the human mind in a very basic way, the first thing that strikes you is that it is extremely active. There is a continuous stream of thought that goes through one's head. It is a noise that you can't really switch off.

You are condemned to living with a noise machine in your head. This is so normal hardly anyone ever questions the premise that you can't stop thinking.

You can look at your own mind to see how often thought is concerned with problems. And in most cases it is not a problem that is here, now – that is actual, true reality, here now. It is a problem that is generated in and through mental noise. That is the case, for example, when you worry. You are in bed, very warm, protected. It's all quiet and you are breathing, but you are worried. Mental noise is in a state of hyper-activity.

Mental noise starts at a very early age, and after a while your whole sense of who you are, your sense of self, of identity, your essential sense of "me" is bound up with thought activity.

When you tell yourself who you are, a mental image comes into being of who you THINK you are – a "me." You will find that a lot of the thought activity that goes on has to do with "me." The "me" in the head. The image of who I think I am. "Me and my problems." A lot of thought focuses on "me and my problems and how I'm going to get out of them, how I'm going to solve them.

I'm here to tell you the good news – that there is the possibility of freedom from that absurdly limited sense of self.

It is in the Now that you become aware of your TRUE identity.

Pure love, or God, or whatever you might call it is the essence of who you are. If you go deep enough, you find that essence. And the wonderful thing is that you don't need time to do that. In fact, time is the one thing that you don't need to know who you are. You can only know that NOW. And that arises in a state of consciousness I call "presence." That is a state in which thought can operate but is no longer compulsive.

In order to truly KNOW who you are beyond name and form, you need to enter the NOW.

Gateways to the Now

You can explore a number of gateways or portals that will gain you access to the Now. Use these gateways. Make them part of your daily practice. Once you become familiar with that state of spacious presence, you will notice the difference between that state and what is considered the normal human state.

1) Gateway of the Inner Body – There is an increased aliveness as soon as you inhabit the body which means your attention is not exclusively on the outer world and your sense perceptions. When you inhabit your body, your attention is not exclusively on thought. Some of your attention dwells in the inner energy field of the body, turning your attention away from continuous mental noise.

2) Gateway of Silence – You can notice silence only through increased alertness, and that increased alertness is an inner stillness. When you notice silence – and you may notice it only for a second – but at that moment the mind is still. Listen to the silence. Acknowledge the dimension of silence.

3) Gateway of Acceptance – The origin of suffering is not accepting what is in your life Now. Allowing this moment to be, just as it is, is a simple but radical spiritual practice. It's a practice that leads to inner peace. Embracing this moment is the most powerful gateway, and you will see it is also connected to the gateways of the inner body and of silence.

As you seek these gateways, you will begin to experience and abide in the Now, increasing your awareness of your essence, an essence which is beyond name and form. This is self-realization. And it is so simple. When you know who you truly are, the false in life falls away. Life becomes purer, simpler, more peaceful, and more filled with joy.

Eckhart Tolle