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PUBLISHER'S PREFACE



The Power of Now was launched in India in June 2001. At that time, we did not envisage the tremendous impact the teaching would have on thousands of Indians. As mentioned in a write-up which recently appeared in a popular spiritual magazine, "...And his book *The Power of Now* is on the bestseller list even in India, which teems with spiritual masters." Testimony to the fact that we are open to any teaching which is genuine and strikes a chord in our hearts and being.

Eckhart traveled to India in February 2002. He addressed gatherings in Chennai and Pondicherry, and this was followed by a seven-day retreat in Rishikesh. Eckhart's first India tour culminated with a two-day

evening talk in Mumbai, which was attended by over 500 people.

On my recent trip to France, I visited the glorious cathedrals across the country. Their imposing grandeur and quietness was in stark contrast to the hustle and bustle inside the great temples of India. Prior to my departure I visited a typical, small roadside temple in a bylane of Mumbai. In retrospect, I feel that the five minutes I spent within this temple's chambers had the same quality as the moments spent in a cathedral, despite the difference in their environment. It was then I realized why this was so, and what was common to both. It was the feeling 'within' and not that which was 'without'. A feeling of peace and tranquility – a state of 'being' which most of us have experienced at some point or another in our lives. Eckhart refers to this as the invisible inner body, the animating presence within the visible and tangible body. In *The Power of Now* he states, "Underneath your outer form, you are connected with something so vast, so immeasurable and sacred, that it cannot be conceived or spoken of – yet I am speaking of it now. I am speaking of it not to give you something to believe in but to show you how you can know it for yourself."

This is what *Practicing The Power of Now* helps you to do. Moving forward from *The Power of Now*, it extracts the essence of the teachings, showing us

how to free ourselves from “enslavement to the mind.” Through meditations and techniques, Eckhart shows us how to quiet our thoughts, see the world in the present moment and find a path to “a life of grace, ease and lightness.”

During a brief conversation prior to his departure from Mumbai, Eckhart mentioned that *Practicing The Power of Now* was for those who wanted the essence from *The Power of Now* in a book they could often refer to, to help them enter into and sustain an awakened state of consciousness in everyday life. For those who have not read *The Power of Now* or were daunted by it for some reason, this book should provide a stepping stone in understanding the teaching in its shorter and concise format.

Eckhart's message on the 'present moment' is universal and timeless. As echoed in the words of Sensei Nyogen Senzaki, a pioneer in bringing Zen Buddhism to the West, “You cannot see it with your eyes. You cannot hold it with your hands. You cannot smell it with your nose. You cannot hear it with your ears. You cannot taste it with your tongue. You cannot form it in your thoughts. Here it is!”

In happiness and in peace.

— Gautam Sachdeva
August, 2002

INTRODUCTION



BY ECKHART TOLLE

Since it was first published in 1997, *The Power of Now* has already had an impact on the collective consciousness of the planet far beyond anything I could have imagined. It has been translated into fifteen languages, and I receive mail from around the globe every day from readers who tell me that their lives have been changed through coming into contact with the teaching embodied in the book.

Although the effects of the insanity of the egoic mind are still visible everywhere, something new *is* emerging. Never before have so many people been ready to break out of collective mind-patterns that have kept humanity in bondage to suffering since time

immemorial. A new state of consciousness is emerging. We have suffered enough! Even at this moment it is emerging from within you, as you hold this book in your hands and read these lines that speak of the possibility of living the liberated life, in which you no longer inflict suffering on yourself or others.

Many of the readers who wrote to me expressed a wish to have the practical aspects of the teachings contained in *The Power of Now* presented in a more readily accessible format, to be used in their daily practice. That request became the impetus for this book.

In addition to the exercises and practices, however, this book also contains some shorter passages from the original work that can serve as a reminder of some of the ideas and concepts and can become a primer for incorporating those concepts daily.

Many of those passages are particularly suitable for meditative reading. When you practice meditative reading, you do not read primarily to gather new information, but to enter a different state of consciousness as you read. This is why you can re-read the same passage many times, and every time it feels fresh and new. Only words that were written or spoken in a state of presence have this transformative power, which is the power to awaken presence in the reader.

These passages are best read slowly. Many times

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you may want to pause and allow for a moment of quiet reflection, or stillness. At other times, you may just open the book at random and read a few lines.

For those readers who felt daunted or overwhelmed by *The Power of Now*, this book can also serve as an introduction.

— Eckhart Tolle
July 9, 2001

PART ONE



ACCESSING
THE POWER OF NOW

*When your consciousness
is directed outward,
mind and world arise.
When it is directed inward,
it realizes its own Source
and returns home into the Unmanifested.*

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; I often call it Being. The word Being explains nothing, but nor does God. Being, however, has the advantage that it is an open concept. It does not reduce the infinite invisible to a finite entity. It is impossible to form a mental image of it. Nobody 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 is 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 innermost invisible and indestructible essence. This means that it is accessible to you now as your own deepest self, your true nature. But don't seek to grasp it with your mind. Don't try to understand it.

You can know it only when the mind is still. When you are present, when your attention is fully and intensely in the Now, Being can be felt, but it can never be understood mentally.

To regain awareness of Being and to abide in that state of "feeling-realization" is enlightenment.

The word *enlightenment* conjures up the idea of some superhuman accomplishment, and the ego likes to keep it that way, but it is simply your natural state of felt oneness with Being. It is a state of connectedness with something immeasurable and indestructible, something that, almost paradoxically, is essentially you and yet is much greater than you. It is finding your true nature beyond name and form.

The inability to feel this connectedness gives rise to the illusion of separation, from yourself and from the world around you. You then perceive yourself, consciously or unconsciously, as an isolated fragment. Fear arises, and conflicts within and without become the norm.

The greatest obstacle to experiencing the reality of your connectedness is identification with your mind, which causes thought to become compulsive. Not to be able to stop thinking is a dreadful affliction, but we don't realize this because almost everybody is suffering from it, so it is considered normal. This incessant mental noise prevents you from finding that realm of inner stillness that is inseparable from Being. It also creates a false mind-made self that casts a shadow of fear and suffering.

Identification with your mind creates an opaque screen of concepts, labels, images, words, judgments, and definitions that blocks all true relationship. It comes between you and yourself, between you and your fellow man and woman, between you and nature, between you and God. It is this screen of thought that creates the illusion of separateness, the illusion that there is you and a totally separate "other." You then forget the essential fact that, underneath the level of physical appearances and separate forms, you are one with all that is.

The mind is a superb instrument if used rightly. Used wrongly, however, it becomes very destructive. To put it more accurately, it is not so much that you use your mind wrongly — you usually don't use it at all. It uses you. This is the disease. You believe that you are your mind. This is the delusion. The instrument has taken you over.

It's almost as if you were possessed without knowing it, and so you take the possessing entity to be yourself.

THE BEGINNING OF FREEDOM is the realization that you are not the possessing entity — the thinker. Knowing this enables you to observe the entity. The moment you start watching the thinker, a higher level of consciousness becomes activated.

You then begin to realize that there is 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.

You begin to awaken.



FREEING YOURSELF FROM YOUR MIND

The good news is that you can free yourself from your mind. This is the only true liberation. You can take the first step right now.

START LISTENING TO THE VOICE IN YOUR HEAD as often as you can. Pay particular attention to any repetitive thought patterns, those old

audiotapes that have been playing in your head perhaps for many years.

This is what I mean by “watching the thinker,” which is another way of saying: Listen to the voice in your head, be there as the witnessing presence.

When you listen to that voice, listen to it impartially. That is to say, do not judge. Do not judge or condemn what you hear, for doing so would mean that the same voice has come in again through the back door. You’ll soon realize: There is the voice, and here I am listening to it, watching it. This *I am* realization, this sense of your own presence, is not a thought. It arises from beyond the mind.

So when you listen to a thought, you are aware not only of the thought but also of yourself as the witness of the thought. A new dimension of consciousness has come in.

AS YOU LISTEN TO THE THOUGHT, you feel a conscious presence — your deeper self — behind or underneath the thought, as it were. The thought then loses its power over you and quickly subsides, because you are no longer energizing the mind through identification with it. This is the beginning of the end of involuntary and compulsive thinking.

When a thought subsides, you experience a discontinuity in the mental stream — a gap of “no-mind.” At first, the gaps will be short, a few seconds perhaps, but gradually they will become longer. When these gaps occur, you feel a certain stillness and peace inside you. This is the beginning of your natural state of felt oneness with Being, which is usually obscured by the mind.

With practice, the sense of stillness and peace will deepen. In fact, there is no end to its depth. You will also feel a subtle emanation of joy arising from deep within: the joy of Being.

In this state of inner connectedness, you are much more alert, more awake than in the mind-identified state. You are fully present. It also raises the vibrational frequency of the energy field that gives life to the physical body.

As you go more deeply into this realm of no-mind, as it is sometimes called in the East, you realize the state of pure consciousness. In that state, you feel your own presence with such intensity and such joy that all thinking, all emotions, your physical body, as well as the whole external world become relatively insignificant in comparison to it. And yet this is not a selfish but a selfless state. It takes you beyond what

you previously thought of as “your self.” That presence is essentially you and at the same time inconceivably greater than you.

INSTEAD OF “WATCHING THE THINKER,” you can also create a gap in the mind stream simply by directing the focus of your attention into the Now. Just become intensely conscious of the present moment.

This is a deeply satisfying thing to do. In this way, you draw consciousness away from mind activity and create a gap of no-mind in which you are highly alert and aware but not thinking. This is the essence of meditation.

IN YOUR EVERYDAY LIFE, you can practice this by taking any routine activity that normally is only a means to an end and giving it your fullest attention, so that it becomes an end in itself. For example, every time you walk up and down the stairs in your house or place of work, pay close attention to every step, every movement, even your breathing. Be totally present.

Or when you wash your hands, pay attention to all the sense perceptions associated with the activity: the sound and feel of the water, the

movement of your hands, the scent of the soap, and so on.

Or when you get into your car, after you close the door, pause for a few seconds and observe the flow of your breath. Become aware of a silent but powerful sense of presence.

There is one certain criterion by which you can measure your success in this practice: the degree of peace that you feel within.

The single most vital step on your journey toward enlightenment is this: Learn to disidentify from your mind. Every time you create a gap in the stream of mind, the light of your consciousness grows stronger.

One day you may catch yourself smiling at the voice in your head, as you would smile at the antics of a child. This means that you no longer take the content of your mind all that seriously, as your sense of self does not depend on it.



ENLIGHTENMENT: RISING ABOVE THOUGHT

As you grow up, you form a mental image of who you are, based on your personal and cultural conditioning. We may call this phantom self the ego. It consists of mind activity and can only be kept going through

constant thinking. The term *ego* means different things to different people, but when I use it here it means a false self, created by unconscious identification with the mind.

To the ego, the present moment hardly exists. Only past and future are considered important. This total reversal of the truth accounts for the fact that in the ego mode the mind is so dysfunctional. It is always concerned with keeping the past alive, because without it — who are you? It constantly projects itself into the future to ensure its continued survival and to seek some kind of release or fulfillment there. It says: “One day, when this, that, or the other happens, I am going to be okay, happy, at peace.”

Even when the ego seems to be concerned with the present, it is not the present that it sees: It misperceives it completely because it looks at it through the eyes of the past. Or it reduces the present to a means to an end, an end that always lies in the mind-projected future. Observe your mind and you’ll see that this is how it works.

The present moment holds the key to liberation. But you cannot find the present moment as long as you are your mind.

Enlightenment means rising above thought. In the enlightened state, you still use your thinking mind when

needed, but in a much more focused and effective way than before. You use it mostly for practical purposes, but you are free of the involuntary internal dialogue, and there is inner stillness.

When you do use your mind, and particularly when a creative solution is needed, you oscillate every few minutes or so between thought and stillness, between mind and no-mind. No-mind is consciousness without thought. Only in that way is it possible to think creatively, because only in that way does thought have any real power. Thought alone, when it is no longer connected with the much vaster realm of consciousness quickly becomes barren, insane, destructive.



EMOTION: THE BODY'S REACTION TO YOUR MIND

Mind, in the way I use the word, is not just thought. It includes your emotions as well as all unconscious mental-emotional reactive patterns. Emotion arises at the place where mind and body meet. It is the body's reaction to your mind — or you might say a reflection of your mind in the body.

The more you are identified with your thinking, your likes and dislikes, judgments and interpretations, which is to say the less present you are as the watching

consciousness, the stronger the emotional energy charge will be, whether you are aware of it or not. If you cannot feel your emotions, if you are cut off from them, you will eventually experience them on a purely physical level, as a physical problem or symptom.

IF YOU HAVE DIFFICULTY FEELING YOUR EMOTIONS, start by focusing attention on the inner energy field of your body. Feel the body from within. This will also put you in touch with your emotions.

If you really want to know your mind, the body will always give you a truthful reflection, so look at the emotion, or rather feel it in your body. If there is an apparent conflict between them, the thought will be the lie, the emotion will be the truth. Not the ultimate truth of who you are, but the relative truth of your state of mind at that time.

You may not yet be able to bring your unconscious mind activity into awareness as thoughts, but it will always be reflected in the body as an emotion, and of this you can become aware.

To watch an emotion in this way is basically the same as listening to or watching a thought, which I described earlier. The only difference is

that, while a thought is in your head, an emotion has a strong physical component and so is primarily felt in the body. You can then allow the emotion to be there without being controlled by it. You no longer are the emotion; you are the watcher, the observing presence.

If you practice this, all that is unconscious in you will be brought into the light of consciousness.

MAKE IT A HABIT TO ASK YOURSELF: What's going on inside me at this moment? That question will point you in the right direction. But don't analyze, just watch. Focus your attention within. Feel the energy of the emotion.

If there is no emotion present, take your attention more deeply into the inner energy field of your body. It is the doorway into Being.