

If you have picked up this book, then odds are that in some way you feel dissatisfied with your life. You are not alone. Most of us have a gnawing sense that we are missing out on something more. We just can't put our finger on what it is. Many strive to do more, to attain more, to be more, yet we are left feeling empty. What do any of us really want? It usually boils down to the following: to be noticed, understood, respected, and loved. If examined closely, most of our efforts are pointed toward these basic needs. In essence, we want to be valued as human beings. For many of us, our discontent comes from believing, deep down inside, that we aren't.

So what does any of this have to do with present moment awareness? Everything, really. Being present in the moment, you have the opportunity to see beyond what your fears and insecurities tell you and open yourself to a nearly limitless array of new choices. In learning to live in the present, you discover how to set aside emotional baggage from the past, and worries about the future, in order to appreciate the opportunities you have available to you, right here and right now.

This can enable you to:

- Stay sharp and focused at work or school
- Cease to pointlessly wrestle with circumstances beyond your control
- Discover your dreams and make them real
- Quit worrying and start living
- Let your real self shine and draw others to you
- Improve your relationships
- Be a better parent
- Do work you enjoy and enjoy your work
- Improve communication with others
- Experience the joy that comes from living fully

The primary requirements for success in this effort are intent and honesty. If you sincerely intend to be honest with yourself and make positive changes wherever you feel it is pertinent, then you have the ability to grow and attain the happiness you've been searching for.

Does this seem too good to be true? It isn't! With heartfelt time and effort, these positive changes in your life can begin to happen naturally. Learning to live in the present moment brings about a shift in our perception, rather than a mere change in our behavior. This is an incredibly powerful and life-altering experience. Remember when you first realized your sexuality? In one fell swoop, your thoughts and behavior pertaining to nearly

every aspect of your life changed for all time. This is the same principle — when your perspective on life shifts, changes in your feelings and behavior will naturally follow suit. Your life can become less of a struggle and more of a pleasure when you learn what it means to be present in the moment.

There are **four phases** to this process; each is a chapter in this book:

1. THE POWER OF THIS MOMENT

The first phase is becoming aware of the present moment through “being” in our body. Learning to pay attention to our senses is the crucial first step in learning to experience the present moment as opposed to being lost in daydreams or worries. We will hopefully come away from this section with a solid grasp on what it really means to be present in the moment.

2. THE ILLUSION OF LIMITATIONS

The second phase is exploring the ways in which our very own thoughts can limit our choices and effectively eliminate opportunities, leaving us frustrated, fearful, and feeling powerless to manifest our dreams. The goal of this section is to begin questioning our own self-limiting beliefs.

3. EMOTIONAL PRESENCE

The third phase is learning to be present with our emotions. We will explore the idea that our emotions do not have to be an overwhelming or all-consuming force, even though for many of us they are exactly that. Learning to experience our emotions in the present moment is gaining the ability to not let what we feel overwhelm and ultimately control us.

4. REACTIVITY ROLLER COASTER

The fourth and final phase is being present with our emotional reactivity and discovering the origins of our discontent. As we will learn, our reactivity is one of the primary reasons we do not live in the present moment and therefore suffer in our lives.

FOCUS TOOL

A “Focus Tool” is simply something a person can use to help remind them to practice living in the moment. It is easy to relax in a favorite chair, read a book, and nod in agreement with what we are reading. It is something else to actually take those concepts and apply them during the stresses of our everyday lives. The Focus Tool acts as a waking alarm clock, a reminder to be aware of the life

happening all around us and to participate in it. Very simply, the Focus Tool repeatedly reminds us to stop and smell the roses. Within the framework of this book, it is to be used while practicing the exercises until the application of the principles becomes second nature. I offer a specially designed Focus Tool in the back of this book. This compact electronic device alerts you randomly throughout your day to bring your attention back to the present. However, telephones, pagers, cell phones, car alarms, doorbells, flashing lights, etc., can all serve as Focus Tools, reminders to bring ourselves out of our daydreams and back into the present.

Little else needs to be said about the Focus Tool other than to use it. The kind of awareness we hope to encourage can become a permanent change in how we live. Because it takes some perseverance in the beginning, we should not hesitate to rely on the Focus Tool continuously when practicing the exercises in this book. With sincere intentions for positive change and a little effort, we will eventually begin to find ourselves already in the moment each time the tool alerts us.

GETTING THE MOST FROM THIS BOOK

This book, while making a lot of statements, is really a book of questions. After reading each topic, stop and ask yourself how it might apply to your own life. To find

new answers, we must first open ourselves to new questions. Even if nothing comes to mind right away, you might be surprised at what will occur to you later because you took a little time to ponder what you read.

This material becomes even more useful by simply paying attention to how you feel about everything you read. By observing what emotions and reactions are stirred up as you are reading, or later pondering what you've read, you can gain a great deal of insight into yourself. Becoming anxious or frustrated while reading is a great indicator that our buttons are being pushed. Instead of allowing these feelings to stop your progress, simply accept them as indicators that you are moving in the right direction. Sometimes, truly, the only way out of the dissatisfaction we have with our lives is to pass right through it.

This book contains three different kinds of exercises. They are "Try This," "Ponder This," and "Homework." It is important to do the "Try This" and "Ponder This" exercises as you read them because understanding their concepts is important to understanding the overall ideas being presented. You should perform the "Homework" exercises throughout each day in an effort to apply the concepts being taught and to learn what it means to be present in the moment.