

||lluminations:

Ideas and Insights from Practitioners

Godfrey Devereux

Yoga is not moral philosophy, existential enhancement or behavioural correction. It is a doorway into the vibrant wisdom of life itself that takes place through the agency of internal enquiry (*svadhyaya*). The eight limbs of yoga are not techniques. They are dimensions of human experience and awareness, accessed by deep self-enquiry. The portals of effective self-enquiry are the first two limbs of yoga, *Yama* and *Niyama*. Sensitivity, honesty, openness, intimacy, acceptance, integrity, trust, passion, enquiry and total absorption are not behavioural imperatives, nor moral injunctions. They are lenses to focus our attention on that which is actually happening in and as body and mind.

<http://www.dynamicyoga.com/downloads/ASHTANGAYOGA.pdf>

Alan Clements

(after long meditation retreat)
I fell in love with the simplicity of just being. There was no hurry. No place to go. No persona to uphold. No bills to pay. No appointments to keep. No one to please. Nothing to say. Nothing to fear. It was my first real glimpse of the natural mind — a mind free of conceptual involvement, at ease within its own uncontrived nature, abiding in a space of undistracted presence. Feeling life so immediately and fully brought a natural stature to everything you did. Suddenly everything opened — everything mattered: the way you sipped tea, the way you bathed, the way you relaxed the habit of outcome. The day became more like art than practice.

Instinct For Freedom. 2002.
New World Library, p 108

Judith Hanson Lasater

Spiritual practice is not the asana but the act of noticing during the practice of asana.

What We Say Matters. 2009. Rodmell, p 21

Joseph Campbell

People say that what we're all seeking is a meaning for life. I **think** that what we're seeking is an experience of being alive, so that our life experiences on the purely physical plane will have resonances within our own innermost being and reality, so that we actually feel the rapture of being alive.... The privilege of a lifetime is being who you are.

The Power of Myth. 1989. Doubleday, p 5

Lewis Richmond

I've been meditating for almost fifty years — there's not a sense of striving or gaining in the way that there used to be, there's much more a sense of surrender and just resting.

'Aging as a spiritual practice',
Tricycle. Spring 2012

Toni Packer

We're not really water molecules; we're mostly empty space filled with energy! You and I — all of us — space and energy, with an astounding potential to create, adapt, disappear.

The Wonder of Presence. 2002. Shambhala, p 106

Buddha

Whatever a person frequently thinks upon and ponders upon, that will become the inclination of their mind.

Dhevadhavitakka Sutta

John Tarrant

Meditation is built to defeat inner bias and to make us susceptible to resetting.... In deep meditation the devices come apart and we don't mind. And when we put the world back together, after we have been free, events don't exist in the same way — the glue doesn't hold, the habits are slow to return. The world is refreshed after you have meditated. In the end, deconstruction might lead to joy.

'Review: Thinking, Fast and Slow'
Lions Roar. March 2012

Andrew Harvey

A spirituality that is only private and self-absorbed, one devoid of an authentic political and social consciousness, does little to halt the suicidal juggernaut of history. On the other hand, an activism that is not purified by profound spiritual and psychological self-awareness and rooted in divine truth, wisdom, and compassion will only perpetuate the problem it is trying to solve, however righteous its intentions. When, however, the deepest and most grounded spiritual vision is married to a practical and pragmatic drive to transform all existing political, economic, and social institutions, a holy force — the power of wisdom and love in action — is born. This force I define as Sacred Activism.

<https://www.andrewharvey.net/sacredactivism>

Matthieu Ricard

We have to understand that we are enormously resistant to change ... there is a profound inertia with respect to any genuine transformation of our way of being.

Happiness. 2008. Hachette, p 135

Luca and Francesco Cavalli-Sforza

Happiness does not come automatically. It is not a gift that good fortune bestows upon us and a reversal of fortune takes back. It depends on us alone. One does not become happy overnight, but with patient labour, day after day. Happiness is constructed, and that requires effort and time. In order to become happy, we have to learn how to change ourselves.

La Science du Bonheur 1998. Odile Jacob.

Monty Python

(on the meaning of life in *The Meaning of Life*)
Try to be nice to people, avoid eating fat, read a good book every now and then, get some walking in, and try to live in harmony with people of all creeds and nations.

William James

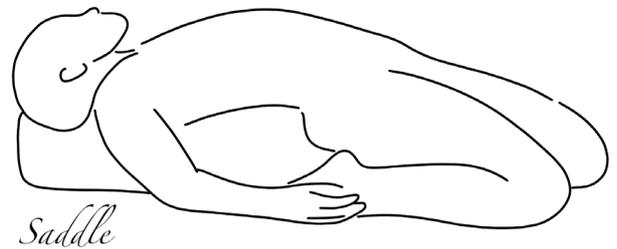
Each of us literally chooses, by our way of attending to things, what sort of universe we shall appear to ourselves to inhabit.

The Principles of Psychology

Pema Chodron

When we feel our bodies tighten, when we feel our minds freeze, we can begin to soften and relax ... at a fundamental level we can acknowledge hardening: at that point we can train in learning to soften ... this is an ongoing process: it's not like we're ever home free. However the aspiration to open becomes a way of life ... our awareness of 'imperfection' is heightened. We see that we are discursive, that we are jealous, aggressive or lustful.

'Signs of Spiritual Progress' in Rod Speary (ed). *A Beginner's Guide to Meditation*. 2014. Shambhala.



David McMahan

The many recommendations in contemporary popular Western Buddhist literature to trust your deepest experience, your inner nature, your internal vision have more to do with this legacy of Romanticism than traditional Buddhism. One seldom hears such counsel from traditional Buddhist texts and teachers; for them, until one is an advanced practitioner, one's inner experiences are likely to be considered just another form of delusion.

The Making of Buddhist Modernism. 2009. OUP.

Guishan

8th century teacher in China
Beware of spending a lifetime in vain; later regrets are useless.

In *The Five Houses of Zen*.
Thomas Cleary (trans). Shambhala.

HH the Dalai Lama

The important thing is to use human intelligence and judgement, and to be mindful of the benefits for long-term and short-term happiness. Up to a certain point, the body itself is a good indicator. For instance, if some sort of food causes you discomfort one day, then later you will not want to consume that type of food. It seems that at a certain stage the body itself can tell us what is suitable for well-being and happiness and what is not.

Bill Bryson

Astronomers today believe there are perhaps 140 billion galaxies in the visible universe ... space scientists have discovered ten billion trillion or so planets that are thought to be out there.

Of every 200 atoms in your body, 126 are hydrogen, 51 are oxygen and 19 are carbon ... of the remaining four, 3 are nitrogen and the remaining atom is divided among all the other elements ... about half the chemical functions that take place in a banana are fundamentally the same as the chemical functions that take place in a human being ... all life is one We are 98.4% genetically indistinguishable from a modern chimpanzee ... there is more difference between a zebra and a horse than there is between human beings and the furry creatures that our ancestors left behind.

A Short History of Nearly Everything.
2016. Black Swan.

Judy Lief

If you see a butterfly struggling to break out of its cocoon, and you try to ease its struggle by prying open the cocoon for it, that butterfly will emerge in a weakened state and may even die. The butterfly needs the stress of working its way out of the cocoon to build up strength and to dry its wings.

‘The Middle Way of Stress’,
Lion’s Roar. October 2020

Tenzin Palmo

What if your first thought for everybody you meet is not judgment but ‘may you be well and happy’? If we could manage that much, it would change the world.

Tal Ben-Shahar

(writer on positive psychology)

When we make a habit of gratitude, we no longer require a special event to make us happy because if we really look, then every object in the wonder-filled world around us is unique and special — an object worthy of beholding and appreciating.

‘Cheer up. Here’s how...’.
The Guardian. 29 December 2007

Jill Bolte Taylor

Our right hemisphere is designed to remember things as they relate to one another. Borders between specific entities are softened ... to the right mind, no time exists other than the present moment and each moment is vibrant with sensation ... our right mind is spontaneous, carefree and imaginative ... our right mind perceives each of us as equal members of the human family... Our left brain manifests the concept of time whereby our moments are divided into past, present and future ... our left mind thrives on details, details and more details about those details ... via our left hemisphere language centres, our mind speaks to us constantly, a phenomenon I refer to as ‘brain chatter’ ... one of the jobs of our left hemisphere language centres is to define our self by saying ‘I am’.

(through the experience of her stroke)
I shifted from the doing-consciousness of my left brain to the being-consciousness of my right brain. I morphed from feeling small and isolated to feeling enormous and expansive.... I was simply a being of light radiating life into the world ... in the absence of the left hemisphere’s negative judgement, I perceived myself as perfect, whole and beautiful just the way I was... Step one to experiencing inner peace is the willingness to be present in the right here, right now.

My Stroke of Insight. 2006. Viking, pp 30, 68

Robert McFarlane

Attention was a form of devotion and noticing continuous with worship.

The Wild Places. 2007. Granta.

HH Dalai Lama

Within the body, there are billions of particles. Similarly, there are many different thoughts and a variety of states of mind. It is wise to take a close look into the world of your mind and to make the distinction between harmful and beneficial states of mind. Once you can recognise the value of good states of mind, you can increase or foster them.

Gregory Kramer

How would we treat other people if we recognised their kinship with us, seeing the sad sameness of the hurts in our hearts? We are always tender and sometimes raw ... even those with tough exteriors began life with sensitive nervous systems and in complete vulnerability.

Insight Dialogue. 2008. Shambhala.

Tim Lomas

English is a veritable cornucopia of borrowed words (with cornucopia itself deriving from the Latin *cornu copiae*, a mythical 'horn of plenty' that is a symbol of nourishment and abundance). Of the more than 600,000 lexemes [a unit of meaning in a language, consisting of a word or group of words] in the Oxford English Dictionary, between 32% and 41% are thought to be borrowed... 3.5% come from various other languages, including 'pepper' (from Sanskrit, via Greek and Latin), 'zero' (Arabic, via Italian), 'banana' (Wolof, via Spanish), 'silk' (Mongolian, via Latin), 'tea' (a Tibeto-Burman language, via Chinese, via Dutch), and 'taboo' (Tongan).

Excessive optimism usually feels good, but it can lead to miscalculations of risk...excessive pessimism may feel unpleasant but also foster prudence, which facilitates well-being.

Translating Happiness. 2018.
MIT Press, p 21, 57

Pamela White

The path to gaining inner wealth begins with a calm mind. If you calm the mind, then everything around you calms down also. At least devote a little bit of time to cultivating a calm mind — you have sacrificed enough on many, many unnecessary things.

'Diamond-like Resolve'. *Tricycle*. Winter 2012.

Carol Wilson

...it's practicing with right attitude more than any particular technique. Right attitude is just checking what qualities are present in the mind that's meditating ... the essence of teaching is relax because we are trying to do something when we're meditating.... What's the attitude in the mind?

'If We Watch, Wisdom Comes'
Tricycle. Winter 2012

Buddha

(on why he refused to answer metaphysical questions)

It is as if a man had been wounded by an arrow thickly smeared with poison, and his friends were to procure for him a physician, and the sick man were to say 'I will not have this arrow taken out until I have learnt the name of the man who wounded me.'

Culamalunkya Sutta

Just as the ocean slopes has a gradual slope, a gradual inclination... in the same way this [method] is a gradual training ... a gradual practice ... with perception of the ultimate truth only after a long stretch.

Upasatha Sutta

Matthew Remski

If only Patanjali encapsulated his discussion of ethics with a single reference to empathy or love...Do we meditate with Patanjali because empathy is difficult and love is painful?

Threads of Yoga. 2012. CreateSpace.

Joseph Goldstein

In the early years of my practice when I would be going through a particularly difficult time, I would often imagine myself six months or a year in the future and know that at that time I would hardly be able to remember what I was currently going through. It definitely helped to lessen the intensity of the dramas of the moment.

Mindfulness. 2013. Sounds True.

Shantideva, 8th century Buddhist scholar
I, too, am a brief and passing thing.

Bodhicaryavartana

Jon Kabat-Zinn

People in our culture who tend to have high levels of hostility are much more susceptible to death from all causes, including cancer and heart disease. Even high use of the personal pronouns in speech has been associated with increased risk of various chronic diseases.

‘Bringing Mindfulness into Mainstream America’. *The Best of Inquiring Mind*. 2008. Wisdom, p 35

Wes Nisker

Why I meditate...I meditate because evolution gave me a big brain, but it didn't come with an instruction manual...I meditate because life is too short and sitting slows it down...I meditate because life is too long and I need an occasional break...I meditate because I've discovered my mind is a great toy and fun to play with...I meditate because I am building myself a bigger and better perspective and occasionally I need a new window.

‘Why I Meditate (After Allen Ginsberg)’
The Best of Inquiring Mind. 2008. Wisdom, p 202

Margaret Cullen

In March 2002 Paul Ekman a highly accomplished research psychologist arrived in Dharamsala to meet the Dalai Lama. He was staunchly scientific in his views and pessimistic in his outlook on life. He was asked to present on his extensive research into the nature of human emotion. Although not personally interested in Buddhism, Dr Ekman accepted the invitation. One week later he left a different man. Frequently at these meetings, the Dalai Lama would stay and chat informally with the participants. At one such interlude, His Holiness held Dr Ekman's hand. The scientist had an experience unlike any he had ever before, one for which he has no easy explanation. There was, he said, a strong sensation of warmth, but more than that. In the months that followed, Dr Ekman found that he almost never got angry, which represented a significant temperamental shift. Paul Ekman is now an optimist.

‘Mystery Remains: A Scientist Meets A Monk’.
The Best of Inquiring Mind. 2008. Wisdom, p 107

Gregory Kramer

The fading of hunger frees us from the narrowness of fear... Each of us is a casserole of hunger and love... The usual array of distractions, uneven effort, tension and identification will likely be our starting point... We engage with patience, with compassion for our own stumbles and the moments of clarity increase... We try to choose the best approach, to pace ourselves and always, endlessly, to be patient with ourselves. Time and again we are humbled by our conditioning. We relax, drop back and let go. Always we rest in kindness to ourselves. When we slow down, when we relate with mindfulness and care, we evoke similar behaviour from others. When we are able to be calm, others begin to calm down. Qualities like serenity, wisdom and kindness are contagious.

Insight Dialogue. 2008. Shambhala.

Michael Pollan

This learned helplessness is of course much to the advantage of the corporations eager to step forward and do all this work for us ... to cook for the pleasure of it is to declare our independence from the corporations seeking to organize our every waking moment into yet another occasion for consumption.... Our brains constitute only 2.5% of our weight yet consume 20% of our energy when we're resting.... Today the average American spends a mere 27 minutes a day on food preparation — that's less than half the time spent cooking in 1965.... Great cooking is all about the three p's: patience, presence and practice...

Cooked. 2013. Allen Lane, pp20, 22, 128, 141

Lewis Thomas, (biologist)

The driving force in nature, on this kind of planet with this sort of biosphere, is co-operation ... the most inventive and novel schemes in nature and perhaps the most significant in determining the great landmark events in evolution, is symbiosis which is simply co-operative behaviour carried out to its extreme.

quoted in *Bringing Home The Dharma* by Jack Kornfield. 2012. Shambhala, p 115

Dogen (Japanese monk, 1200–53)

In general, a quiet room is good for practicing Zazen.... Do not think of good and bad. Do not consider right and wrong.... Cease intellectual consideration through images, thoughts and reflections. Do not aim to become a Buddha.... Sitting immovably in the mountain-still state, think about this concrete state beyond thinking. How can the state beyond thinking be thought about? It is different from thinking. This is just the pivot of Zazen.

The body is like a dew-drop on a blade of grass. Life passes like a flash of lightning. Suddenly it is gone. In an instant it is lost.

I came to realise that the mind is nothing other than rivers and mountains and the great wide earth, the sun and the moon and the stars.

Fukan zazengi
(*Universal Recommendation for Zazen*)

Bruce Lipton

When we change the way we respond to the world, we change the chemical composition of our blood, which in turn regulates our genetics and behaviour. This is the foundation of the placebo effect.... Some of the nicknames of oxytocin are love drug, cuddle chemical and trust hormone.... A pregnant woman's mental state can shape her offspring's psyche.... Researchers have corroborated that 65% of our thoughts are negative and/or redundant.... If you let go of the details of a dispute and make contact with each other, your hearts open again and everything gets handled really quickly. You do have to make sure you are touching...

The Honeymoon Effect. 2014. Hay House.

Richard Freeman

Some people think yoga will give them a perfect body. And if they practice it hard enough and with enough dedication, it will. That's possible. But they're still going to die. Then they'll have a perfect dead body.

Bryon Katie

Reality is always kinder than the stories we tell about it.

Paul Grilley

I have had no visions or revelations of wisdom, or clairvoyance about the future or discovered if there is a god. My progress is primarily that I enjoy sitting, I enjoy being calm, I can hear the subtle sounds of the inner world. Meditation used to be a labor for me, a discipline to do. Now I find it fulfilling, and as I get older I seem less and less affected by desires for this world. I am no longer as ambitious. I used to say: 'Oh, I want to be a great scientist or a famous novelist.' But those things do not affect me the way they used to. I still admire scientists and writers but there is no envy. I do not think I have arrived at a high spiritual state but it is an improvement from where I was.

<https://www.with-yinyoga.com/en/articles/paul-suzee-grilley-exclusive-interview-on-anatomy-meditation-laughter>

Ken McLeod

The more options we have, the more energy we have to invest in making decisions. Which shampoo? Which car? Which dress? Which restaurant? Which movie? Our energy and attention are consumed by these decisions, and we have less left with which to live our life ... during my three-year retreat, I had only two sets of clothes. The aim was to reduce choice so that I could focus attention on meditation practice ... freedom is the moment-by-moment experience of not being run by one's own reactive mechanisms ... the illusion of choice is an indication of a lack of freedom.

'Freedom and Choice'. *Tricycle*. Winter 2012.

Suzuki Roshi

What we call 'I' is just a swinging door which moves when we inhale and when we exhale. It just moves; that is all ... there is nothing: no 'I', no world, no body or mind; just a swinging door.

'Breathing'. *Tricycle*. Spring 1995.

Ikkyū (Japanese monk and poet, 1394–1481)

Only one koan matters: you.

In *Crow with No Mouth*.
Stephen Berg (tr). Copper Canyon Press.

Rick Hanson

It's almost impossible to be very upset about something if you feel deeply relaxed.... Feelings grow moods — repeatedly taking in feelings of gladness and gratitude will tend to develop a mood of contentment.

Most of the inputs into your brain come from inside your body rather than from your external experience. This is because your brain needs to know, moment by moment, how your internal organs are doing to make sure you're ok ... this tight linkage between mind and body gives you a powerful way to rest in a growing sense of calm and ease, since most of the time your body is doing pretty much fine... 'all is well, all is well'.

We've armed a Stone Age brain with nuclear weapons. The fearful, greedy and self-centered reactive setting of the brain promotes a kind of gorging of the earth's limited resources that is causing deforestation, mass extinctions and global warming... You really can nudge your whole being in a better direction every day... If you routinely practice relaxation, this will increase the activity of genes that calm down stress reactions, making you more resilient.

Hardwiring Happiness. 2013.
Rider, pp 81, 186, 221

Norman Fischer

The first three practices of the eightfold path are right view, right intention, and right speech. These make right conduct possible, and when there is right conduct, there can be meditation practice and mindfulness, which lead to wisdom, thereby reinforcing right view. So from the first, the Buddha saw that our language conditions our spirituality through our views, intentions, and uttered words, and that training in an increased awareness of this process has to be the starting point for spiritual practice.

'Beyond Language'. *Tricycle*. Summer 2011

Buddha

You should develop this recollection of virtue while you are walking, while you are standing, while you are sitting, while you are lying down, while you are busy at work, while you are resting in your home crowded with children.

Mahanama Sutta

Henry James

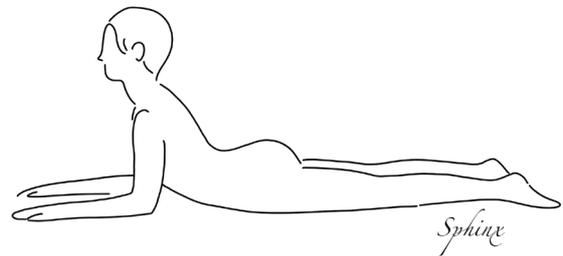
Three things in human life are important: the first is to be kind; the second is to be kind; and the third is to be kind.

Leon Edel Lippincott. *Henry James: The Master 1901–1916*. 1972. Williams & Wilkins.

Roshi Pat O'Hara

True joy is to be so close to your experience of life that you are filled with awe. You are like a child lying in the grass staring up at the vast starry night.

'Simple Joy'. *Tricycle*. Spring 2014



David Carse

Instead of looking outwards, look within. That need for specialness is strong, is it not?

Perfect Brilliant Stillness. 2005.
Non-Duality Press.

David Bohm

Considered to be one of the most significant theoretical physicists of the 20th century

Reality is what we take to be true. What we take to be true is what we believe. What we believe is based on our perceptions. What we perceive depends on what we look for. What we look for depends on what we think. What we think depends on what we perceive. What we perceive depends what we believe. What we believe depends what we take to be true. What we take to be true is our reality.

Lecture at Berkeley,
University of California, 1977

Adyashanti

There are only two certainties about life: that you will someday die and between birth and death you will encounter tragedy.

Yuval Harari

Today we can go to the supermarket and choose to eat a thousand different foods. But whatever we choose, we might eat in haste in front of the TV, not really paying attention to the taste. We can go on vacation to a thousand different amazing locations. But wherever we go, we might play with our smart phones instead of really seeing the place. We have more choice than ever before, but what good is this choice, when we have lost the ability really to pay attention?

Sapiens. 2014. Harvill Secker.

Jonathan Jones

A tiny dinghy floats like flotsam on the big silver-blue expanse of the Aegean sea, as Iranian migrants try to paddle their way from Turkey to the Greek island Kos. As they struggle in their tiny boat, a vast luxury yacht dwarfs them... That big yacht may strike you as a symbol of the 1%, an image of gloating wealth. But it is not. It is the icy embodiment of us all. We who were born lucky, who live in democracies, with economies that are still among the world's richest, we are all travelling in that slick rich man's ship. We speed past the unlucky as if this were natural and inevitable. We look away. We let the have nots founder in our wake.

'The Yacht and the Dinghy'.
The Guardian. 17 August 2015

Owen Jones

I am not going to waste your time or patronize you by preaching the benefits of immigration. Instead, I want to ask you this. Who has caused our country most problems: the bankers who plunged us into economic disaster, the expenses-milking politicians who have the cheek to lecture us on benefit fraud, the wealthy tax-dodgers keeping £25 billion a year from the Exchequer; the poverty wage-paying bosses and rip-off rent-charging landlords; or Indian nurses and Polish fruit pickers?

'An Open Letter from Owen Jones to UKIP voters'. *Independent*. 15 January 2014

Tenzin Gache

A method to counter these negative influences is to fill our mind with more constructive pathways. Cultivation of positive mental states like compassion, patience and introspection is essential, and memorising texts and prayers that encourage these states helps enhance them and ensure they become more habitual. In fact, the Tibetan word for meditation, *gom*, literally means 'to habituate'... If we truly are the summation of what we think and believe, we would be prudent to become familiar with eloquent, uplifting and sagacious sayings rather than much of the superficial relics that bombard us if we tune into the TV and the Internet.

<https://fpmt.org/mandala/onlinefeatures/memorization-beneficial-exercise-for-the-mind/>

Stephen Hawking

The human failing that I would most like to correct is aggression. It may have survival advantage in caveman days, to get more food, territory, or partner with whom to reproduce, but now it threatens to destroy us all... I would most like to magnify empathy. It brings us together in a peaceful, loving state.

'Stephen Hawking: Aggression could destroy us'. *Independent*. 19 February 2015.

Lord Kelvin

The first British scientist to be elevated to the House of Lords

There is nothing new to be discovered in physics now. All that remains is more and more precise measurement.

Talk at the British Association for the Advancement of Science, 1900

Klas Nevrin

There is a limit to how yoga can change a person because he or she is highly dependent on environmental circumstances...the neglect to address this limit often results in a rhetoric claim that yoga has a dimension of truth and authenticity supposedly lacking in other activities.

'Empowerment and Using the Body in Modern Postural Yoga' in J Bryne and M Singleton (eds). *Yoga in the Modern World*. 2008. Routledge, p 131

Pico Iyer

These days, in the age of movement and connection, space has been annihilated by time; we feel as though we can make contact with almost anywhere at any moment. But as fast as geography is coming under control, the clock is exerting more and more tyranny over us. And the more we can contact others, the more, it sometimes seems, we lose contact with ourselves.

The Art of Stillness. 2014.
Simon & Schuster, p 55

Tara Brach

The Pali word *‘dukkha’* is used to describe the emotional pain that runs through our lives. While it is often translated as ‘suffering’, *dukkha* encompasses all our experiences of stress, dissatisfaction, anxiety, sorrow, frustration and basic unease in living.

Presence is not some exotic state we need to search for or manufacture. In the simplest terms, it is the felt sense of wakefulness, openness and tenderness that naturally arises when we are fully here and now with our experience... Under the solid concept of pain is a changing constellation of experience — burning, pinpricks, twisting, pressing, soreness, stabbing ... Research now shows that even a slight smile relaxes our reactivity and inclines us toward feeling of ease and well-being.

True Refuge. 2013.
Bantam, pp xiv, 12, 93, 103

Peter Conradi

The Cambridge-based lama with whom I ‘took refuge’ suggested...that a quite realistic aim of meditation practice is ‘to avoid becoming worse on an annual basis.’

Going Buddhist. 2004. Short Books, p 37

Michele Reiss

Viewing a crisis as a challenge gives us room to problem-solve. Viewing the same crisis as an overwhelming obstacle creates a sense of helpless victimhood.

Lessons in Loss and Living. 2010.
Hyperion, p 184

Storm Jameson

There is only one world, the world pressing against you at this minute. There is only one minute in which you are alive, this minute here and now. The only way to live is by accepting each minute as an unrepeatable miracle.

Henry Longfellow

If we could read the secret history of our enemies, we should find in each man’s life sorrow and suffering enough to disarm all hostility.

both quoted in *Radical Acceptance* by Tara Brach, 2003. Bantam, p 45, 231.

Pema Chodron

The truth you believe and cling to makes you unavailable to hear anything new.

quoted in *Child’s Mind* by Christopher Willard. 2010. Parallax, p 30.

B. Alan Wallace

Contemplation (from the Latin *contemplari*, ‘to gaze attentively, observe’) is an act of engaged attention...the method and aims of contemplation vary greatly

Embracing Mind. 2008. Shambhala, p 131

Meditation is a balancing act between attention and relaxation.

The Attention Revolution. 2006. Wisdom.

Christopher Willard

Our neural pathways form into ruts that are not always helpful. Imagine a dirt path that ambles across a meadow. The road is worn down over the years by trucks repeatedly driving over the same tracks. We continue to drive on this same path because it has been worn down...This is exactly why we get stuck in old thoughts, feelings and behaviours. Now imagine for a moment that a gentle rain comes and softens the whole field. With soft ground, creating a fresh and more direct path is that much easier. Mindfulness is like the rain that falls on the meadow, softening the ground to make blazing a new path easier in time.

Child’s Mind. 2010. Parallax, p 81

Ethan Nichtern

It would be preposterous to argue that all these self-loathing thoughts that tell you that you are ‘not good enough’ — those thoughts that constantly beat you up — are somehow independent of all the advertisements that you saw today that sold you an aggressively idealized and airbrushed version of how to be you.

Jack Kornfield

In the 1920s, an influential school of child psychologists actually taught parents that it was bad to touch their children.

To be here fully requires a steadying of the mind, concentration and attention. It is like that sign in the Las Vegas casino, ‘You must be present to win’. You have to be present to awaken.

The twelve styles in *Living Buddhist Masters* represented just a fraction of the fifty or a hundred ways that I know of to do *vipassana*. In many cases these masters did not agree with one another on the best way to practice. Sometimes the styles were diametrically opposed to one another... Any practice that cultivates mindfulness, wise effort, investigation, joy, concentration, calm, equanimity and compassion will bring one to liberation, and there are many ways to do that.
Bringing Home the Dharma. 2011.
Shambhala, pp42, 74, 125

Eckhart Tolle

Acknowledging the good that you already have in your life is the foundation for all abundance.

A New Earth 2005. Plume.

Alden Nowlen

The day the child realises that all adults are imperfect, he becomes an adolescent; the day he forgives them, he becomes an adult; the day he forgives himself, he becomes wise.

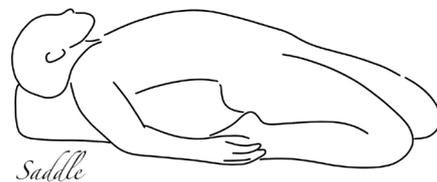
Between Tears and Laughter Clarke, Irwin 1971

Ralph Marston

Make it a habit to tell people thank you. To express your appreciation, sincerely and without the expectation of anything in return. Truly appreciate those around you, and you’ll soon find many others around you. Truly appreciate life, and you’ll find that you have more of it.

George Bernard Shaw

We don’t stop playing because we grow old; we grow old because we stop playing.



April Nunes Tucker

Observing the inner landscape of the body like looking on a beautiful painting, observing how different images, sensations, emotions, thoughts suddenly appear in the foreground and then in the same turn become the distant background and disappear. Bonding with the earth ... In the womb we were in a c-curve, when born we were placed on the floor, in our cot, on our stomach or on our back and we learned to bond with gravity through the front and back of the body. Some people feel a deeper bonding to earth on their front, others on their back. How can we unfurl the spine to bond, communicate and establish relationship with the earth through front and back body? Observation of sensations — like a scientist making field notes: what is being uncovered, discovered? What is the location, quality, how much information can you gather?

Personal communication, 2016

Orville Wright

If we all worked on the assumption that what is accepted as true is really true, there would be little hope of advance.

Andrew Olendzki

We experience the flow of events, not the interconnection of structures. The practice of meditation involves listening closely to the music of your mind.

‘The Music of the Mind’.
Tricycle. Summer 2015

Robert Sapolsky

...the absence of touch is seemingly one of the most marked developmental stressors that we can suffer...Something roughly akin to love is needed for proper biological development, and its absence is among the most aching, distorting stressors that we can suffer...There is a strong link between the nervous system and the immune system.

The fewer social relationships a person has, the shorter the life expectancy, and the worse the impact of various infectious diseases...people who score high on loneliness scales have been found to have relatively depressed immune function...the impact of social relationships on life expectancy appears to be at least as large as that of variables such as cigarette smoking, hypertension, obesity, and level of physical activity...your memory and concentration are anything but ideal under circumstances of high or prolonged stress.

Why Zebras Don't Get Ulcers. 1994.
WH Freeman, pp 98, 127; 142, 184

Zhiyi (Chinese monk, 538–97)

... just as when a ... potter wishes to create various sorts of vessels, [h]e must first skilfully make adjustments in the clay such that it is neither too stiff nor too soft...To speak of what is most essential, being neither too loose nor too tight is the sign of [helpful] physical adjustment.

Tong meng zhiyuan (The Essentials of Meditation).
2008. Dharmamitra (tr).
Kalavinka Press, pp 77, 85

Christina Feldman

Every moment of true attention is a moment of wonder. It is attention that allows the conclusions and assumptions of the past to fall away, freeing us to see all things anew. Deep attentiveness is profound sensitivity: we are touched and taught by the events, we encounter. Without full attention, we skim over the surface of life. Our capacity for love, empathy and intimacy is awakened through our willingness to be wholeheartedly present in this life. Alienated from authentic attentiveness, we long for the future, for dramatic life experiences. Learning the richness of deep attentiveness, we discover the wonder in the simplest sight, sound, encounter and feeling.

Silence. 2003. Rodmell, p 104

Victor Hugo

Generations are puffs of breath, that pass away. Man respires, aspires, and expires.

The Man Who Laughs. 1869.

Sharon Salzberg

Mindfulness practice isn't meant to eliminate thinking but aims rather to help us know what we're thinking when we're thinking it, just as we want to know what we're feeling when we're feeling it...Meditation is like going into an old attic room and turning on the light. In that light we see everything — the beautiful treasures we're grateful to have unearthed; the dusty, neglected corners that inspire us to say, 'I'd better clean that up'; the unfortunate relics of the past that we thought we had gotten rid of years ago. We acknowledge them all, with an open, spacious, and loving awareness. It's never too late to turn on the light...It's never too late to take a moment to look.

‘Mindfulness and Difficult Emotions’.

Tricycle. Spring 2013

Deborah Tull

Meditation teaches us how to relate to fear in an entirely different way. It gives us the choice to see fear (False Evidence Appearing Real) clearly and to cultivate the equanimity and courage that is our birthright.

<https://sangha.live/2017/03/15/letting-go-of-fear/>

Jeremy Hayward

The hard shell of arrogantly feeling I am or should be, or should at least pretend to be someone special has begun to drop away and I can, quite joyfully, feel a little more humble. I know, more genuinely now, that I am really just a beginner...by just sitting without expectation, the natural stability and clarity of my mind gradually strengthens, little by little.

Warrior-King of Shambhala. 2008.
Simon and Schuster, p 398

Tenzin Palmo

The more you realise, the more you realise there is nothing to realise. The idea that there's somewhere we have got to get to, and something we have to attain is our basic delusion.

Garry Kasparov

Chess grandmaster

Things happen. We all make mistakes... What's important is how we deal with our mistakes, with negative experience...better you understand the nature of your mistakes, better your chances of making fast improvement.

<https://www.wired.com/story/defeated-chess-champ-garry-kasparov-made-peace-ai/>

Annals of Lu Buwei

(3rd century BCE China)

As a general rule, humans have 360 joints, nine apertures, five repositories, and six storehouses. It is desirable that skin be taut, the blood vessels open to free circulation, the sinews and bones hard, the mind and will harmonious, and the qi active. If all this is achieved, illness will find no place to lodge, and evil no means to grow. Illness remains and its malevolence grows because the qi are blocked. When water is blocked, it becomes stagnant; when a tree is blocked, it becomes infested with wood-boring insects; when a plant is blocked, it withers.

Martina Navratilova

What matters isn't how well you play when you're playing well. What matters is how well you play when you're playing badly.

Iain McGilchrist

In general terms the left hemisphere yields narrow, focused attention, mainly for the purpose of getting and feeding. The right hemisphere yields a broad, vigilant attention, the purpose of which appears to be awareness of signals from surroundings...the left hemisphere takes a local short-term view, whereas the right hemisphere sees the bigger picture...the left hemisphere needs certainty and needs to be right...the right hemisphere's tolerance of uncertainty is implied everywhere in its subtle ability to use metaphor, irony and humour.

People in the West characteristically over-estimate their abilities, exaggerate their capacity to control essentially uncontrollable events, and hold over-optimistic views of the future...Certainty is the greatest of all illusions.

The Master and His Emissary. 2018.
Yale University Press, pp 27, 82, 456, 460

Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen

The real key is to perceive what you're doing. I really can't teach you, but I can help you focus on your awareness so that you can discover what you are doing. Then you have choice.

<https://www.bodymindcentering.com>

Richard Bach

We teach best what we most need to learn.

Illusions. 1989. Dell

Pico Iyer

In an age of speed, nothing could be more invigorating than going slow. In an age of distraction, nothing can feel more luxurious than paying attention. In an age of constant movement, nothing is more urgent than sitting still.

The Art of Stillness. 2014.
Simon & Schuster, p 66

Theo Wildcroft

Post-lineage yoga is, at heart, a re-evaluation of the authority to determine practice, and a privileging of peer networks over pedagogical hierarchies, or *sanghas* (communities) over *guru-sisya* (teacher-adept) relationships.

Post-Lineage Yoga. 2020. Equinox, p 11

George Bernard Shaw

I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the whole community, and as long as I live it is my privilege to do for it whatever I can...I rejoice in life for its own sake. Life is no 'brief candle' for me. It is a sort of splendid torch which I have got hold of for the moment, and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to future generations.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Write it on your heart that every day is the best day in the year. He is rich who owns the day, and no one owns the day who allows it to be invaded with fret and anxiety. Finish every day and be done with it. You have done what you could. Some blunders and absurdities, no doubt crept in. Forget them as soon as you can, tomorrow is a new day; begin it well and serenely, with too high a spirit to be cumbered with your old nonsense. This new day is too dear, with its hopes and invitations, to waste a moment on the yesterdays.

Complete Works: Vol 7, Works and Days. 1904.

Meister Eckhart (13th-century mystic)

If the only prayer that you said in your whole life was 'thank you' that would suffice.

George Eliot

Character is a process and an unfolding.... Character is not cut in marble — it is not something solid and unalterable. It is something living and changing...

Middlemarch. 1871. Penguin, pp140, 694

John Welwood

The key to waking up from our distraction is to bring awareness to our lack of awareness and be present with our lack of presence.

Toward A Psychology of Awakening.
2002. Shambhala

Gehlek Rinpoche

Depression is absolutely impermanent and dependent on conditions. The most important thing is not to submit to the habit of undermining ourselves.

Ajahn Amaro

We can thus learn to listen to our thinking as we would listen to a stream of water, a splashing fountain or a chorus of song from a flock of birds with the same freedom from involvement or identification. It's only the murmuring brock of the mind, that's all. It's no big thing, nothing to get excited about, nothing to get disturbed about.

Inner Listening. 2012.
Amaravati Publications, p 17

Wayne Dyer

If you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change.

Tsung Ping (Chinese painter, 375–443)

Now I am old and infirm. I fear I shall no more be able to roam among the beautiful mountains. Clarifying my mind, I meditate on the mountain trails and wander about only in dreams.

In *The Spirit of the Brush.* 1948. Shio Sakanishi (trans). John Murray, p 34

