

Gateways to Conscious Contact

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 (being aware of what is in this moment, no past and no future) – 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 move into 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.

Question: What can I do?

Answer: Begin to allow the watcher to emerge. See that the mind is always trying to run the show, to strut the stage. Just see this without judgment, and that seeing emanates from silence. This is what you are. It's like a film projector that is always on. We put the film through the projector and it plays out the life story with all its ups and downs, its dramas and conflicts, which we are fascinated by, but which signify nothing. Then the film runs out; the light is still on. You are the light.

I would invite people here to simply close their eyes and allow awareness to rest wherever it will. It will be discovered that awareness rests in one place only and then moves to another place and so on. Don't try to fix awareness anywhere in particular, because again this is the mind trying to indulge in a process.

Awareness can alight on sounds, in the body, on emotions, back to the sound of a car, and then on to the breath, and so on. Thoughts can arise and recede, and awareness will again alight wherever it will. Now notice that if there is a real intimacy with awareness of "what is," then it is seen that it only rests on one point, and everything else is diffused. This one point is what I call the life point. This is "what is, as it is." It is the invitation, the gateway. There can still be an apparent someone who is aware, but it is very possible at this juncture that the apparent someone will vanish, and there will only be "what is." Here is absolute awareness. The invitation has apparently been accepted. The door, it seems, has been knocked on and has apparently opened. In reality there is no one knocking, and there is no door that has to open.

PRAYER

There are several questions on prayer, the use of prayer, how to use it, whether to use it at all. That word can mean many different things. It can mean going to church and praying, "Please God, let me get that job. I promise I'll be good." I practiced that as a child. "Please, let there be some peace in my family." It didn't work.

But there are many different kinds of prayer. There are petitionary prayers - you would like something. They may sometimes work but you never know if you would have gotten it anyway. There are more effective ways if you really think you need or want something. But be careful, it won't make you happy.

If you really think you want something you can use affirmation and visualization. And when you get it, enjoy it. Don't look for yourself in it. Don't look to it for deep inner fulfillment or some kind of permanently enhanced sense of self or permanent happiness. Nothing that you achieve can give you that. Knowing that, you can play around with the world of form. And Jesus already explained how to pray FOR something, and that is when he said when you pray for something, feel as if you already had it, as if it had already been given. So you're not saying, "I want something," because if you say, "I want something," it affirms a lack. It says on the other side, the unexpressed side, "I don't have it." So when you say, "I want it," you're also stating that you DON'T have it. So you're praying at the same time not to have it. If you affirm and visualize that it is already here, and you FEEL as if you had it, the feeling that you want to get from it, you already have that feeling, and that's the truth, because you're imagining that it's going to give you feelings of peace or happiness, which is always in you already, if you just go inside deep enough.

But I don't want to discourage you from playing around in the world of form. So why not try it out? Visualize that it is already yours, that you have it. You feel what you feel as you have it. "Thank you for giving me that, it's beautiful." "It's nice to have that house, thanks."

So if you see it's already there, it's more likely to manifest in that way.

And then you move in and you go from there. Then you sit there, "Oh great, I've got the house." And then the destructive old mind patterns come up in the new house.

And there are other prayers that are used from all the different religions. They can be called pointers, they are more advanced prayers. They are pointers to a particular state. It's not that uttering those words produces the state magically. What matters when you utter certain words or prayers, and most of them are short, is really the Stillness that comes after that.

Buddhism, for example, has the Metta Meditation, which is a kind of prayer, which starts I believe with, "May all beings on the planet be well and happy," and then after you've utter those words there's a Stillness. And then it says, "May all beings in this country be well and happy," (metta means loving-kindness) and then there's a Stillness. "May all beings in this city be well and happy." Stillness. "May all being in this building be well and happy." "May I be well and happy." And it takes you to Stillness. And the being of well and happy is already there in the Stillness, it's there, it spreads. You could become Still, it would spread anyway, even without the words. Because whatever state of consciousness you are in affects the totality. And in turn IS the totality, manifesting through you. And then we have the beautiful Christian prayer by St. Francis. "Let me be an instrument of Thy peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love. Where there is injury, let me sow pardon." And so on.

And those prayers are openings, they open a door and they always take you into Stillness. And they're beautiful. Most prayers operate still on the level of duality. Even when you say, "Let me be an instrument of THY peace," you are still using the language of duality. There's me and Thy (presumably God). There's me and there's God, so God is perceived still as something or someone separate from me. Nevertheless, it's a beautiful prayer. And if stillness follows the prayer, in the Stillness you have transcended duality.

Some of you are familiar with A Course In Miracles. In A Course In Miracles, many of those lessons are a kind of prayer, and most of the lessons in it operate on the level of duality, speaking of God as He and addressing God as something or someone outside of you. The Course meets you where you are (on the level of duality) but as you reach the end of The Course, without you noticing it, the lessons become more non-dualistic. And in the end you end up in Stillness, and it says, "The use for words is almost over now." So it meets you where you are and takes you by the hand, but there are many other ways. Don't use something that the form of which you don't like, that you don't resonate with.

So most prayers are dualistic. Although the Metta Prayer in Buddhism, "May all beings be well and happy," is fine, there's no duality really there, although you are still saying there are many beings, ultimately there's only Oneness but what can we do, we're using language.

And then there are short things that are like mantras, just single words. "Peace", for example. The word itself doesn't produce peace but it is a pointer. "Stillness" is another pointer.

One of the most beautiful pointers to be found in the Old Testament - "Be still and know that I am God." And this is where, if we can call it a prayer, it is a prayer where duality is transcended. And it is a miraculous prayer, the words of which it consists are all synonyms for one single thing. Be, Still, Know, I Am, God. BE - Being, one Being, "Sat" in Sanscrit. Being and STILLNESS are one, it is the Stillness of Being Itself, before It comes into existence as something. Be, Still, KNOW - in the Stillness that's Being there is a deep knowing, non-conceptual, a deep intelligence, not words, not thoughts, deeper than thought because it's the primordial seed of all intelligence. Be, Still, Know, I AM - it is the innermost sense of Beingness or I Am. GOD - the Divine, the Source, the One. And you put these words together, each word signifies also the other, they're all one. Be, Still, Know, I Am, God. Miraculous.

So those are advanced prayers and powerful, they put you in touch. "Be still and know that I am God" is one of the most powerful and beautiful pointers to the Truth and one of those rare ones that uses language without taking you into duality.