

## THE POWER OF NOW

---

### *A guide to spiritual enlightenment* by Eckhart Tolle *Major insights with transformative potential*

1999, New World Library, 191 pages

It's an enchanting thought, isn't it? In the middle of a society whose centers of political power are emanating stale rot to the accompaniment of bugles, we're beginning to see a vibrant coalescence of awareness (COA) among ordinary people.

Extraordinary ordinary people that is.

Spiritual enlightenment has become sort of a preoccupation of mine, not to say I've made stellar progress on my own but I like to see it and comment on it in others. For example, I reviewed *The Celestine Prophecy*, a personally liberating book that gathered numerous devotees through the 1990s and beyond. A fair amount of my other work on my site has had a theme of self-improvement or self-discovery or both, e.g.

book reviews of:

Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance

Think and Grow Rich

Building a Bridge to the 18th Century

The Secret behind Secret Societies

The Secret

movie reviews of:

The Matrix

Ulee's Gold

V for Vendetta (revenge-oriented but still spiritually gratifying)

The Da Vinci Code

and articles or columns of:

The Sacred Nonaggression Principle

The 15-Minute Spirit Charge

Brew Pub Nation (beer is proof God wants us to be happy)

Reflections on a Noble Soul (loss of my brother)

Of all the works I've reviewed, I feel this book by Mr. Tolle[1] has the most potential for making fundamental positive changes in how we connect to our "higher powers." Eckhart Tolle is an innocent from abroad, an "extraordinary ordinary" man, who, totally apart from any motivational or spiritual movement of the times, came into a peak experience that changed his whole way of looking at things:

"Until my 30th year, I lived in a state of almost continuous anxiety interspersed with periods of suicidal depression.... One night not long after my 29th birthday I woke in the early hours with a feeling of absolute dread [more intense than ever]. [I said to myself] 'I cannot live with myself any longer.' This was the thought that kept repeating itself in my mind. Then I became aware of what a peculiar thought it was. 'Am I one or two? If I cannot live with myself, there must be two of me: the 'I' and the 'self' that 'I' cannot live with.' Maybe only one of them is real." — Page 1

This thought so totally stunned the young Cambridge University research scholar that his "mind stopped." He felt drawn into a vortex of energy, shaking, sucked into a void inside himself. Suddenly there was no more fear; the next day he awakened to a world that was totally alive, fresh, and new. He claims he spent nearly the next two years "sitting on park benches in a state of the most intense joy."

Eventually, people would come up to him saying they wanted that inner peace he seemed to have acquired. He would tell them they already have it, but their minds are making too much noise. He says, "Before I knew it, I had an external identity again. I had become a spiritual teacher."

He spent years reading and studying other teachers in matters of the soul, prophets from Buddha to Jesus to Ghandi. And what he sets down in *The Power of Now* is, in my humble opinion, the simplest and most fundamental concept of what any of us can do to lead the best of all our possible lives and, yes, provide the last best chance for saving the planet... and the solar system, and the galaxy, and the universe.

So what's the basic idea?

Here's my best shot: His words above give you most of it: a) "you" are not the same thing as "your mind," and b) the reason for most of your problems is that "your mind" has taken "you" over. (Much of the book is an elaboration of how to interpret these terms in quotation marks.)

A corollary to the message is most of us get stuck in our minds by virtue of time, either being trapped by the past or hinging our anxieties on the future. By appropriate exercises and techniques, we, that is our true souls, can break the chains of time and form, and enter the Present. Tolle contends that in the present we find Being with a capital B. Awareness of Being and surrender to it then become for want of a better term "cosmic consciousness."

The choice for our consciousnesses thus becomes to Be or not to Be, to shine the light of awareness on the "pain-body" of the past and/or the controlling expectations of the future and thus disable their power over us... or to continue in our old debilitating patterns of unconsciousness. These debilitating patterns, by the way, can have deadly external as well as internal consequences. Which leads to this thought:

"All evils are the effect of unconsciousness. You can alleviate the effects of unconsciousness, but you cannot eliminate them unless you eliminate their cause. True change happens from within, not without."  
— Page 168

This is where I feel the book is talking to many of us, qua freedom activists, personally. It also suggests a different approach than simply reasoning. Reasoning is important, but not as important as sharing the universal tools for finding inner peace and lasting joy. If we can plant that, political liberty, not to mention reason, follows as a flower blooms.

As enthusiastic as I am about *The Power*, I cannot do nearly enough justice to it within the space of a column. For example, I'm thoroughly convinced this book can help save relationships... mainly because grasping its principles rescues men's and women's souls from the trauma and domination by timebound, formbound trivia. If it can help save relationships, it can help save neighborhoods, communities and countries.

Please share your opinions with me on the forum.

[1] I first heard of Eckhart Tolle through a leading voluntary-money-systems guru, Thomas Greco, who maintains a Website ReinventingMoney.com. As a recipient of Mr. Greco's newsletters, I learned he recently has been working with a community in India; he commented on the Spartan, messy conditions of life there and made a reference to something Eckhart Tolle had said. Then Google, Wikipedia, and voila!

2007 August 08

Copyright © Brian Wright | The Coffee Coaster™

The Power of Now | Eckhart Tolle | Staying in the Present