

### *Awakening to your life's purpose*

by Eckhart Tolle

2006, Penguin Group, 309 pages

A few weeks ago I became excited about a book that was referred to inadvertently via an alternative-money Website's newsletter. The money guru is Thomas H. Greco, Jr., who mentioned in his newsletter, paraphrasing, "Eckhart Tolle would say 'nonresistance enables one to transcend ephemeral circumstances and tap into a higher power.'"

So I became curious about Eckhart Tolle and acquired his breakout book, *The Power of Now* (1999). I reviewed *The Power of Now*, and the following passages from that review are what I took from it:

Basic "Tolleian Way:" 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.

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 or a natural state of Being.

Awareness of Being and surrender to it then become for want of a better term "cosmic consciousness."

A New Earth comes along six years later as Eckhart has achieved some degree of celebration as a spiritual teacher. (You may check his Website for news of his latest seminars or public speaking engagements.) I have the sense his newest work, which has the subtitle "Awakening to your life's purpose," is directed consciously toward the spiritual awakening of the entire species... one soul at a time.

A New Earth seems to elaborate many of the psychological insights of *The Power of Now*, yet builds toward its central purpose of helping us imagine who we are 'meant to be.' I can't spoil the conclusion but I can give you some idea of how he sets it up: a) he draws a convincing picture of where the human race stands spiritually as of Now, b) he describes how the so-called egoic mind and the pain-body work as a tag team undercutting true self-actualization (Tolle thinks of the true self as Being or Presence, even God), and c) he outlines measures for breaking free into this realm of self-realization.

He writes simply and elegantly.

It's a captivating notion to buy into: set aside the constant yammering voices in your head telling you all the things to worry about tomorrow and reminding you of all the yesterdays that make your life such a dreary mess today. Then walk into the sunshine of your Life, the Now, and do so by the simplest techniques of deep awareness.

Of course, nothing is so easy, is it? Almost everyone has difficulty quieting the mind, but if one makes a commitment eventually progress occurs. But what about folks who are married with children? Or those who have living arrangements with many distractions, heavy demands by others on their time? Those who are doing hard time for victimless crime?

The irony is the greatest therapy may be possible for those who are most afflicted by "noises" of the ephemeral world of form. Tolle gives you the tools: basically it's a process, not of acquiescence or abandonment, but of acceptance. By not resisting reality, you become one with it... and its master.

At least that's the theory. I'm sure it raises as many questions as it seems to answer, but it's important to recognize that the Now or the Presence is not a thought. Words or concepts are not reality, they only serve as pointers to reality.

For my own part, accustomed to grandiose mind action thru the most exalted concepts of reason and liberty, it becomes a challenge to cast such thinking—that I, frankly, take quite a bit of pride in—as subordinate to my soul. But it's okay. I find the more I read and absorb the points Tolle makes, my thinking becomes a lot less important... and simultaneously better.

I stop caring whether someone disagrees with me, say, about global warming or whether 911 was a black op of evil maximum pricks. I'm increasingly finding the world of thought and form need not bother me; my happiness or contentment can be world-condition-independent: just keep on truckin', like dwelling in the eye of a hurricane.

Also now I'm seeing political freedom as a consequence of spiritual awakening, nothing more and nothing less. Those who oppress and seek power are simply menacing phenomena of the unconscious. Truth will out. And, no matter what, we're still the cheery captains of our souls.

Is this fatalism? Que será, será? Sort of. But Tolle isn't saying one should not go out there and grab reality by the gonads... try to reach the best deal. You stay maximally aware at all times, at all Nows, and you still plan for the future and make calculations based on the past, become who you're meant to be. Just feel the rain and smell the roses.

All these ideas make the Tolle books and his lectures, which as yet I know nothing of, ripe for conversation. They make perfect subjects of book discussion groups; I have so many questions and so many ideas that his thinking stimulates:

- What is the relation between spiritual awakening and the "motivational" business?
- Who am I apart from what I've accomplished; what distinguishes my unique eternal soul from others?
- How does the Sacred Nonaggression Principle help in furthering the process of enlightenment?
- How is the whole world of psychology and psychotherapy affected by these insights?

Anyway, I'm happy that Mr. Tolle has come along, and I think the human race, quite possibly, has been provided the seeds of deliverance in the words of this quiet new understanding. All quite rational and natural. Thanks, Eckhart.

Terrific read, transformative!

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