

The

Here & Now

Meditation

***A Quick and Effective Way
to Overcome Suffering***

Mimi Khuc & Thanh-Trieu Nguyen



Here & Now Publishing

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Preface

The book, *The Here & Now Meditation*, started out as just a few pages outlining a simple meditation technique. These pages eventually expanded into a small booklet to help people find inner peace, happiness, and harmony in their lives. That booklet was made available free of charge and was also offered as an e-booklet on the internet in five languages: English, French, Spanish, Dutch and Vietnamese. The book—an expanded form of the original booklet—was in response to our readers' requests for clarification on certain aspects of this meditation practice. Included some of the new information we developed in the book, this booklet here is the newly con-

densed version, and once again, is available in various languages on our website free of charge.

The full book has eight chapters—four of them have been adapted for this booklet. You will find a brief description of the other four chapters in the middle of the booklet.

To serve the general population, we use only simple terms and concepts about meditation so that we can reach the beginner everywhere. We will not be discussing viewpoints of any particular religion or school of thought. Throughout this booklet, when we do make comparisons or evaluations, they will be based solely on one merit—the effectiveness of a method in liberating a person from suffering.

A few things to keep in mind while you read: This booklet combines Eastern and Western concepts in a way that may ask its more traditional readers to consider new and different ideas. For all readers, traditional and untraditional, please read

with an open heart and a quiet mind—a mind that does not respond to its need to analyze, argue, criticize, or compare with available preconceptions and standpoints. And please read slowly. The substance of this booklet resides not only in the written words but also in the silence behind them. This booklet is meant to be read for both the knowledge obtained through the mind *and* the wisdom found by the heart.

Happy reading.

This chapter is an adapted version of the original chapter.

Chapter One

An Introduction To The Mind

The following conversation took place during a counseling session between one of our spiritual counselors and a young woman in her mid-thirties:

Counselor: Hi, how may I help you?

Woman: Everything is going wrong. I need help. I need a stable job. I also need a better place to stay... Right now, I share a room in someone's basement. I want my family to love me. My husband left me. I need a nice man... a nice husband. My car keeps breaking down...

Counselor: What you just said you need, I think is reasonable. I think everyone would want the same... Do you know of anyone who has all these things?

Woman: Yes. Some of my friends.

Counselor: And are they happy?

Woman: Well...not really.

Counselor: Do you think if you had all these things, you would be happy for good?

Woman: Maybe... Well, not really... Not for good.

Counselor: If you don't mind, I have a personal theory why. I may be wrong but let's just take a look at it. I think we come from a place where we are absolute love and peace. Maybe that's why we always feel needy and lacking now. To cope with this lack, we cling on to the love of our parents, then siblings, then friends, lovers, spouses, children... We keep feeling that lack so we try to fill it with fame, power, status, wealth. Everything works for a little while, but then that feeling of

lack comes back. I don't have the magic wand to give you what you were asking, but I can show you how to truly fill that lack. Once we do this, nothing else really matters. You have those things you asked for—fine. You don't have them—that's fine, too. You are at peace with yourself and with the world anyway...

By separating from that place of completeness, we have created a secondary mind that uses words. Our original mind is always wordless and quiet; all perceptions are without interpretation, judgment, analysis, comparison, or deduction. Everything just IS. The secondary mind is what you and I are using right now. It rants endlessly about things that cause unhappiness. Once we learn how to tame that mind, we can return to the state of our original mind. We can transcend that feeling of lack permanently. Would you like to learn how?

Suffering And Its Accomplice: The Mind

In Western culture, the word “suffering” is usually linked with traumatic life events, pain, and sadness. Eastern cultures, influenced by Hinduism and Buddhism, often view suffering as a basic building block of life—life *is* suffering. The definition in this book lies somewhere in between. Suffering, of course, refers to emotions such as sadness and pain. In this book, the definition of suffering broadens to include any emotional state linked with *unhappiness*. Our complete definition of suffering, then, is as follows:

- **Any emotion that is NOT happiness, love, and joy.** Examples: anger, jealousy, sadness, fear, hurt, anxiety, bitterness, sorrow, grief, vengefulness, hate, contempt, loneliness, etc.
- **Any state of being that is NOT peace, contentment, and har-**

mony. For examples: violence, neediness, confusion, nervousness, anxiety, withdrawal, denial, lack, devastation, worry, depression, etc.

- **Any action that is NOT of kindness, tolerance, and compassion.** Examples: controlling, judging, criticizing, insulting, attacking, abusing, complaining, nagging, belittling, etc.

With this definition of suffering, it is clear that most of us suffer to some degree. To solve this widespread problem, we first need to ask what causes our suffering. Here are some reasons many of us list. *I am unhappy because...*

- I don't get what I really want or need.
- Someone did something bad to me.
- Someone did not do something they should do for me.
- Things don't happen the way I would like for them to happen.
- I am in constant fear of losing someone, or something.

- I fail in everything I set out to do.
- There is no meaning to life.

These all seem like reasonable life situations to cause unhappiness. But there are people who *are* happy even with many of these situations! What is the difference between them and us? The answer: ***The condition of the mind!*** One mind is still and quiet while the other speaks, usually in complaint. Yet, has it ever occurred to you that perhaps you are NOT your mind? When you want peace and quiet, does that mind stop its noisy nagging? Doesn't that mind disregard your wishes most of the time?

The next time you think any of the kinds of thoughts in the above list, try separating yourself from your mind and tell it to “be quiet.” Hopefully, it will obey and become quiet or change the subject. If it does obey at first, watch and see how long before it sneaks back to the previous subject. It seems that, for many of us, our minds are not completely under

our control. This book is written for those who have not yet mastered their minds.

The concepts in this book rest upon the awareness of the following two truths:

First, the principle source of almost all emotional misery and mental suffering is the *dysfunction* of a very special and important mechanism of the human being: the mind.

Second, the mind is just one of the many parts of the human being such as the heart, eyes, and nose. This mind cannot be taken as the total self. We are not our minds and our minds are not us. Therefore, we are not the mind's **reactions** or **deductions** that lead to the emotional states of sadness, pain, or anger.

This book will guide us on how to cure this dysfunction and how to recover the high quality functions of our minds such as creativity, inventiveness, and awareness. By the time you finish reading this book, you will be equipped with an understanding of the workings of that mind as well as the skills to deal with it.

The Workings Of The Mind

The Mind's Imprecision

The first problem with the mind is its imprecision. The “knowledge” of the ordinary mind is “inexact.” Below are two examples of inexact conclusions made by the mind:

Example #1: Your eyes see that you have sown a seed. Then, your eyes see a tree growing in that place. Your mind then concludes, “I have planted this tree,” and it may jump further to claim, “That tree is mine.” In *actuality*, the eyes saw only two facts: The first is *your hands have placed a seed into the soil*, and the second is *a tree grew in that place*. Knowing only those two facts, the mind then draws the conclusion that the second phenomenon (the tree) is the result of the first one (sowing the seed).

The incorrectness, or inexactness, is that the eye *did not* see other factors involved such as soil, water, air, sunlight,

minerals, fertilizers, etc. However, it would be *equally inexact* to conclude the other way: “This seed was sown by me—*plus*, thanks to the soil, water, sunlight, etc., it grew into a tree.” Why is it still inexact?? Because the eyes *actually saw only* the sowing of a seed and the existence of a tree. It is the mind that pulls out stored knowledge from its memory bank (i.e. soil, water, sunlight...) and applies such knowledge to the phenomenon that the eyes saw (i.e. sowing of a seed and a growing tree). It then draws the conclusion. However, it is totally possible that the tree seen by the eyes could have grown from another seed planted by another person. Or there could be a thousand other factors involved. So, when we see “A” and then “B,” it is not certain that “B” is the consequence of “A.” Hence, the *True mind* is one that knows “A” as “A” and “B” as “B” without further deduction.

Example #2: Nine months after a couple has sexual intercourse, a tiny human being is born. The mind concludes, “This little human was made by me and is my offspring. He belongs to me.” The mind draws this conclusion even though it does not know if there may be ***other forces and reasons that may bring this being into life.***

In these examples, even if the mind had drawn a *different* conclusion using its stored knowledge, it would most likely still be inaccurate because the mind is always limited in its “knowing.” Using limited observations, the mind habitually deduces, reasons and fills in the gaps in knowledge with its stored, old “knowledge.”

A pure, true, and exact mind receives information without adding or deducing anything; it is one of Stillness. Then, when the need for interpretation and reasoning arises, the True mind performs such tasks in this Stillness without judg-

ment and erroneous deduction—and *at the same time*, the True mind is *aware* that it is reasoning and interpreting. It is also aware that there is always room for *possible inaccuracy*.

In short, whenever the mind draws a “conclusion,” be aware of the process it is using. What are the correct mind processes? They are the processes used when the mind is operating in perfect Stillness. They occur without judgment, criticism, suggestions, or deduction. They are only peaceful observations and perceptions.

The Mind's Shoulds And Shouldn'ts

Problems and suffering worsen when that imprecise mind decides to use its inaccurate knowledge to make judgment. In the examples below, we see how the mind works: it searches its memory bank and then applies old opinions and values to new observations. And if the world around a person does not comply with its expectations and interpretation, the mind

becomes agitated. It may nag or even throw tantrums.

In the examples below, we see how the mind can take information from our senses and apply its expectations and judgments to cause us irritation.

~ **Sight:** “I believe we should live in neat, orderly and clean surroundings. When I see clothes on the floor, dirty dishes, and clutter, I feel very uncomfortable. I don’t like messy people. They should live cleaner, healthier lives.”

~ **Hearing:** “I really dislike loud, disturbing noise. I am especially irritated when people make noise carelessly and inconsiderately. I am offended by people who slam doors, talk loudly on their cell phones, or talk during movies.”

~ **Taste:** “I am very picky when it comes to food. In fact, I

would rather go hungry than eat unappetizing meals. I get upset if a dish is not up to my standards in taste and aroma.”

Our mind also makes more sophisticated judgments based on its observations. Some common preconceptions that the mind uses to distort incoming information include preconceptions about relationships, value, roles, and identity.

~ **Value:** “If I wear this outfit, people will laugh at me (for being tacky, having no taste, being poor), or they will compliment me (for being classy, beautiful, fashionable). When I look at people and see the way they dress, the cars they drive, I immediately know their worth.” Here, the mind defines value and meaning through appearance. The mind pays great attention to compliments and criticisms from others. Thus, the mind will be greatly distressed if there

are no available means to provide the proper status symbols for the self or family.

~ **Identity:** “I lost my job and all my money. I am a complete failure.” The above faulty thinking processes of this mind could lead us into believing that we are the direct and sole cause of all life phenomena and things that represent success and failure. For example, the mind should only see a fortune as just “a fortune” instead of “a fortune that I’ve created” or “a fortune that I’ve lost.” This correct perception will enable us to overcome the suffering related to success and failure, loss and gain, honor and disgrace, and to liberate ourselves from the ever-binding illusions, “*I am in control of all things in my life,*” and “*I am what I own and what I achieve.*”

~ **Relationships and social roles:**

“Although my father (or mother, sibling, friend, spouse, child, niece, nephew) is related and/or close to me, when I encountered difficulties and needed help, s/he did not help me like s/he should have.” Here, the mind defines family and close relationships as linked with certain responsibilities. If these responsibilities aren’t fulfilled, the mind judges and blames.

“Children should obey and be dutiful to their parents.” “Parents should give love equally, foster and care for their children until they are solidly successful.” The roles of child and parent are heavily linked with certain responsibilities and expectations in the mind. These expectations can be carried out to extremes without awareness at all. For example, in an actual case we know, a mother expected her daugh-

ter to prostitute herself to support the mother's gambling habit.

“In a family, women are responsible for homemaking and the care of their husband and children. Men are responsible for finances, and material comfort.” If a person falls short of his/her expected role, both the person and others around the person will suffer the mind's nagging, judging, and blaming.

With respect to the mind, relationships are the most troublesome aspect in our lives. New perspectives can help lessen our problems. For example, we should see our spouse as follows: “This is a human being, who prior to meeting me, has already lived in this world for decades, owns a complete set of personal concepts already misled by his/her own mind, and whose body and soul are completely independent of me.” Has it ever occurred to you that this person may exist in this world for other purposes besides being

your spouse? This perspective will help the mind accept and respect others around us; it will no longer require others to give up their *own* “knowledge” and values—misled or not—for *our* misled knowledge.

The Mind's Endless Past And Endless Future

The mind often doesn't need observations to keep itself occupied. It has the past and the future to think about. A major source of our suffering comes from the mind's incessant remembering and reliving, and worrying and fantasizing. We often miss out on the experiences of the present because the mind takes pains and regrets from the past and relives them like a broken record. We also live a part of our time in the future by worrying, planning, and fantasizing excessively. The mind obsesses about these events that are actually from a different time and makes us live them during the present.

In summary, here is how the mind, through dysfunctional processes, creates our suffering.

- It is busily repeating thoughts and experiences from **the past**.
- It immerses in worries, fears, and dreams of **the future**.
- It torments us with its adamant application of **opinions** and **views** created by societies, regardless of reason or logic.
- It judges, analyzes, insults, argues, and builds images and emotions of violence, hatred, jealousy, etc.
- It can even bring illness and pain to the physical body through its continuous transmission of damaging, chaotic thoughts to the cells.

When a man mumbles and talks to himself all day, we say he's mentally ill. We fail to notice that all of us also talk to ourselves endlessly all day and all night—except we do it *quietly in our heads*. This is a serious chronic problem,

but because everyone is affected, we think it is “normal.” So instead of us being the “owners” who operate and control the mind, in reality, *that mind endlessly runs and controls us*. As long as we are unable to turn off that mind when necessary, we are not beyond suffering.

It is not our goal here to forget the past or to not plan for the future. Nor is it to have no opinions or viewpoints. The problem with the processes in the above list is that they happen *automatically and habitually*. When we say we want to turn off the mind, we mean that we want to regain control of its processes. We want to turn off its auto-pilot. The goal then is to be able to have a choice over these very processes and applications—we want to be able to choose when to apply an opinion or prior knowledge, or when to reminisce of the past, or when to build images and emotions within ourselves.

The human mind is not a disaster for mankind. On the contrary—it is an ex-

tremely valuable mechanism **IF** we know how to use it. Once we become owners of our own minds, we can cultivate its positive qualities such as creativity and awareness.

Eliminating suffering requires three things: an understanding of the mind and its habits; a method to tame that mind; and, most importantly, a cultivated awareness of our selves and our relationships with others. We have already presented an introduction to the mind's processes; in the next chapter, we would like to present a simple method that can be used to cultivate the necessary awareness. This method is only one of countless meditation methods in the world—but we have found it to be one of the simplest and most effective for our goals. Here, we present it for those who have not yet found a useful tool in their search for lasting happiness.

This chapter is an adapted version of the original chapter.

Chapter Two

The Here & Now Meditation

Our key to eliminating suffering is a simple technique that enables us to liberate ourselves *by turning off the mind*. This key is especially geared towards inexperienced practitioners of meditation. Anyone can practice it easily at any place and any time—even while sitting comfortably in a chair, lying down, standing, walking, or working.

This Here & Now meditation neither requires us to leave the normal life of the

material and social world nor expects us to abandon loved ones for solitary contemplation for any length of time. Furthermore, it does not belong to any religion. Anyone can use it.

The Purpose of Meditation

Meditation has been in existence for many thousands of years ever since people learned how to be quiet both in words and in thoughts. This quietness has helped re-energize the body and bring about true and complete rest to the mind.

Within the framework of this book, we shall focus on **eliminating unhappiness for ourselves and on preventing us from hurting others again.** After the true root of unhappiness is dealt with successfully, you will find that true lasting peace and happiness shall be yours to keep.

Basic Here & Now Concepts

The very first goal of many meditations is to quiet, or still, the thinking

mind. Normally, if we were to focus our attention on something, the thinking mind would be the one directing this action. This thinking mind leads and directs nearly all of our daily actions and thoughts. Some meditation techniques use **it** to manipulate **itself** into quietness. Others also resort to “mindful” methods where one uses this thinking mind to stay aware of the senses, thoughts, and actions such as eating, chewing, walking, thinking certain thoughts, etc.

The Here & Now technique, however, does not attempt to “wrestle” with that mind. At the beginner level, the thinking mind is sitting at a designated place, *unthinking* and *unfocused* during meditation. The mind and body get to rest deeply and thus experience profound peace and tranquility. As one becomes more proficient, this state of being will free the mind from its own habits of endless chatter. At higher levels, the True mind carries out normal daily activities

while constantly keeping an awareness on or connectedness with the inner Stillness. In addition, the method includes a means to continue practice even while you are asleep so that you can reach the subconscious mind.

So what exactly is “Here & Now”? It means literally being “**here**” and “**now.**” It results from *keeping the mind where the body is* and from the absence of thought while in a heightened state of awareness. In this state, the mind stands still, unthinking—not darting to the past, jumping to the future, or analyzing and drawing inaccurate conclusions. “Mind” and “body” become **One**, uniting the physical body with its inherent inner Stillness; a state that transcends time and space.

Simply put, if we can keep our minds quiet when not in use, we are already way ahead of the game. Then, if we can keep our minds quiet *even* when we use it and when we are asleep, we are at a much higher state of mind that no longer suffers

needlessly. With this Here & Now method, most people can enjoy great improvement in their emotional and mental well-being within a few days. You do not even need to believe in the method for it to work. All you have to do is try it and put in sincere effort.

Using The Here & Now

To summarize from the previous chapter, emotions generally develop in these ways:

- From opinions, feelings, and past interactions stored in the memory bank.
- From interpretations made by the mind through the five physical senses.
- From thoughts of events that have occurred in the past or that may occur in the future.
- From values, beliefs, and expectations applied by the mind to life events and other people.

Here are the ways in which we can address these:

To stop the mind's automatic use of certain old knowledge, we can be "present" using the Here & Now meditation. When we find ourselves reliving a certain past painful event or feeling, we need to make ourselves "present" by using the Here & Now method to enter the state of Stillness, keeping the mind quiet for at least one minute. Then, afterwards, in that state of inner Stillness, we can *observe* the event or feeling without reliving it. We can think of a memory while simultaneously never disconnecting from the present and the present's experiences.

We can minimize the bind between the mind and the senses by using the Here & Now meditation. You need to do this if, for example, your eyes see a rose, and then the mind hurriedly darts back to the past and pulls up hurtful images and memories related to a certain rose of the past. In cases like this, take a slow deep breath, enter the inner Stillness using the Here & Now meditation,

and listen in that state of being. You will be able to calm down that edgy and over-active mind quickly.

To stop the mind from living in the past and future, we also need to deal with the mind's control over the imagination. The mind has a special ability. It can “see” pictures and “hear” sounds without using the senses. It even creates feelings, tastes, and smells by itself and stimulates mental and physical reactions. For example, when the mind imagines a lemon being squeezed into the mouth, saliva glands automatically respond. This special ability, however, is a doubled-edge blade that can bring both sadness and happiness. Our imagination can be creative and innovative causing us to create art and inventions. But it can also paint fantasies from the past or future that cause us suffering.

When we need to interrupt a useless or negative session of the imagination, we can take a slow deep breath and enter into

the Here & Now inner Stillness. Once in the Stillness, the mind will immediately stop its imagining process. This technique is especially helpful in preventing the imagination from getting out of control and bringing harm to us or those around us.

To change the mind's expectations and judgments, we may need to explore new perspectives on life events. Chapter Three contains examples of new perspectives that can help us cultivate awareness and perhaps change the way the mind habitually applies its opinions and expectations to ourselves and the people around us.

Experiencing The Here & Now

The final goal of this meditation technique is for us to be able to *remain in the state of inner Stillness at all times*, whether we are sitting, standing, or walking, and whether we are awake or asleep. There are typically four stages to reach that goal:

Stage 1: In this stage, through a conscious effort, we can interrupt the flow of thought during what we call a “sitting meditation.” We can also experience Stillness, inner peace, and the resting and clarity of the mind during meditation.

Stage 2: Here, when we are *not* in sitting meditation and while carrying out our normal daily activities, we can experience the presence of Stillness quite frequently. We experience this both naturally and by the conscious effort of doing one-minute meditation throughout the day.

Stage 3: In this stage, the mind has become quite docile, less chaotic, and more manageable. Through practice, we can calmly face real life situations, be aware of our mind’s drives and habits, and step out of emotional turmoil as we maintain Stillness throughout.

Stage 4: In this fourth stage, we and our minds are in a **natural** state of **oneness** without struggles or chaos. Here, we live our lives with an ever-present inner peace

and connection with that inner Stillness. The mind no longer **automatically** analyzes, judges, reacts, draw conclusions, or nags as it used to do.

It is believed that the most enlightened sages stay in this state of Stillness continually.

For practitioners of other disciplines:

Practitioners of the Chakra System and other energy systems: When practicing the Here & Now meditation, because the initial goals of the Here & Now method are Stillness and the complete absence of thought, you will need to relax all the muscles on the forehead and around the eyes to avoid concentrating at the eyebrows and forehead, especially at the location of the “Third Eye” chakra, or Chakra 6 to some.

If you are used to feeling energy movements, frequencies, or vibrations or having visions during meditation, please ignore them because the essence of Here

& Now is the Stillness behind all of them. You should keep the mind completely still, without expecting anything—not expecting even the experience of Stillness itself because the act of expecting also hinders our experiencing Stillness.

Practitioners of traditional meditations: Traditional meditations often emphasize complete **wakefulness**. The Here & Now method emphasizes **complete inaction** which includes not struggling to stay alert. The ideal initial depth of meditation in the first stage is the state of being **half-awake and half-asleep**: between the two states of being asleep and awake.

Level One: Entering The Stillness

Important: Please note that three levels have been designed for the sole purpose of practical training. They do not indicate levels of spiritual achievement, only different applications of the meditation technique. Begin with Level One. Only advance to the next level after mastering

the previous techniques. However, do not feel pressure to advance—many people comfortably and effectively use the first- or second-level techniques even after mastering all three levels. Just find a comfortable one for yourself.

Level One explains the basic way to quiet the mind and enter Stillness, opens the heart to compassion, and teaches techniques for self-healing, anti-aging and stress management,

Level Two teaches how to deepen the state of Stillness. It also contains advanced exercises to practice sustaining Stillness during everyday activities and to neutralize negative emotions. (See the book, *The Here & Now Meditation*.)

Level Three consists of methods of spiritual cultivation using the Here & Now meditation.

Sitting Meditation

While we call the daily meditation a “sitting meditation,” remember that this

meditation technique may be practiced at any time, any place, and in any posture. Just make sure you are as comfortable and relaxed as possible.

Step One: Inhale *slowly* through your nose. As you *slowly* exhale through the mouth, feel as if a wave is sweeping from head to toe to relax your entire body. You can keep your eyes open or closed. If open, they should be gazing but neither focusing nor concentrating on any object.

Step Two: Tell the mind, “The body is here,” *knowing* the mind’s arrival at the heart area of your chest. Let go of yourself and relax with the mind **unthinking** and **unfocused**. Especially relax the muscles around the eyes and forehead whether the eyes are open or closed. Every so often, vaguely know that the mind is sitting quietly at the heart area.

If the mind starts wandering away or thinking, just quietly remind it, “The

body is here,” and settle it again at the same location. Then *immediately let go of thoughts and relax your body and mind again.*

Remain in that **unthinking** and **unfocused** state for a minimum of one minute and maximum of 30 minutes. New practitioners should not meditate longer than 30 minutes at first. After about a month, you can go as long as comfortable.

Step Three: To end the sitting meditation, take a slow deep breath. As you slowly exhale, open and focus your eyes fully. Stretch your body if desired as you end the session.

If you wish to continue the session with some other methods of contemplation, then after fully re-focusing, sustain the Stillness while in the normal state of wakefulness. Quietly gaze at or observe the surfacing images and passing thoughts without analyzing or reasoning. This practice can be performed for as

long as desired.

If your goal in meditation is developing your “higher Mind,” we advise that you work with a teacher who is accomplished in this area to guide you personally. The regular mind can be easily mistaken for the “higher Mind.”

Sleeping Meditation

At first, we transcend suffering when we reach Stillness *during the sitting meditation*. Next, we integrate this Stillness into our everyday activities. Then, in the sleeping meditation, we attempt to deal with another part of our mind: our subconscious. For us to no longer suffer even in our dreams, we guide both the subconscious and our thinking mind to dwell in the Stillness even during sleep. This allows us to wake up each day feeling fresh and at peace with ourselves and our world because it prevents the mind from continuing its habits at night.

The technique is as follows: whenever you feel drowsy and are about to fall asleep, tell your thinking mind and your subconscious, “Take refuge in the Stillness during sleep.” Then, let go of all thoughts and muscles, and fall into a peaceful sleep.

Signs Of Stillness During Meditation

A meditating person in deep Stillness will show the following signs: The body is *not* swaying, the limbs are still, and the head does not nod or move. The person’s face appears peaceful without any tenseness. Breathing becomes extremely light. With Stillness, even in long meditation sessions, limbs and back should have no aches or pains. In addition, perceptions of time and space can be slightly distorted. For example, upon opening the eyes after meditation, a person may inaccurately estimate the length of time under meditation, or a person may feel slightly disoriented. Another indication of Stillness is feeling

physically refreshed and mentally peaceful after a meditation session.

The Here & Now meditation may be practiced as often as desired throughout your day. For effectiveness, we suggest at least one 10- to 30-minute long sitting session and three short sessions of one minute each during daily activities. If your mind is very active, often darting to different times and places, practice more often and for longer periods. Then when you are ready to fall asleep, whether taking a nap, going to bed, or returning to sleep after waking up during the night, do the sleeping meditation steps.

Remember that our main goal is to live in the present, be in full awareness of our mind's processes, be in control of our thoughts, emotions, actions and realities, and maintain Stillness and equanimity through life's tribulations. Thus, after you have learned to achieve Stillness, silently keep in touch with it as frequently as possible. Again, frequent one-minute pauses in

Stillness throughout your day will be incredibly helpful.

*Self-Healing, Anti-Aging
& Stress Managing*

For self-healing: After a few minutes of regular meditation, tell your mind to rest at the ailing locations and then promptly let go of your thoughts and re-enter the Stillness for 1 to 30 minutes. (If the illness is in whole-body systems such as the circulatory, lymphatic, nervous, etc., then place the mind at the top of the head instead.)

For Stress Control and Anti-Aging:

- Everyday, do at least 15 minutes for the Here & Now sitting meditation.
- Do the 1-minute Stillness throughout the day to prevent stress build-up.
- Each time you are about to fall asleep, take a slow, deep breath, relax, and tell your mind and your subconscious to *dwell in the Stillness during sleep.*

- Every time negative thoughts or feelings arise, take a slow, deep breath and enter the Stillness for at least 30 seconds

Don't forget to take pictures of your face to see the before & after affects.

Neutralizing Forces of Past Karma

Some people believe that the sources of old information are not necessarily contained within this single lifetime, but rather, from many previous lifetimes. In this case, perhaps you will find the following instructions relevant to your goals. But if you don't believe in past life, simply ignore this section.

To neutralize forces from past lives, it is necessary to view existing suffering (illness, painful relationships, painful events, etc.) as the results of some of our past actions. In such case, one needs to *sincerely feel remorseful*—even though we may not remember or know

of those past actions. We then silently apologize to those who have suffered due to our past intentional or unintentional actions.

In our daily lives, there are times when we suffer from people who, without apparent reason, seem to persistently make life difficult for us, i.e. angrily arguing, fighting, taking our money, damaging our property, etc. To understand this karmically, we assume that some time in the past, we had done the same things to them. Put ourselves in their position in that past and open our heart so that we can understand their plight. Then, in deep Stillness, we sincerely regret and silently apologize to them. Immediately afterwards, enter Stillness for at least 30 minutes. The deeper the Stillness and the more complete the silence of the mind, the greater the results.

Characteristics of Here & Now

This Here & Now meditation method has several very important qualities especially in comparison to other methods:

~***Non Struggle:*** This method begins with not struggling with the noisy mind and ends with a completely non-struggling state within and without our being.

~***Stillness Versus Watchful Awareness:*** In this method, our awareness is sustained through peaceful observation and Stillness, not through intense watching as in many other disciplines. Yet, the method is completely compatible with all other traditions and even with a secular, non-religious life.

~***Time and Effectiveness:*** If practiced correctly, one can experience this *life-changing* Stillness within a few days—some have even experienced it within minutes. Practitioners usually can integrate the Stillness into daily life within a few weeks. These are *very* short times

compared to the months or even years that many meditation methods require.

~***Simplicity***: The Here & Now method is one of the simplest and easiest methods to learn, requiring very little time and education, no expenses, and no instructors. The method is also very easy to teach—once mastered, one can easily show others how to practice within moments.

~***Compatibility***: The Here & Now meditation is neutral and complementary—it is compatible with all other spiritual and religious traditions. It is even compatible with a secular, non-religious life. The meditation helps bring about clarity in both mind and spirit, allowing you the freedom to follow any path you choose and often even helping you proceed along those paths. Lasting happiness is a human goal that belongs to no single tradition and to all people everywhere.

~***Compassion and World Peace***: Beside providing inner peace, this Here & Now key also helps us develop compassion

and loving-kindness. We can build world peace only after we have achieved compassion and inner peace for ourselves.

This chapter has been taken directly from the original chapter.

Chapter Three

New Perspectives

*I*n this chapter, we present perspectives that we feel are useful in alleviating suffering. These stories are not meant to be strict guidelines, rules, or even instructions. Again, the main goal of this book is to help you find paths to lasting happiness. Unless you feel it will help you personally, you do not *need* to change your life perspectives in any way. Because we and many of our practitioners have found some of these stories and ideas helpful, we decided to share them with you and let you choose among them those that resonate with you.

Most of the ideas below deal with the mind, its opinions, and its insistence in

applying its views on others. This is because this aspect of the mind can be the most confining part of our lives, causing suffering in the forms of anger, hurt, frustration, outrage, self-righteousness, and more. As we grow up, our minds accumulate opinions, views, and beliefs from our parents and others around us. These views are not inherently harmful—many of them are good, teaching virtues such as kindness and generosity. What changes these opinions into things harmful to us and others is the mind's insistence that *others must believe as we do and others must behave as we think they should*.

When we interact with people, objects, and situations, we often come upon things that contradict our minds' views of how things should be. Our minds become uncomfortable because that man should be more decent, that woman should be a better mother, my daughter should be respectful, my son should call me. In coming in contact with other beings and

objects, our minds immediately analyze and judge using its long-stored opinions, often even demanding the people and situations around us to adjust themselves accordingly. *He shouldn't have been late—he should be more prompt. It wasn't supposed to rain today. There isn't supposed to be traffic at this time.* These thoughts run through our minds constantly, leaving in their wake continual suffering.

So, our first step is to end *in our mind* the demand that others must comply to our minds' points of view, *especially the points that we and the majority of people believe to be good and correct.* Our minds need to understand that if we have the right to have our own opinions, so do others, so long as these opinions do not lead to harm to the community or society. Instead of imposing our opinions on other people and on life situations, we *apply our opinions only to ourselves.* This is a necessary beginning step in the construction of happiness.

The second step is to sort through all our minds' opinions—which now only apply to ourselves—and make decisions about which opinions are useful and which are useless in our path to happiness. We may find that many of these opinions are restrictive even though we no longer apply them to others. These opinions are restrictive *on ourselves*. Find the views that cause you unhappiness, such as certain expectations of yourself, and choose to change them. Once you've identified them, you can begin working on changing them through the Here & Now meditation (see italicized text below).

The following selected perspectives may help you identify views within yourself that you would like to change. Again, these stories have been chosen on one merit: the ability to liberate us from suffering. Thus, any view that still holds us in bondage, that still restricts us, including those well-established in traditional value systems will not be discussed. We

will not assert whether something is right or wrong, or good or bad. We offer only what we have found to be *useful*.

*If you wish to change any of your perspectives or adopt new ones, do the following before meditating the Here & Now: repeat once to yourself the main point of that perspective, **then put it out of your mind**, and immediately enter the Here & Now meditation. The deeper the Stillness, the more effective this method will be.*

The Nagging Mind

“One day, my mother scolded me unjustly. It hurt me and made me cry. Every time I tell someone about it, I feel hurt again and cry again. In fact, when no one is around for me to tell it to, I remember it and even relive it. I relive the memory, the words and the feelings, and then I end up crying as if it is happening again. After two weeks, I have managed to relive the pain and cry 18 times total! If this

thought pattern remains with me, if my mind keeps doing this, who knows how many more times I will hurt and cry—when in reality, my mother scolded me only once.”



In their younger days, her husband had an affair, but afterwards, he regretted it and became a good, faithful, and loving husband. However, her mind kept recalling the old story, and she continued to feel hurt. She would remember the hurt, and she cried all through the forty years of marriage no matter what he did to comfort her. Her mind could not let go of those memories of hurt, and even after his death, it would not relent. Now, the memories of the affair still surface whenever she visits his grave.

“Must” And “Should”

The words **“must”** and **“should”** may be necessary in life if we want to maintain reasonable peace and order in societies

and communities. But what if our mind is burdened with these two words endlessly, day and night? “A husband *must* be responsible, children *must*..., I *must*..., you *must*..., they *must*..., we *must*..., God *must*...” “You *should* do it this way..., I *should*..., she *should*...”



“In the span of a single day, I purposely counted how many times my mind used the words “**must**” and “**should**,” and discovered the exact extent of how much I still hold myself and others in bondage. I also discovered that these ideas, opinions, and points of view are not truly mine but rather were imposed upon me by my parents and by society. I in turn impose them automatically upon others, especially my offspring. So as I unthinkingly pass on restrictive and useless opinions and views, I may create further bondage for generations.”



A meditation student complains to the master about a friend. “Master, all day he tells me what I “must” and “should” do, and I feel annoyed and frustrated. How do I solve this?” The master answers gently: “Have you noticed how you want to argue or defend yourself to him? Know that his use of words like “must” and “should,” especially when they have the subtle meaning that something is wrong with you, is a form of violence. He is unconsciously attacking you. But your need to defend and explain yourself is *also* a form of violence—it is violence within yourself, within your mind. Your mind attacks and resents him. We can only find true inner peace when we no longer feel that dire need to explain, defend, argue, or even wonder...”

Wants Or Needs?

“When I want something I can’t have or when I want others to do something and my wishes are unmet, I suffer—I feel

frustrated, angry, disappointed. My mind complains constantly about these unfulfilled wishes and demands.” If you experience these feelings, then ask yourself this: “Do I *want* it, or do I *need* it?” If the answer seems to be *need*, then ask further: “If I don’t get my wish, does it kill me?” If it actually harms you, *then it is need*. However, if it doesn’t, it is *want*. And if it’s *want*—if you don’t really *need* it—perhaps you would not suffer if you chose to no longer want it.

The Bondage Of Criticism

We feel upset and hurt when someone has a wrong or negative opinion about us. To deal with this, we should understand three things.

1—We feel hurt because *the mind wants to change that person’s opinion about us*. It is this **want** that causes our hurt—not necessarily the opinion itself. We are upset because our minds want the person to think *something else*, to have a different

opinion about us. And we suffer because of the mind's need to defend and argue.

2—People form their opinions from their minds' general background: their mind's beliefs, values, and standards. And unless new information has been added, it actually would have been difficult for the mind to have formed the opinion *differently*. So it's pretty safe to conclude that people mean no malice; the mind just could not help it.

3—There is no need to change that opinion. To deal with our suffering—our anger, hurt, frustration, outrage—we need only to deal with **our mind's need and desire** to change that opinion. Once the mind no longer feels this need, the opinion will no longer bother us.

Also, while criticism from others is hurtful, criticism of ourselves *from our own minds* is likely more traumatic and damaging. The mind can torture us for our entire lives by frequently bringing up the memories of weaknesses and mistakes

of the past. We must forgive ourselves and move on so we can live in peace. Without compassion for ourselves, we can't truly have compassion for others.

Once we have understood the relationship between criticism and the mind, we can use the Here & Now meditation to neutralize our negative emotions. Understanding is done in the mind, but true understanding and *experience* must be done in our heart where it is *wordless*.

The Past And The Future

“Years ago, I lived in poverty. We had no food. We didn't eat regularly. Now, we are comfortable and have more than enough food. But I still remember the feeling of hunger and I fear it. Even now, when I sit in front of a lavish meal, I remember when we had no food, and I worry that something might happen in the future—I worry that someday this food won't be here anymore. I worry so much about those “what if's” that when

I try to eat, the food then tastes like nothing at all.”



“I was willing to sacrifice and put off my own wants to build a future for myself and my family. I worked hard towards my goal. Now, I have achieved that ‘future.’ But I look back and realize that my children’s childhoods have long passed, the youth of my spouse has been lost, and my health is no longer vibrant enough to enjoy an active and passionate family life. The forgotten *present* has long become the past...”



She suffers over something that happened or did not happen in the past. He never stops worrying about something that has not yet happened or that might happen in the future. They seem to have forgotten about living in the present. Perhaps she would no longer suffer if she realizes that she cannot go back into the

past to make changes—no matter how much the mind wants to. And he would suffer less if he understands that the act of worrying does not influence or change anything in the future—whether he worries or not, the outcomes will be the same. Worrying itself does little to influence anything or anyone—*except it may cause suffering to the worrier.*

Judgment

With our limited minds, we do not—and cannot—fully comprehend the reasons behind things which we perceived as good and bad. Knowing how limited our minds are, perhaps, we should hesitate and pause whenever our minds pass judgment so quickly, easily, and often.



Judgment is the habit of an active mind that imposes its opinions, values, and beliefs on the self and on others. Although morals and ethics are important for social order, many judgments can be

a form of violence attacking the people being judged. And the person being judged can also be the self—as long as the ability to pass judgment on others exists, so will the ability to pass judgment on the self. Both these abilities are forms of bondage that lead to suffering. The true mind does not judge—it only observes in silence and peace.



“I tried to live one whole day without allowing the mind to pass any judgments or make any accusations. That’s when I realized that my mind judges and accuses *all day...*”

Happiness And Suffering

A meditation student asks: Why does everyone hurt me and make me suffer—why does no one bring me happiness? The master answers: No one is capable of causing our suffering or bringing us happiness. We are the only ones who are capable of doing such things *to ourselves*.

It is not *what happens to us* but rather *how we react* to what happens. Observe your mind and how it reacts.

Changing Our Significant Other

A woman asks her therapist for ways to change her husband to improve their marriage. The therapist sadly replies: “I’m sorry, I don’t have this ability. Many of us think that after we marry, we will gradually change our spouses. I don’t think I have ever met a person who is truly capable of changing another person. Here, I can only show people how to *change themselves to find inner happiness.*”

Changing Places

“Last night on the news, I watched a man waiting on death row. I knew he committed crimes but as I looked deeply into his numb and staring eyes, I couldn’t help wondering: If I were in his place, how would I feel right now?”

Forgiveness

A meditation student asks, “I suffer so much from how others treat me. My loved ones have hurt me, betrayed me, and disappointed me. How do I get rid of my resentment and hatred?” The master answers, “Meditate and forgive all of them.” A few days later, the student returns with success: “I have learned forgiveness, master. Thank you.” The master answers: “You are not finished yet. Meditate, open your heart, and love them.” A week later, the student returns, again with success. But again, the master gives new instructions: “Now, meditate and be appreciative and grateful. Without them and the roles they played, you would not have had the opportunity for such personal growth.” The student returns again, convinced that the lessons are finished. The student proclaims, “I have learned to appreciate these people for giving me the

chance to learn forgiveness!” The master answers: “Then you should go and meditate again. They have *played their roles correctly and well*—why is there even a need for forgiveness?”

Self-Pity

Of all the pain causing thoughts, the self-pitying ones can produce the strongest pain. Justified or not, they can cause us to experience and re-experience pain: “I am so unfortunate. How could that person say such horrible things to me? Why doesn’t that person love me? God is so unfair to me! Everything goes wrong in my life...”

Separation And Love

A person comes into our lives because s/he is meant to come—just as when s/he is leaving, it is meant to be. One of the most painful experiences is when someone we love leaves our lives. Another is when that person does not re-

turn our love. But we must realize that the existence of love depends neither on the other's physical presence nor on the other's feelings. We do not love people because they are near nor because they love us in return. So why should their absence or lack of love stop us from loving and experiencing the joy of loving? The joy of loving has nothing to do with the pain of separation. To feel pain from separation is to misidentify **need** for **love**—we do not suffer because we love; we suffer because we need. Our minds reinforce these needs and demands instead of allowing us to experience the joy of loving.



Relationships never really end. They only change in form. When a person leaves our life, the relationship is not “over.” It only changes from “spouse” to “not-spouse,” or “close friend” to “not close friend.” We are always in some kind of relation to everyone around us.

We do not “lose” people—they are always there, existing. What causes suffering is our mind’s desire to have a *specific* kind, or form, of relationship. It does not like changes. This applies even to death—we want that person to “be alive,” a particular state of being and kind of relationship to us. Perhaps it would help to know that even in death, we are still in relation to that person, if not through souls and spirits, then through our memories and the relationship we have with that person in our memory and the love we shared.

The Measure Of Success & Failure

What do we define as success and failure? When we work hard and achieve security, wealth, family, independence, a career, we think to ourselves, “I am successful—I am Success.” Then when we lose these things, we think, “I have failed—I am Failure.” But the things we use to define success are impermanent,

things that come and go in our lifetime. So why do we make these the measure, the standard, of our *worth*, of our life's successes and failures, and then *suffer* because of this measure?

Religion Of Origin

Question: “I was born and raised in a particular religious faith. As an adult, I felt the need to search further, beyond what I felt as the limits of that faith. My family is very upset about this, and I had to move out to ease the pressure for everyone. However, I am still very troubled—I don't feel free from it. What should I do?”

Answer: “Sometimes, there is little you can do to change how others feel. However, you can change *your own* emotions and feelings. You can use the Here & Now method to calm the conflicting emotions about your loyalties to your family and your new spiritual path. Furthermore, perhaps your past, your faith of

origin, is not a coincidence in the first place. Perhaps there is a reason why you were raised a specific way and also a reason why you choose differently now.

Mine's Better Than Yours

Practitioners are arguing about the legitimacy of various meditation methods and the spirituality and religious beliefs behind them. They claim theirs to be the best and refuse to accept others' methods and beliefs. Then, someone stands up and asks: "My friends, what in life is *not* spiritual? What in life is not part of something larger? The universe was created long before what we now call religions. Everything, including spirituality, comes into being at the necessary time and place. None are more "true" than others. Perhaps each one is only more appropriate at a certain time and place and for a certain people. We wouldn't be arguing if we could look beyond the religious historical events

and see them as manifestations of *different means to the same end.*”

Is That So?

The following is a summary and translation of a famous Buddhist story about a Japanese Zen monk: One day, a pregnant woman and her family arrive at the temple of a serene monk. The woman points at him and falsely accuses him of being the father of her child. The family yells and curses at him for his “sins.” He listens patiently and then responds: “Is that so?” They leave only to return some months later with the infant to leave in his care. Again, he responds, “Is that so?” and takes the child. A few years later, they return again to apologize to him for their mistake and to take back the child. He calmly responds once again, “Is that so?” as he watches the child taken away.

Inter-Relationship

A meditation student asks a master: “What is the best way to deal with human interaction in my cultivation? Should I seclude myself to avoid all interaction so I can prevent the accumulation of new karma?” The master replies: Sure, you can if you want. But for some reason, I, personally, keep feeling as if I owe *somebody* something no matter what I do. When I eat my meals, I feel I owe the farmers for their labor. When I turn on the lights, I feel I owe the people who work at the power plant. When I do the laundry, I feel I owe the people who work at soap factories. But, of course, that’s just me.

Why Are We Here In This Life?

The following paragraphs portray different views on the meaning of our existence in this life and world. Some of these are similar and can work in tandem with each other while some are contradic-

tory—it is up to you to choose some, if any at all, that are helpful to you.

1. Faith In The Universe

Society and the universe may seem extremely chaotic. However, when we look more closely, what seems like chaos is actually following a kind of a definite order. An individual's life may also seem chaotic and aimless, but with keener perception, one can see wondrous order and arrangement. There exists certain universal forces that are more intelligent than we are, a kind of guiding energy and power that manifests the rhythms of all the ups and downs that will gently lead us to wherever we need to go and to be.

2. Karma

“To believe in karma, the universal law of cause and effect, is to see all relationships and life events as a part of that larger cycle. So when someone hurts me or causes me loss, instead of suffering, I view it as a payment of an old debt from

a previous life. I feel relieved, and my heart is lighter because the debt load has lessened.”

3. Roles And Lessons

“I don’t believe in karma. I believe that this world is a gigantic stage where each person is both an actor and script-writer for his/her own role. Before birth, we choose our roles and request others to play important opposing roles such as parents, spouses, children, enemies, loved ones, etc. The main goal on this stage is to ‘experience’ and evolve spiritually; one learns forgiveness, compassion, and unconditional love. One also learns bondage and freedom, suffering and happiness. Therefore, I sincerely thank everyone whether their roles in my life were loving or hateful, good or bad. I also have respect for those who hold lesser and weaker positions in my life such as my children, my younger siblings, my employees, and people with less money, power, beauty, and intelligence, because I

know that they certainly are truly not anything *less* than I. They have actually granted me a great privilege by acting in these lesser roles.”

4. *What Is This Lesson?*

“I believe that all events and relationships in my life are lessons designed to help me evolve spiritually. Therefore, *each time* I face a trauma, challenge, or even success, instead of allowing my mind to blame myself, others, or the universe, I ask myself: What lesson can I learn from this?”

“I believe that all life experiences are lessons—and the main lesson is to let go of my attachments and, thus, understand the essence of illusion and impermanence in life. For example, if I am excessively concerned with money, especially if I believe it to be the determining factor of my worth, I may experience financial failure and loss, one after another until I let go of my attachment to money. If I am attached

to and dependent on emotional relationships with others, especially if I see them as a part of my identity, I may experience many relationship failures and the loss of loved ones. These lessons will keep on repeating until I understand the nature of my attachments. Once the lessons are learned, my specific problems seem to dissipate and my life automatically calms down. I find inner peace and equanimity. I find peace because my life is calm, and my life is calm also because I find inner peace—the relationship is circular.”

Unconditional Love

What is unconditional love? To love unconditionally is to love without condition, without expectation or demand. It is easy to love someone who is perfect. But what of the imperfect? A mother may view her mentally handicapped child as a punishment from higher forces. But perhaps the child is a blessing. Perhaps the child is here to teach the mother *true* un-

conditional love. Unconditional love is the ability to love a handicapped child who cannot speak pleasant words to us, who has no social status and achievements of which a parent can be proud.



How does one love a man or woman unconditionally? Loving people unconditionally is loving them totally, *both their “good” and “bad” parts*. It is not loving them *despite* their bad qualities—it is loving them also *because* of those qualities. When we love people unconditionally, we are able to watch them living their lives, being themselves, *without wanting or needing them to change anything*. In fact, we love them without **needing** them to belong to us—we love them regardless of whether they return our love, whether they are with us or in our lives.

Love Versus Need

How do you know when you love someone? We often say, “I know I love

her because I can't live without her. If she left, I would hurt so much." Or we say, "When I'm not with him, I miss him so much. I always want to be near him." But these don't seem to capture the essence of love because *love does not hurt or cause pain*. What causes us pain, what those quotes above are actually describing, is *need*. Need asks, demands, expects. Need constrains and confines. Need hurts. And need is the work of *the mind*. Love does not require certain behaviors or certain feelings. Love *does not require at all*. Love is joyful and liberating—it is freedom for both those who love and those who are loved. Love is the work of the heart.

Experiencing "All Is One"

People often talk about "oneness," and many say, "All is one." Many ask how we can go about *experiencing* it. But we as humans cannot describe the "it" experience in words, much less show

someone how to reach that experience. The story below is an attempt to describe *one* experience through the language of the mind—and is a pale and pallid comparison to the actual experience. This is not a formula or instructions for you to follow. We hope you find this story helpful in some way on your own path to experiencing the oneness of all that is.

Woman And Child

Most people say she's Woman. Some say she's Child. She thinks she's both. Together “they” often go to the beach. The woman gazes into the deep water, longing for her lost continent of a distant past. The child builds a sand castle and giggles when the wind sneaks up and pecks her on the cheek. Once in awhile, the wind asks softly, “Who are you?” The child laughs. “I am Me, of course. Silly you!”

Then one day, the woman pauses and wonders who she really is. They say clothing does not make a person. So she takes

off all her clothes. They say the physical form is not the true identity. So she slowly lets her body dissolve into the air. And after every bit of the physical matter disappears, the layers of her non-physical form away, too. Then to her surprise, there is nothing but Stillness, wordlessness...

The Child is fascinated. She wiggles a bit and feels herself expanding, expanding, and expanding... She wiggles again and finds herself pervading the entire universe...

Something is very odd, yet so natural here. With her coverings peeled off, all things appear as Stillness and formless just like her. In fact, the “Stillnesses” are one and the same. Either everything is a part of her or she is in everything, or maybe both. As she loses her self, the entire physical universe comes back into being within that Stillness. Now, she is the little ant that is being crushed under someone's shoe. She is the small boy flying a kite. She is the monk preaching to a large group of people. She is

the disfigured leper whose pus-filled wounds are being cleaned by an undistinguished nun, and she is also the nun at the same time. She is the man murdering a child, and she is the father grieving over the child's coffin. She is that man who touches a woman... touches her deeply... and then walks off without an explanation. She is also that same woman, fixing her gaze on the horizon at sunset for the next thousand years, silently grieving the loss of a moment of the past. She is the young girl standing at a street corner waiting for customers, and she is also the nun praying for the salvation of the human race. She is all the mountains and rivers, and she is a small stone, deep in meditation for centuries on end. She is all those humans able to roam the different, both seen and unseen, universes... And she is all of those universes...

All the particles of her physical body start to gather themselves back into a shape... Then come the non-physical layers... The Stillness joins in and, voila, the woman-child appears as before. She wears

a flimsy gown and stands on the balcony, being a woman. The blinking stars bear her witness; her body shivers as the wind caresses her skin... She embraces life's passion; her being pervades the universes. Then she puts back on the ordinary clothes of the woman-child. In peace and equanimity, she again finds herself among the worlds of mortals and immortals, knowing that she belongs to them and they her...

She puts on the outfit of a master, pretending to disseminate wisdom to a group of students who she knows are none other than her own self. Though they may or may not be aware of this, she knows they need nothing from her or anyone else. Those who have paranormal power look at her Stillness and say they see gods and goddesses. She smiles lovingly... She knows they only see reflections of their own yearnings and needs. They are a part of her, are they not?

So the woman and child go back to the beach. The woman again gazes into

the deep water; the entire marine kingdom comes alive within her. The child again builds a sand castle and laughs when the wind sneaks up and pecks her on the cheek. And again, the wind asks softly, “Who are you?” Without looking up from the sand castle, the child smiles and whispers, “I am You.”

Other Chapters in the Book

Below are brief descriptions of other chapters in the full book:

Chapter Four: Self-Healing This section discusses using the Here & Now meditation to heal. With this method, you can actually watch your pain subside within a few minutes. While the method is very effective, we know that many meditators, especially those whose goal in meditation is a kind of spiritual enlightenment, dislike the idea of using meditation for healing purposes. This meditation method involves both mind and body, however, so a person may use it effectively with either or both.

Chapter Five: Managing Stress And Slowing The Aging Process. This section explains how to use the Here & Now meditation to relax and manage stress, or to slow the aging process.

Chapter Six: Questions and Answers for Experienced Meditators. This section addresses various questions posed by meditation masters from varying disciplines and discusses more advanced concepts and techniques in a comparative manner.

Chapter Seven: General Questions and Answers. This is a question and answer section. Topics include technical aspects of the meditation, advanced concepts on the mind, practical applications of the new perspectives, and suggestions for spiritual cultivation and personal transformation.

This chapter has been taken directly from the original chapter.

Summary

*H*ere is a summary of the main points of this book along with a few tips on practice.

- ~ The mind is not the self. We are not that mind.
- ~ The senses receive and transfer information to the mind. The mind “perceives” and then interprets the information based on its knowledge and feelings stored in the memory bank. When we misidentify ourselves with the mind and believe we

are those feelings and thoughts, we will become sad or happy according to the mind's directing.

- ~ Suffering is any emotion that is not happiness, any state that is not peace, and any action that does not come from compassion. This includes emotions and actions we don't normally consider suffering such as anger and vengeance.
- ~ A state of profound Stillness can interrupt the mind's control over our emotions and actions. This Stillness is not just a pause in thought—it is a natural silence within us that allows us to be in a state of peace, a state of silent wholeness. In this state, we are untouched by the mind's habits which have created need and expectation. In this state, we can bring peace to the mind and the body thus bringing peace into our lives.
- ~ The Here and Now meditation offers a daily meditation to reach Stillness.

To relieve our suffering and the suffering of those around us, we need to be able to bring a part of this Stillness into our daily lives. In whatever you are doing, try to maintain a certain connectedness with that inner Stillness.

- ~ The most practical exercise is to listen and converse in Stillness. This means listening and responding with an absolute absence of the need for analysis, judgment, vindication, and problem-solving. When any of these tasks become necessary, we should perform them purposely and only in Stillness instead of allowing the mind to do them habitually and automatically.
- ~ Making judgment on others comes from a need within us that the mind has created. This need is one of self-reassurance, self-consolation, and self-elevation. And this need drives us to act out in a form of violence

that can be very hurtful to those around us. Instead of temporarily patching our wounds by attacking others, we can permanently realize our wholeness and peace by reaching the state of Stillness so that we no longer hurt others through judgment.

- ~ Stillness is not the opposite of action—it does not mean inaction in life. Living in Stillness means living without an inner struggle with life and the situations we face. Externally, we still live our daily lives and still cope “face-to-face” with our present realities. *Inner stillness does not mean outer motionless.*

Here & Now Mottos

We call the favorite phrases which can be easily applied to the “Here & Now” way of life our “*mottos*,” or sometimes jokingly our “mantras”:

- ~ For those of us who are quick-

tempered or tend to nag our spouses and children about trivial things such as being messy in the home, not squeezing the toothpaste from the bottom up, not rinsing the glass after drinking orange juice, etc., this motto can help reduce the nagging and angry reactions: ***“If it isn’t killing anyone, don’t complain!”***

- ~ For those of us whose minds habitually deduce, analyze and judge, we can practice stopping that tendency. The minute the mind receives information from the senses, and before it can jump to an interpretation, stop and tell it, ***“That’s it!”*** or, ***“Period.”***
- ~ For those of us who habitually impose our opinions on others, requiring others to follow the rules of our beliefs, we should frequently tell ourselves, ***“It’s all right. No big deal!”***
- ~ For those of us whose minds are often preoccupied with complaints, perhaps

it would help if we thought to ourselves, ***“It could be worse.”***

- ~ Remember the story about the Japanese Zen monk in Chapter 3? In all his life situations, good and bad, he would calmly comment, “Is that so?” and peacefully move on with life. This monk sets an example for all of us. As we face each situation that life creates for us, perhaps we too should try to calmly comment, ***“Is that so?”*** with a smile on our faces and peace in our hearts.

Thank you for taking your journey with us. We hope you found this book useful in some way. The Here & Now meditation is only one method among many used to first establish the sacred inner Stillness. Once you have found Stillness within yourself (with whatever method you prefer), please use it to cultivate deeper understanding and compassion. Only these will create lasting

happiness for you individually and for the world as a whole.

May you and all beings find true peace, joy, and understanding in life.

This booklet is available in English, Spanish, French, Dutch, Chinese and Vietnamese free of charge on our website. Here, you'll find a text version to print and an e-booklet to download.

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