

Practicing the Art of Now: Essential Teachings Meditations and Exercises from the Power of Now

Eckhart Tolle

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Based on and excerpted from the author's previous work, *The Power of Now*, this CD set, read by the author, offers distinctive, simple exercises for discovering "grace, ease, and lightness."

At the beginning of each chapter, a Buddhist chime calls the listener to attention. Tolle uses one-word chapter headings-Practicing, Consciousness, Knowing, Timeless, Fulfillment-to remind listeners of their focus during the exercise. Using comparison and contrast, he points out ways to work toward inner peace and get beyond the mind, working toward what matters.

Tolle, a spiritual teacher and lecturer from Vancouver, British Columbia, uses a soothing reading style and makes his points gently in a non-threatening manner. He wants his audience to be "intelligent beyond thought." Believing that consciousness is "both outward and inward," he discusses the "present simplicity of the now." Humans may not be able to reduce infinity, but, through their presence, they can unlearn the negative emotions of fear, unease, worry, and phobias.

Defining emotions as "the body's reaction to the mind," the author shows seekers that "saying 'yes' to the present can help separate clock time from psychological time." Without negating the need for dealing with practical matters, Tolle points out the ways in which using psychological time helps the seeker use the mind, becoming sharper and clearer in completing everyday tasks in order to spend more time working towards "life's journey, the adventure."

Once a person begins to exercise sensing life fully in the now, that person should be more aware of space, sounds, silence, touch, and breathing, "allowing everything to be" in the realization that "all problems are illusions of the now."

Understanding that listeners come from different backgrounds, Tolle uses "Being" and "God" interchangeably, to keep concepts open to interpretation. He recognizes that "the past is a bottomless pit" for most adults and wants listeners to know that "only the present can free you from the past."

Once a person has realized the goal of living in the now, she or he should be able to maintain an interest in personal reactions, watch thought, be observant toward the reactions of others, and be aware of the intense presence (as defined by the individual's belief system). The ego should be diminished alongside the need to justify one's actions and defend oneself from threats to the self-image. This CD book can help listeners say "yes" to the present moment, and so be no longer stopped by time.

PAM KINGSBURY (November / December 2003)

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