

The following are 6 key mindfulness practices outlined by Eckhart Tolle in “The Power of Now”

An antidote to the insanity of a constantly changing world

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**(1) "WATCHING THE THINKER" - START LISTENING TO THE VOICE IN YOUR HEAD**

....as often as you can.

Pay particular attention to any repetitive thought patterns, those old audiotapes that have been playing in your head perhaps for many years.

## **(2) FOCUS YOUR ATTENTION INTO THE NOW -**

You can also create a gap in the mind stream simply by directing the focus of your attention into the Now.

Just become intensely conscious of the present moment.

There is one certain criterion by which you can measure your success in this practice: And that is the degree of peace that you feel within.

### **(3) LOOK AT YOUR EMOTIONS: THE BODY'S REACTION TO YOUR MIND**

The more you are identified with your thinking, your likes and dislikes, judgments and interpretations, which is to say the less present you are as the watching consciousness, the stronger the emotional energy charge will be, whether you are aware of it or not.

**(4) WATCH OUT FOR ANY KIND OF  
DEFENSIVENESS** within yourself.

What are you defending?  
An illusory identity, an image in your mind, a fictitious  
entity.

By making this pattern conscious, by witnessing it, you un-  
identify from it.

In the light of your consciousness, the unconscious pattern  
will then quickly dissolve.

## **(5) END THE DELUSION OF TIME + LETTING GO OF PSYCHOLOGICAL TIME**

End the delusion of time. Time and mind are inseparable.

Remove time from the mind and it stops - unless you  
choose to use it.

To be identified with your mind is to be trapped in time:  
The compulsion to live almost exclusively through memory  
and anticipation.

Step out of the time dimension as much as possible in  
everyday life.

If you find it hard to enter the Now directly, start by  
observing the habitual tendency of your mind to want to  
escape from the Now.

Notice also how often your attention is in the past or future.

## **(6) CONNECTING WITH THE INNER BODY**

Direct your attention into the body. Feel it from within. Is it alive? Is there life in your hands, arms, legs, and feet - in your abdomen, your chest?

Can you feel the subtle energy field that pervades the entire body and gives vibrant life to every organ and every cell? Can you feel it simultaneously in all parts of the body as a single field of energy? Keep focusing on the feeling of your inner body for a few moments. Do not start to think about it. Feel it.

When your consciousness is directed outward, mind and world arise.

When it is directed inward, it realizes its own Source and returns home into the Unmanifested.

As you go about your life, don't give 100 percent of your attention to the external world and to your mind. Keep some within.

# **FREEING YOURSELF FROM YOUR MIND**

## **How to practise the Power of Now - A journey toward enlightenment**

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# FREEING YOURSELF FROM YOUR MIND

## How to practise the Power of Now - A journey toward enlightenment

The good news is that you can free yourself from your mind. This is the only true liberation.

**1. "WATCHING THE THINKER" - START LISTENING TO THE VOICE IN YOUR HEAD** as often as you can. Pay particular attention to any repetitive thought patterns, those old audiotapes that have been playing in your head perhaps for many years.

This is what I mean by "watching the thinker," which is another way of saying: Listen to the voice in your head, be there as the witnessing presence.

When you listen to that voice, listen to it impartially. That is to say, do not judge. Do not judge or condemn what you hear, for doing so would mean that the same voice has come in again through the back door. You'll soon realize: There is the voice, and here I am listening to it, watching it. **This I AM realization, this sense of your own presence, is not a thought. It arises from beyond the mind.**

So when you listen to a thought, you are aware not only of the thought but also of yourself as the witness of the thought. A new dimension of consciousness has come in.

As you listen to the thought, you feel a conscious presence - your deeper self - behind or underneath the thought, as it were. The thought then loses its power over you and quickly subsides, because you are no longer energizing the mind through identification with it.

**Every time you create a gap in the stream of mind,  
the light of your consciousness grows stronger.**

- This is the beginning of the end of involuntary and compulsive thinking.
  - When a thought subsides, you experience a discontinuity in the mental stream - a gap of "no-mind."
  - At first, the gaps will be short, a few seconds perhaps, but gradually they will become longer. When these gaps occur, you feel a certain stillness and peace inside you.
  - This is the beginning of your natural state of felt oneness with Being, which is usually obscured by the mind.
  - With practice, the sense of stillness and peace will deepen. In fact, there is no end to its depth.
  - You will also feel a subtle emanation of joy arising from deep within: the joy of Being.
  - In this state of inner connectedness, you are much more alert, more awake than in the mind-identified state. You are fully present.
  - It also raises the vibrational frequency of the energy field that gives life to the physical body.
  - As you go more deeply into this realm of no-mind, as it is sometimes called in the East, you realize the state of pure consciousness.
  - In that state, you feel your own presence with such intensity and such joy that all thinking, all emotions, your physical body, as well as the whole external world become relatively insignificant in comparison to it.
  - And yet this is not a selfish but a selfless state. It takes you beyond what you previously thought of as "your self."
  - That presence is essentially you and at the same time inconceivably greater than you.
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**2. FOCUS YOUR ATTENTION INTO THE NOW** - you can also create a gap in the mind stream simply by directing the focus of your attention into the Now. Just become intensely conscious of the present moment.

This is a deeply satisfying thing to do. In this way, you draw consciousness away from mind activity and create a gap of no-mind in which you are highly alert and aware but not thinking.

This is the essence of meditation.

In your everyday life, you can practice this by taking any routine activity that normally is only a means to an end and giving it 'your fullest attention, so that it becomes an end in itself.

For example, every time you walk up and down the stairs in your house or place of work, pay close attention to every step, every movement, even your breathing. Be totally present.

Or when you wash your hands, pay attention to all the sense perceptions associated with the activity: the sound and feel of the water, the movement of your hands, the scent of the soap, and so on.

Or when you get into your car, after you close the door, pause for a few seconds and observe the flow of your breath. Become aware of a silent but powerful sense of presence.

One day you may catch yourself smiling at the voice in your head, as you would smile at the antics of a child. This means that you no longer take the content of your mind all that seriously, as your sense of self does not depend on it.

**The single most vital step on your journey toward enlightenment is this:  
Learn to un-identify from your mind.**

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# **FREEING YOURSELF FROM YOUR MIND**

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### **3. LOOK AT YOUR EMOTION:THE BODY'S REACTION TO YOUR MIND**

Mind, in the way I use the word, is not just thought. It includes your emotions as well as all unconscious mental-emotional reactive patterns. Emotion arises at the place where mind and body meet. It is the body's reaction to your mind - or you might say a reflection of your mind in the body.

The more you are identified with your thinking, your likes and dislikes, judgments and interpretations, which is to say the less present you are as the watching consciousness, the stronger the emotional energy charge will be, whether you are aware of it or not.

**There is one certain criterion by which you can measure your success in this practice:  
And that is the degree of peace that you feel within.**

If you cannot feel your emotions, if you are cut off from them, you will eventually experience them on a purely physical level, as a physical problem or symptom.

If you have difficulty feeling your emotions, start by focusing attention on the inner energy field of your body. Feel the body from within. This will also put you in touch with your emotions.

If you really want to know your mind, the body will always give you a truthful reflection, so look at the emotion, or rather feel it in your body.

If there is an apparent conflict between them, the thought will be the lie, the emotion will be the truth. Not the ultimate truth of who you are, but the relative truth of your state of mind at that time. You may not yet be able to bring your unconscious mind activity into awareness as thoughts, but it will always be reflected in the body as an emotion, and of this you can become aware. To watch an emotion in this way is basically the same as listening to or watching a thought, which I described earlier.

The only difference is that, while a thought is in your head, an emotion has a strong physical component and so is primarily felt in the body. You can then allow the emotion to be there without being controlled by it. You no longer are the emotion; you are the watcher, the observing presence. If you practice this, all that is unconscious in you will be brought into the light of consciousness.

**That question will point you in the right direction. But don't analyze, just watch. Focus your attention within. Feel the energy of the emotion**

If there is no emotion present, take your attention more deeply into the inner energy field of your body. It is the doorway into Being.

**MAKE IT A HABIT TO ASK YOURSELF:**

**What's going on inside me at this moment?**

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### **4. WATCH OUT FOR ANY KIND OF DEFENSIVENESS** within yourself.

What are you defending? An illusory identity, an image in your mind, a fictitious entity. By making this pattern conscious, by witnessing it, you un-identify from it. In the light of your consciousness, the unconscious pattern will then quickly dissolve.

This is the end of all arguments and power games, which are so corrosive to relationships. Power over others is weakness disguised as strength. True power is within, and it is available to you now.

**The mind always seeks to deny the Now and to escape from it.**

**The more you are identified with your mind, the more you suffer. Or you may put it like this:**

**The more you are able to honor and accept the Now, the more you are free of pain, of suffering - and free of the ego mind.**

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### **5. END THE DELUSION OF TIME + LETTING GO OF PSYCHOLOGICAL TIME**

If you no longer want to create pain for yourself and others, if you no longer want to add to the residue of past pain that still lives on in you, then don't create any more time, or at least no more than is necessary to deal with the practical aspects of your life. How to stop creating time?

**End the delusion of time.**

**Time and mind are inseparable.**

**Remove time from the mind and it stops - unless you choose to use it.**

This creates an endless preoccupation with past and future and an unwillingness to honor and acknowledge the present moment and allow it to be.

The compulsion arises because the past gives you an identity and the future holds the promise of salvation, of fulfillment in whatever form. Both are illusions.

The more you are focused on time - past and future - the more you miss the Now, the most precious thing there is.

Why is it the most precious thing? Firstly, because it is the only thing. It's all there is. The eternal present is the space within which your whole life unfolds, the one factor that remains constant. Life is now. There was never a time when your life was not now, nor will there ever be.

Secondly, the Now is the only point that can take you beyond the limited confines of the mind. It is your only point of access into the timeless and formless realm of Being.

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Have you ever experienced, done, thought, or felt anything outside the Now? Do you think you ever will? Is it possible for anything to happen or be outside the Now? The answer is obvious, is it not?

Nothing ever happened in the past; it happened in the Now. Nothing will ever happen in the future; it will happen in the Now.

The essence of what I am saying here cannot be understood by the mind.

The moment you grasp it, there is a shift in consciousness from mind to Being, from time to presence.

Suddenly, everything feels alive, radiates energy, emanates Being.

Break the old pattern of present-moment denial and present-moment resistance. Make it your practice to withdraw attention from past and future whenever they are not needed.

Step out of the time dimension as much as possible in everyday life.

If you find it hard to enter the Now directly, start by observing the habitual tendency of your mind to want to escape from the Now.

You will observe that the future is usually imagined as either better or worse than the present.

If the imagined future is better, it gives you hope or pleasurable anticipation. If it is worse, it creates anxiety. Both are illusory.

Whenever you are able to observe your mind, you are no longer trapped in it. Another factor has come in, something that is not of the mind: the witnessing presence.

Be present as the watcher of your mind - of your thoughts and emotions as well as your reactions in various situations. Be at least as interested in your reactions as in the situation or person that causes you to react.

Notice also how often your attention is in the past or future.

**To be identified with your mind is to be trapped in time:**

**The compulsion to live almost exclusively through memory and anticipation.**

Don't judge or analyze what you observe. Watch the thought, feel the emotion, observe the reaction. Don't make a personal problem out of them. You will then feel something more powerful than any of those things that you observe: the still, observing presence itself behind the content of your mind, the silent watcher.

Intense presence is needed when certain situations trigger a reaction with a strong emotional charge, such as when your self-image is threatened, a challenge comes into your life that triggers fear, things "go wrong," or an emotional complex from the past is brought up. In those instances, the tendency is for you to become "unconscious."

The reaction or emotion takes you over - you "become" it. You act it out. You justify, make wrong, attack, defend ... except that it isn't you, it's the reactive pattern, the mind in its habitual survival mode.

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Identification with the mind gives it more energy; observation of the mind withdraws energy from it. Identification with the mind creates more time; observation of the mind opens up the dimension of the timeless.

The energy that is withdrawn from the mind turns into presence. Once you can feel what it means to be present, it becomes much easier to simply choose to step out of the time dimension whenever time is not needed for practical purposes and move more deeply into the Now.

This does not impair your ability to use time - past or future - when you need to refer to it for practical matters. Nor does it impair your ability to use your mind. In fact, it enhances it. When you do use your mind, it will be sharper, more focused.

Learn to use time in the practical aspects of your life - we may call this "clock time" - but immediately return to present-moment awareness when those practical matters have been dealt with. In this way, there will be no buildup of "psychological time," which is identification with the past and continuous compulsive projection into the future.

**The enlightened person's main focus of attention is always the Now**

The enlightened person's main focus of attention is always the Now, but they are still peripherally aware of time. In other words, they continue to use clock time but are free of psychological

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## 6. CONNECTING WITH THE INNER BODY

You may find it helpful to close your eyes for this practice. Later on, when "being in the body" has become natural and easy, this will no longer be necessary.

Direct your attention into the body. Feel it from within. Is it alive? Is there life in your hands, arms, legs, and feet - in your abdomen, your chest?

Can you feel the subtle energy field that pervades the entire body and gives vibrant life to every organ and every cell? Can you feel it simultaneously in all parts of the body as a single field of energy?

Keep focusing on the feeling of your inner body for a few moments. Do not start to think about it. Feel it.

The more attention you give it, the clearer and stronger this feeling will become. It will feel as if every cell is becoming more alive, and if you have a strong visual sense, you may get an image of your body becoming luminous. Although such an image can help you temporarily, pay more attention to the feeling than to any image that may arise. An image, no matter how beautiful or powerful, is already defined in form, so there is less scope for penetrating more deeply.

**To go even more deeply into the body, try the following meditation. Ten to fifteen minutes of clock time should be sufficient.**

Make sure first that there are no external distractions such as telephones or people who are likely to interrupt you. Sit on a chair, but don't lean back. Keep the spine erect. Doing so will help you to stay alert. Alternatively, choose your own favorite position for meditation.

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Make sure the body is relaxed. Close your eyes. Take a few deep breaths. Feel yourself breathing into the lower abdomen, as it were. Observe how it expands and contracts slightly with each in and out breath.

Then become aware of the entire inner energy field of the body. Don't think about it - feel it. By doing this, you reclaim consciousness from the mind. If you find it helpful, use the "light" visualization I just described.

When you can feel the inner body clearly as a single field of energy, let go, if possible, of any visual image and focus exclusively on the feeling. If you can, also drop any mental image you may still have of the physical body. All that is left then is an all-encompassing sense of presence or "beingness," and the inner body is felt to be without a boundary.

**Through self-observation, more presence comes into your life automatically.**

**The moment you realize you are not present, you are present.**

Then take your attention even more deeply into that feeling. Become one with it. Merge with the energy field, so that there is no longer a perceived duality of the observer and the observed, of you and your body. The distinction between inner and outer also dissolves now, so there is no inner body anymore. By going deeply into the body, you have transcended the body.

Stay in this realm of pure Being for as long as feels comfortable; then become aware again of the physical body, your breathing and physical senses, and open your eyes. Look at your surroundings for a few minutes in a meditative way - that is, without labeling them mentally - and continue to feel the inner body as you do so.

Having access to that formless realm is truly liberating. It frees you from bondage to form and identification with form. We may call it the Unmanifested, the invisible Source of all things, the Being within all beings. It is a realm of deep stillness and peace, but also of joy and intense aliveness. Whenever you are present, you become "transparent" to some extent to the light, the pure consciousness that emanates from this Source. You also realize that the light is not separate from who you are but constitutes your very essence.

When your consciousness is directed outward, mind and world arise. When it is directed inward, it realizes its own Source and returns home into the Unmanifested.

**It is quite possible to be conscious of the Unmanifested throughout your life.**

**You feel it as a deep sense of peace somewhere in the background, a stillness that never leaves you, no matter what happens out here.**

**You become a bridge between the Unmanifested and the manifested, between God and the world.**

**THIS IS THE STATE OF CONNECTEDNESS WITH THE SOURCE THAT WE CALL ENLIGHTENMENT.**

Then, when your consciousness comes back to the manifested world, you reassume the form identity that you temporarily relinquished. You have a name, a past, a life situation, a future. But in one essential respect, you are not the same person you were before: You will have glimpsed a reality within yourself that is not "of

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this world," although it isn't separate from it, just as it isn't separate from you. Now let your spiritual practice be this:

As you go about your life, don't give 100 percent of your attention to the external world and to your mind. Keep some within. Feel the inner body even when engaged in everyday activities, especially when engaged in relationships or when you are relating with nature. Feel the stillness deep inside it. Keep the portal open.

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### Creative use of mind

If you need to use your mind for a specific purpose, use it in conjunction with your inner body. Only if you are able to be conscious without thought can you use your mind creatively, and the easiest way to enter that state is through your body.

Whenever an answer, a solution, or a creative idea is needed, stop thinking for a moment by focusing attention on your inner energy field. Become aware of the stillness.

When you resume thinking, it will be fresh and creative. In any thought activity, make it a habit to go back and forth every few minutes or so between thinking and an inner kind of listening, an inner stillness.

Don't just think with your head, think with your whole body.

Let the breath take you into the body. If at any time you are finding it hard to get in touch with the inner body, it is usually easier to focus on your breathing first. Conscious breathing, which is a powerful meditation in its own right, will gradually put you in touch with the body.

Follow the breath with your attention as it moves in and out of your body. Breathe into the body, and feel your abdomen expanding and contracting slightly with each inhalation and exhalation.

If you find it easy to visualize, close your eyes and see yourself surrounded by light or immersed in a luminous substance - a sea of consciousness. Then breathe in that light. Feel that luminous substance filling up your body and making it luminous also.

Then gradually focus more on the feeling. Don't get attached to any visual image. You are now in your body. You have accessed the power of Now.

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