

#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

THE POWER OF
NOW

A GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL ENLIGHTENMENT

With a New Preface by the Author

OVER
2 MILLION
COPIES
SOLD

Eckhart Tolle



**“One of the best books to come along in years.
Every sentence rings with truth and power.”**

— Deepak Chopra, author of *The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success*

Wherever You Are, Be There Totally

An excerpt from *The Power of Now* by Eckhart Tolle

A word-of-mouth phenomenon since its first publication, *The Power of Now* by **Eckhart Tolle** is one of those rare books with the power to create an experience in readers — one that can radically change their lives for the better.

To make the journey into *The Power of Now*, we need to leave our analytical mind and its false created self, the ego, behind. From the very first page of this extraordinary book, we move rapidly into a significantly higher altitude where we breathe a lighter air. We become more connected to the indestructible essence of our Being, “the eternal, ever-present One Life beyond the myriad forms of life that are subject to birth and death.”

We hope you’ll enjoy this excerpt from the book.

#

See if you can catch yourself complaining, in either speech or thought, about a situation you find yourself in, what other people do or say, your surroundings, your life situation, even the weather. To complain is always nonacceptance of what is. It invariably carries an unconscious negative charge. When you complain, you make yourself into a victim. When you speak out, you are in your power. So change the situation by taking action or by speaking out if necessary or possible; leave the situation or accept it. All else is madness.

Ordinary unconsciousness is always linked in some way with denial of the Now. The Now, of course, also implies the here. Are you resisting your here and now? Some people would always rather be somewhere else. Their “here” is never good enough. Through self-observation, find out if that is the case in your life. Wherever you are, be there totally. If you find your here and now intolerable and it makes you unhappy, you have three options: remove yourself from the situation, change it, or accept it totally. If you want to take responsibility for your life, you must choose one of those three options, and you must choose now. Then accept the consequences. No excuses. No negativity. No psychic pollution. Keep your inner space clear.

If you take any action — leaving or changing your situation — drop the negativity first, if at all possible. Action arising out of insight into what is required is more effective than action arising out of negativity.

Any action is often better than no action, especially if you have been stuck in an unhappy situation for a long time. If it is a mistake, at least you learn something, in which case it’s

no longer a mistake. If you remain stuck, you learn nothing. Is fear preventing you from taking action? Acknowledge the fear, watch it, take your attention into it, be fully present with it. Doing so cuts the link between the fear and your thinking. Don't let the fear rise up into your mind. Use the power of the Now. Fear cannot prevail against it.

If there is truly nothing that you can do to change your here and now, and you can't remove yourself from the situation, then accept your here and now totally by dropping all inner resistance. The false, unhappy self that loves feeling miserable, resentful, or sorry for itself can then no longer survive. This is called surrender. Surrender is not weakness. There is great strength in it. Only a surrendered person has spiritual power. Through surrender, you will be free internally of the situation. You may then find that the situation changes without any effort on your part. In any case, you are free.

Or is there something that you "should" be doing but are not doing it? Get up and do it now. Alternatively, completely accept your inactivity, laziness, or passivity at this moment, if that is your choice. Go into it fully. Enjoy it. Be as lazy or inactive as you can. If you go into it fully and consciously, you will soon come out of it. Or maybe you won't. Either way, there is no inner conflict, no resistance, no negativity.

Are you stressed? Are you so busy getting to the future that the present is reduced to a means of getting there? Stress is caused by being "here" but wanting to be "there," or being in the present but wanting to be in the future. It's a split that tears you apart inside. To create and live with such an inner split is insane. The fact that everyone else is doing it doesn't make it any less insane. If you have to, you can move fast, work fast, or even run, without projecting yourself into the future and without resisting the present. As you move, work, run — do it totally. Enjoy the flow of energy, the high energy of that moment. Now you are no longer stressed, no longer splitting yourself in two. Just moving, running, working — and enjoying it. Or you can drop the whole thing and sit on a park bench. But when you do, watch your mind. It may say: "You should be working. You are wasting time." Observe the mind. Smile at it.

Does the past take up a great deal of your attention? Do you frequently talk and think about it, either positively or negatively? The great things that you have achieved, your adventures or experiences, or your victim story and the dreadful things that were done to you, or maybe what you did to someone else? Are your thought processes creating guilt, pride, resentment, anger, regret, or self-pity? Then you are not only reinforcing a false sense of self but also helping to accelerate your body's aging process by creating an accumulation of past in your psyche. Verify this for yourself by observing those around you who have a strong tendency to hold on to the past.

Die to the past every moment. You don't need it. Only refer to it when it is absolutely relevant to the present. Feel the power of this moment and the fullness of Being. Feel your presence.

#

Are you worried? Do you have many “what if” thoughts? You are identified with your mind, which is projecting itself into an imaginary future situation and creating fear. There is no way that you can cope with such a situation, because it doesn’t exist. It’s a mental phantom. You can stop this health- and life-corroding insanity simply by acknowledging the present moment. Become aware of your breathing. Feel the air flowing in and out of your body. Feel your inner energy field. All that you ever have to deal with, cope with, in real life — as opposed to imaginary mind projections — is this moment. Ask yourself what “problem” you have right now, not next year, tomorrow, or five minutes from now. What is wrong with this moment? You can always cope with the Now, but you can never cope with the future — nor do you have to. The answer, the strength, the right action or the resource will be there when you need it, not before, not after.

“One day I’ll make it.” Is your goal taking up so much of your attention that you reduce the present moment to a means to an end? Is it taking the joy out of your doing? Are you waiting to start living? If you develop such a mind pattern, no matter what you achieve or get, the present will never be good enough; the future will always seem better. A perfect recipe for permanent dissatisfaction and nonfulfillment, don’t you agree?

Are you a habitual “waiter”? How much of your life do you spend waiting? What I call “small-scale waiting” is waiting in line at the post office, in a traffic jam, at the airport, or waiting for someone to arrive, to finish work, and so on. “Large-scale waiting” is waiting for the next vacation, for a better job, for the children to grow up, for a truly meaningful relationship, for success, to make money, to be important, to become enlightened. It is not uncommon for people to spend their whole life waiting to start living.

Waiting is a state of mind. Basically, it means that you want the future; you don’t want the present. You don’t want what you’ve got, and you want what you haven’t got. With every kind of waiting, you unconsciously create inner conflict between your here and now, where you don’t want to be, and the projected future, where you want to be. This greatly reduces the quality of your life by making you lose the present.

There is nothing wrong with striving to improve your life situation. You can improve your life situation, but you cannot improve your life. Life is primary. Life is your deepest inner Being. It is already whole, complete, perfect. Your life situation consists of your circumstances and your experiences. There is nothing wrong with setting goals and striving to achieve things. The mistake lies in using it as a substitute for the feeling of life, for Being. The only point of access for that is the Now. You are then like an architect who pays no attention to the foundation of a building but spends a lot of time working on the superstructure.

For example, many people are waiting for prosperity. It cannot come in the future. When you honor, acknowledge, and fully accept your present reality — where you are, who you are, what you are doing right now — when you fully accept what you have got, you are grateful for what you have got, grateful for what is, grateful for Being. Gratitude for the present moment and the fullness of life now is true prosperity. It cannot come in the future. Then, in time, that prosperity manifests for you in various ways.

If you are dissatisfied with what you have got, or even frustrated or angry about your present lack, that may motivate you to become rich, but even if you do make millions, you will continue to experience the inner condition of lack, and deep down you will continue to feel unfulfilled. You may have many exciting experiences that money can buy, but they will come and go and always leave you with an empty feeling and the need for further physical or psychological gratification. You won't abide in Being and so feel the fullness of life now that alone is true prosperity.

So give up waiting as a state of mind. When you catch yourself slipping into waiting ... snap out of it. Come into the present moment. Just be, and enjoy being. If you are present, there is never any need for you to wait for anything. So next time somebody says, "Sorry to have kept you waiting," you can reply, "That's all right, I wasn't waiting. I was just standing here enjoying myself — in joy in myself."

These are just a few of the habitual mind strategies for denying the present moment that are part of ordinary unconsciousness. They are easy to overlook because they are so much a part of normal living: the background static of perpetual discontent. But the more you practice monitoring your inner mental-emotional state, the easier it will be to know when you have been trapped in past or future, which is to say unconscious, and to awaken out of the dream of time into the present. But beware: The false, unhappy self, based on mind identification, lives on time. It knows that the present moment is its own death and so feels very threatened by it. It will do all it can to take you out of it. It will try to keep you trapped in time.

###

Eckhart Tolle is the author of the *New York Times* bestsellers *The Power of Now* and *A New Earth*, which are widely regarded as two of the most influential spiritual books of our time. In 2018, *The Power of Now Journal* was published, highlighting Eckhart Tolle's teachings in a journal format. Visit him online at www.eckhartolle.com.

Excerpted from the book *The Power of Now: A Guide to Spiritual Enlightenment*.
Copyright ©1999 by Eckhart Tolle. Printed with permission from New World Library.
www.newworldlibrary.com

[Purchase the book](#) direct from New English Library.