

# You are not your mind.

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Introduction.

I would like to share my experience in the hope that it may help others. I was born in India in 1955. In 2008 I serendipitously gave up caffeine after almost 50 years of drinking tea daily. It has made a great difference in my life. I had been drinking tea since early childhood, and during high school and college years the intake was more.

When I was about 25 years old I started getting aphthous ulcers. Whenever I bit my lip or tongue I would get a deep ulcer that would last for 1-2 weeks, and

at times I would use silver nitrate to cauterize it since the pain would be severe. I tried everything including diet changes, zinc, magnesium, etc. with no relief. Then at times I would get severe pain and tenderness in my ear cartilages and over 10-15 years before I quit tea I started getting depression, at times severe. Being a physician I tried my best to control it by exploring self help books, psychology, theology, yoga and meditation. I did my best to keep functioning to the best of my ability, and therefore I doubt anyone realized what I was going through. I also started developing extreme fatigue. In the morning I would wake up tired and with great effort I would bathe, pray and

then drink a cup of chai ( two tea bags boiled with sugar then milk added and boiled again) and leave for work. By the time I reached work the fatigue would dissipate. Around noon I would feel tired again and at times I would take a short nap and then some coffee or tea or a mixture of coke and coffee. I would work until five or six. On my way home I would almost fall asleep driving. As soon as I stepped in my house I would need a cup of chai and would be upset if I did not get it right away. I was resigned to the fact that I likely had Chronic Fatigue Syndrome and chai and caffeine were keeping me alive and functional. I would compulsively read, meditate and do

yoga to help myself. I was disgusted with my dependence on caffeine and my depression and fatigue.

In January 2008 my wife and I were on vacation in Sri Lanka. We were having our morning tea in the restaurant. For some unexplained reason I told my wife that it would be my last cup of tea.

Since then I have had less than 10 cups of tea or coffee and a very rare chocolate. My stay was ruined. I had continuous headaches, day and night, excessive drowsiness and thirst for about 2 weeks until the symptoms slowly improved. I drank a lot of water but did not take any medications. I wanted to see what would happen. We went to India and then returned home

and back to work. I still had mild headaches and drowsiness which were also due to jet lag. I was able to function so I did not take any medications. One day I was at work in the morning and there was no headache and my mind felt clear. I could not believe that my mind could be so clear. That was good. Then over a few weeks I noticed that my short-term memory was better. Before I was unable to keep 7 digits in my memory to transfer from paper to computer and had to do it in two parts. Now I do not even have to read all the digits. I had a very good memory when I was young. Depression, obsessive compulsive thoughts, procrastination and recurring jingles in

my mind vanished. I have not been depressed for a single day since then. Not a single aphthous ulcer or ear pain since then. The rare times that I have had tea or coffee I feel tingling spots in my mouth like I felt before: symptoms of an aphthous ulcer but nothing beyond that. No fatigue, and no waking up tired, I sleep well. The only drawback is I am done for the day at 9:30 pm. My day starts at about 5:30 am. I am not going to start consuming caffeine regularly again because of the depression, paranoia, fatigue, obsessive compulsive behavior, memory loss, aphthous stomatitis and ear pain. One cup of tea or coffee can keep me up the whole night now.

For persons that have symptoms similar to mine and are consuming caffeine, it may be worth trying to stop all caffeine intake to see if they feel better. I would recommend a slow process of discontinuation over 6-8 weeks. I hope my experience is of help.

One of the books I read was Take Your Time by Eknath Easwaran-(1910-1999) A Professor of English, master of Sanskrit and Hindu legacy, a gifted teacher of Philosophy and Meditation. His writings appealed to me immensely and helped me. Over the last few years I have decreased my reading considerably. One day I decided to take the excerpts from Take Your Time (Take Your Time,

by Eknath Easwaran, founder of the Blue Mountain Center of Meditation, copyright 1994, 2006; reprinted by permission of Nilgiri Press, P. O. Box 256, Tomales, Ca 94971, [www.easwaran.org](http://www.easwaran.org)) and write a few lines of thoughts that came to my mind. I did this with one excerpt at a time over a period of three months. I just typed one excerpt and then typed the thoughts that came to me. I did this first thing in the morning. I did not look at the next excerpt nor did I make any effort to remember or review what I wrote the previous day. Once it was complete then I organized it a little bit and edited it but did not alter the content.

I also had my friend Harriet Schiff **review** it for me and her help was

invaluable. My daughter Fatema read it, reviewed it and made it worth publishing. I am thankful to all whose writing, teaching and association have helped me in my journey of life.

I am hopeful that what I write will help the reader.

This book is dedicated to my wife and children for their love and patience.

There is no beginning, middle or end to this book. The nature of the subject is such that repetition is inevitable and controversy is expected. I intend for this to be a growing project and welcome your feedback.

*Every moment is a doorway to meaning,*

*purpose and joy. The key is an unhurried mind. \**

We either live in the past, good or bad, and in the future, bright or dull. We miss the present moment. But, it is the present that makes the future and the past. An unhurried and uncluttered mind is needed to enjoy the present which may be painful, joyous or just mundane. Life without meaning, purpose and joy is a life not lived. Slow down and savor life.

*However much we have to do we don't have to be in a hurry. \**

Most of us have a lot to do and we feel that unless we hurry we will not be able to finish our tasks, but it is hurry that unbalances us and mistakes happen. More time is then spent in correction,

further hurry and worry. We often hear "smell the flowers" and we must also see, feel, hear and taste.

*Living without hurry is a skill that everyone can learn. \**

To check hurry you just have to stop for a moment, become quiet, take a deep breath, concentrate on your core, consider your options and restart. You have to resist the urge to hurry.

*A simple, unhurried life can be full of wisdom and beauty. \**

A simple unhurried life: easy to say but hard to achieve. No competitiveness, no greed, no jealousy, no cunning, no pride, no manipulation and no fear. Honesty, hard work, a healthy lifestyle, trust and

many other factors make for a simple life. With simplicity comes beauty. Wisdom comes with simplicity and an unhurried life and wisdom are needed to live a simple and joyous life.

*Fulfillment doesn't come from outside-we must look within ourselves.\**

Acquisition gives temporary satisfaction, after we get one thing we crave for the next. There is no sense of fulfillment. Only activities that satisfy your inner being provide fulfillment. Contentment rather than grasping leads to satisfaction. We must pause and take time to look within.

*Mahatma Gandhi showed how to face pressure without losing peace of mind. Staying calm at the center enabled*

*Gandhi to accomplish great things.\**

We see that major projects, crisis management and emergency situations are best managed by persons who are calm and collected. Is their quality of being calm and collected inborn or acquired through learning and practice? Some are naturally calm. One can learn to be calm and collected through experience, learning and training. However, this is not an easy task if it is not in your nature.

*An unhurried mind is calm, alert and ready for anything.\**

To slow down and control the mind is not an easy task. There are multiple factors that affect the mind including personality, diet, exercise, drugs, beliefs, education,

work, financial status, family situation, etc. One has to work on each of them and be on a middle path so that the mind is not under or over stimulated. Then it can stay calm and centered. It takes a lifetime of training and practice to achieve balance. With a calm mind one is able to live well and enjoy more.

*Slowing Down \**

*Just one person slowing down helps everyone around relax too:\**

Learn and strive to be that calm and unhurried person. Become a nidus around whom everybody else relaxes.

*Eight ways to make the best of the time we have everyday: \**

*1. Give Yourself More Time.\**

How do you give yourself more time when a day has exactly twenty-four hours? You give yourself more time by becoming efficient and eliminating activities that are useless. Urgent situations and putting out fires take a lot of time and these can be reduced to a minimum with planning and proactive measures. A healthy lifestyle can make you efficient and you can gain time if you spend 30-45 minutes exercising daily.

## *2. Don't Crowd Your Day.\**

Many of us plan for far more activities than the available time and hope to complete as many as possible. We then rush the whole day, always thinking of the next and not paying full attention to

the current activity. This gives us a lingering feeling of dissatisfaction and causes anxiety and stress. It is better to plan daily activities so that there is some downtime, 10-15 minutes every 3-4 hours. People are so busy that they have no time for each other. This is a major cause of broken marriages, relationships and families.

### *3. Ask What's Important.\**

This thinking comes from the late Stephen Covey (7 Habits author) :  
Activities can be divided into four categories, Urgent and Important, Important and Not Urgent, Urgent but Not Important and Not Urgent and Not Important. Urgent and Important activities need to be taken care of right

away. These can be decreased by continuously working on Important but not Urgent matters so that there are fewer emergencies. Important and Not Urgent matters are what count the most. We usually neglect them until urgency arises. We should be spending most of our time on these activities. Not Important but apparently Urgent matters are what take unnecessary time. These are usually demands from others or from our own uncontrolled mind. Not Important and Not Urgent matters are usually harmful activities that should be avoided.

#### *4. Take Time For Relationships.\**

It is very hard to build relationships and very easy to break them. Relationship involves give and take, sacrifice, an

ability to listen, acceptance, understanding and forgiveness. It takes time to build **relationships**. **One** should consider it fortunate to have even one real friend.

### *5. Take Time for Reflection.\**

We get so involved in all our activities that we lose a sense of direction. Only a major crisis redirects us. It is important to pause and reflect on who we are. What we are doing. Where we are heading. Regular reflection helps us to make right choices. We then move in the right direction.

### *6. Don't Let Yourself Get Hurried.\**

Plan your day. Learn to say no. Learn to choose between two good things. Give

yourself more time and don't crowd your day. Each of us has a natural pace that we can feel when doing something, especially when walking and talking. When we are in a hurry we can feel that we are going against our natural rhythm. Listen to the body. Try to do things at your natural pace-different persons have a different rhythm and each has to work at their own pace.

### *7. Cultivate Patience.\**

Tolerance, understanding, and perseverance help to cultivate patience. Putting up with inconveniences, difficult people, tough situations and adversities help to build patience. If you are patient then you take time to reflect and understand. You are not in a hurry and

upset all the time.

### *8. Slow Down Your Mind.\**

First realize that you are not your mind. You are beyond your mind. Consider your mind to be a tool at your disposal. Once you do this you will begin to master your mind. You will then not be at its mercy. Different meditative techniques are recommended to achieve control of the mind. You can use what suits you best. All techniques rely on focused attention.

### *One Thing At a Time.\**

*Even when we have a lot to do, we can avoid stress and hurry by tackling one thing at a time. \**

We become anxious about pending work

and the list of things to do. Then we are unable to perform well. In reality we can only do one thing at a time. We must concentrate on the work at hand and do it properly. Then we can move on to the next job. Even in small things it is important to do one thing at a time.

*When the mind is uncontrolled, we don't think our thoughts-our thoughts think us.*

\*

If the mind is not in control then the thoughts are uncontrolled. States of mind like fear, obsession, anxiety, depression, mania, etc. take over and start controlling us. When we closely observe our minds we can usually tell what state we are in. Observation helps us gain control over the mind. With an uncontrolled mind our

thoughts become our masters. We need to learn to control our thoughts as we need to learn to control our speech and actions.

*Directing attention at will is the most precious skill in life. \**

The ability to control attention and direct it at will is our biggest asset. We are not trained formally to develop this ability. Some of us acquire it and some do not. We need to develop it by focusing attention, hearing, vision and thoughts in one direction and sustaining it. Once you are able to control your attention then you will notice a significant enhancement in all your senses and thinking.

*When we live one hundred percent in the present, we are one hundred percent*

*alive.* \*

The feeling of disconnectedness from life occurs when we are not attentive to the present moment and are living in the past or future. Concentrating fully on the task at hand connects us and grounds us into ourselves and into reality. Concentrating and tightening our core brings our attention back to the present moment. An action performed from a strong core is always better.

*One-pointed attention is most rewarding in personal relationships.* \*

Observing, listening and understanding with total attention when interacting with people can transform relationships. We always have something else on our minds and are never truly listening.

Preconceived notions and views, an internal dialog and a need to answer hamper us from true communication. Listening with a calm and open mind is a skill we all need to acquire.

*Every conversation is an opportunity for learning to be one-pointed. \**

When we engage in a dialog or interaction we have to be fully present with 100% attention. As we repeatedly do this, hopefully, it becomes a habit. This is a learned behavior and requires effort, understanding and restraint. This requires us to follow our thought process. We must listen and reply carefully after consideration of the consequences of our words. We usually succumb very quickly

to our automatic behavior patterns. This has to be acknowledged and controlled.

*Every time we are criticized, we have an opportunity to grow. \**

The different aspects of a criticism are: what is the criticism, what is being criticized, who is being criticized, who is criticizing and what are the circumstances. When you consider all these aspects and analyze them, then you can handle any criticism and grow with it. When criticized we usually take offense, shut down and prepare to counterattack. This is detrimental and does not help in our learning and growth.

*When you are walking, walk. When you are sitting, sit. Don't wobble.\**

First think, plan, consider all the factors involved and then decide. Once a decision is made then it is important to execute it without wavering, while monitoring and adjusting as needed. To remain undecided is to miss the opportunity. To wobble and waver is to lose. Solid intention, effort and perseverance will lead to success.

*Doing things with divided attention is just skimming the surface of life.\**

Immerse yourself in your daily activities. Be present mentally as you are present physically. If your attention is not in what you are doing then you miss out on living. Be alert and focus your attention and intention on the task at hand.

*Whatever you are doing, give it your*

*complete attention. \**

We categorize what we are doing and accordingly give it our attention. We wait for big things to which we give our attention. This is a mistake. Small and routine things are the stuff of life. When we do not give our attention to them then we live an unattached, dull and boring life. Give your undivided attention to every little act. Then see how your life becomes filled with fun and excitement.

*Through complete concentration, we can overcome the sense of separateness from the rest of life. \**

We are individual beings physically, mentally and spiritually. All our efforts are at becoming whole. We strive towards physical, mental and spiritual

integration. This can be achieved only through complete concentration. When we do not keep our attention and focus on our daily activities and just go through the motions we live alone, afraid and disinterested. There is no pleasure or joy in life.

*When attention is one pointed, loyalty will not waver, love will not wobble. \**

We first need to determine where we will place our one pointed attention. Once we attach ourselves with complete attention to what we love than loyalty and unwavering love will be spontaneous.

Where we place our undivided attention will determine who and what we are and what we will become. Choose with care and diligence.

*You can change the channel of your mind from anger to compassion-just as you switch channels on your TV. \**

First realize that you are not your mind and that your mind is a powerful tool. Once you see this then you can control your mind and change how it behaves in an instant. How do you know that you are not your mind? You will see that you are the same entity you were as a child, adolescent, young adult and now. Your mind and body changes over time but you are still the same entity.

*When we train attention, it will rest completely in the here and now, which brings limitless security and infinite joy. \**

The mind has to be free of all extremes

of passion, desires and drugs. It must be under our control. Then there has to be a point of focus and the power for concentration must come from the core also called the Hara or Chi. Then all activities, easy or difficult will be associated with security and joy. All activities will become a meditation.

### Finding Balance\*

*The energy we need is always present: we just need to learn to release and harness it. \**

Unless we are ill we have the energy, physical and mental, to live a good life. We need to realize that the more energy we spend, physical and mental, the more energy we will have. Avoid scattering your efforts in multiple directions, Avoid

spending energy in unimportant activities. Pick and chose your activities and place your efforts in the right direction.

*"It is not enough to be busy," Thoreau says. "The question is, What are you busy about?"\**

We go running around without taking the time to think what it is all about. It is important to be busy but it is more important to be busy with a full understanding of what we are doing and where we are heading. Life is limited. Our bodies and minds will deteriorate with aging. We need to evaluate what kind of life we are leading.

*Energy out of control has two*

*characteristics: hurry and worry.\**

When we are tired, have not had adequate sleep, consume too much caffeine, alcohol, etc., live beyond our means and in stressful conditions then our mind is unbalanced and our energies uncontrolled. Hurry and worry then predominate our mental state. Our effectiveness and efficiency diminishes. Life becomes a chore instead of joy.

*Energy, to be useful, has to be available when we need it-at our beck and call.\**

Our mind and body are the servants of the self. We are not our body or mind. That is why we say "my body" and "my mind". We are the "MY". The mind and body function with their energies. Those energies should be completely under our

control. At our beck and call. Once we realize and assimilate this understanding then our faculties will be directed towards our purpose and intention.

*Inertia is frozen power. The energy is there: it just needs to be released.\**

The evolution of inanimate **matter** and animate life for about 14 billion years has led to the creation of humans. Homo Sapiens are recent arrivals. We have abundant physical and mental energies that are obvious from human endeavors and achievements. The energy is there and it needs to be released. Health, both physical and mental, goals, intentions and purpose are needed for the release. Once the energy is released, directed with perseverance and patience then

anything is possible.

*Having all our energy in a dynamic balance allows us to give our best and enjoy life to the fullest.\**

To achieve a dynamic balance means to achieve a balance in action and activity. Our whole life has to be in harmony: family, work, recreation, health. Nothing in excess and nothing suppressed. This is what we have to strive for. It will never be perfect and constant. This is a dynamic and ever-changing situation. Facing new challenges and living every day with a balanced mind is to enjoy life and give our best.

*We need time simply to be quiet now and then: time to reflect on what we are doing, what we value, how we are*

*spending our lives. \**

We get so busy that we have no time for reflection. When we are not doing something we think we are wasting our time. We need to cultivate silent moments and time-outs for reflection and meditation. We need to direct and create our lives. We need to understand and know what we are doing. In what direction we are heading. We are totally responsible for ourselves.

*Living in balance means living in the present, ready for whatever comes.\**

All circumstances come and go. A mind that lives in the present and is focused is ready for whatever life brings. We only live in the present and are able to act in the present. By doing so we effect the

past and future. Our mind harbors regrets about the past and worries about the future and paralyzes us in the present. The present moment is all we have.

*When your life is in balance, you lose the capacity to be disappointed.\**

Disappointment is a mental state. It is what you feel and experience. Causes may be varied and there are degrees of disappointment. Living a balanced life with full awareness you are able to deal with any situation. Then there is no room for disappointment.

Living in Freedom\*

*To live in balance we need a mind that listens to us, not one that drags us about as it pleases.\**

We are an entity living in a body-mind.  
We are supposed to be in control.  
However the body-mind overcomes us  
and gets into the driver's seat. Then we  
are at its mercy. We forget who we are.  
The sense driven body-mind does what it  
pleases with us until it breaks down. We  
then have an awakening. Once we take  
charge and repair it, it once again takes  
over and the cycle keeps repeating. Our  
body-mind is our tool, a highly  
sophisticated one. It has to do our  
bidding and then we can live in balance  
and peace.

*To enjoy anything we cannot be attached  
to it.\**

Inordinate attachment to anything leads  
to disappointments. To enjoy we need a

free mind and that freedom is lost with attachment. Every thing and every situation changes. To be attached and to hold on is to be frustrated. To accept changes, to adapt and to move on is to live joyfully.

*Likes and dislikes don't have to be rigid. We can learn to play with them, and the freedom can be quite enjoyable.\**

Our comfort level determines what we like and dislike. We move towards what we like and away from what we dislike. At times with awareness and freedom of choice, at times we are dragged. We need to become aware of our likes and dislikes and their effect on us. We need to play with them and be comfortable with both. We live immersed in what we like and dislike. Once we start choosing either one with full awareness then we live in freedom.

*Training the mind to be patient begins with wearing likes and dislikes casually, like a favorite old sweater.\**

Our identity is formed by our likes and dislikes. We are unwilling to change and experiment. We cling to what we like and reject what we don't without consideration. The mind becomes static and firm in its ways. It needs to be flexible and open. We need to start being flexible in areas of minor discomfort and casual situations and then with patience progress. We should learn to handle all situations whether we like it or not.

*With every choice, take time to ask, "what are the long-term effects of this experience? What are the costs in calories, security, self-esteem?\**

We make a choice and the choice makes us. We have to continuously choose and most of the time we **choose** without any contemplation. The mind falls into a fixed pattern and induces a knee jerk reaction. The only control **we can have** is in the moment between a stimulus and response. How we use that moment is in our hands. The rippling effects of our actions are not. Extend the moment between stimulus and response. Use that to think and act.

*By observing how the mind responds to food, you can get a precious early warning when your mind is starting to get out of control. \**

Eating and breathing are essential. Our relationship with food reflects our mind.

When the mind is in control then we are conscious of what, how much and how we eat. Focusing our attention on eating and eating with full awareness is a meditation. It helps in observing our mental state. Similarly our breathing pattern changes with our mental state. Observing our breathing is also a meditation and leads to a relaxed state of mind and harmonious breathing. Breathing is an involuntary function. When you practice voluntary breathing as in pranayama (yogic breathing) it leads to control of the mind. Since attention has to be focused on breathing it cannot waver.

*Preferences can get more and more rigid until nothing is right, nothing will*

*please.\**

Unless the mind is continuously trained to be flexible and tolerant we gradually fall into a static state. We then like things in a particular way only. That becomes the right way, the only way for us.

Whatever does not agree with our fixed concepts is unacceptable. We start limiting our choices and with that comes constriction and unhappiness. A flexible mind is a resilient mind. It is able to weather any storms.

*We can learn not to be rigid by playing with likes and dislikes in little things.\**

Being rigid or being flexible are mental states. Whenever we try to change it causes stress and anxiety. It is best to start being flexible in small matters in the

beginning and gradually a pliant and tolerant mind state will be the norm. A flexible body promotes a flexible mind and a flexible mind helps increase the flexibility of the body. Therefore yoga, stretching, dancing, sports and other activities are essential.

Training the senses does not mean depriving them. It means educating them-teaching them not to demand things at our expense.\*

Our bodies, senses and mind are our tools. We are an entity beyond them. We forget this basic fact and are swayed by our mind and senses. We then suffer damages from the indiscretion. We have to be vigilant and monitor, restrain, educate and take service from our mind

and senses. We must not let them rule us. We are a complete being and one part should not be working against the other.

*Permanent joy is far, far higher than pleasure that comes and goes.\**

Pleasure that comes and goes is the satisfaction of the mind when the senses are uncontrolled and desires are fulfilled without reflection. There is temporary satisfaction and a thirst and hunger for more of that sets in right away. Once the mind is controlled, senses are harnessed and fulfillment of the right desires is sought then there is permanent joy and bliss.

*Remembering how quickly time passes adds meaning to every moment.\**

Time is what we get when we are born. How we use it determines our life. We forget that we have limited time and that time is our main capital- a capital that decreases every moment. Time is measured in two ways, one is physical time and one is time measured with our minds. A moment of suffering or a moment of joy can be fleeting or endless. Our mind gives it meaning. Once the moment is gone it is gone.

Time for Relationships\*

*We all need personal relationships if we want to function beautifully in life's ups and downs.\**

Life is not a solo performance. It is a dance of the many. What others do affects us and what we do affects others.

In good times or in bad to have somebody to share with is a great blessing. Life can be good no matter what the circumstances are if you have a companion.

*The real essentials of life-compassion, forgiveness-are what is fundamental to living as a true being.\**

Air, water and food are essential for life. Similarly essential are love, compassion and forgiveness. When we start paying attention to the basic essentials our physical, mental and spiritual health starts improving. We should extend our love and compassion into larger and larger circles until it becomes all-inclusive. Once we do this it will return to us multiplied. We have to forgive to go

on but we must strive to forget.

*Relationships can be beautiful-if we take time to nourish them.\**

Relationships need an investment in time, effort and sincerity. Both quality and quantity of time are needed to nurture a relationship that will be beautiful and everlasting.

*It is through personal relationships that we learn to function beautifully in life throughout its ups and downs.\**

Life has its ups and downs, nothing is static. As humans we are always doing and always being. We are never done and never complete. There are moments of joy, anguish, happiness, sadness, pleasure, pain, contraction and

expansion. Through all these we need friends and family with whom we can share. Life is then beautifully lived and a journey joyfully completed.

*Trust, intimacy and concern can flourish when there is personal contact.\**

Trust is the foundation of all relationships. Intimacy and concern come with love and compassion. The growth and development of our humanity is not possible in isolation and loneliness. Personal relationships, contacts and interactions are needed. We need to experience life and learn from our failures and successes. We can only flourish when we learn to live as a part of the whole.

*Nothing makes us feel so secure as*

*knowing that we have brought a little joy into the life of someone we care about.\**

We are always seeking happiness, love, security and joy. These come to us redoubled when we bring them to others. A kind word, a gesture of love, a sympathetic ear, and attention may be all that one needs. We must make an effort to provide these. It will work wonders.

*When irritations or conflicts occur in a relationship, don't move away. Move closer-even if it's hard.\**

First we have to decide which relationships are important and which are not. Then we have to work on the ones that we know are important. Time and effort need to be invested in building and maintaining relationships. When there

are problems then avoidance and distancing is what we do. To move closer, to compromise, to forgive and ask for forgiveness, to forget, and to interact more is what is needed. Even if it seems impossible.

*The more defenses we carry the more insecure we feel because defenses prevent us from moving closer to others.\**

We carry defenses because we have been hurt and do not want to be hurt in the future. We are insecure in ourselves and are afraid of interactions. The more defenses we have the more insecure we are. We need to work through our fears and paranoia. We need to drop our defenses at the risk of being hurt again. We need to move closer in our

relationships.

*To love, we need to be sensitive to those around us-not racing through life engrossed in all the things we need to do.\**

Whether we stay engrossed in all the things we need to do because we have to or we use that as a defense for not getting close to others is always a question. We need to love and be loved in order to thrive. It only comes with sensitivity to others and to ourselves. Racing through life without a moment to spare will surely lead to a lonely end. No matter what you achieve and where you reach. Though physically separate we are all mentally and emotionally entangled. What happens to one, happens to all.

*Anger can be contagious-but so can peace of mind. Which do you want to spread?\**

Partly voluntary and partly involuntary actions like laughing and crying are contagious. Anger is similar, but with effort it can be controlled. Uncontrolled anger clouds your intelligence. It then leads to rage and does a lot of harm. Recognize the beginning of anger and subdue it with a peaceful mind. Mind states can be changed instantaneously. Then peace can spread and happiness reign.

*There is only one way to be completely happy: to forget ourselves in the service of others.\**

A mother with a new-born baby is joyous

as she is completely absorbed in the care of her newborn. We all want happiness and relief from suffering. All meditations are aimed at forgetting ourselves. We can then be free of physical and mental pain and enjoy moments of freedom and happiness. When we serve others selflessly, without any anticipation of a reward and completely absorbed in the task at hand then there is happiness.

*It is love that is important-the harmony of your home, the harmony of your workplace, the harmony of your life.\**

Love and harmony go together. It is difficult to be in harmony if you are not in love. Also it is difficult to keep both love and hate together. Love for the few

is a part of love for the all. A life in harmony is in harmony at home and at work. A harmonious person is loving and willing to adjust, learn and compromise to achieve a balance. Love or harmony is not possible if there is not openness, honesty and a willingness to listen and understand.

### A Higher Image\*

*Body and mind are like a car that carries us through life. But they shouldn't be driving us-we are the driver.\**

We are in charge and in the driver's seat. The mind and body should be in our control. We have all witnessed the perfection and achievements of bodies and mind under the control of a calm and focused being. We have also seen our

own performance peak when we are all together, spirit, body and mind. In critical times we are usually able to achieve this state. We need to learn and practice so that we can be in this state all the time. It should be very clear as to who's the boss, the mind, body or the spirit.

*We are not imperfect physical creatures. Our essence is spiritual, and our greatest need is simply to discover our real nature.\**

Our bodies and brains are made of physical matter and subject to physical laws, deterioration, damage, injury and illness. Therefore the acts of mind and body are imperfect. Our essence is spiritual and as a part of perfection it is perfect. This is what we have to realize.

This is what we must make sovereign.  
When the mind, senses and body rule the spirit then there is chaos. When the spirit rules there is peace and joy. All meditative practices bring the spirit, our real nature, to the forefront.

*A short period of quiet inspiration in the morning will anchor the rest of your day.\**

Early mornings after a good night's sleep are when the mind is quiet and at peace. Many traditions have a ritual of early morning prayers. This is the time when a short period of meditation will set the pace for the whole day. We sleep late, sleep less than needed, do not sleep well, wake up half asleep with a busy day ahead of us and stimulate our brains

continuously with caffeine and calm it with alcohol. We then expect to live a healthy life. This is impossible. We leave no time for silence, solitude, meditation, inspiration and prayers.

*Meditation on inspired words drives them deep into consciousness. The ideals they embody gradually become part of our character and conduct.\**

What you eat on a regular basis determines your health. Similarly, what you feed your mind on a regular basis determines who you are. Occasional food can cause food poisoning. Similarly, some words can instantly poison your mind. We have to be very selective as to what we absorb into our consciousness. What we repeatedly meditate on a daily

basis becomes absorbed in to our subconsciousness. It changes us, and becomes a part of us. This then determines the outcome of all our actions. We need to meditate on words from prophets, saints and sages.

*The promise of meditation is simple: we discover who we are.\**

Are we a physical body that changes from birth to death or a mind whose content keeps changing every moment or an unchanging entity that is experiencing the body and mind? What are our capabilities and limits as an individual. What are our capabilities and limits as the whole human race? What is our potential? Did we exist before birth? Are we going to survive death? Different

religions and traditions give different answers. We either accept them or reject them. Meditation is the key that opens the door to self discovery and discovery of the Self. "Know Thyself" is engraved on that door.

The Still Center\*

*When the mind grows still, it is full of healing power.\**

Random thoughts never stop. The mind never goes still. Only in deep sleep is the mind quiet for a short duration. Then dreams take over. Control of the thinking process and quietening of the mind is a learned behavior. This takes years of practice, perseverance and patience. Control of desires, contentment, honesty, fearlessness and a brain not

affected with substances is needed. Once the mind is still and thinking is under one's control than the potential is unlimited for healing and living a joyous, fulfilled life.

*All of us have moments when we forget time completely. It is in those moments that we experience happiness.\**

When we are completely absorbed in an activity then the passage of time is not reckoned. We forget ourselves. This is when we experience happiness. All time collapses into the now. Our attention gets focused and our performance peaks.

Most of us get into this state of mind occasionally and involuntarily. Some of us use drugs and other means to help us achieve this state. We all crave it.

Meditation is the path to increased happiness and joy.

*As the thinking process slows down, you can see your mind with detachment and learn to tune it just as a mechanic tunes a performance car.\**

The brain is a part of the body. The mind is the functioning of the brain and thinking is a part of it. Thoughts are a random, continuous occurrence that can be controlled with effort. Thinking can be slowed although almost impossible to bring it to a standstill. When thinking is slowed down the mind and thought processes can be observed. Observation alone with detachment brings them under control. When you are able to control your thinking then your desires,

speech and actions automatically come under your control. Then you are fully awake and able to live with full awareness.

*The healing stillness of a quiet mind nourishes every aspect of our lives.\**

A quiet mind is an enigma. The mind is continuously assailed with waves of thoughts from all directions. These sway our attention and attention can never be anchored. However once you sit quietly in silence and solitude, gather your attention and focus it on an object and keep it focused there, bringing it back to your object of focus repeatedly as it wavers then you can taste moments of a quiet mind. Slowly over time periods of stillness increase and the effect is seen in

all aspects of your life. You then live with full awareness and happiness in all circumstances.

*Between one thought and the next is a tiny gap when the mind is at peace. Extending that gap is the secret of an unhurried mind.\**

You are not your thoughts. Whether you are aware or not, random thoughts are from the random activity of the conscious and subconscious mind which is gathering experiences all your life. Observation of the thought process with detachment like an outsider will reveal the subtle nature of thinking. Thinking is dependent on the state of mind. When anxious or high-strung, thoughts are random and continuous. There does not

seems to be an instant between two thoughts. Once the mind is calm then thinking slows down. Thinking can be controlled and instants of no thought can be perceived. One should practice extending the period of silence between two thoughts. When needed one should be able to control the thinking process and use it as a tool.

*We all need the protection of a mind at peace.\**

We are always so busy that we have no time. No time for exercise, a healthy lifestyle, meditation, prayers, silence and solitude. We also feel that meditation is not for us. Most of us are afraid to face our own subconscious that erupts in solitude. We all need silence,

introspection, reflection and meditation to regain a mind at peace. An unhurried, quiet and peaceful mind will protect us from all the changes and adversities of life.

*A mind at peace is naturally full of love.\**

The basic nature of a mind is to be at peace and full of love. We lose our mental peace as we grow because we let our mind and desires get out of control. Grabbing one object after another, never satisfied, always wanting, always seeking. It is necessary that we learn, seek, achieve, fulfill our dreams and desires but to what extent and at what cost. We have to regain our basic state of peacefulness and love. This will only come with awareness, contentment and

forgiveness. Peace and love are not something we have to seek. It is in our innate nature. We have to drop off whatever is cloaking it.

*A still mind brings the infinite joy and love for which we were born. \**

The infinite joy and love is not any joy and not any love. It is what is given to us by our Creator in whose image we have been made and endowed with intelligence. Our true image can only be seen in a still mind. As we grow and experience life we get encrusted with opinions, hurts, defenses, beliefs, superstitions, restrictions and limitations, few right and mostly wrong. We need to sculpt our true selves out and become the humans we were intended to be.

*We are not here to peck at crumbs like pigeons. We are born to soar in freedom with a mind at peace and a heart full of love.\**

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