

# *Living Fully Moment by Moment*

by  
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Cellular biologist Bruce Lipton put it simply. A cell is growing or protecting itself. Growth stops when a cell organizes for protection. When protection becomes chronic, the cell dies. In childhood growth is explosive. Later it slows. For some it stops. Thoreau said, most "live lives of quiet desperation." Quiet desperation is dying slowly. We are either growing or dying. There is no middle ground.

Over time growth is measured in centimeters or expanding capacity. Moment by moment growth is determined by a set of inner qualities that shape outer relationships. How can we tell if growth is occurring this moment or the next? Are we curious, exploring, inquiring, testing, questioning, stretching, wondering, laughing when it falls down or not? Growth implies learning. Learning is relationship, a particular kind of relationship.

Imagine a stack of blocks. Everyday experiences are the clay that is molded into the block we create each day. And every day blocks are added to the stack of our life. The higher and more complex the structure the more important well formed blocks become. Each and every day is both a unique expression of past development and, simultaneously, the laying of a critical foundation for tomorrow's great leap forward. We are never finished.

Each moment of each day we make a choice, discover, open and develop new fields of potential, or we don't. Every time we do, the rest of our life changes, sometimes dramatically. When we don't, growth stops. When growth stops protection begins. This simple model assumes that the basic goal of life is constant learning, development, and extension of undreamed of possibilities. It also assumes that we are never finished.

In sports we hear, "keep your eye on the ball." The ball is life, now. When we move our attention from life, now, to projected past and future, rewards and punishments, we fail to meet life fully, now. This shift of attention betrays the present moment and in this betrayal we forfeit full development of today's vast potential. The brick we create and add to the stack will not be quite "true." When our attention shifts from here-now to there-then, development stalls. We choke, sputter and stutter and the tower we are becoming tilts, perhaps just a little each day.

We may be thinking about the past or projected future, however the act of thinking is now. Sensory motor stimulation is here, now. Our emotional life is here, now. Even re-mem-bering of past wounds is taking place here, now. The real action of our life, living or dying each moment, occurs right here, right now.

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This eternal moment is an expression of everything that came before and in a simple, yet profound way creates the future depending on how we interpret and respond to the universe, now. The future is being created now. We create a different tomorrow by changing the state of the body and mind, now.

The philosopher J. Krishnamurti raised a provocative question. "What is the role of knowledge and time in the transformation of the human mind?" The question lays open the relationship between three things - knowledge, time and transformation.

Knowledge may be personal or collective. It may be story, myth, superstition, prejudice, assumptions, technical data, so called scientific fact, and many other forms. We may have all sorts of knowledge but the expression of that knowledge takes place now. Psychological time is created when the intellect looks back and says "this wound happened when I was a child, in the past." The memory, the re-experiencing and the re-telling about this wound, however, is happening now. Krishnamurti was inviting us to see how knowledge and time are two sides of the same coin. A mind occupied by knowledge implies time. Psychological time is inherent in the structure we call knowledge.

From within the knowledge-time structure we call thought it appears that a change is taking place when one thought replaces another. And, of course, like watching a thrilling movie, thinking about a lover organizes the body and mind differently than thinking about the IRS. Yes, every thought reorders the entire body. But regardless of what is being thought, the "state" of the mind is still "thinking." And while we are thinking there is no fundamental transformation in the state of the mind. Thinking is thinking.

Thinking draws a significant amount of attention inward. With curiosity or wonder, especially while we are young, attention is drawn outward. Slowly as we grow attention is drawn inward. Most adults rarely give the same complete attention to the outer world, looking and listening with wonder, as they did as a child. Attention is occupied, clouded by worries, time, and knowledge.

The vast majority of this inner process we call thinking is redundant, repetitive, habitual. Yesterday we thought most of the thoughts we will have today. From a growth perspective, this repetitive, tape-loop activity can be compared to a needle stuck in a groove. Remember records, those flat round squished donuts with tiny grooves? How much of our life's energy, attention and potential is consumed repeating today the same thoughts and feelings we had yesterday?

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What would happen if that energy and attention were invested in growth rather than repetition? The lid would blow off the human potential. Human beings just like you and me would discover, open and develop capacities we don't even know exist.

For this to happen, and it can, we must discover what it feels like to be in the state I call "learning" and distinguish this from the state of mind that "knows." The state of the body and mind that is wondering, curious, attentive is very different from a mind that knows. One is open and embracing. The other is closed, stuck in or protecting its little groves. Learning is a state. Real inquiry is a state. The energy and sensitive attention we call growth is a state.

What role does "knowledge and time" play in the transformation of the human mind? Actually very little. Imagine that every day we build new bricks and add those bricks to the stack. Imagine every day standing on that stack and looking out at the world with curiosity and wonder. Standing on top of what is known to discover something new is very different than living inside a tower made of bricks, which is what most of us do. By design expanding experience and knowledge provides a broader foundation to see beyond what has been seen before. This use of knowledge, as a platform for new exploration and inquiry, is very different from a mind that "knows" and defends.

The childlike mind, full of curiosity, wonder and imagination, uses knowledge strategically, as a child uses blocks or sand to build a castle. Knowledge is useful as a tool to go beyond itself. The genius we attribute to Einstein and others is this creative and expansive use of knowledge to see beyond what has ever been seen before. When knowing begins - growth stops, protection sets in. When knowing becomes chronic our lives are transformed. We stop wondering and begin living lives of quiet desperation. A door opens when we rediscover what it feels like, the energy, passion and attention, to be in the state called "learning" and distinguish it from the state that "knows." We have a choice, to live fully or die a little each moment. There is no middle ground.