

THE TAO IS IN THE NOW



The Lost Art of Self-Remembering
in an Age of Distraction

JACK E. SOUTAR

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For more information, contact: JackESoutar@protonmail.com.

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Jack E. Soutar

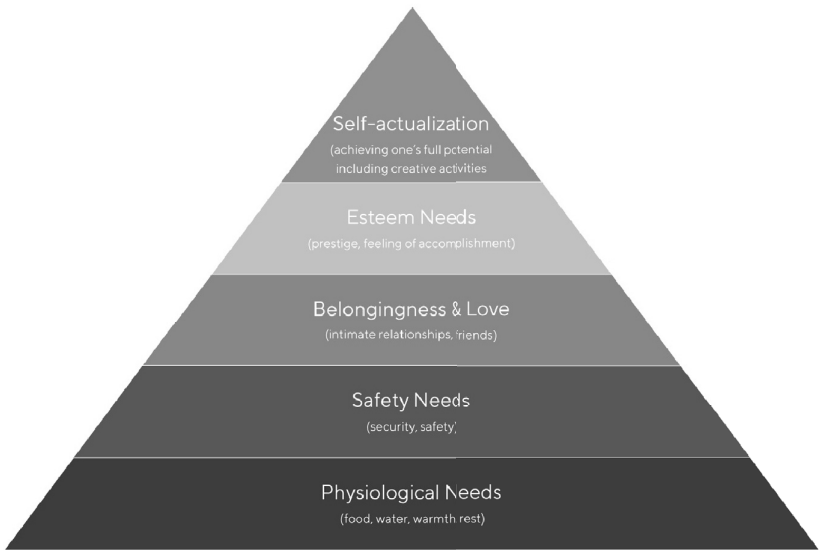
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FOREWORD



*A*braham Maslow created a five-tier model of human needs, shown above, and as you can see, self-actualisation sits at the top.

“Whatever you think you can do or believe you can do, begin it. Action has magic, grace, and power in it. Begin it now.”

For most of my life, I believed the above quote was written by Goethe, but the society in his name points to the Scottish mountaineer William Hutchison Murray as more likely. Meanwhile, I was quite happy all those years believing that Goethe had written it.

As Shakespeare might say to that, “What’s in a name? A rose by any other name would smell as sweet.”

The point being that it’s not so important who wrote what, but rather what they wrote, and I appreciate words of truth from any source, whatever country, person, religion, or time, and feel they transcend any limitation people might want to subject them to.

So in this book, which is about self-actualisation, many sources are quoted, some of which may seem unlikely, but they are included because they relate to that process.

As you may have forgotten, you are a winner! You overcame millions of others to come to this planet. Out of those millions, you were the first to reach the goal that brought you here. However, if you tell me you remember that swimming race, I will be somewhat sceptical!

You are unique, one of a kind, as only you will experience the precise circumstances that will form you. Having said that, you share some archetypal traits with other people, knowing which will contribute to your self-knowledge.

Some of them will be elucidated in this book, which is for those people (the luckiest in the world in my eyes) who can discern that their consciousness varies in such a way that they can be more or less conscious at any given moment.

People who understand that the interconnected state of awareness can be pursued and made constant by the correct application of necessary knowledge and being, and that you can know a lot, but your ability to do or make what you know real is dependent upon your level of being. One way to think of being is as experiential knowledge, which is practical rather than theoretical. Being able to “walk the talk”.

Knowledge and being must exist at the requisite levels to produce understanding, in the same way as one needs the correct mixture of flour, water, and fire to make bread. Too much water gives a runny mess, too much flour gives a dry powdery mess, and too much fire gives a burnt black mess.

I take from whichever sources have information that is relevant to the process of awakening. Sifting through so many different ones, I found that one in particular had many more nuggets than others, despite many people having negative opinions about it. It seems that often people will denigrate and criticize ideas they don't understand. The teacher George Ivanovitch Gurdjieff (1866-1877), whom I will refer to from now on as Mr. G, said, "Being is the only indestructible reality." His philosophy is based on the idea that most people live in a state of "waking sleep," functioning like machines, disconnected from their true selves and consciousness. He is not popular as he taught that we are incomplete and that to awaken we had to make a conscious effort and achieve unification through self-observation, self-remembering, and, through conscious suffering, become free from our ego and mechanical behaviour. By the way, the Fourth Way takes its name from the idea that there were four traditional ways: the way of the instinctive person, or fakir, who by overcoming the body created himself; the way of the monk, or Bhakti, the emotional person who created himself by overcoming the emotional nature; the way of the yogi, the intellectual person who created themselves by the mind and knowledge; and the Fourth Way, which used all of the tools of all the preceding ways at the appropriate time, but is secular or non-religious and is meant to take place in ordinary life applying the tools of the previous ways in the correct moment.

However, many other sources are included as being just as worthwhile. This book is for not only those who already know certain truths, but also those in the new generations, forever growing, who are hungry for knowledge about the most important subject one can wish for knowledge about, or in other words, themselves. I advise you to use ideas from as many different sources as you find useful. Your aim to awaken is more important than loyalty to any one source.

I wrote the first draft when relatively young, and it lay gathering dust for many years in the time between then and now. Something unthinkable happened: the kind of ideas it addresses about living in

the moment became popular! They were quite esoteric when they were first written, and now they have become so popular that almost every thinking person with access to society has heard of them.

The material here is for anyone from any culture with a genuine wish and aim to develop their self-knowledge and conscious awareness.

And so as it says in Luke 11:33 from the New Testament, “No man when he hath lighted a candle, putteth it in a secret place, neither under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that they which come in may see the light.”

Nowadays, a large number of people consider themselves able to live permanently in the now and as being “woke”.

They were sold the idea that we are already complete and don't have to make any effort at all.

The reduction to the level of understanding of the majority often has a diluting effect; for example, some people write songs that, although wonderful, will never be popular as they are too complex.

It's understandable from one angle that people would believe they are already fully conscious, because, in one sense, they are; as the “Self” is perfect, it's just that it is clouded, like a mirror, by all our habits and egoic particularities. So it is necessary to learn how to clean that mirror, not just imagine it is not clouded.

Erving Goffman wrote in his *Frame Analysis*, “I can only suggest that he who would combat false consciousness and awaken people to their true interests has much to do, because the sleep is very deep. And I do not intend here to provide a lullaby but merely to sneak in and watch the way people snore.”

I neither wish to provide a lullaby nor to watch people snore. Instead, I wish to encourage them to produce, sustain, and deepen consciousness; to study general and personal obstacles to this; and to present them with some of the tools that have been useful to my process.

Although I find any discussion of consciousness interesting, practical efforts are superior to endless philosophising.

When you experience a higher state than normal, your being is more connected, and what was theory becomes reality. Later, there will be a detailed account of the different possible states of consciousness that are possible to attain.

Contemporary neuroscience suggests that we are only conscious of about 5% of our cognitive possibilities. Some even suggest that there are four billion bits of information and sensory impressions entering us through our senses at any moment, and that we process only a few thousand of them. If one accepts this, then we are lacking immediate access to 95% of our possible awareness.

Of course, our whole brain is always functioning, or we would be in serious trouble. Having said that, later I will provide a few instances where that was not the case, and the individuals involved did just fine. In a very real sense, our good friend the thinking brain is a veil. The biggest illusion for almost everyone everywhere is that their consciousness is continuous. Their entire psychology is set up in such a way as to maintain this illusion. If you threaten it in any way, these defences are mobilized sometimes quite vehemently, as the character George in the movie *Easy Rider* says, “Course, don’t ever tell anybody that they’re not free ‘cause then they’re gonna get real busy killin’ and maimin’ to prove to you that they are.”

That is why they say to “let sleeping dogs lie,” or not to “cast one’s pearls in front of swine.”

Living a conscious life depends on the ability to create, deepen, and sustain consciousness at any given moment.

Any teaching or source, no matter how beautiful it sounds or how profound the ideas it expresses, if it doesn’t teach practical information about how to create consciousness in any given moment, how to deepen it, and make it come more frequently and remain longer, is relatively imaginary, as these are what living a conscious life entails.

Terence McKenna said, “If the truth can be told so as to be understood, it will be believed.” So, I will attempt to do as Mr. McKenna suggested in the pages that follow.

Did you know that the Buddha had to be convinced to start his teaching, as he seemingly didn't think people would be able to understand it?

Both the Buddha and the teacher who is now known as Jesus were homeless, unemployed people with no qualifications!

But I think they felt at home wherever they were.

The ideas in this book are mainly those of other people from antiquity to now, which have been processed within me, thereby producing others.

Some of them are of a literal or "stone and water" level of understanding. In other words, a primary level that is a foundation for other, less dogmatic methods of expressing higher truths. These can only be expressed in the form of myth, parable, allegory, symbolism, or art, dance, and even architecture.

Although I am not a Christian or an adherent of any religion, there are many references from the compilation known as the Bible. That is because it is full of knowledge about what this book is about, when the correct keys are applied!

It would take a separate book to elucidate all the stories, but let's just say they all have an inner meaning related to our physiology and work on becoming conscious. The characters and place names are all symbolic. Just as an example, the seven churches are actually the Endocrine glands or Chakras. The books that were left out, known as the Apocrypha, are well worth reading, bearing this in mind, particularly the Gospels of Thomas, Mary, and Judas, as are the later discovered Nag Hammadi and Qumran scrolls.

The intent of the book is to inform some, stimulate some, and entertain others. Its highest function would be to light a fire or feed one already burning, and fire can remove the impurities in gold.

It is said that the first twenty years of our life pass with enthusiasm without thinking of the Dharma.

The next twenty pass with a vague desire to practice, but without having the time.

The last twenty pass with the regret of the inability to practice it.

A NOTE TO THE READER



Most of us move through life largely absent from it. We are physically present but mentally elsewhere, lost in thought, habit, reaction. We live on autopilot. This book is about what it means to wake up to your actual life—to genuinely *be here*.

The practices and teachings presented here draw from multiple traditions: the Fourth Way, Taoism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Hermeticism, contemporary psychology. They are not competing doctrines. They are different doorways into the same recognition: that real presence is possible, and that cultivating it changes everything.

You will encounter unfamiliar terminology and frameworks. A glossary is provided at the end for reference. These are tools. Use them to sharpen your own observation of yourself and the world.

Some ideas will challenge your assumptions. That friction is intentional. Real understanding requires engagement, not passive reception. You must test these teachings against your own experience.

The real work happens not in these pages, but in your own practice and observation. These pages are simply a map. You must walk the territory.

Chapter 1

THE MOMENT

And How To Value Returning To It



We are often in the past and often in the future, but rarely in the present.

One tends to lose focus on the present when imagining the past or future. But if, through perseverance, one can create a strong enough desire to remain in the present, then sometimes worries, fears, and anxieties of the future lose their power to remove us from it.

Perhaps one of the most important skills we can learn is to recognize when we return to presence, and to be grateful when it occurs. Unfortunately, it is also one of the easiest things to forget, so I will repeat this idea elsewhere. Presence is optional, and many people opt out, either because they have never realized its importance or because it is not always there.

Lal Ded, otherwise known as Lalla, said, “Some, though they be sound asleep, are yet awake; on others, though they be awake, hath slumber fallen.”

Paul of Biblical fame said, “Behold, I show you a mystery. We shall not all sleep but shall be changed.” Although I have perhaps taken it out of context.

The name “Buddha,” meaning he who is awake, derives from the root “Bud,” meaning “to be awake, be conscious of.” The same root gives

“buddhi” in the Bhagavad Gita, which, in different contexts, means intelligence, reason, wisdom, vision, and the faculty of discernment between good, beauty, evil, ugliness, truth, and falsehood.

One definition of intelligence is the faculty of making order from chaos. From the Isa Upanishad: “From delusion lead me to truth, from darkness lead me to light, from death lead me to immortality.”

From Delphi and the Oracle: “I warn you, whoever you are. Oh, you who wish to probe the arcanae of nature. If you do not find within yourself that which you seek, neither shall you be able to find it outside yourself. If you ignore the excellence of your own house, how do you intend to find other excellencies? In you is hidden the treasure of treasures. Oh, man, know thyself, and you shall know the universe and its Gods.”

Awakening is the divestment of illusions, which is painful, but it is possible to survive that pain if one is humble and is able to put ego aside.

Mr. G’s student, Piotr Demianovich Ouspensky, who was much better known than Mr. G in intellectual circles at the time he met him, showed how perceptive and humble he was when presented with the idea of sleep versus self-remembering. He related a story where he went out into the city holding onto the awareness of himself. When he looked at people hurrying here and there, it was almost as if thoughts were passing across their eyes. He felt that they were not there.

He describes thinking he would pop by the tobacconist, and then, much later, while travelling on a tram, having a strange sensation of having forgotten something and realizing, with a shock, that he had forgotten to maintain awareness of himself.

Meanwhile, on autopilot, he had been to the tobacconist, visited his publisher, discussed his new book, said hello to people, and passed the time of day with people before he came to himself on the tram.

This story illustrates the humility of the man and his perceptiveness. Although he was a well-known author, he could put his ego aside and learn from someone whom he recognised as knowing more than himself.

Although he may have been centered in the intellectual part of the intellectual center (to be explained later), which is very rare, he also wrote:

“Love is the potent force that tears off all masks, and men who run away from love do so that they may preserve their masks.”

The teaching that he received from Mr. G defines different states of consciousness in the following way.

The first state is deep physical sleep.

In the second state, one gets up and starts doing things, but can be completely on autopilot. A person can do practically anything on autopilot—even things that one would think need more attention—once they have been drilled in and passed down to the more mechanical parts of the brain. Personally, I have performed two-hour-long Harold Pinter plays in the theatre every night for months, sometimes almost entirely on autopilot.

The third state is relative awakening, where one adds awareness to the second state.

The highest state is the fourth: real awakening, for which paradoxically there are many more names and descriptions of than the intervening ones.

To produce and maintain the third state, one must become an artist and a scientist.

Perhaps you have heard the expression ascribed to Joseph Campbell: “Follow your bliss and the universe will open doors for you where there were only walls.”

This is a key to being in the third state, as when we are in that more real part of ourselves referred to here as essence, we are under fewer laws. So, it might be dancing, teaching, or even knitting that you feel at home and everything is right.

As will be discussed later, different parts of us can be said to be under more restrictions or laws than others. The essence is under fewer laws than the personality, which comes from the “persona,” or mask, which covers the essence to protect it. Essence is our original nature; it is like a child, and has many more possible ways of expression than its ego-personality covering.

When I previously had the temerity to teach groups about awakening, most of the questions I was asked arose from a disconnected state. Very often, these questions could be answered by being more connected to oneself. So, the answer to many questions related to awakening is to get into a more unified state, thereby bringing more of one's own being and knowledge to bear on the issue.

There are three types of influence that one can be exposed to in life. They are like three roads or streams.

The first one arises mechanically without awareness and leads to nowhere but more of itself on the same level.

The second originated from a higher source of understanding and points the way out of the endless repetition on the same level.

The third is a direct influence from a higher source of understanding and awareness.

Many people today confuse these three sources, mistaking the second and even the first for the same as the third. In other words, they “don't know shit from Shinola.” However, a common tool in contemporary psychology is the Johari window, which, as you can see below, creates a matrix whereby one can categorise different sides of oneself.

<p style="text-align: center;">1</p> <p style="text-align: center;">KNOWN SELF</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Things we know about ourselves and others know about us.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">2</p> <p style="text-align: center;">HIDDEN SELF</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Things we know about ourselves that others do not know.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">3</p> <p style="text-align: center;">BLIND SELF</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Things others know about us that we do not know.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">4</p> <p style="text-align: center;">UNKNOWN SELF</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Things neither we nor others know about us.</p>

I had the good luck of working with people who helped me to see into some of the other boxes, which can be and was quite painful. Later, when working more as a facilitator, once I had gotten to know someone, it was possible to set up circumstances that gave them a chance of seeing their hidden sides. Or put another way, the sides of themselves which were “buffered” so effectively that they became invisible.

For example, for someone who was overly concerned with other people’s opinions of them, I might suggest they rummage through trash bins in a busy walking street and separate themselves constantly from the fear and vanity that would try to remove them from the moment. Or to go into a department store and try on lots of clothes or shoes, with the help of a shop assistant, and leave without buying anything, which, for some people, would be incredibly difficult.

These situations were tailor-made for the individual and required creative invention related to their occluded sides.

There was one man whom I asked to wear a suit to walk around town because he felt it was important to be seen as a casual “good guy.” For him, anyone who wore a suit was not likely to be a nice person. This was a very difficult thing for him to do, as he was afraid that his friends might see him and worried about what strangers would think of him. Paradoxically, his seeing how difficult it would be convinced him to go through with it and to try to hold onto awareness, while taking care not to get taken up or lost in the thoughts and feelings the situation produced. One has to repeat these kinds of exercises until they have no power.

Some esoteric schools have been based around theatre and street theatre to experiment with such things, and it’s possible to have some fun while learning about oneself and others in this way.

One of the highest things a person can learn from theatrical training is the ability to intentionally choose which states and emotions they experience, rather than those that are produced mechanically. I was lucky enough to get the chance to see life from many different standpoints, which is another benefit of acting training: to be able to put oneself into another’s shoes.

If you have seen the show “Just for Laughs,” in which pranks are set up for the general public, you can see how someone could get an insight into attitudes they weren’t aware they had. The difference is in having a specific aim related to why they were putting themselves through it and not just doing it for laughs.

Ken Wilber said, “To develop a more or less accurate self-image... is simply to gain a comprehensive awareness of those facets of yourself which you didn’t know existed. And these facets are easily spotted because they show up as your symptoms.”

Getting to know ourselves is difficult as we are all to a certain extent like the Emperor in the story “The Emperor’s New Clothes,” it is as if we were given one of the most advanced jets available and a state-of-the-art computer to run it, after taxiing around the runway for a long time, you might want to consult a handbook to learn how to take off.

Why is it that when a human being is born, apart from some biological information for those who are drawn to it and a smattering of advice from here and there, there is nothing, no detailed users handbook for one of the most incredible machines of all, a biochemical soft machine of such incredible complexity and capacity that some of its most amazing possibilities are only guessed at if at all?

Anyway, in relation to changing the world, we are part of it, so by changing ourselves, we are affecting or changing the world in the same way as when we throw a pebble in a pool, the ripples spread outwards.

According to chaos theory, a woman shaking a blanket in Africa or even a butterfly’s wings can affect the weather on the opposite side of the world... come to think of it if that’s true, how does a jet affect it or a nuclear explosion, for that matter.

But surely one person becoming more conscious, aware, or “good” changes humanity.

When one becomes more connected to their consciousness, they also tend to become more connected to their conscience.

Have you ever considered exactly what prevents “heaven on earth,” and whose interests the current situation serves?

It is a bit hackneyed now, but if one were to take the fear and control-based military budgets of all countries as a whole and use them instead to create food farms, infrastructure, and logistics to deliver food, poverty and hunger would be eliminated, and also most of the suffering of humanity. This is one of the most damning pieces of evidence of the general level of consciousness of humanity.

If one controls the elements in oneself that create suffering in the world, then surely the totality of suffering in the world will be diminished. Suffering is like a fire that burns away the dross, leaving pure gold, and when transformed, purifies the heart. One can't directly control the world, but one can begin in small ways to control oneself. People are often their own worst enemies, running away from their own higher selves rather than their lower selves, and are generally focused on external rather than internal achievements.

Lao Tzu said, “If you want to awaken all of humanity, then awaken all of yourself. If you want to eliminate the suffering in the world, then eliminate all that is dark and negative in yourself. Truly, the greatest gift you have to give is that of your own self-transformation.”

Ramana Maharshi said something similar: “Your own self-realization is the greatest service you can render the world.”

When you are able to transform negative emotions, the same events that occur to all people are used differently in you. In most people, events inner and outer just happen. In someone who has learned to transform them, they are used for the fulfillment of specific aims.

Anne Morrow Lindberg said in *Gift from the Sea 1995*: “Each person who goes into the ocean brings back different gifts”.

There is much suffering in the world, but joy is your higher right. Which does not mean we shouldn't try to diminish the sufferings of others if it is within our power, but it starts in your own house by learning to go upstairs more often.

One of the biggest illusions people have is that they are free, self-determining, and fully conscious beings, which, of course, precludes making efforts to become free and conscious. Why would someone make efforts to attain something which they believed they already possessed?

Consciousness accompanies very little of our actions. This is part of the meaning of the Indian idea of living in “*Maya*” or illusion. We imagine that we are much more conscious than we are, whereas all the major teachings and even contemporary science state that we are identified, attached, or asleep.

In other words, we have lost some of our awareness by attaching it to our thoughts, feelings, sensations, and other things than our deeper selves most of the time.

It is somehow perversely and divinely perfect that people will allow themselves to be taught about anything, including the most superficial and mundane things, but when it comes to the most important thing, namely themselves, they feel that knowledge must be inherent.

By its very nature, the most recently developed part of the mind, the grey matter, neocortex, or “new brain,” addresses only facets of things, mainly through verbal language, which is an imperfect and partial method of passing information.

There is even evidence suggesting that geniuses use less of their brain to solve problems than others do, and scientists have seemingly determined that Albert Einstein’s brain was smaller than average but had greater connectivity.

If one regards life as a mystery, which Einstein endorsed strongly, one is using more of one’s brain than if they regard everything as understood.

John Lennon said, “Reality leaves a lot to the imagination,” which is born out by contemporary neuroscience, as they reckon we only perceive ten percent of reality directly. The other ninety percent is constructed by our brains.

Esoteric science points out that we use only parts of our brain at any time, or more exactly, that we use different parts of different brains at any one time, and it is possible to learn to use more of it simultaneously. This will become obvious later in the chapter about the brain. Perhaps the explanation or the theory that we are constantly being subject to billions of impressions but only process a few thousand at any given time is pretty much the same idea in different clothes.

To quote the artist, poet, and mystic William Blake, whose wife complained she had very little of his time as he was always in heaven: “If the doors of perception were cleansed, we would see things as they are: infinite.”

Here in life, we have the opportunity to develop “being” in many different areas. One can have being or experiential knowledge in everything from knitting to skydiving, and our type, which will be discussed later, tends to draw us to different things. I would suggest that developing being, in being itself, or rather developing the ability to be conscious constantly, is the summit of scale and is accessible to all types.

If we could somehow adjust the limiter on our brain or cleanse the doors of perception, the outlook might be much wider. This limiter is comprised to a large extent by our predominant glands and brain parts, but also by the programming we have received.

Many of the ideas that will be presented here will appear contradictory because they present the same truth in different forms; however, if you look beyond the forms, you will see that the underlying truth is the same. It’s just that they come from different cultures and times and are clothed accordingly.

Another reason for putting these ideas into a book is children. I remember being one and being unsatisfied with a lot of the answers to my questions. I later found out that many of the things taught to me as established facts were merely theories, and having lived so long, I have seen a number of them disproved.

For example, in the west it was taught that civilization was only a few thousand years old and that people from other cultures, like Africa, Arabia, India, Egypt, Iran, China, etc. (sorry if I didn't mention your land), were "savages" before Western influence. As we know now, actual civilization began in some of these places. Our counting, measuring, and judicial systems, etc. stem from them, in particular Sumeria.

And new evidence, particularly using scanning techniques such as LIDAR, keeps being found, which pushes civilization further and further back in many different countries, so it is hard to say definitively where it originated. But my take on it is that there have been countless cultures, some higher than the present one, that have disappeared without a trace. It must have been embarrassing for early European astrologers and astronomers to find out that the heavens had already been mapped and many of the heavenly bodies had been ascribed Arabic names.

Even parts of the Bible are directly lifted from earlier texts, such as the Egyptian Book of the Dead. Just as an example, as there are too many to mention in this book: "The kingdom of Heaven is within you, and whosoever shall know himself shall find it." It sounds as if it could be from the Bible or the Apocryphal Gospel of Thomas, but it is, in fact, an ancient Egyptian saying.

The Kemetian teachings, i.e. those from Kemet, which is the original name before it came to be called Egypt, are one of the sources of what is now called Christianity and, if anything, the original African/Egyptian teachings have been diluted and distorted to keep people in subjection and control instead of freeing them and helping them achieve their own divinity, as did the originals.



There is a saying by Vera Stanley Alder: "Only an open mind is big enough to contain the secrets of the universe."

Children have open minds as they haven't yet closed them down to fit in with society. All the doors in all the rooms are open. How would the world be if children had a say in politics? I never thought I would quote an American ex-president, and especially not Reagan, but the quote below is from him or his speech writer, as the case may be:

"I believe with all my heart that if a generation of young people throughout the world could get to know each other, they would never make war upon each other."

Many children are left to their own devices and are raising themselves.

If you want to know why the world is the way it is, just zap on your TV, if you still have one, or surf the net for a while.

Although many will find it ridiculous, it is my belief that cartoons do teach violence, but they have been superseded by video games in this regard. Video games are diminishing the boundaries between imagination and reality to the point where there is little difference between the video game of warfare, where one sits in front of a computer screen and kills in a number of different ways, and that of sitting in a tank or the cockpit of a fighter plane and engaging in actual warfare.

Actually, in the time it has taken to write this book, drone warfare has begun, where people sit in a container in one country and remotely bomb citizens in another. So, they are distant physically and perhaps emotionally from the actual killing. When we are young, some of us want to change the world for the better (seemingly by the age of eighteen, a child has seen approximately 26,000 killings on TV, mostly by men; this statistic is very, very old, so you might want to check the contemporary statistics). I have a nasty feeling they might have increased dramatically.

Most countries, through their respective media, teach children to lie, cheat, steal, kill, use drugs, and then are surprised when the children grow up and proceed to enact these behaviours.

In many cases, children are bringing up children.

A substantial adult I would give one definition of as being able to see beyond the childish literal understanding of fairy tales and stories (like the biblical ones) to the real meaning behind, without losing the magic of the child's view, and real magic is transforming negative emotions into consciousness.

When children are young, in a state where there are many possibilities, they live in a mythical world.

The wonderful Joseph Campbell, teacher of myths, pointed out, and I may have paraphrased it;

“Religious stories are true in the metaphorical sense, but if taken literally, they have departed from truth”.

He also brought it to our attention that “Mythical stories represent the different parts of our make-up represented symbolically, and their conflicting interests,” and “Myths are public dreams, dreams are private Myths.”

Along the same lines, the Sikh Guru Nanak said: “The world is a drama, staged in a dream.”

And in the Zohar, it discusses one thing representing another in relation to religion, it says,

“The narratives of the Doctrine are its cloak. The simple look only at the garment, that is upon the narrative of the Doctrine; more they know not. The instructed, however, see not only the cloak, but what the cloak covers.”

We are all players in the great mystery of life, and relatively trivial things stand in the way of our being able to perceive this. Generally, people spend most of their lives waiting for something to happen, while the most important thing could be occurring alongside whatever else they are doing. This is one of the subtle ways that our oldest brain part, which we share with the reptiles, undermines and slowly overcomes us throughout our lives.

Much of the material that will be presented here was considered esoteric or hidden until recently. Often, because of the Catholic

Church, one could quite literally be executed for saying anything contradictory to their doctrine.

In this book, there are many subjects related to one main one, i.e., self-remembering, re-remembering oneself, or putting together the separate members or parts of oneself, also referred to as being present, being in the now, etc.

“Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall, Humpty Dumpty had a great fall. All the king’s horses and all the king’s men couldn’t put Humpty together again.”

Humpty Dumpty is about the struggle to unify, to re-member or put his members together.

This division is discussed in a book by R. D. Laing who wrote a book which I don’t quote from here called *The Divided Self*, which, although quite old, it is still worth a read, dealing as it does with the fragmented Self and the struggle to become unified in the same way as from a completely different source *The Conference of the Birds* by the Persian Sufi poet Farid ud Din Attar. 1177 approximately. It is a profound allegorical journey about spiritual enlightenment, where a flock of birds gather to choose a king, ultimately led by the wisest bird, the Hoopoe, on a quest to find the legendary Simorgh, a mythical bird symbolizing God, the higher self, or ultimate truth.

That is, the self one was before one became covered up with numerous other, less substantial selves, represented by the other birds. The Simorgh represents one’s deepest self.

Here are some quotes from various walks of life on this process.

First, Jung, who said: “Knowing your own darkness is the best method for dealing with the darkness of others.”

That people have been engaged in this process for a long time is borne out by this excerpt from Zoroastrianism, Gatha 43: “Give me the gift that is the best of all; give me the inmost self of all the selves.”

Keith Richards from The Rolling Stones said, “All the contortions we go through just not to be ourselves for a few hours.”

And it is true: almost all normal life is spent doing other things to avoid the one thing.

Buddhist teacher Sylvia Boorstein once said, “Don’t just do something, sit there.”

Real doing is not primarily connected with forms of movement but occurs despite them.

I am not sure of the source of this analogy of work on oneself and the work of groups, but I include it because it is beautiful, and it seems to have some Sufi elements.

“The salt which has preserved the olives while in storage in their sacks is all our conditioning, and must be washed away before real work can begin.

To have a good result, one chooses the best olives to begin with. One can consider these as our many facets, or on another level, each individual olive as being someone of use to the growth of the work.

The jar, which has to be thoroughly cleaned, can be taken as the physical body, or the location you occupy, or the location the group occupies. It is said that water takes on the colour of its container, and we desire this water to be completely clear. Ritual washing is a reminder, on a physical level, of an internal process that must also be undertaken.

The olives are fragile once cleaned of the salt, so they must be treated with love and care. Then the boiling water, like a baptism of fire, can be very painful. The Way requires intentional, conscious suffering.

The water stays in the jar for the time the olives take to swell without bursting, for if one bursts, they will all be spoiled. It is necessary to know how hot and how long the water should remain.

Then add lemon, mint, garlic, or oregano, as a mixture of acid and alkali; then finally, for balance, the olive oil, representing the second baptism of the spirit with the olive’s own essence.

Finally, the lid is screwed on firmly. For forty days and forty nights, the great alchemy balances and blends the whole into one, and thus we come to a full cycle, with everything returning to its source.”

It is said that “there are some real cooks, and that if one were to eat their food, one would receive everything.”

I suspect that Mr. G was one such cook.

An anonymous Sufi said, “All true life is the peace and harmony of contraries.”

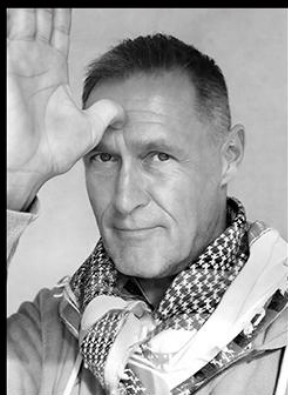
What is life but then and now, and the hope of something yet to come? The something yet to come can be accessed from the now. It’s not what you own, not your talents or abilities, nor who you know, nor any multitude of other things, but it is what you ARE that matters. Whoever would have thought that just being here now would be the biggest, most worthwhile challenge?

Ramana Maharshi said, “There is neither Past nor Future. There is only Present.”

Humans live in a state of "sleep" or mechanical consciousness, and through intentional work of self-remembering and self-observation, one can achieve higher states of awareness.

We live in an age of constant stimulation, yet many people feel inwardly distant from their own lives. Beneath the surface of routine, thought, and distraction lies a quiet intuition that something essential is being overlooked. *The Tao is in the Now* explores this intuition and points toward a simple but demanding possibility: awakening to the living reality of the present moment, discovered not elsewhere but within the texture of ordinary experience.

Drawing from contemplative traditions, esoteric psychology, and practical reflection, *The Tao is in the Now* examines psychological sleep and the patterns that keep attention bound to thought and reaction. Through insights on self-remembering, awareness, and inner observation, it gently encourages readers to pause and look within. Rather than offering quick solutions or dramatic promises, the book invites a gradual shift in perception, opening space for greater clarity, depth, and presence, and nurturing a more conscious relationship with everyday life and the unfolding moment.



JACK E. SOUTAR

is a writer exploring consciousness, presence, and inner awakening. Influenced by contemplative traditions, mystical philosophy, and self-observation, he approaches spirituality as lived inquiry rooted in direct experience. His work invites readers to question, remember themselves, and rediscover awareness in everyday life and in ordinary moments of presence.

