

the
Quiet
Place
Within

Peter
Ingle

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The Quiet Place Within

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The Quiet Place Within



There is a place in you where you
are quiet, calm, and nothing can disturb
you. This quiet place is not a metaphor.
It is a very real thing.

P.D. Ouspensky

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Tranquility

AWARENESS is always tranquil. This tranquility is like a bubble that nothing seen or felt can penetrate. You can think of it as the core of your being. You can also think of it as surrounding you.

A quiet mind and peaceful body do not comprise awareness. Nor do a noisy mind and busy body preclude awareness. Awareness is none of these things. It is the empty, silent, motionless tranquility *always* in the background.

Attachment

ALTHOUGH awareness is its own sanctuary, it can be lured out of its 'place' by anything it perceives. Due to a lack of awareness that it *is* awareness, it gets immediately appropriated by whatever it perceives.

In human beings, awareness is first appropriated by thoughts, emotions, sensations, and movements. Instead of awareness seeing all these functions and knowing that it is seeing them, it grants them identity as a sense of 'me'.

In the East, this is known as 'attachment' to describe how awareness attaches itself to its perceptions. In the West, it is called 'identification' to convey that awareness not only attaches itself *to*, but establishes a sense of identity *in*, what it perceives.

All of this usually happens so quickly that we don't notice it, and we don't notice it because awareness is not noticing itself.

Presence and Silence

PRESENCE and silence are two attributes of awareness. When we reach presence, we approach silence. When we reach silence, we approach presence.

When presence and silence come together, they create a perfect environment for awareness to become aware of being aware. But they are only the environment. Awareness still has to emerge there.

The Meditator

ACHIEVING a sense of inner quiet and calm is often considered a goal of meditation and yoga, yet there is another ingredient that is more important. Although meditation and yoga can still the mind and pacify the body, their greatest value does not lie in mastering a mantra or posture or breathing. It lies in how well they enable mind and body to yield to awareness *on behalf of* awareness.

For this to work fully, a subtle shift has to take place from being the meditator to becoming aware *of* the meditator. Awareness then sees 'me' (the mind and body) practicing. It becomes aware that meditation is an activity of the mind working on the mind, just as yoga is an activity of the body working on the body.

Like prayer, meditation and yoga are an appeal by the person, but they are not for the person. They are platforms for awareness.

The Muscle of Attention

WHEN the mind controls attention, it thinks it is controlling awareness. It does not realize that it *cannot* comprehend what awareness really is.

Focusing attention is something the muscle of the mind does. It involves a narrowing of attention the way you narrow the stream of light from a flashlight by turning the barrel of the flashlight. The mind knows it can 'turn' itself to focus the stream of attention, but it does not understand the light—the awareness—passing *through* it.

Awareness itself is so rarefied that it cannot be contained by the mind or the body. It can pass through them and vivify them, but they cannot control it. The only thing that can contain awareness is itself, and it does not 'do' that through mental or physical effort. It simply becomes aware that it is aware.

Being in the Moment

SOME people are naturally more active and some naturally more passive. For example, active types tend to *pursue* the moment and move *through* it with determination and goals, whereas passive types tend to *resist* the moment and get *pulled* by it despite their inertia. It is virtually impossible for either type to do otherwise, and it is easy to see why each has a different concept of what it means to be *in the moment*.

The moment, however, is neither active nor passive. It never insists on being pursued, resisted, manipulated, or avoided. That is just how each person interprets the moment and imposes requirements on the moment—either by looking for and clutching something to do, or by avoiding things and having to do them.

This does not mean that you should not be active or passive. It means that whatever your tendency is, awareness simply perceives that, watches it unfold as part of the moment, and realizes itself watching.

Being in Awareness

Awareness is not in the moment. The moment is in awareness. Everything it perceives is simply there as part of itself. From this perspective, it is not a matter of being in the moment. It is a matter of being awareness and welcoming the moment in.

In a Mood

IT is common to say that we are 'in' a mood, as though a mood is a place inside where we go and get bogged down.

Although different moods exist, look carefully and you will see that you are not in them, but that they are in you; that moods unfold inside awareness and awareness attaches itself *to* them.

Storms in the earth's atmosphere arise, develop, and pass away—all inside the atmosphere surrounding them. The same is true of moods and of our entire psychological world.

This is not to say that moods should be eradicated or that it is easy for awareness to extract itself from them. It is just important to know the difference between a mood and being aware of a mood, and to know that awareness can free *itself* from any mood at any moment.

One way to see this is to not let anyone see when you are in a bad mood; to not display and express the bad mood. Instead, try to keep it inside and look at it there. Then realize the difference between the mood and looking at it.

Transformation

ONE of the key ideas of the fourth way tradition is that awakening (self-realization) revolves around the transformation of negative emotions. This refers to all emotions that carry a negative charge such as irritation, impatience, boredom, self-pity, resentment, hatred, and anger—to name just a few.

Indulging in negative emotions inwardly and venting them outwardly are usually considered normal, even healthy, manifestations of human character. The fourth way, however, takes the position that they are abnormal because they corrupt and consume awareness. The idea behind withholding the outer expression of negative emotions is to instead wedge open a psychological window through which you can look at a negative emotion and examine ‘who’ is negative *on the inside*.

As with moods, the goal is not to ignore or suppress negative emotions inwardly. The purpose is to withhold their outer expression and use that as leverage to shine light on the logic behind them. When awareness realizes itself as the observer shining this light, it begins to transmute the sense of ‘I’ behind

negativity into the awareness of *itself* as the conscious observer. In this sense, transformation is not about negative emotions being transformed into something else; it is about awareness using negative emotions and the feeling of 'I' behind them as a catalyst to transform itself.

Transformation can occur in relation to *anything* as soon as awareness realizes that it is outside that thing. This is because being aware of being aware *is* transformation and is what makes transformation possible.

Leaving the Person Behind

WE all live in the same outer world, yet we each live in a different inner world. The combination of our thoughts, feelings, and predispositions varies from one person to another as the material out of which we develop a sense of ourselves as a person.

At the same time, each person is loathe to acknowledge that their *entire* inner world does not matter and can be left behind; not abandoned, but revealed as a false sense of self that is not awareness.

The more awareness is conscious of itself, the less interest it takes in the machinations of the mind and the preoccupations of the body, and the more interest it takes in the mystery of awareness beyond the mind and body.

Stages of Self Remembering

THE central idea of the fourth way is called self-remembering, which refers to awareness being consciously aware of being aware. But self-remembering does not always start on the level of awareness. It often starts on a physical level, then expands to a psychological level, before reaching the metaphysical presence of awareness being aware.

The reason self-remembering starts physically is because it is taught as a principle of *external* divided attention where, for example, you are aware not only of the sunset but of yourself watching the sunset. Instead of there being one thing in your attention, there are now two. This dividing of attention *by* the mind starts to mirror the nature of awareness.

Divided attention can also be brought *inside* the mind. Instead of being absorbed by thoughts and feelings (and negative emotions), you ‘divide attention’ and watch your thoughts. This form of dividing attention *internally* is closer to the realm of awareness. It contains the seed of awareness, but it is still the mind controlling attention in the mind.

Awareness Asleep

ALMOST every moment, awareness attaches itself to and identifies itself with one 'I' or a group of 'I's. They become 'me' for as long as awareness stays attached and until it is lured by another 'I'. And so we go from attachment to attachment, day after day, in our inner and outer world.

The fourth way calls this being 'asleep', meaning that awareness has forgotten itself and lost the realization that it is awareness. It is literally asleep *in* the mind and body.

We are usually not consciously aware of our body in the environment, or consciously aware of thoughts and feelings in the mind. Least of all are we consciously aware of being the observer of both worlds.

When awareness remembers itself, it wakes up from the dream of mind and body and realizes itself as awareness.

The Self

THE word 'self' is confusing because it is sometimes spelled with a small 's' to signify the ego, and sometimes with a capital 'S' to signify the enlightened 'Self'. The mind construes from this that large Self is simply an improved version of small self, a more 'mindful' version, a more enlightened *person*.

The small self exists as a feeling of 'I' in the mind and as a sense of 'me' in the body, but there is no such feeling in awareness. It just *is*. It exists as a void of presence that is aware of seeing the mind and body as they function.

Unlike the mind, awareness does not conceptualize or project an identity of itself; and unlike the body, it does not occupy space. It is more akin to a non-self that is aware of being aware of the self.

The Curious Mind

WHEN awareness slips free of the mind and achieves the clarity of being aware of being aware, this inevitably prompts the mind to wonder about awareness, to want to investigate it, define it, and be able to explain its meaning, purpose, and origin.

All of this is a distraction to awareness because it draws awareness right back into the mind. Awareness has to keep dropping the mind and keep abiding in the mystery of itself.

Into the Distance

LOOK out at the sea or into the sky as far as you can. Then consider that your inner world is infinitely more vast than that.

Most of the time we stay close to shore, hug the surface, cling to the familiar and safe. This is not a bad thing; it just prevents us from realizing how much we contain inside and how far we can go—even with the vehicle of thought, which is more nimble than we suspect.

At a certain point, however, thought reaches its limit. It simply cannot go farther or comprehend more. It cannot venture into the increasing emptiness and darkness where there are no forms, concepts, or words. Only awareness can roam that distance and navigate those depths.

Held in Check

WHEN the mind and body look at people, they perceive physical features, magnetism, mannerisms, and idiosyncrasies. When awareness looks at people, it perceives awareness held in check by a sense of 'I' in the person.