



Present Moment Excerpt

To the Reader

The soul can be experienced by releasing the familiar and safe, by the constant renewal and expression of our presence in the world, and by the moment-to-moment attention we give to daily life.

Benjamin Shield, PhD

Faster and Faster—But Are We There Yet?

I have a friend, a Buddhist priest-cabinetmaker-poet, who lives in New Mexico. Lately we've been exchanging letters, as a kind of creative, spiritual practice. Mine are filled with the humorous saga of my book tour, work in Tokyo, and computer and internet snafus,

combined with details of my nobly struggling vegetable garden, stunted by the El Nino weather.

His, in contrast, are Zen-simple, recounting horseback rides across wide-open mesas, the smell of rain and juniper in the desert evening, with the occasional burst of passion. I can see him out on his horse, atop a rise with a 360-degree view, exclaiming to the wispy dragon clouds above: "I want to say, 'Let us cast off the veil of belief that keeps us centered in our narrow biography; let us enter the dreamtime of souls and be gods and goddesses, Buddhas and birds, animals and stars!'" His reality is a baseline that I gratefully tune back in to when mine becomes too flooded with the chaos and shallowness of the urban life.

Living and working much of the time in bustling cities, I can't help but notice that something is happening to us, individually and culturally, that may never have happened before, at least with such promise of conscious recognition. Life is accelerating. We are accelerating. Everything is increasing, from the speed of our modems, to the number of incoming phone calls we receive, to the number of hours we feel we must stay awake to handle all the tasks at hand. We're aware of a massive amount of complexity these days. Even the pitch of our stress levels seems screechier, whinier. Thankfully, the inner frequency level of our thoughts and feelings is also rising, making us yearn for a higher kind of experience, a more noble, spiritual quality to our relationships and work. It may seem we're about to blow apart from the launch velocity of our rocketing lives but perhaps the speed is actually guiding us toward a threshold where we'll be propelled into a quantum leap to a vast, eminently harmonious, superconscious universe. It's telling that so many of us are now hungering for heart, soul, and purpose in life.

In our information-overloaded society, it's easy to deify the sources of incoming information, to place authority in the outside world, in the "experts" who speak the loudest or portray themselves most audaciously. We hear so many competing voices that we've become dangerously distracted, fragmented, pressured, and rushed. Our health—and our humanity—are at stake. A high level

executive I spoke with recently told me she had been trying to reach their computer company for two weeks. She'd left five messages, with no callbacks. Finally, exasperated, she left a more insistent message, which eventually got a response. The man explained the poor service by saying, "You never seemed angry in any of your previous messages, so I figured you really didn't need help that badly."

Where is our common sense? What's happening to our standards? Why are we treating each other so disrespectfully, even in the most innocent arenas of life? By going so fast, we're losing touch with our bodies and nature, where the wisdom of our souls resides. We're up in our heads or in cyberspace, using will power to survive the onslaught of mental data. The more "heady" we get, and the more diversity we feel compelled to keep track of, the less heart we seem to have. It's ironic that the faster we go, the slower our progress, both physically and spiritually. How long can we keep up the pace? It seems we're approaching the time where we can no longer process the quantity of discrete facts and tasks with our linear, logical mind, even with the help of computers. Our logic is a poor vehicle; it's simply not broad enough to contain the vastness of the new world that is now being born, whose reality is based upon a greater number of dimensions of awareness, and in collective superconsciousness.

To know this world of the future, we must learn to maximize our perception, to know holistically, and integrate our intuitive, "direct knowing" with our logic. We need a drastic shift, a big opening, or as they say in the Country Western music world, "an attitude adjustment." The fact that we have a chance to come together, first within ourselves, and then with each other and the earth, to consciously know more and more as one mind, one heart, one great body—this is the opportunity of an eon. How can we do it? The answer lies in the present moment.

Intuition is notoriously clever and happens most when we shift our rational mind into an unfocused state. It is the wellspring of our creativity, our guidance, and our ability to take the road less traveled — more often than not leading us to our heart's desire.

Carol Adrienne, PhD

Intuition: Knowing at the Speed of Light

In my first book, *The Intuitive Way: The Definitive Guide to Increasing Your Awareness*, I detailed the process of intuition development which, I believe, is the fastest path to the experience of soul and enlightenment. Intuition is a doorway to the divine and helps us achieve the kind of wholeness, integration, and communion that leads to the quantum leap into the "hyperspace" of our future reality. With its quality of knowing from within (rather than observing from without), intuition is immediate; it is perception at the speed of light.

Writer and filmmaker Phil Cousineau says, "In a world moving at hyperspeed, where so many of us are anxious because of the rate of change, the soulful move is the move toward contemplating the source of things deeply rooted in eternity, the things that always are. . . If all we're trying to do is keep up with change, I think we lose the momentum of our soul's journey." Intuition is the key to perceiving those things deeply rooted in eternity; it is the perception of the soul. To develop intuition, and thus be capable of expanded perception, ironically, we must first slow down, narrow our field of vision, and pay attention to what is small, mundane, and right in front of our nose.

In *The Present Moment: A Daybook of Clarity and Intuition* I want to help you find the intuitive doorway to your soul's inner wisdom. By practicing some simple habits of centered attentiveness,

you will easily and consistently be able to hear the guidance that comes from the still, small voice within. In *The Intuitive Way* I outlined a process of growth that took ten weeks. Here I want to help you focus, for a whole year, on one simple thought and action per day that will increase your sense of spirit, presence, and meaning in life. Each day you'll concentrate on an affirmation and a short correlating exercise designed to heighten your connection with your body, your intuition, the world within arm's reach, and your deepest, most real source of guidance and supply. *The Present Moment* will help you find inner wisdom in 365 different, yet simple ways.

The affirmations and exercises you'll work with are based on universal principles that can help you be more fully aware of life. Some of the themes underlying the daily practices in *The Present Moment* come from tenets of Buddhism, Christianity, and other major religions. Still others I've plucked from my own experience of what empowers us to be more intuitive. Described below are the key ideas that will help keep you focused and aligned for the year — so you can reap the greatest benefit from your own precious string of jewel-like present moments.

*Be aware of your masculine nature;
But by keeping to the feminine way,
You shall be to the world like a canyon,
Where the Virtue eternal resides,
And go back to become as a child.*

Lao Tsu

Value the Feminine Mind

Most of us need a little help and encouragement, or some sort of excuse, to slow down, pay attention, and shift gears from what I call the “masculine mind” — that linear, action- and goal-oriented, will-based part of our awareness, to the “feminine mind” — which quietly notices, appreciates, includes, and experiences interconnections and oneness. Our feminine or yin awareness allows us to exhale, drop down into our body, take the pressure off, and “feel” knowledge rather than zero in on it, collect it, analyze it, categorize it, and memorize it.

By using our mind in a soft, nonambitious (yet totally alert) way, we are magically ushered into an inspired state where personal insights and global visions give themselves to us willingly. Just as we cannot hold water in a clenched fist, the soul's wisdom cannot be realized with a mind that is driven and anxious. Our feminine awareness allows us to “commune” with knowledge, to be in a cocreative friendship with the process of our life, and to be so directly connected with what we perceive that we lose the sense of relatedness and actually become what we're observing.

Working with this book can provide you with the excuse you need to enter your feminine awareness. By taking in the ideas presented here day by day, you'll be gently guided into a new way of living and knowing, one based on receiving the love and wisdom in the “presence” that's everywhere around and in you. My Buddhist friend in Santa Fe writes in his latest letter, “I'm really in no way trying to analyze events, dreams, or waking realities, not trying to reshape things into some second or third reality that my intellect likes better. I seem to live more fully by not trying to abstract meaning. It's like suddenly finding your way out of the canyon, and riding up onto the mesa; the great circle of the horizon engulfs and swallows your mind in a single small gulp and all you can say is — Oh, yes!”

*See how nature — trees, flowers, grass — grows in silence?
See the stars, the moon, and the sun — how they move in silence?
We need silence to be able to touch souls.*

Mother Teresa

To the Reader continues with the following segments:

ENTER THE SILENCE
PRACTICE SKILLFUL PERCEPTION
RETURN TO BEGINNER'S MIND
EMBRACE "NOTHING SPECIAL"
DEVELOP MINDFULNESS: THE ART OF ATTENTION
KEEP THINE EYE SINGLE
GO WITH THE FLOW
EXPRESS LOVING KINDNESS
LIVE A LIFE OF INQUIRY
TRUST YOUR BODY: HOME OF YOUR SOUL
IMAGINATION IS YOUR ALLY!
RESPECT THE AUTHORITY OF YOURSELF AND OTHERS
YOUR INNER AND OUTER WORLDS ARE CORRELATED
YOU ARE A MULTI-DIMENSIONAL BEING

*"Let's have a merry journey, and shout about how light is good and dark is not.
What we should do is not future ourselves so much. We should now ourselves more. "Now thyself" is
more important than "Know thyself." Reason is what tells us to ignore the present and live in the future.
So all we do is make plans. We think that somewhere there are going to be green pastures. It's crazy.
Heaven is nothing but a grand, monumental instance of future. Listen, now is good. Now is wonderful."*

Mel Brooks