

PRESENCE! NOT PERSON...

A HANDFUL OF MEDITATIVE INSIGHTS ON WHY
YOU SHOULD LIVE MORE IN THE NOW AS
PRESENCE INSTEAD OF IN THE PAST AND
FUTURE AS PERSON

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“Be Here Now”

Ray LaMontagne

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INTRODUCTION

Hey dear friend and fellow adventurer! In this writing I will try to give you a handful of meditative insights on why living as person is quite nutrient deficient from a spiritual and existential point of view, while living as presence is superbly. supremely, infinitely, vastly much more healthy in all aspects of life imaginable.

First of all what is meant by a person and presence?

Instead of telling you that here in this incredibly short introduction, lets just get the good ol train on her way and rolling wont we...?

Follow me, or yourself.. because I for the life of me don't seem to know which ones who these days!

1. PRESENCE IS VAST, PERSON IS LIMITED.

“Man cannot discover new oceans unless he has the courage to lose sight of the shore.” – Andre Gide

Living as a person is a very limited way of navigating through the world and universe. Why? Well, perhaps I best explain by what I mean by person first, although you will probably figure it out anyways as we go along. What I mean with the term person is the self-reflecting egoic mind that constantly is filtrating and projecting its own ideas unto reality.

And the person is limited precisely in this regard, that it filtrates experiences so that it fits into a certain conditioned mode of perceiving the world. It always tries to attract or fend off other “persons”. In other words it always seems to be selfishly seeking its own benefit, while doing so it inevitably ends up lessening the overall quality of the life that is being lived.

And this... my friend is not the way of presence and not the door to direct experience, which is, as we shall see, what I propose to be the ideal way of living.

Now when you first begin to live more as presence and less as person, you immediately and intuitively feel an expansion in your range of expressions. Your presence isn't limited to your personal identity, ideas about life or even your body. Your presence is simply much vaster in what it can include in its expressions and impressions, in fact, it is quite unlimited. Furthermore this means that in this regard your original presence

is quite the opposite of what the personal state brings to the table.

Presence can play the part of human beings, animals, plants, and smaller organisms like bacteria and even of insentient objects such as atoms, quarks and what have you. Its expressions are as said spontaneously infinite, and it never seems to run out of new costumes to try out. Also when talking about presence in these lesser advanced organisms and forms of matter, I am perhaps more referring to something which I call absolute awareness. Its beyond even the sense of presence.

That being said, when we are talking about presence strictly from a humans perspective, then maybe we'll have to exclude some of the speculations made above, though in my understanding they are not so speculative but quite intuitive, at the same time I can see why some would consider it so.

As we shall find in the next items on the list, presence will most often function as an antidote to those limitations that the state of personhood imposes on you and your consciousness.

In other words, you shall know your own presence and it shall set you free!

2. PRESENCE IS HERE, PERSON IS NOT

“Be happy for this moment. This moment is your life.” – Omar Khayyam

Now what do I mean with this? Well If you have read my books or some of my blogposts, I have described two distinct ways, aside from person and presence of living life as an human being. These two I call direct experience and indirect experience. The person is all about indirect experience, which furthermore means that it never is fulfilled or content with what it gets. It lives indirectly and life therefore becomes watered down. Indirect experience also means heavy tendencies towards consumption, filtration, stagnancy and unfulfillment.

When living from the paradigm of personhood, these are the cards that one keeps being handed.

Why?

Well because it is in the nature of the psychological mind to be restless and capricious. Its in its nature to be living indirectly, because it has billions of projections which it wants to fulfil instead of living fully in the majesty of the present moment. The person isn't here, though your presence carries it everywhere, because it cannot live without a substrate, which in this and all cases happens to be consciousness.

Now what's the alternative to living as person?

Well yes you guessed it!

Presence!

Your presence is the key to the prison of which the personal state of existence imposes upon you. Your presence is always directly in contact with life. It has no real preferences or opinions as the person has, but it always is available for all types of experiences. It is very intertwined with the present moment, it never gets distracted, in fact that is an impossibility for it. Superfluous distractions are only for the person and not your original presence.

Direct experience simply means unfiltered and unhindered experience of your reality, moreover by directly experiencing yourself and your reality through presence you are thoroughly empowering yourself in all your expressions.

When life is lived directly, one is effortlessly sucking the marrow out of life, as Thoreau so poignantly put it. Presence is pure experience, whether these experiences are pleasant or tough, your presence is ever available for them and ever beyond them as well.

3. THE PERSON IS ALWAYS LACKING WHILE PRESENCE IS EVER FULFILLED

“Love abounds in all things, excels from the depths to beyond the stars, is lovingly disposed to all things.” – Hildegard of Bingen

The person never seems to become satisfied. It always wants more, the belly of the beast is never content. It is in the nature of the person to always seek and cling to the next object or thought that appears before it. It always wants more and this wanting makes the consciousness weak. It becomes weak in the sense that the innate power of the consciousness is simply handed over to objects and thoughts. What should function as an empowerment is now a depowerment of the presence. This is not the way of direct experience!

Now there’s nothing wrong with a sense of momentum and drive which sometimes characterizes the ambitious people persons of this world, but when this “drive” gets out of control and wreaks havoc within the confines of your own soul and your surroundings, then this is the point you know that this hunger of the person is severely detrimental.

The person is an expression of consciousness, but a very limited one. We human beings have the possibility of consciously choosing presence over person, and from there grace will undeniably show itself, both for the atheist and the religious one.

That being said, in contrast to the person, the presence is...

When you really come to understand and distinguish your sense of presence, one thing you are bound to arrive at is that it always seems to be fully fulfilled unto itself. Though you can have days with heavy mood-swings, or simply be confused, irritated, impatient. All this can happen all the while you notice something that is not affected by these transient states.

The transient state is most often the personal state, while the intransient state is the state of presence. Your presence always seems to be content, even though it may experience pain in the body or confusion in the mind. Your presence is ever independent and yet paradoxically, indistinguishably intertwined with each experience. Therefore “it” can never be hurt or confused, but those states can appear in it. No sensory, psychological, emotional impression can last as they all come and go, all the while your original presence seems to be ever relaxed and fulfilled unto itself!

What a marvellous discovery, don't you think? 😊

4. PRESENCE IS TIMELESS, PERSON IS A PRISONER OF TIME

“We forge the chains we wear in life.” – Charles Dickens

The person has, is and always will be a product and therefore a servant of time. The personal state is something that dwells in time and therefore it is not stable. When one seeks to make stable that which by nature is unstable, one has left the path of wisdom. The person always projects its ideas and illusions unto reality, illusions that are most often or maybe always characterized by transience. This is precisely why it never seems to be content or at rest, it always has to achieve or create something to stay alive or relevant unto itself. It always moves about and doesn't know the meaning of taking it easy.

The person, no matter how proud and grand it proclaims itself, is a existential prisoner that is always moving about restlessly and without any notion of grace. It's a prison of time, while your presence is...

Yes you guessed it again! Your presence always finds itself in a timeless space of consciousness. Time cannot bind it in any way, shape or form, why? Well because presence is prior to time and the originator of it, which consequently means that it is therefore beyond it.

The fascinating thing about time and the timeless, or perhaps the person and presence, is that the timeless views upon the time-bound without effort, intention and attachment. When one first comes closer and in contact with ones own sense of presence, its

timelessness is something intuitively felt yet unfathomable. This unknown factor of the presence could also be why many people when initially exposed to these potent ideas and this kind of language could be deterred or frightened.

Having said that, presence isn't something your intellectual mind can investigate, as it can with all other phenomena that appear in the objective world, because how could the mind which arises out presence be a subject to the absolute subject. If this hurts your head, I apologize! But it's quite an important point to consider!

The intellectual mind wants features and distinguishing qualities it can observe and then deduce and infer from that, but presence is timeless and prior to this mind, therefore every attempt of the mind of trying to understand its originator is fruitless.

In conclusion, your presence is ever fulfilled and content and it being timeless is one of the main reasons why this is.

5. ONE IS STABLE, THE OTHER.. NOT SO MUCH!

“The soul must remain in resigned humility just as the fountain relies on its source.” – Jakob Böhme

I’ve touched on the instability of the personal state, and it is truly one of the defining features of the person. Since that which is bound by time always is subject to change, and that which is subject to change most often is in a state of flux, it cannot therefore be said to be stable in any real sense. Though it can be argued that its stability lies in its instability, or the unchanging lies in the changeful, however that would be making a philosophical point and you should thoroughly know that I do not view myself as a philosopher doing philosophy. No not at all, I’m simply attempting to transmit the freedom and luminosity of the state of presence compared to the person.

Back to the point. The person is not stable, though it very much wants to be so. It most often creates false illusions of safety and permanence, while in reality it is not. The mistake of the personal mode of consciousness is that it has its myriad of “false idols”, meaning that it directs its attention and belief unto things that are not really there. These “idols” most often are thoughts, projections and volatile emotions. The person attaches itself like glue unto most phenomena that it deems to be satisfying its identity and projections; it is therefore a cherry picker that has quite a difficult time just resting. Which leads to its restlessness which also is one of the main reasons why it is unstable.

Now in contrast to the person, your presence is much more unwavering. Your presence or your consciousness is like space, as it allows experiences to appear within it and it contains them without any effort or difficulty.

Presence is always in direct contact with your immediate reality, and through my meditative contemplations I have found it to be the most stable “thing” in my experience as a human being. Because everyone can attest to the fact that the body is constantly in flux and changing, as there are billions of processes that are going on in the physical body of a human being, or for that matter any advanced animal organism. The person is also in the mix when it comes to these processes and changes, because the person or the ego-mind is itself a process, a very stubborn process who hijacks the consciousness and sometimes overrides the sense of presence. But you my friend, are wise and healthy in spirit, you know now this trick that is played and you shall overcome it!

That being said, only your consciousness and your presence is truly stable, even though within it all instabilities occur and take place. Consciousness in its original condition is untouched and forever unblemished by every experience, whether they be good or bad.

Because if you contemplate it, how can space be stained by that which is appearing in it. In the same way, our own awareness is immaculate and untouchable by every experience that occurs in it. It can never be blemished or defiled, it is ever pure and perfect unto itself. The grace is undeniable when this becomes your living experience.

I'm aware that this almost sounds religious, but I don't consider myself to be religious, in fact, I was a hard-headed atheist not so long ago. But even the atheistic stand-point is incomplete, it is also based on the intellectual mind, while my quest is to switch your focus to your original mind, your presence.

This brings us to our next important point!

6. WHAT IS ENLIGHTENMENT?

“No one saves us but ourselves.

No one can and no one may.

We ourselves must walk the path.” – Buddha (Dhammapada)

Many people go around not knowing what to make of the idea of enlightenment. They have read about the Buddha and heard about Jesus, but they wouldn't know if their life depended on it what it truly meant. In other words, the experience of enlightenment feels foreign to these individuals. Some claim to be enlightened who really are not; sometimes these people are speaking from their aggrandized personhood, and not from their perfect state of presence.

If you happen to be interested in the concept of Enlightenment, I am here to tell you that all these points I've been covering are legitimate insights and ways of reaching that state. These are insights that you may have great use for on your journey towards total freedom.

Spiritual enlightenment is simply you being present as presence before yourself without any trace of the constructed self-separate person.

And do you know what the greatest thing about enlightenment is? Well, that would be that your presence is already enlightened, or your original consciousness is already so, but something seems to hide it. Therefore you don't need to “create” and “maintain” enlightenment when you find it, but you only need to be one with it and dissolve in it.

It is dissolution of the ego-mind, and not you by the way, because you are not your person, a truth that you most assuredly know by now.

Enlightenment is therefore a powerful recognition and a shift of perspective from where you're seeing yourself, life and reality from. It is not something attained, because it is already here, though it appears to not be.

Presence is your true nature, the person is merely an afterthought, and like all afterthoughts, they have their role to play but cannot stay in the grand scheme of things.

Gautama Buddha, Jesus, Meister Eckhart, Mooji, Ramana Maharshi, Rumi, Teresa of Avila, Kabir, Tilopa, Bodhidharma, Hui-Neng all are examples of individuals who understood this deeply in their being, and therefore were freed from the tyranny of time and the restlessness of personhood.

You can do the very same, you can become your own self-shining sun, in truth, you already are, you just need to recognize it!

7. OUR ORIGINAL SELVES

“I believe in the immortality of the soul because I have within me immortal longings...” – Helen Keller

No one can teach you to be presence and no one has taught you to be consciousness. On the other hand you were indeed taught to be a person as you were not born a person. Prior to even your physical body you were presence. It is at this point where it could become abstract and spiritual. The chain of events looks something like this.

Absolute awareness → Presence → Body → Personhood →
Presence → Enlightenment

That is my spontaneous image of how the spirit is born into the body and personhood and thereafter transcends its own limitations when reaching its evolutionary peak.

You may ask, where on gods green earth do I get this stuff from, I would say by simply being present as presence. These words are pouring out without a person to put its stamp on them. They are spontaneous, and it doesn't really matter if they are “objectively” true or false. Presence is all about subjectivity, namely absolute subjectivity. When you reach this state of absolute subjectivity, you transcend both subjectivity and objectivity. This is your innermost and original condition, namely pure presence witnessing itself. Ain't that mind-boggling thing to ponder!

Your original self can never be seen with separate eyes, if you wish to see your consciousness, you have to dance with it and

become lost in the dance so completely that only your presence remains. In doing this, you come to know it and “see” it for the very first time for what it is, and not what you think it is.

Your natural state is presence, the person is a symbiot which sometimes or most often turns parasitic quite quickly, and the meaning of life is to transcend it by dancing in your own presence!

8. RESTING BEFORE THE FINAL REST!

“For a day, just for one day, talk about that which disturbs no one and bring some peace into your beautiful eyes.” - Hafez

The personal state, as you very well know by now, is characterized by constant capricious movement and changefulness. In this hurricane of personhood you will not find any true rest. Occasional rests will of course reveal itself so that life becomes bearable, but a permanent state of peace will not be your experience. In the state of personhood, lack is a fact. The person always strives to add unto its inventory or store up objects/thoughts/emotions as its own.

This constant striving after external experience makes it very difficult for one to rest. Even if you were tired of your minds chattering and the persons shenanigans, you couldn't stop it at this very moment. If I were to say to you, can you stop your mind from bothering you for five minutes while awake, you'll most likely know that it can't be done. Why? Because the person or the psychological mind is like a bicycle which one pedals and it goes forward, and if you want to stop it takes time for it to slow down. That is if you don't know how to use the brakes, but even that can be dangerous.

Now the purpose of that metaphor was to illuminate the nature of the person, constantly moving and never resting. Whereas your presence however...

In your presence will you find your perfect sanctuary and rest. I'm not talking about "resting in peace", I'm talking about enjoying the peace while still drawing breath. Even when your

body is warm can you achieve this state of tranquillity, which is beyond any conception of your mind.

It is truly the sweetest and subtlest joy I've come across. When you truly have this "self-respect", your presence will naturally bloom into its full potential and perfect peace. It is always available for your returning back to it, it has been with you since the beginning and will be with you at the end. In fact neither beginning nor end can truly encapsulate it, as I said, it is timeless. In this timelessness you can become weightless and find your true home and rest, while still having a heartbeat to accompany you!

Isn't this a miracle if any?

9. THE TRUTH SHALL SET YOU FREE!

“The greater perfection a soul aspires after, the more dependant it is upon Divine Grace.” – Brother Lawrence

Yes, we have almost come to the end of this insightful list on why life lived as presence is much more truthful, earnest, fulfilling and majestic than living merely as person. You might object and say that I have been a bit too harsh to this state of personhood and perhaps a bit too overly gracious when it comes to the state of presence.

To that I can only say, find out for yourself! That is find out for yourself what truly is meant by living as presence. Because when you know this, you will automatically and naturally know that the symbiot turned parasite in the personal ego-mind has no real use for the fulfillment of ones life and therefore it isn't needed anymore. You can live without it but it cannot live without you.

That being said, I'm completely aware that I have given a handful of reasons, compelling ones I hope, on why navigating through life as presence is vastly greater than doing it as person, I'm aware of this, but at the same time I haven't given any concrete ways of reaching this oh so great state of presence.

So as an ending and an beginning I'll give you two powerful exercises to help you realign your attention with your ever present presence. The first exercise will come quite naturally for you, as its one of the most natural and most accessible ways of empowering your presence. The second exercise is much more profound, as it strives to illumine your vision of yourself, you as you are without any psychological conditioning, you as you are

without the person to disturb or blemish, or what is called in some traditions, your “original face”. This second exercise is a pointing towards your innermost centre, a place where you are truly yourself at all times and without distortion.

10. INTUITIVE PRESENCE

“One recognizes one’s course by discovering the paths that stray from it.” – Albert Camus

Wherever you seem to be, be there and be aware of your body being there. You should know that you have a great power that isn’t always utilized to its full potential. This power is the power of attention. Wherever you direct your attention that becomes your immediate reality, and if you always listen and are fascinated by the tricks of the psychological person-mind, the result will be that you will be dwelling that “lower” realm chiefly.

Now in order to empower your sense of presence instead of your person, you can switch your focus by redirecting your attention to your five senses. You can either choose one, or a couple ones or all five of them simultaneously.

Being present and aligned with the organic functioning of ones body is a natural and effective way of empowering your direct experience and presence.

So when listening to music, listen to it totally, when eating your delicious dinner, be dissolved in the rich flavours (I hope) and the eating process fully, when you happen to be out in nature try to wholly inhale the air and aroma of your vibrant and alive surroundings, when dancing or moving around creatively become completely one with the bodily movements, when seeing something that catches your eye, melt in that pure seeing of it, and then try to feel out where the separation between you as a subject and the objet seen really lies.

So the exercise is simple, namely just totally be in your experience as a living physical organism, relax and let your senses play and play with them too.

When doing this, your intuition becomes your compass to presence.

Try it and feel it out for yourself!

If you have done this quite successfully, and you are curious of what's so profound about the second exercise, please feel free to continue reading!

11. THE DOOR OF DIRECT EXPERIENCE

“He who hears not me but the logos will say: All is one.” - Heraclitus

In this very moment, you can be in total harmony with your own presence and immediate experience, and being in tune with ones own self is the surest way to understand and enjoy the life that is being lived. Here below are four phases on how you can do or rather allow direct experience to happen naturally. I recommend a slow reading of all these phases simultaneously as you're trying to live out the guidelines.

Phase 1: Sit or lay down somewhere you can be relatively comfortable. Then wind down and proceed by effortlessly turning your minds eye or attention towards the sensation of having a physical body. Feel the weight of it and the buzzing sensations of the primal life force moving through you. If there is any specific place of discomfort or if there is any bodypart that maybe happens to be a little cold, irritated or what have you, turn your attention gently towards that area and rest your awareness there. If you'd like you could go deeper into that area by placing your hands consciously on that bodypart and by doing so combining your senses and mind, if not just continue observing the sensations happening in your body. Now defocus from these localized parts of your body and again feel your body's total weight. Feel its diversity and its unity. Rest your awareness on the entire body as one organism, and don't give too much attention to the separate parts. Feel it and be it.

Phase 2: Now that you are at ease and your attention is one with your body, turn your attention towards more subtle objects occurring in the screen of your consciousness. Notice how your thoughts and feelings appear and disappear, see how they connect with each other and in doing so forming a certain narrative or description of what happened or of what is going to happen. Notice these diverse mental and emotional energies and try to feel them out just the same way you felt out your body. Now of course you can't physically touch or grasp a thought or an internal feeling the same way you can do with a body part, however what you can do is rest your minds eye on them. In fact you are doing so each and every second they appear without really noticing it. Every thought appears to suck in your attention towards itself involuntarily. Notice this and notice this subtle internal realm of yourself.

Phase 3: Now switch back your attention towards the body again. Everything is still there I presume and the sensations may have migrated or changed places but the life force buzzing in you is still pretty similar to how it was a couple minutes ago. Now gently switch back again, turn your minds eye towards the internal world of you, your personality, your thoughts and your feelings. Try now as if you could hold your own biography and life story in your minds grasp. Try to know your entire story by simply resting your attention on the entire mental realm. The mental realm which is called the story of me. Feel the subtle realms of your consciousness. and now turn back your attention towards the weight of your body. Feel the whole body as one unit, and don't pay too much attention to certain specific places, but see rather the totality of the body. Feel the entire body

pulsating with life and proceed now to the next stage and final stage.

Phase 4: This phase is the climax of all the other phases. Now go about by turning your attention towards itself. This will sound strange and counterintuitive but give it a try and see what happens. See how the attention is always moving and changing the object of its focus. Try to direct its focus on itself, or to put it in another way, turn your attention towards your own awareness. In the beginning it will feel like your trying to look at your own eyes but this will be transformed. See how the attention is at times like a monkey on a tree that jumps around restlessly. Observe the tendencies of how your attention functions. Now know with clarity that this attention is an integral aspect of you, but keep in heart that its still an aspect of you and not your definition. You are something that watches the attention moving about hither and thither, your nature is not its nature. You are beyond it, just as you are beyond your body, your thoughts, your feelings, your personality, your biography, your dreams, your fears, your identity and your mind. You are even beyond your minds eye. These are merely aspects of your being but they are not who you are.

You have neither beginning or end. You cannot be seen by your attention which sees all other objects, because you're not an object whether physical or mental to be seen. You are the seer of all things and therefore in constant absolute subjectivity. Anything that your mind can see is not who you are. Your essence is immaculate and your nature is formless. Realize this deeply in your being and you shall forever be in direct experience of yourself and the universe.

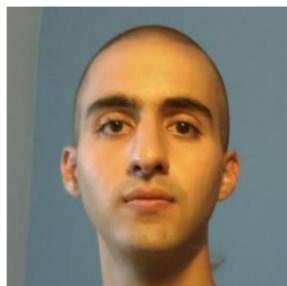
You have no name, you have no form, you are eternally happy and content. You cannot be destroyed nor can you be created, notice that in this state you have neither friend nor foe, sister nor brother, father nor mother. In this state you are free from all bindings and attachments. You are eternally free because you rest in your own weightless and formless space.

Any faculty of the intellect cannot define you, for your realm is beyond them. This is the ultimate truth, see and let see. You are who you are looking for and what you are looking for is where you're looking from.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Daniel Seeker is a wandering dervish and lifelong student of the past, present and future.

He realized that he was made of immaculate and timeless consciousness when meditating in his hermit cave on the island of Gotland.



He's the author of a number of books on spirituality, presence and direct experience. His most recent project is a online video course named: "**Liberated:** The Spiritual Way of Not Giving a F*ck". You can find it at <https://nirvanic.co/liberated/>