



Become What You Are, by Alan Watts

Begin with the practice of concentration, that is, of attentive looking. It is as if to say, "If you want to know what reality is, you must look directly at it and see for yourself. But this needs a certain kind of concentration, because reality is not symbols, it is not words and thoughts, it is not reflections and fantasies. Therefore to see it clearly, your mind must be free from wandering words and from the floating fantasies of memory." [...] Now the great deal of talk about the difficulty of action, or the difficulty of concentration, is sheer nonsense. If we are sitting together at a meal, and I say to you, "Please pass the salt" -- you just do it, and there is no difficulty about it. You do not stop to consider the right method. You do not trouble yourself with the problem of how, when you have picked the saltshaker up, you are going to be able to concentrate on it long enough to bring it to my end of the table. Now there is absolutely no difference between this and concentrating the mind's attention to see into the nature of reality. If you can concentrate the mind for two seconds, you can do it for two minutes, and you can do it for two hours. Of course, if you want to *make* this kind of thing horribly difficult, you begin to think about whether you are concentrating, about how long you have concentrated, and about how much longer you are going to keep it up, All this is totally off the point. Concentrate for one second. If, at the end of this time, your mind has wandered off, concentrate for another second, and then another. Nobody ever has to concentrate for more than one second -- this one. [...] If you try to watch your mind concentrate, it will not concentrate. And if, when it is concentrated, you begin to watch for the arrival of some insight into reality, you have stopped concentrating. Real concentration is therefore a rather curious and seemingly paradoxical state, since it is at once the maximum of consciousness and the minimum of ego-feeling ... The only way to enter into this state is precipitately -- without delay or hesitation, just to do it. --Alan Watts