



Making Friends with the Present Moment, by Alan Zulch

Some months ago, for three successive nights, I was awakened by three insights that came to me - persistently and repeatedly - one per night. The first night's message was: "Only the present moment is real." The second night's message was: "You can trust the present moment." The third night's message was: "Make friends with the present moment." How do I surrender the primacy of my conditioned mind and egoic will, and allow - moment-by-moment - space for stillness and the arising of my natural state of awareness? Doing so, for me, involves a certain amount of rational insight to initially coax the thinking mind from its constant daydreaming in the foreground into letting go and taking a secondary position in the background. This shift is facilitated by the first night's message. With the mind's move into the background, my body comes alive, my hearing clears and ambient sounds are bright. I'm alert but feeling a deep peace I'm fully here, having taken a "backward step" into the present moment. Staying here, however, is a real trick - an all-or-nothing opportunity. One thought - indeed any mind intrusion - and I'm instantly back in my ego identity. Allowing my ego to step aside requires trust - not only that a larger intelligence is holding me, but that it's capable of actively engaging in my practical affairs. This slow building of trust is assisted by the second night's message. Some days, when I am especially calm, I can ease into the present moment for longer periods successfully relaxing into this friendly - indeed loving - universe. Slowly, I'm making friends with the present moment, with being, in accordance with the third night's message. Making friends with the universe is very, very enticing. Like a moth to a flame. My goal is to abide in presence, allowing being to inform my doing. It entails a fundamental shift of my identity, of who I take myself to be. Am I the ego? Or, am I the consciousness that is observing - with equanimity - from behind the drama? To the ego, simply being sounds dangerously disengaged. But now I know - gradually gradually - that being fully present is radically transformative and just the opposite of passivity, allowing one to be responsive rather than reactive, and in service to the need at hand. Ultimately, I can think of no higher aspiration than to become an instrument through which larger creative and healing forces of a friendly, loving universe can come into the world. This can only happen in the present moment, with complete trust. Gradually gradually.

--Alan Zulch