

PRESENCE



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What is Presence?

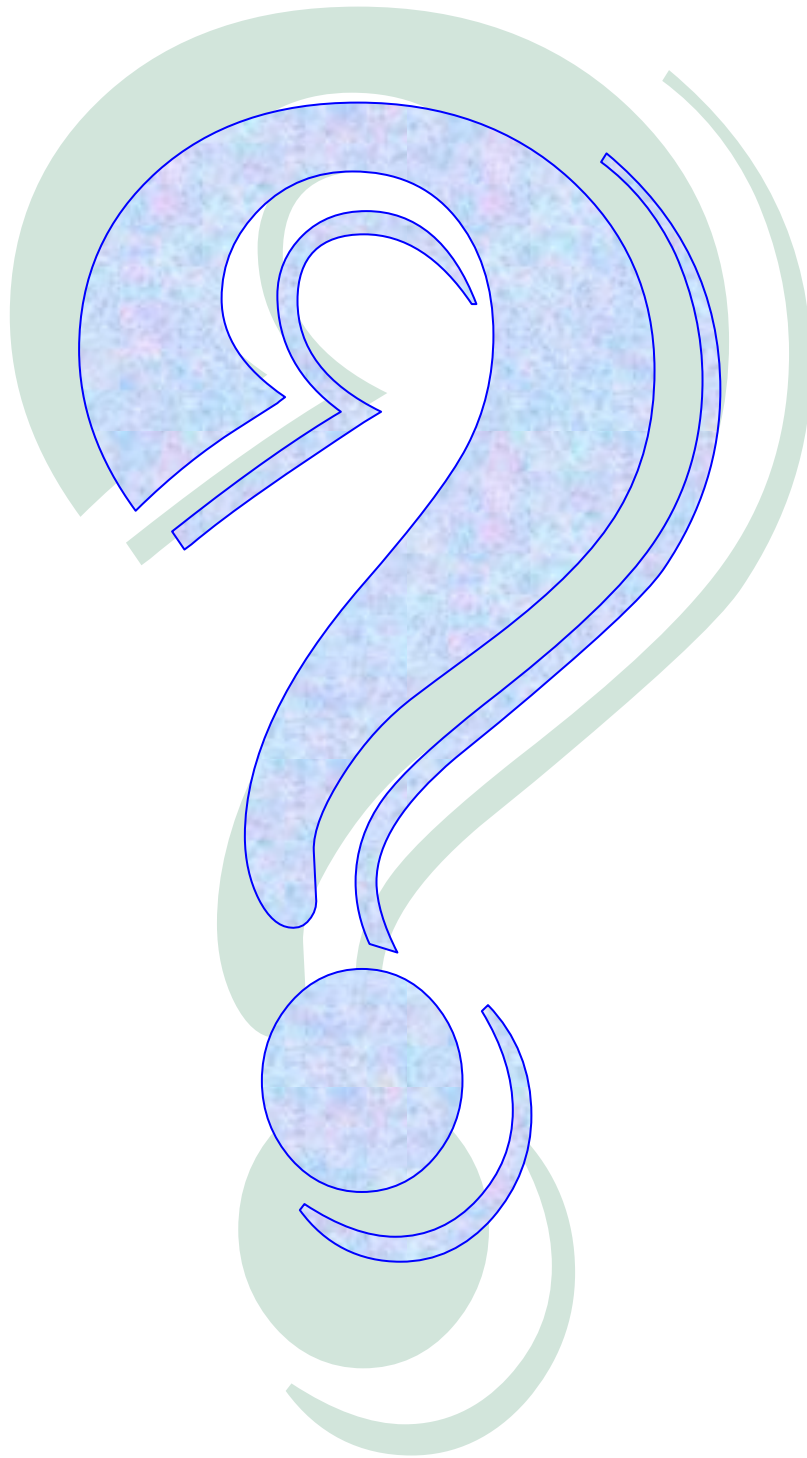
The past brought you to where you are now. The future is yours to write. Life, meanwhile, exists in the *presence*. Are you truly *in* life, in this moment; do you exist in a time delay, thinking about the past; or are you living in a fantasy, with your thoughts focused on the future? Do you even know the time zone of your consciousness?



Your ability to create and hold thoughts is unlimited. You have the potential to do anything within the bounds of time and space. You are complex, with many layers and expanses of identity. An enormous amount of activity can occur at once, like a whirlwind.



How much is accomplished in a
whirlwind?



Can you create stillness?



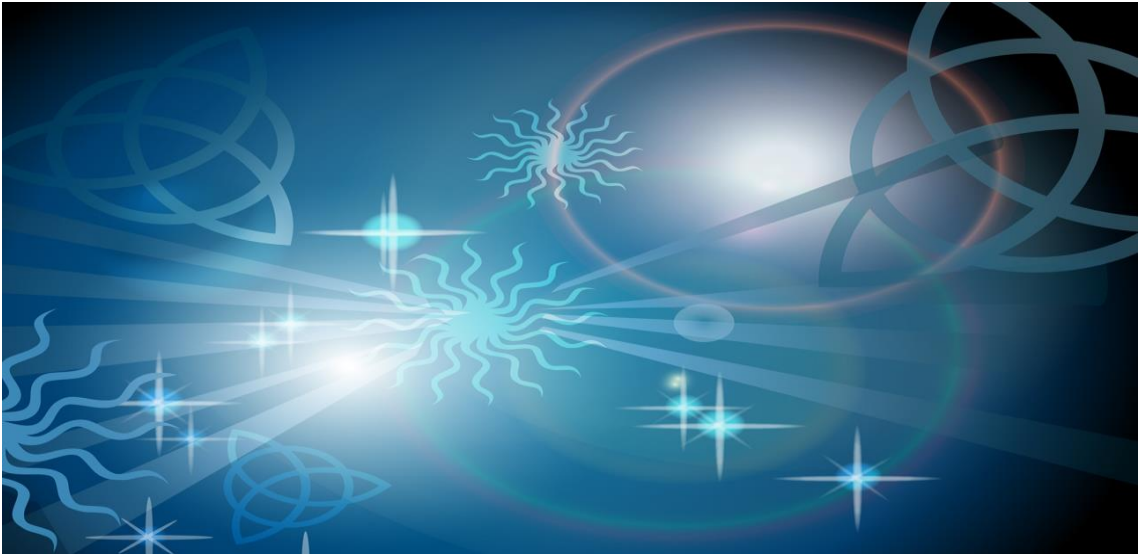
How long can you refrain from activity and thought? Who are the judges that appear when you attempt to "not do" - to simply be?

How long can you be absolutely still?
Possum dead?

Playing Possum

Try lying somewhere comfortable, dead as a possum, where the only thing in your being that moves is the gentlest flow of breath. You need to create “alone space.” If you live with people, pretend that you are coming down with something, or do whatever you need, to be possum dead. You may imagine how an actor plays dead - absolutely motionless for the camera. Quiet everything. Do not let your muscles function or your mind think. Be dead.





In trying this exercise, notice what comes up.

Are you afraid to go to the dead state? If so, connect to the source of life that *breathes* you when you are unaware.

Are thoughts of responsibilities swimming in your mind and keeping your heart rate up? Then imagine how, if you suddenly died, those things would just have to take care of themselves. Realize that you are doing a temporary "checking out" that just might make your active hours doubly productive.

Do you feel so uncomfortable that it just isn't you to stay still? Then realize you are living in a surface identity, out of touch with your deeper and truer identity.



In trying the exercise, you can't fail or do anything wrong.

You can try it when you choose to try it. Whether you try it now or 10 years from now, the timing is perfect for you.


After you are in the stillness for as long as it wishes to endure, be conscious of what your mind and body decide to do. Observe as a curious scientist would. Perhaps your body says, "I need to pee," and your body moves you to the bathroom. Be aware of the experience -- of feeling pressure in your bladder, of initiating movement, of sustaining your movement and releasing the pressure in your belly. Feel your feet, your abdomen, your shoulders, and every part of your body. Notice what you see and hear - the shapes, colors, hums and pings, the voices. Be aware of your own breath. Notice your thoughts.



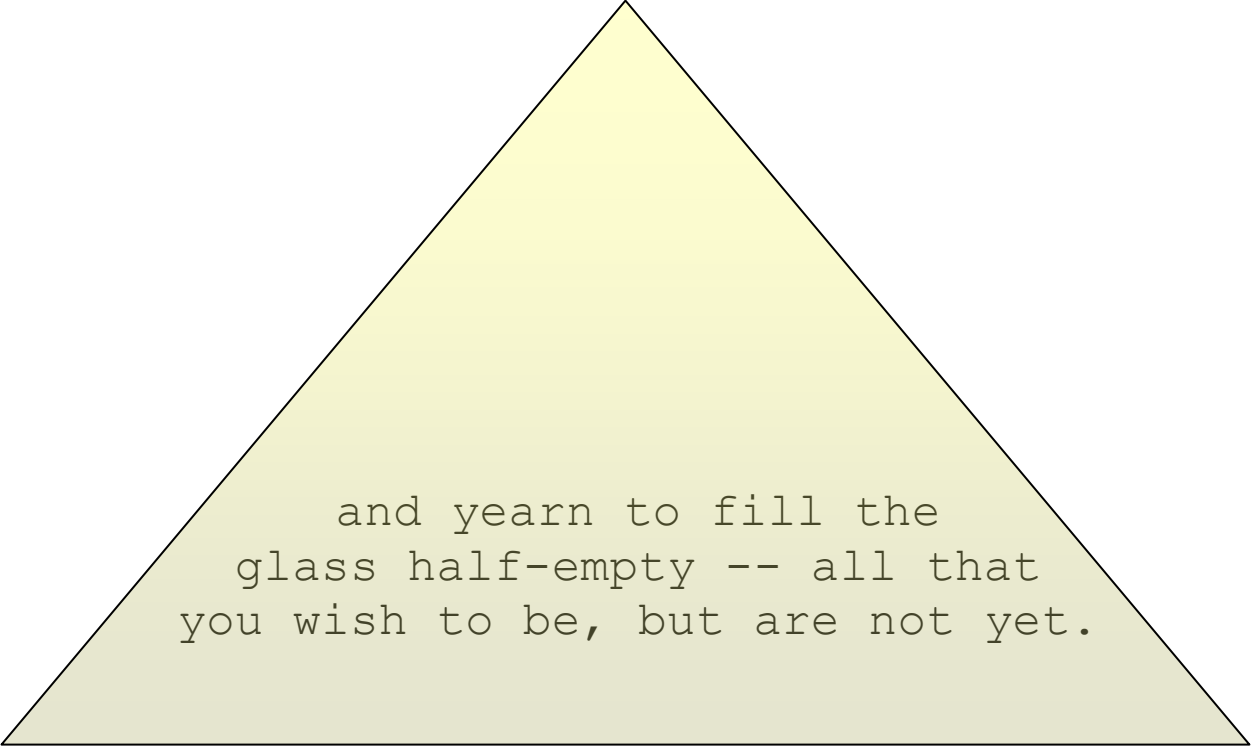
Engage deeply in getting to know yourself. You have the unique opportunity to know yourself better than anyone else. You have the precious opportunity to be present with yourself always.

Enjoy the beauty of who you are, and polish away the tarnishes.





Enjoy the experience of your
glass half full -- all that
is pleasing in what you
have made of yourself.



and yearn to fill the
glass half-empty -- all that
you wish to be, but are not yet.

Like the flow of the ocean waves,
covering the shore and receding back,
flow in joy and yearning.



Then you will have balance.

In balance with joy and yearning, you celebrate the past and create your effort for the future. You live in present awareness. Change is constant, like the weather that changes as the earth breathes.

This change is your presence.





At the core of your presence is the stillness of "I am." No matter how active you are in both mind and body, you have the presence of "I am" in your center. The more conscious you are of the "I am" stillness, the more you enjoy the presence you have in life. Your core "I am" exists even in unconsciousness.

You are present now.