

SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS 1-4: THE POWER OF NOW, by Eckhart Tolle

Chapter 1

- **You are not the thinker. Watch the thinker — and do not judge.** A sense of stillness and peace will deepen.
- **Be totally present in the Now.** Ask yourself, “What’s going on inside me at this moment?” Observe it and feel the energy of the emotion. **Be aware of the emotion, but don’t let it take over.** If there is no emotion, focus more deeply into the inner energy field of your body.
- Observe your reactions in various situations. **Be at least as interested in your reactions as in the situation or person that caused you to react. Measure your success by the degree of your inner peace.**

Chapter 2

- **The emotional pain we create now is always some form of non-acceptance, some form of unconscious resistance to what is.**
 - In thought = judgment
 - In emotions = negativity.
 - The more you are able to honor and accept the Now, the more you are free of pain and suffering.
- **When the present is unpleasant.**
 - Observe how the mind labels the experience.
 - Allow the present moment to be.
 - Take action if necessary or possible. Accept — then act.
 - **Whatever the present moment contains, accept it as if you had chosen it.**

Chapter 3

- **Don’t Seek Your Self in the Mind**
 - The mind is a wonderful tool — if it doesn’t take over.
 - You are not your thoughts or even the product of your experiences. You have a choice about the effect you allow these to have on your life.
- **Nothing Exists Outside the Now**
 - Nothing ever happened in the past; it happened in the Now
 - Nothing will ever happen in the future; it will happen in the Now
 - What you think of as the past is a memory stored in the mind of a former Now.
 - The future is an imagined Now, a projection of the mind.
 - So the past/future (time) are realities borrowed from the Now.
- **Letting Go of Psychological Time**
 - “Clock time” = Use time for practical aspects of life. Examples...it’s okay to:
 - Learn from the past to not repeat the same mistakes — makes the past relevant
 - Set goals and work toward them — be aware of where you want to go, but honor and give your fullest attention to the step you are taking at this moment.
 - Predict the future based on past experience/knowledge and take action in the Now.
 - The present moment is all you ever have. There is never a time when your life is not “this moment.”
- **Finding the Life Underneath Your Life Situation**
 - “Life Situation” = Psychological Time — past/future
 - Forget about your life situation for awhile and pay attention to your *Life*
 - Your life situation exists in time; Your Life is Now
 - Your life situation is mind-stuff; Your Life is real
 - Narrow your Life down to this moment.

- **All Problems Are Illusions of the Mind**
 - There are no problems...only situations to be dealt with now, or to be left alone and accepted as part of...the present moment until they can change or *can* be dealt with.
 - It is impossible to have a problem when your attention is fully in the Now. A situation that needs to be either dealt with or accepted — yes. Why make it into a problem?
 - **“Problem” means you are dwelling on a situation without a true intention or possibility of taking action now and are unconsciously making it part of your sense of self.**
 - Instead focus your attention on the one thing that you *can* do now.

Chapter 4

- **Freedom from Unhappiness**
 - When situations trigger emotional reactions, realize it isn't you, it's a habitual reactive pattern of survival
 - When you are unhappy, here are your choices:
 - Stop/change *what* you are doing — or *how* you are doing it
 - Speak to the person concerned and express fully what you feel
 - Drop the negativity that your mind has created around the situation
 - In response to, “It’s okay to be angry and feel whatever you feel,” he says, “you don’t have to have those emotions; you have a choice.”
- **Wherever you are, be there totally**
 - Examples of ordinary unconsciousness — all are forms of non-acceptance of the Now and strategies for avoiding the Now:
 - Are you complaining, in speech or thought?
 - Are you stressed? Are you so busy getting to the future that the present is only a means to getting there?
 - Does the past take up a great deal of your attention?
 - Are you worried? Do you have many “what if” thoughts?
- ***If the Now is intolerable and unhappy, here are your three choices:***
 - Change it
 - Accept it totally
 - Remove yourself from the situation
- Delving into the past is a bottomless pit. ***You cannot find yourself by going into the past You find yourself by coming into the present.***

ACTIVITY FOR THE WEEK

- In everyday life, take any routine activity and give it your fullest attention — be totally present.
- Observe when you are in the past/present
 - Ask yourself, “Is it relevant/practical or am I dwelling on it?”
 - Make a choice:
 - Continue dwelling on it & notice the effect your thoughts have on your emotions. Test changing the thoughts and notice what happens to your emotions.
 - Use it for practical living
 - learn from the past
 - plan for the future
 - take action
 - accept it as it is
- In everyday life, when you don’t like what you are doing, change how you are doing it
 - Give attention to the doing
 - How does this change your feelings about what you are doing?