



Eckhart Tolle's Spiritual Practices

Note that Eckhart has said that “**You need time, until you realize that you do not need time**”, which loosely translated means that you “need a Spiritual Practice” until you realize that you don’t.

Practices need time - they are something done by someone to achieve a goal at some time in the future.

Seeing who you really are is not a Practice at all - it is pure seeing of itself by your own essential nature - and that occurs in the immediacy of the present moment where there is no past or future - only this instant.

So at a certain point you will need to discard your Practices.

As Eckhart said “**You need time, until you realize that you do not need time**”

Context: Fully Being who you truly are is the most important thing in your life.

To put the place of Spiritual Practice in context, listen to or watch Eckhart Tolle's “Touching the Eternal: Renunciation of Thought”, part 1.

Everything in your life is a part of your Spiritual Practice – especially the things that go “wrong”- so gradually incorporate these Practices in what you “normally” do in your life, and see what happens.

Don’t let your mind organize, force, impose or evaluate your Spiritual Practice.

Hopefully, you will read what follows a few times, and then forget about them, only to discover at a later time that many of them are naturally occurring in your life without any determined or deliberate effort to “apply” them.

Do all these in the Now, not as a means to an end.

Inner Body (Eckhart uses the term 'Inner Body' as a label for the energy field of the body, a manifestation of the aliveness that you are – your true nature)

- Feel the Inner Body during the day. This means 10 - 15 - 20 times a day – even for 10 seconds or so is fine. At various times and when appropriate go deeper into the Inner Body and merge with it. And at other times go deeper still, as is possible
- Feel the Inner Body for 15 minutes or so at night before sleep, as is possible. Go to sleep from there.
- Feel the Inner Body for a few minutes when you first wake up. If you have heavy feelings, a feeling of being “on edge” etc in the morning then surrender to it, observe the feeling fully. Let it be as it is. As you observe the feeling, Space will arise around it
- Feel the Inner Body whilst observing Nature.
- Whenever someone speaks to you – feel the Inner Body with a part of your attention

Watch out for

- Watch your mind ('Oh - there goes another thought!') with a part of your attention at all times. Allow Space to arise around your thoughts – then you are the observer, not the thinker. Do not take your mind too seriously.
- Watch out for when you are in Suffering – which could be as small as mere irritation or impatience. This means that you have “lost” the Now. Suffering requires the Past and Future, as well as a “little Me”. Being aware that you are in Suffering brings Knowing to it, but do not get caught up in thinking about “having lost the Now” Then step

back into the Now using the usual Portals – Surrender, Nature, Sense Perceptions, Inner Body, Spiritual Texts, Sensing the Inner Field of Now, etc.

- Watch out for Labeling and Judgments. Recognize them as such and let go of them
- Watch out for (bring your awareness to) repetitive or conditioned responses in yourself and look intensely at these, without judgment or commentary. Watch them as they actually occur whenever possible. Examples are situations where you feel ill at ease, have the same dispute again, or the same thing irritates you again, or perhaps you become full of pride, or take the high moral ground, have feelings of superiority, or sitting in judgment over others - (all Egoic Self stuff – both sides of the duality)
- Watch out for Identifying with a Mental Position. Look out for defensiveness which shows a mental position has been identified with and you are defending an illusion (your Egoic Self). Look out for Repair mechanisms to the Egoic Self - actions which rebuild the sense of self after it has been “damaged” or “threatened”
- Watch out for things that cause resistance to accepting the Isness of Now. Notice and Accept! Watch out for things that “Weren't meant to be like that”, and accept them. They are as the Are! They could not be any other way.
- Watch out for Judging others – when you judge others you are in essence judging yourself. Notice that.
- Watch out for the story in the head. There is no story that is you, or leads to you. Every story leads away from you. You are what exists before all stories. You are what remains when all the stories are understood. Notice it when it occurs

Yes / Surrender

It is only Consciousness that can accept – there is no separate “I” that does the accepting – acceptance occurs - and you feel a different energy arising when acceptance occurs. (You can notice the Non Surrender by the physical contraction, the emotion and the mental judgment – all aspects of the separate identity. The separate identity is motivated totally by self interest)

- Accept the simplicity of the moment – do not let your mind add a story to it (personalize it)
- Ask – “Am I surrendered totally to the form that this moment takes – in the field of Now?” “Am I welcoming whatever form arises in the Now”
- Make a Practice of accepting completely (surrendering to) small irritations. Allow them to be as they are.
- Surrender completely to the form that this moment takes (in the field of Now), welcoming what ever appears in the Field of Now. YES. Embrace the form of that moment, as if you had chosen it.
- When you notice that you have resistance to something or just generally then just let the resistance drop.
- Acknowledge the Isness of the occasions without judgment or comment when you cannot feel the Inner Body, or notice the aliveness and stillness of a huge tree, or there is heavy mind noise, etc. It is as it is. Accept that
- If you observe in yourself a Non-Surrender state – Allow it to be. Allow the Non-Surrender to be! Do Not fight it.. You cannot fight it – it just adds another Non Surrender to it!
- When a “No” arises in you – notice it and Accept it completely. Surrender fully to it. It is as it is, and there is nothing personal in it.
- If you are having difficulties saying “yes” to what is - then feel the Inner Body first, and maintain it while you Accept what is.

Practices should occur completely in the Now, without an agenda, without a final objective, without trying to “achieve” something, or get rid of something.. They are just interesting things to do.

Increasingly bring Presence (self aware consciousness) into normal everyday life. This is what the Teaching is all about, and it directly breaks Human conditioning. This means Honor this moment, and every form that this moment takes – this can be done by giving clear Still Awareness to the “little doings” of life. Most of life is a series of the “little things”.

Give to them your total attention that you would give to a Tree or a Flower when walking in Nature. Each time you do this - it is a few seconds of clear Still Presence, of knowing. It is a state of deep Knowing, without mind, stepping out of duality, thoughtless Awareness.

Each time the mindstream is cut it lowers the momentum of the mind, and cutting the mindstream lots of times is more important than the length of time it is cut, as that will take care of itself. Just see what happens..

Choose small things to start with, and you could choose actions mainly to do with objects. Do not select long things (like getting dressed) to start with.. Each “doing” should be done not as a means to an end – in other words Totally in the Now. “Action without cause”, as Krishnamurti would say. And the mind is still.....

- When you put your shoes on or off.
- When you open a door, walk through, and close the door
- When you peel a banana.
- When you Listen to someone with complete attention and there is no mind activity.
- When you Look at an analogue watch or clock and Know the time, without the mind activity that turns it into words..
- When you Follow your breathing with full attention, including noticing the gaps between the breaths.

To deepen it - Can you notice the Field of Awareness in which the sensory perception occurs? Can you Be There so totally that You are the Field of Attention in which these things happen?

With Sense Perceptions

- First focus on the Sense Perception completely
- Then become aware of the Field in which the Perception occurs. This adds great depth to the Sense Perception

When Meeting another Human

- Give total attention to the form of that person – both physical and psychological form
- Then become aware of the Field of Stillness in which that Perception occurs

Generally....

- Heightened sensory perception - specifically sounds, vision, tactile etc. e.g. the sound of the water running while washing up, the scent of the detergent etc - all without thought, judgment or commentary. Pay attention to sound (for example) in situations where you would normally predominantly use vision.
- Make a practice of doing repetitive jobs, like the washing up, 'one step at a time' with full and intense attention - in stillness, in the Now. Include heightened sensory perception (see above)
- With Humans with whom you have long standing “issues” – Firstly feel your Inner Body. Settle into the Inner body. Visualize the person, and “look” with pure awareness, without thought, and maintaining the Inner Body. Hold that. When you meet them, do the same thing. This will bring consciousness to the relationship.

- With Partners – each day or so, gaze into each other’s eyes, whilst feeling the Inner Body for 5 minutes or so. Gaze with full awareness, and without thought. Pure Awareness.
- What seems to be in the Way – IS the Way. Use everything that goes wrong in your life as a part of your Spiritual Practice..
- Ask “Is it as it Is?”
- Notice the Isness of the Now. (“Here I am, sitting on a park bench, breathing, feeling my inner body, noticing...)
- Let the phone ring twice before answering it.
- If doing work involving lots of Mind Stuff, take many short breaks and feel the inner body, look at a flower, a tree etc
- Have a part of your attention in your inner state at all times - 'what is happening internally in my space?' and observe (notice) what is found without judgment and without commentary. This means feelings, emotions etc. Accept fully (surrender to) what you find.
- Watch out for overlaying judgments on those feelings, emotions - e.g. scolding yourself for “having” these feelings or emotions. When you are the observer, Space will arise around those feelings/emotions.
- Face the Pain Bodies of other people with great alertness (Presence), and feel the aliveness of your own Inner Body. This takes you out of reactivity (duality)
- Bring Awareness to your Inner State by recognizing the Egoic Self, the illusory “little me” in the head
- Recognize the complaining voice in the head – that complains about people, situations, the weather etc etc. Realize that what it is complaining about is irrelevant – it is only a strengthening of the boundaries of the separate self.
- Recognize that the Egoic Self depends on the total identification with a personal or collective mental position – a mind form – a mind object. “This is how it is !”
- Recognize that the Egoic Self needs an Enemy – without which the separate sense of self could not sustain itself. The Egoic self cannot be very long without reactivity and conflict – which it needs for the continuous strengthening and rebuilding of its sense of identity, and its boundaries.
- Recognize and bring acceptance to what you find. Accept the Non Acceptance. Allow the thoughts, the reactivity, the emotions to be as it is. Bring gentle acceptance to the Field of Now – the simplest form of this moment. (this does not include the story in the head)

Your Mind

- Use 'waiting for the next thought' to slow down the mind when the mind stream is rampant. Use the simple Breathing Meditation (including noticing the gaps between the breaths) to slow the mind further, and then feel the Inner Body. Use this when you are having difficulties sleeping
- When the mind is agitated – notice it and acknowledge that the mind is agitated. Accept the Isness of it completely. Sit with it and give it the Gentle Embrace. At the same time feel the Inner Body – this helps put Space around it When your mind “thinks about things” - notice if those thoughts are relevant right NOW.
- When you notice that your mind is being drawn into activity when you talk with someone –notice your breathing, including the gaps between the breaths, or feel your Inner Body, or both
- Don’t take your Mind too seriously. It is as it is, the little runt! (joke)

Stillness – Space

- Notice the stillness and space between the words, sentences, breaths etc. Notice the Gaps between the teeth (joke)
- Do things in stillness and silence when possible and appropriate (e.g. when putting away the dishes in silence and stillness - quite a challenge, and requires intense attention)
- Be aware of the Field of Still, Alert Space/Presence in which all perception arises – the underlying Presence. This Field of Now is the Sacred Space of NOW.

- Observe the world through Stillness and Awareness. This implies No thought. This is what Eckhart does at the beginning of Talks, Intensives and Retreat.

Nature

- Notice the Stillness and Space in Nature around you. Feel the Life in Nature, feel your Oneness and Connectedness with Nature.
- Observe Nature without Mind Noise (thoughts about the name of the animal or plant, its scientific name and its taxonomy, its habits, its relatives, its place in the ecology, age, etc etc).
- While observing Nature, feel the Inner Body. Also you can feel your breathing, including the gaps between the breaths.
- Notice the background (the still, silent space) to sensory perceptions, especially in Nature.
- View Nature with an Alert Stillness – view it as if you were seeing it for the first time. Use the same level of alertness that you use when noticing the gaps between the words (i.e. pure awareness/consciousness). When walking in Nature, walk slowly, and stay with each for a while – a few seconds – in a state of alert stillness, with no labeling or commentary. This is Knowing something – without mind movement – without labels.
- Occasionally walk alone in Nature. Be aware of the Field of Still Alert Presence in which the perception arises – the underlying Presence. This Field of Now is the Sacred Space of Now.

From time to time (do these fully in the Now, not as a means to an end)

The Pain Body

- When the Pain Body arises, take the fullest advantage of it as possible to regain the energy and aliveness that is trapped there. Big Steps are possible here. This is where all the Heavy Shit is, Man – where “normal” negative emotions are magnified 20 or 50 or 100 times. Not just incremental brown stuff!
- Sit with the Pain Body – and notice it as an object. Observe its energy, its turbulence, its feeling, and give it a gentle embrace. Do not get caught up in the “thoughts”, the story, the mind stream that accompanies it. Notice it as it is happening (with great alertness) and just be the observer of the energy movement itself.
- The Pain Body will gradually subside, but may take a while. Accept the Pain Body. It Is As It Is. It is not “fun”, it is not pleasant, but it is worth completing it without getting “sucked in” by the thoughts, if you can.
- While the Pain Body is still active, and you are observing it – also feel the Inner Body in places where you still can – often the Pain Body has not occupied the hands or the feet and so you can still feel the aliveness in these areas. Feeling the Inner Body in this way is a part of letting Space arise around the Pain Body.
- Some Space and Stillness will arise around the Pain Body when you become the Witness. When this occurs you will feel a sense of Peace.
- Dealing with the Pain Body will need the increased Presence “generated” (not really generated) by the items in the first list. Being in the Body will help greatly in being able to notice the Pain Body when it arises. Be Prepared, and welcome the Pain Body when it comes – do not fight it – Say “YES” to the existence of the Pain Body. Accept the Pain Body fully, and feel the Inner aliveness of the Body at the same time (amazing that you can do both at the same time!)

Retreats/Time Out

- Take Time Outs from time to time - this means Retreats of some kind. Even Eckhart needs these and use them to full advantage. (Study Spiritual Teachings, connect with Nature, Noble Silence, etc. No Mind stuff. Taking long walks in Nature with an MP3 player full of Eckhart is a wonderful way to go.)

Spiritual Practices of Eckhart Tolle

- When you notice a contraction, tightness, an inner sense of irritation etc – take some time out to have a look at it. Say Yes. Let it Be. Accept it as it already IS. Let Space arise around it. This may only take a few minutes.
- Occasionally have an evening or a morning in Noble Silence (defined as highly aware silence). No Mind stuff. No TV, No Papers, No Radio. No computers. No thought (well..... as little as possible... notice, as the alert observer, any thoughts that do occur)