

The Now Movement



There have been numerous Now Movement authors in the past several years, but probably none as prominent as the best-known representative of the Now Movement today, Eckhart Tolle. Tolle says that his book, "*The Power of Now*", is "a restatement for our time of that one timeless spiritual teaching, the essence of all religions". He writes that religions "have become so overlaid with extraneous matter that their spiritual substance has become almost completely obscured", that they have become "to a large extent ... divisive rather than unifying forces" and become "themselves part of the insanity".

Tolle writes, "The most significant thing that can happen to a human being is the separation process of thinking and awareness and that awareness is "the space in which thoughts exist". Tolle says, "The primary cause of unhappiness is never the situation but your thoughts about it".

Again, he says:

"The beginning of freedom is the realization that you are not "the thinker." The moment you start watching the thinker, a higher level of consciousness becomes activated. You then begin to realize that there is a vast realm of intelligence beyond thought, that thought is only a tiny aspect of that intelligence. You also realize that all the things that truly matter – beauty, love, creativity, joy, inner peace – arise from beyond the mind. You begin to awaken."

At the core of Tolle's teachings lies the transformation of consciousness, a spiritual awakening that he sees as the next step in human evolution. An essential aspect of this awakening consists in transcending our ego-based state of consciousness. This is a

prerequisite not only for personal happiness but also for the ending of violent conflict endemic on our planet".

In his book "*A New Earth*," Tolle describes a major aspect of the human dysfunction as "ego" or an "illusory sense of self" based on unconscious identification with one's memories and thoughts, and another major aspect he calls "pain-body" or "an accumulation of old emotional pain". We read:

"As long as the egoic mind is running your life, you cannot truly be at ease; you cannot be at peace or fulfilled except for brief intervals when you obtained what you wanted, when a craving has just been fulfilled. Since the ego is a derived sense of self, it needs to identify with external things. It needs to be both defended and fed constantly. The most common ego identifications have to do with possessions, the work you do, social status and recognition, knowledge and education, physical appearance, special abilities, relationships, personal and family history, belief systems, and often also political, nationalistic, racial, religious, and other collective identifications. None of these is you."

- Eckhart Tolle, The Power of Now: A Guide to Spiritual Enlightenment

The key is to live in the present moment, the now:

"Realize deeply that the present moment is all you ever have. Make the Now the primary focus of your life. Whereas before you dwelt in time and paid brief visits to the Now, have your dwelling place in the Now and pay brief visits to past and future when required to deal with the practical aspects of your life situation. Always say "yes" to the present moment. What could be more futile, more insane, than to create inner resistance to something that already is? What could be more insane than to oppose life itself, which is now and always now? Surrender to what is. Say "yes to life — and see how life suddenly starts working for you rather than against you."

- Eckhart Tolle, Practicing The Power of Now

Tolle is well read. He has mentioned texts such as the Tao Te Ching, the Bhagavad Gita and other Hindu scriptures, the Buddhist scriptures, the Old Testament, the New Testament, A Course in Miracles. He has been influenced by various individuals such as Zoroaster, Lao Tzu, Mahavira, Gautama Buddha, Heraclitus, Parmenides, Jesus, Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius, Rumi, Meister Eckhart, Hafiz, Rinzai Gigen, Ralph Waldo Emerson; and he has emphasized the mystical schools within religions such as Gnosticism in Christianity, Sufism in Islam, Hasidism and Kabbala in Judaism, Advaita Vedanta in Hinduism, and Zen and Dzogchen in Buddhism.



Reference: Based on Eckhart Tolle's talks, books, and Wikipedia