



The Space Between Thoughts

I spend my life rushing away from myself,
chasing the next something or thought.
I have trained my mind to *chase after*,
rather than rest into my own peace.

Embodied awareness, and a powerful sense of grounded presence. Well-honed skills for stabilizing a quiet mind and an interior environment liberated from reactive tendencies of thought and emotions. Understanding that each movement of my mind and heart has the capacity to either splinter or unify wholeness. This knowledge lives at the core of every ancient wisdom tradition as embodied, grounded awareness in their spiritual adepts.

When we lived close to nature, and the pace of human lives was slower and less complicated, we sat closer to this knowledge. We appreciated the rhythmic quality of breath and its cadence, of heartbeat and laughter, of rest without numbing out. We felt alive in mysterious ways while watching a sunrise or the soft quality of night returning. Hidden within each of us, these realizations remain ~ too often obscured by distractions and the busyness of existence.

Today, relationships with technology replace our awe of the natural world, and screen time appears more important than spending intimate time with someone we love. The need for immediate feedback often encourages me to leapfrog over moments of stillness and beauty. Constantly reaching away from myself for validation or attempting to escape doubt, one distraction after the next becomes the trajectory of my life.

Without skills, my unconscious attention flashes toward anything that moves ~ as both external and internal distractions occupy my awareness. With no space in between, one thought tumbles into the next... and I follow. I am not present. I am in denial of myself. I am asleep.

Collectively, our human systems are constantly recalibrated by the stimuli available and our increasing capacity to absorb while multi-tasking. We train our minds to move faster and faster, until the space within the run-on sentence of our thinking becomes unrecognizable, and we congratulate ourselves for such skillful means. I think, *what a predicament we are in* as I watch my own distraction-seeking tendencies vying for preference status and the desire to govern my life. I must remember I have a choice.

In contrast, when thoughts slow down or our chasing after the next thing stops, we awkwardly sense a lack of *immediacy*. The open space long ignored rages to the forefront. Without a stable sense of presence, I don't remember the space as *stillness*. Rather, I experience a kind of shock, a feeling of being empty. *What to do?* Rather than possessing the skills to abide in that open space ~ allowing the pause to take root and evolve into calmness ~ I hurry to find the next distraction to run toward. The potential state of stillness I crave becomes a state to escape from. I have taught myself to flee from my own peace!

Think about it. It won't take long to remember how only a few minutes ago your hand reached for your cell phone. Or it got quiet and you unconsciously walked to the kitchen for a snack... or a glass of wine. Maybe you felt a quieting and there it was ~ something you forgot or something that hasn't happened yet. Worry becomes a viable diversion. Or what about your mind's clever use of this distraction... *I'm bored*.

I once thought a feeling of boredom arrived only when I had nothing to do. Especially nothing I really wanted to do. However today, in the middle of a demanding life filled with responsibilities, I rarely have nothing to do. Yet when the flurry of anxious activity starts settling down, with my mind still rushing toward the energy of movement and finding quietness, I can feel strangely agitated and restless. *Am I bored?*

This agitated inner perception of nothingness (boredom) ignites the distraction-seeking addiction again. *Where's my fun? Where's my text? Where's the action... the party? What am I supposed to do with myself now? What should I be thinking about? I don't want to experience what I'm experiencing. Where can I go to escape, even for a*

moment? These unattended impulses arise, and suddenly it's no longer pleasurable just to be alive.

Whether a question about having nothing to do, or the arrival of your favorite distraction-chasing strategy, some inner tension arises. It might be a flash, but it's there. Unchecked or misinterpreted, the tension pulls you away from the present moment. Then off your attention goes, and away your energy flows, to anywhere other than just right here. Just right now.

You might think, "Oh, I've heard this before. I know about the importance of stillness and avoiding distractions. I meditate. I do yoga." If so, the question remains, "Why are you still running away from your inner quietness and peace, chasing distraction like fireflies?" We are very clever with our justifications.

The untrained individual finds distraction more attractive than the present moment because to the unskilled mind energy is associated with movement rather than experienced in stillness. The trained individual, however, recognizes the PAUSE as the space between two thoughts ~ as an invitation full of the energy of possibility. The skilled mind sees an open space suddenly undefined by thinking. A freedom abandoned in the name of productivity and quick reactions, becomes available again. Without training, I remain blind to such openings and miss the depth of my own human potential. Overstimulated, I burn out.

How do you bring awareness to that undesired inner tension and recognize the space as awareness itself unformed? How do you develop skills for recognizing the present moment as something not to run away from, but rather to awaken into? You train.

The goal of spiritual training is liberation ~ arriving at each moment free to choose beyond reactivity or preconceptions. It is unbinding from the cycle of addictive thought and limiting beliefs too small to facilitate your emergence. It's transforming the belief that happiness is somewhere else.

The link below offers additional teaching and a recorded practice given to Initiates of the **Nine Gates Esoteric School**. If taken seriously, the skill of *opening the space between thoughts* can repattern your reactive tendencies. You can train to pause without agitation. You can open to the present moment without the need to run away or toward anything. The practice is a gateway into the remembered teachings of the ancient

wisdom schools. As an adept, experience a taste of coming home to the vast wisdom you believed you needed to chase.

You are invited to train like the sages.

LINK

Remember. You can release yourself from a world that defines the fast pace of life and thought as *quality of life*, where freedom and contentment are something to chase rather than your established interior peace. Find that spaciousness between two thoughts. Train to abide there.