



To Be Continually Thrown Out Of The Nest, by Pema Chodron

We think that if we just meditated enough or jogged enough or ate perfect food, everything would be perfect. But from the point of view of someone who is awake, that's death. Seeking security or perfection, rejoicing in feeling confirmed and whole, self-contained and comfortable, is some kind of death. It doesn't have any fresh air. There's no room for something to come in and interrupt all that. We are killing the moment by controlling our experience. Doing this is setting ourselves up for failure, because sooner or later, we're going to have an experience we can't control: our house is going to burn down, someone we love is going to die, we're going to find out we have cancer, a brick is going to fall out of the sky and hit us on the head, somebody's going to spill tomato juice all over our white suit, or we're going to arrive at our favorite restaurant and discover that no one ordered produce and seven hundred people are coming for lunch.

The essence of life is that it's challenging. Sometimes it is sweet, and sometimes it is bitter. Sometimes your body tenses, and sometimes it relaxes or opens. Sometimes you have a headache, and sometimes you feel 100 percent healthy. From an awakened perspective, trying to tie up all the loose ends and finally get it together is death, because it involves rejecting a lot of your basic experience. There is something aggressive about that approach to life, trying to flatten out all the rough spots and imperfections into a nice smooth ride.

To be fully alive, fully human, and completely awake is to be continually thrown out of the nest. To live fully is to be always in no-man's-land, to experience each moment as completely new and fresh.

To live is to be willing to die over and over again. From the awakened point of view, that's life.

The way to dissolve our resistance to life is to meet it face to face. When we feel resentment because the room is too hot, we could meet the heat and feel its fieriness and its heaviness. When we feel resentment because the room is too cold, we could meet the cold and feel its iciness and its bite. When we want to complain about the rain, we could feel its wetness instead. When we worry because the wind is shaking our windows, we could meet the wind and hear its sound. Cutting our expectations for a cure is a gift we can give ourselves. There is no cure for hot and cold. They will go on forever. After we have died, the ebb and flow will still continue. Like the tides of the sea, like day and night --Â this is the nature of things.

