



Making Friends with the Present Moment, by Alan Zulch

Some months ago, for three successive nights, I was awakened by three insights that came to me “ persistently and repeatedly “ one per night. The first night's message was: "Only the present moment is real." Â The second night's message was: "You can trust the present moment." The third night's message was: "Make friends with the present moment."Â

How do I surrender the primacy of my conditioned mind and egoic will, and allow “ moment-by-moment “ space for stillness and the arising of my natural state of awareness? Doing so, for me, involves a certain amount of rational insight to initially coax the thinking mind from its constant daydreaming in the foreground into letting go and taking a secondary position in the background. This shift is facilitated by the first night's message.Â

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With the mind's move into the background, my body comes alive, my hearing clears and ambient sounds are bright. I'm alert but feeling a deep peaceâ€I'm fully here, having taken a "backward step" into the present moment. Staying here, however, is a real trick “ an all-or-nothing opportunity. One thought “ indeed any mind intrusion “ and I'm instantly back in my ego identity.Â

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Allowing my ego to step aside requires trust “ not only that a larger intelligence is holding me, but that it's capable of actively engaging in my practical affairs. This slow building of trust is assisted by the second night's message.Â

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Some days, when I am especially calm, I can ease into the present moment for longer periodsâ€successfully relaxing into this friendly “ indeed loving “ universe. Slowly, I'm making friends with the present moment, with being, in accordance with the third night's message. Making friends with the universe is very, very enticing. Like a moth to a flame.Â

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My goal is to abide in presence, allowing being to inform my doing. It entails a fundamental shift of my identity, of who I take myself to be. Am I the ego? Or, am I the consciousness that is observing “ with equanimity “ from behind the drama? To the ego, simply being sounds dangerously disengaged. But now I know “ gradually gradually “ that being fully present is radically transformative and just the opposite of passivity, allowing one to be responsive rather than reactive, and in service to the need at hand.Â

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Ultimately, I can think of no higher aspiration than to become an instrument through which larger creative and healing forces of a

friendly, loving universe can come into the world. This can only happen in the present moment, with complete trust. Gradually gradually.

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--Alan Zulch

Published at www.awakin.org on Mar 05, 2012