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The Golden Coin of Now

The present moment as a starting point for healing

By Yehuda Tagar



Yehuda Tagar

This article I write in praise of the *now*, of the wisdom and the power inherent in the experience of the present moment. It is written out of faith and the certainty that there is, within the nurturing, the insight, the inner equipment for the manifestation of our inner journey. I write this out of an inner conviction, originated in my artistic work as a poet and a dramatist, and wrought and substantiated further by years of professional clinical experience as a Philophonetics-Counselling Practitioner, a conviction that all it takes to start an effective journey of healing and of inner growth within any condition, is the free choice to take an active interest in the direct experience of the present moment, as a starting point.

I will start with a poem I wrote at a moment of relaxing into the *now* of my experience one sunny winter morning in the bush:

Love Them Now

'Love them now' - the gentle voice said
'They are all there for you, now
'The trees, the myriad shades of green.
'The loveliness between them,
'The brisk crystal air,
'The gentle winged wind, the brilliant blue
sky, the Sun,
'So loving, love them now, it's all
'Yours for the loving.'
So I paused, I took them in,
I was now for a moment.
The gentle voice smiled at me,
reassuring, 'I
'Who gave you life, will with you
'Harvest seeds of these, in time.
'In time I placed you now.
'Do love them now
'For now
'And for the harvest.'

Philophonetics-Counselling session. My client is in distress.

'Where shall I start? I have been through all this before so many times, I've done it all, know it all, nothing new, I've lost the plot again, all these stupid fears are back, chaotic wild thoughts, impractical futile plans. I've lost it. Where shall I start?'

Headache, distress, shallow breathing, abandonment, abyss, mistrust in the relationship; all are back just days after a wonderful harmonious holiday with her part-

ner. Total confusion. No tangible starting point to process any of it.

'What about starting with now?' I suggested.

'Now?'

'Now.' Right now, in the body, in the multitude of sensations, movement, invisible flowing kaleidoscope of pictures and strange symphonies of noiseless sounds. Not the thoughts, regurgitation, of the past mental-pictures, nor the speculative plans and wishes and worries and fears, all jutting out into the future. Just the sensations in the body now. The body, which is the resonance chamber of the soul. It will tell all, It will connect you to the starting point, the Golden Coin of accepting the now as a starting point.

Resistance. That in her which is so scared of the feelings which might be there underneath the noise does not want to do it. A big resistance is building up towards that suggestion. She is back to having no starting point. No orientation. Safe in being lost.

'Resistance? How interesting,' say I, curious and unperturbed. 'How does it feel right now to not want to feel what the body feels?'

She was surprised. She expected me to try and fight the resistance. The fear would know what to do with me then. Fear loves fighting. The fear was completely disarmed by the attention paid to its own activity. The fear got caught in a game not of its own rules. Interest in the now embraced it with the warmth of attention. It gave way. Faced with attention to itself, it allowed her awareness to touch it.

She could easily respond to the request to bring the experience of resistance into gesture. Her whole body was contorted when expressing that fear, twisted, turning away, desperately trying to escape from facing something inescapable in the deep. Once brought into gesture, she could let go, move out of that position and look back into the vacant space she left behind, where that remarkable gesture still echoed for both of us in its reality. She could 'see' that fear for what it was. It had nothing to do with the holiday, the partner, the plans, the practicalities of life's struggles which were blamed before for her confusion.

In the empty space where she has just been, she now beheld the little frightened girl having no tangible support which she once was, who, for some reason was triggered in that holiday, was again triggered, threatened, surfaced into her feeling life, and flooded the consciousness of the mature woman with her fears. Once made conscious, embraced with awareness, this little girl can be taken care of by her owner. She is always there, she is always *now* there, living in the subtle vibrations of the living and the Ensouled body of the woman, seeking connection with the adult consciousness, speaking no English or any other verbal language. But communicable through her own modes of being: Sensing, Movement, Visualisation, Sounds. The inner child was found, and found – it could be cared for, like any other child that is found after being lost for a long time. Only this child is an inner, not an outer reality. But real it is nevertheless. The headache disappeared, the fear disappeared, the confusion cleared, the trust restored. We found the starting point, the Golden Coin, the acceptance of the present moment. Now we could start to look at the special opportunity this experience phase provided for her development, having the essential tool in place: perspective on the experience.

Thinking, says Psychosophy, is in the past. Always reflecting what has come to pass, experiences already digested. It may be triggered by present experiences, but it processes them always in pictures taken from the past. The will, on the other hand, is a seed-energy of things yet to come, impulses to unfold in the future, whose energy lies largely in the subconscious, in the realm of sleep. Motivation and intention may engage the will, but the action itself stems from its own source, deep below awareness, never to be completely exhausted in the present.

Only the feeling life truly lives in the now. Sensations, feeling, emotion, affection, sympathy and antipathy, the whole colourful rainbow, the whole many-scaled ongoing symphony of the inner life of human beings (also the desire life of animals, the ebbs and flows of plants, and moods of the Earth life-sheaths) – only these live in the now, and only through attention to them the *now* is accessible to consciousness.

And the now, the still point within the passing moment, is the window to that which is above time, to eternity of which

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Another client, another time, another set of issues. Her hand was chopped off completely by accident at the wrist and then re-sown in a hospital. With nerves and tendons severed and deeply traumatised, nearly all sensation and movability was gone, and a very slow and arduous process of recovery had started. She had identified with her hand a whole lot of inner content of herself which is in need of care and healing, so the recovery became an inner as well as a physical journey. Philophonetics-Counselling was added to Physiotherapy. But what do you do with a hand with no sensation? Where do you start?

You start from *now*, as always. And now, as it is, there is a feeling of discomfort, a vague pain surrounding the area, a tightness in the rest of the arm. Very undesirable feelings. We both have already established that the wounded hand became for her something like another young child, a baby with severe need and with no verbal communication. Another child at her care. As we talked about the above symptoms, the possibility has gradually dawned on us that

this range of uncomfortable sensations are the faint voices with which her hand is trying to communicate with her.

She could identify half-conscious reactions to these sensations which blocked them away; a sort of internal turning away of the head from them. Having released this reaction by expressing it in gesture – the sensation in the wounded hand became louder, revealing a consistent pattern of signals, which repeated in later sessions:

- 1) A tightness in the arm. When that sensation was gestured and expressed in a sound (VV-GG) with the help of the other hand, then ...
- 2) A sensation of pins-and-needles became noticeable in some fingers. Having overcome the instinctive inclination to turn away from it and having expressed it with gesture and sound (ZZ-T) came the ...
- 3) Sensation of tingling/pulsating flow of energy, which, when expressed as well, was followed by ...
- 4) A wave of warmth which flooded the wounded hand, together with a greater mobility.

The hand was communicating with us, telling us what it needed, receiving help, responding positively. All she had to do was to accept the present situation as the

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starting point, to listen to it with active interest in the *now* of the situation, beyond the obsession with the thought of how she wished it to be. All that was needed was encapsulated within the *now* of the experience. The process of recovery, her relationship to her wounded hand, her relationship to that part of herself which the hand came to represent – all took a step forward.

For we are fundamentally well-equipped for the journey of our life. For some, this is a belief. For some, this is knowledge. That is, as long as the journey, its purpose and its conceived destination, is defined – not only in terms of surviving, immediate happiness, satisfaction of basic needs and their extensions, outer approval, possessions and security, but in terms of inner growth and awakening, self-knowledge, ennobling, refining and deepening one's being, perception and ability to fulfil one's potential and service within the greater whole; as long as the outer life is taken as the opportunity for the unfolding of the inner life; so long as these are the priorities – the equipment is there for the journey for everyone, within any given situation, if only I respect my given experience as a starting point for deeper relationship with myself and with the world.

My ability to transform an experience, into a step in my inner journey is potentially limited by nothing at all. This is where real freedom really lives: not in what is happening to me, but in how I take it. Nothing outside of me needs to change in order for me to take a 'problem' I am faced with as an 'opportunity' for inner development and for the healing that inevitably goes with it. The change is an inner one: it is the insertion, at will and by free choice, of the *Golden Coin of the Acceptance of the Now* of the experience as it is as the starting point, as the first message of self-knowledge, as the initial information, orientation, guidance; it is taking interest in it, listening to it, and acting on the knowledge that is already there.

I discovered this option for the first time in my youth, when I had to make a choice between surviving a mortal wound which had shattered my life by trying to make the best of what was left: avoiding the painful confrontation with my wound, and inevitably, slowly inwardly dying; or to facing my wound straight on, fathoming its pain, taking responsibility for it, stopping investing in blaming others, accepting it as my lot, as a new starting

point, and being fully with the *now* of its experience. I took the latter path. Had I taken the former, I would not be here now to tell the tale. As I took that turn on that road, I coined the phrase which expressed my choice: *And to live, facing the anguish of my dying, rather than to die with my face away from it.* It was a point of no return which had led me to my present ability to work with people in an encouraging capacity.

Whenever I stop in my tracks, in the middle of any train of action, thought, reaction, habitual behaviour, negativity and upset; whenever I stop and turn around to look at myself, at my direct experience of the present moment, taking active interest in my experience as it is (feeling and underlying feeling, bodily sensations, subtle as well as loud, emotions as they are, sympathy and antipathy as they are, the whole colourful rainbow, unpleasant and scary as it all might be), whenever I freely insert the Golden Coin of accepting now as it is as a starting point – I have started to move, to liberate myself from being locked in unconscious identification with a part of me, into the healing dynamics of the whole of me; I have made the shift from being a passive receiver of the effect of my life, into being the active co-creator of its meaning for me. And then real healing can start.

'Dear friends,' said my mentor, Dr Rudolf Steiner, to his early students in 1910, at the end of the course of lectures in which he established the new science of Psychosophy¹ (on which Philophonetics-Counselling is based). 'You have identified yourself with a movement in which your store of knowledge can increase if you think of your present knowledge as a karmic fact.' This has always been the hallmark of true spiritual development: knowledge starts from self-knowledge.

Taking an active interest in the direct experience of now is an act of simple courage. All our instinctive alarm bells of early warning, all our entrenched ancient defence mechanisms, all our natural instinctive repulsion from the prospect of pain, will attempt to divert our attention from confronting the depth of our experience in the moment. They are originally designed for basic physical survival of the

species, not for the development of the inner life.

Only now we live in a time when the two collide, when healing can increasingly be only found in a context of an active path of inner awakening to the depth of ourselves. It is our destiny as human beings to gradually come to know ourselves – it is probably what we are here for.

We will not survive neglecting this task. I may periodically go astray and lose the plot, but I can always start anew with very simple steps, like stopping in my tracks for a moment in order to listen to the experience of my feeling life, in my living body *now*, which is a part and parcel of eternity.

In praise now as a part of eternity, in a great moment of transcending the moment for a moment, I wrote the following poem:

Eternity

*I am a member of my own eternity
Now, and for all times
And all these moments which I thought
Are passing, ending, dropping and
therefore
Are not eternal –
Are,
Now and forever
Resounding growing points on the tips of
The branches of my ever being
Tree of eternity
And they do count, and are not passing
But are full members, inwardly connected
To I
Who am the end of the world as I know it
And the beginning of the world as I be it
Now and for all times to come
From ever to ever, now included
Always.
And to acknowledge the eternal dignity
Of this being-moment
Now
Has the sweet smell of the good green
fields of
Homecoming
As I return
Be turned
In-turn
To
From
Eternity.*

Blessings on your now.

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¹ Psychosophy is a psychology based on Spiritual Science or Anthroposophy, founded by Rudolf Steiner in 1910. It incorporates within its basic view of the human being the Physical, the Life, the Soul and the Spiritual dimension of human existence.

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