

Nature Inspired Presence Reflections



Evita Ochel

Written and created by
Evita Ochel

www.evitaochel.com

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Introduction

From the moment that we are born into this seemingly-physical reality, we begin to interact with life within the confines of time and space. There is a now, and there is a past and future. The significance and potential of life, however, is only and always in the now. The past and future are only reference points that can provide limited guidance for our life journey. What we have done instead, is enabled the past and future to be our driving forces, giving little priority to the present. Our lives seem to be perpetual moments of things that passed and things to come. But what about that which is, right now?

Living in the past either leaves us longing for or regretting that which was. Living in the future either leaves us hoping for or fearing that which may come. Neither of these two states of living create inner peace. Instead, they bring out our attachments and fears and lead to an array of internal turmoil. Inner peace can only be found in the present moment. If your life revolves around the past, of what was, choices made and not made, the baggage of energies you carry with you commonly include yearning, remorse, guilt, shame, anger, and resentment. Each of these is destructive to our health and wellbeing. If your life revolves around the future, of what will be and possible outcomes to come, the baggage of energies you carry with you commonly include worry, anxiety, uncertainty, insecurity, and fear. Each of these is destructive to our health and wellbeing. Most of us lead lives that oscillate between living in the past and future, bypassing the central now.

In our avoidance of the present moment we are sabotaging our own joy, health, and wellbeing. Life only happens in the now, and when we neglect to engage presently we are essentially cutting ourselves off from life. It is no surprise therefore that people are often taken aback by all the weeks, months, and years that have gone by, as if vanishing into thin air. Too many people go through their whole lives in anticipation of the future, only to be filled with regret when that illusory future arrives. With our mind in some past or future illusion, we miss the now. *We miss out on our lives.* We dismiss our own potential and empowerment. We have no power in the past or future; we only have power in the now.

The past creates victims and survivors. The future alluringly promises to be our savior. Yet our healing and salvation can only be found in the present moment. You don't need any special ritual, person, or occasion to release all that heavy energetic baggage that you carry with you. This is one of the most powerful aspects of the now. You and I can choose to release anything and everything simply by being present. Whether it is related to your health, finances, relationships, or what have you, the healing transformation is here, right now, right in front of you. You simply have to choose it. By switching our awareness to the present, we free ourselves to truly live.

Our journey of liberation, self-realization, and self-actualization begins with presence. We cannot realize our full human potential or life potential while operating in a state of past or future; we must operate from a state of presence. But how do we achieve this? While there are many practices that can help us cultivate more presence, like meditation or yoga, as mentioned above being present starts with a choice. Unless and until you and I make that choice, change will not happen; we will continue to sabotage our life potential.

A discussion about cultivating presence would be incomplete, however, without addressing the role of nature. What can nature teach us about presence? Everything.

Nature is our perfect role model, our wisest guide, and clearest example when it comes to understanding presence. Everything in nature has its time and purpose. Nothing dwells on the past or worries about the future. The spring does not anticipate the summer, nor does the winter yearn for the autumn. Each plant, fungi, and creature interacts with the moment to the fullness of its potential. Notice that this does not mean living irresponsibly, without any cares or preparation to adequately meet one's needs. Every being intuitively knows what needs to be done when it is presently connected. There is a time for work and a time for play. There is an unspoken understanding about the interconnectedness of all things. Everything in nature exists with meaning and efficiency; nothing is wasted or unwanted.

Nature teaches us to trust that we will always be provided with what we need in the moment of. Nature teaches us to see clearly and feel fully, providing a rich experience for our inner and outer being. Nature teaches us that balance is at the core of life; it is not about any *bad* or *good*, *right* or *wrong*, but simply about balance. The balance we can strike in our lives between the past and the future resides for us in the now. Therein lies the opportunity for change and renewal, for healing and transformation. Nature teaches us about acceptance of what is, where as our human behavior is all too often programmed to *resist what is*. When we align ourselves to presence, we begin to understand the purpose for all things and have an easier time releasing judgements. Nature shows us the way.

As you may have already guessed, my inspiration for creating this book has come directly from nature—my main and trusted teacher. I am continually reminded by nature to not only live with a reverence for the present moment, but to live fully, releasing any regrets and anticipations. By doing so I enter deeper states of being and dimensions of existence. These are available to each and every one of us, but their doors can only be opened via the present moment. When our lives revolve around the present moment, we experience a deeper sense of peace and wellbeing. Everything benefits: from our work and creativity, to our health and relationships. This is also why I want to share this gift with you.

This ebook will provide for you 21 visual and written reflections to inspire a deeper sense of presence in your life. I invite you to take in one reflection per day for three weeks, and perhaps use each one as an opening to a personal meditation or contemplation session. Imagine how much transformation can arise within you and your life if you can commit to giving yourself at least 15 minutes of complete presence each day for 3 weeks. You can use these to start your day, or to end your day, or really at any time you like. The most important thing is to put this book to use. It is nice when we read something that inspires us but not much will change, if anything, unless we put it into practice.

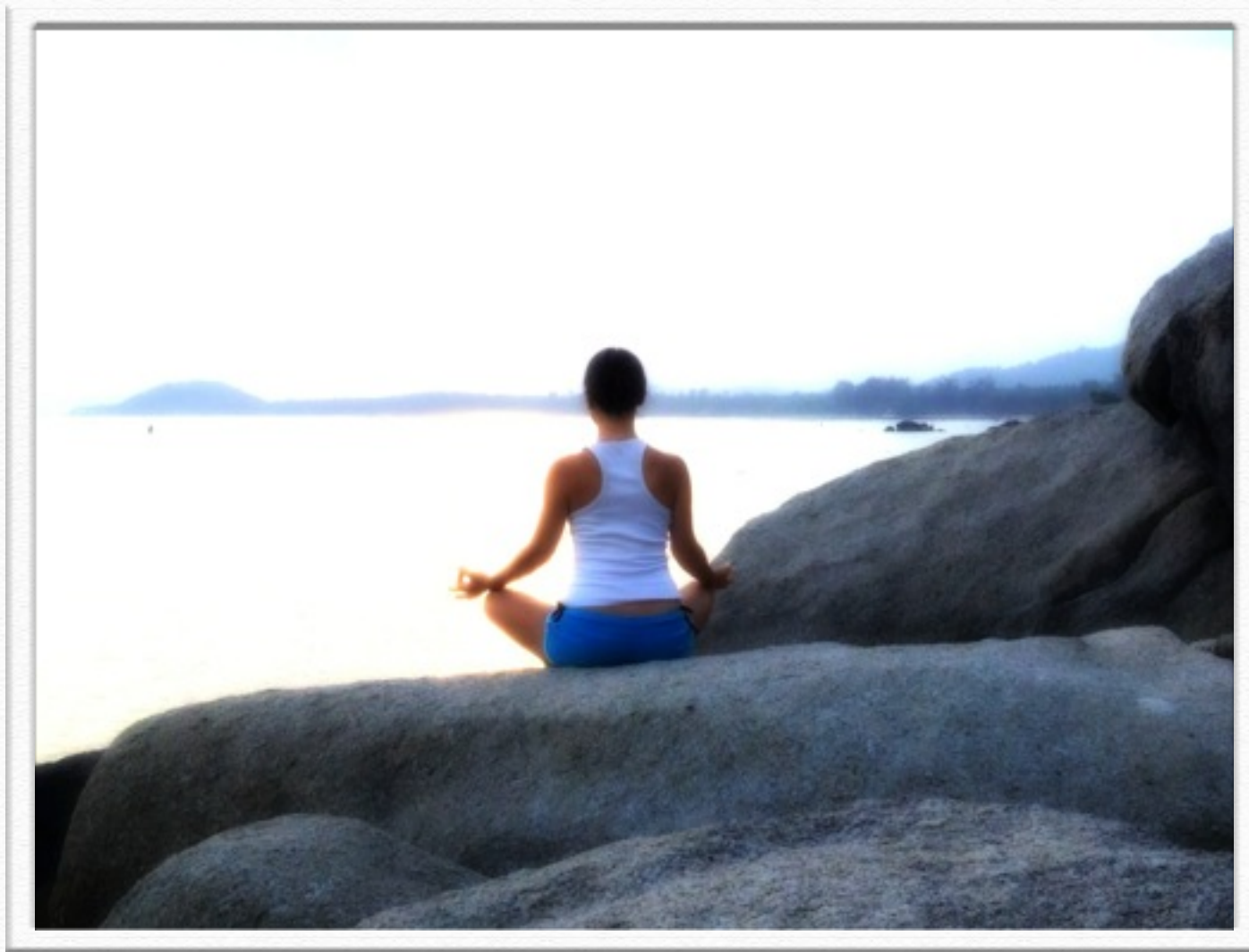
I hope the words and images found on the following pages will serve as a gateway to cultivating your personal practice of presence and lead you to live more mindfully in every area of your life—each of your thoughts, words, and actions. I trust that they will trickle into the essence of your entire being to infuse a greater sense of joy, inner peace, and wellbeing. Remember that the answers we seek are always within, but as long as we are lost in the past or future they will always evade us. Life is here and now.

Part 1: Present to Yourself

“How present you are
reflects how alive you are.”

—Evita Ochel

Present to the Mind



It is only through the thorough examination of our mind that we come to know our true selves.

Our minds dictate how we express ourselves over the course of our lives. Everything you think, say, and do or don't has a deep mental component. Our minds operate based on our thoughts, beliefs, and perceptions, which in turn influence our emotions. We often hold the idea that these are beyond our control, but that is not quite the case. After all, if you are not in charge of your thoughts and emotions, then who is?

It is thus not the external world but your mind that will create your *heaven* or your *hell*. Going through life without an examination of our mind's contents is like traveling on this planet without a map. Sometimes you'll like where you end up and other times you won't. There must be a better way to traverse the landscape of life, than to do it so haphazardly. And there is. The answer lies in presence.

The more we make being present to our mind a priority, and part of our daily life, the more we are enabled to know and understand why we think, speak, or act the way we do in response to external stimuli. We become aware of our self-talk, of our mind's rumination patterns, and the habitual programming we so often operate from. We begin to see what is in alignment with our needs and desires, and what is sabotaging our joy, inner peace, and wellbeing.

Affirmation:

I prioritize presence to consciously examine the contents of my mind.

Present to the Body



The body reflects the contents of the mind.

Our bodies are in constant communication with us. But are we listening? Every single tension, pain, or discomfort is part of the body's language and balancing system. Nothing is random. Every occurrence that we call a *symptom* or *disease* has a meaning and connection to what is happening on the level of our mind. It may not always be easy to be present to our mind, but it is hard not to notice physical discomfort. Unfortunately our culture has conditioned us to dismiss and silence the language of the body. We are quick to suppress symptoms but as long as the root cause is not addressed, the body will find other channels of expression to get our attention.

The body's communication system should not be feared or resented. It should be cherished, as it can help us navigate through life to know when we are living in alignment with our truths and needs, and when we aren't. Our minds are very clever; they can tell us anything we want to hear, even when it is not true. Our body, however, will never lie. It is always forthright in presenting the state of our inner selves.

Be present to your body. Listen to what it is asking of you and what it is telling you. This also applies to how you handle food, drinks, fresh air, exercise, rest, play, etc. The more present we are to the body, the more we benefit from effective prevention and healing to enjoy optimal health and wellbeing on a physical, mental, and emotional level.

Affirmation:

I honor my health by listening to my body and supporting its need adequately.

Present to the Spirit



We come to know that we are more than the mind
and the body when we are present to our spirit.

When we are born and throughout the first years of our childhood, we are connected to the greater nature of our being. It takes time to learn that there is a body and mind that we are attached to during our physical incarnations. As time proceeds, and begins to rule the course of our life, we begin to operate as if we were the body and/or the mind, forgetting the larger part of who we are. With every year of our life, many new attachments are formed and old attachments become stronger. Our identities begin to revolve around our physical appearance, our job titles, our financial worth, our relationships, etc. We have lost the innocence of our childhood years.

Yet upon deeper reflection and introspection we learn that we are not our bodies and are not our minds. Neither are we our roles, titles, or appearances. We are so much more! In order to tap into that *more* though, we must connect with the present moment. For only by being present can we experience the deeper nature of our presence.

It has been shared that the Buddha came to know the unbound nature of being by observing the body and mind with full presence and mindfulness. This is available to each of us. When we provide opportunities to experience ourselves beyond space and time, we *feel* the broader nature of who we are: Consciousness, Energy, Spirit!

Affirmation:

I nurture my being by nurturing my spirit.

Present to Love



Love is our nature when we release
the illusions of time and space.

The use of the word *love*, as we all know, has been given many meanings, weights, and most predominantly *conditions*. We tell our kids we *love* them when they are “good”. We share our *love* with our partners when they act as we desire. We show other people *love* when they reflect some aspect that we deem to be good or desirable. All of this puts constraints on love—on who we are—and limits our greatest potential.

We therefore often apply the word *unconditional* to accompany love in order to emphasize its higher nature. It is indeed only when we detach love from the illusions of time and space that we begin to experience its fullness. Most love is attached to some time and space: expectations related to the past or future. We want someone to be somewhere, to do something, at some time in order for us to be pleased. Suffering seems to follow all too rapidly when these expectations are not met.

When we release the illusions of the past or future, and engage presently, it is then that we can begin to embody the true nature of love—our true nature. When we choose presence we dissolve expectations; resentments and anticipations lose their hold over us. We are liberated *to be, to love, and to be the love*.

Affirmation:

I choose presence to experience the highest nature of love and myself.

Present to Joy



We allow life to surprise and delight us
when we are present to what is.

How joy-filled is your life? This is an important question to honestly consider and answer for ourselves. For most of us, joy is a transient state, attached to some future moment that promises to be better in some way than the present. Day in and day out, so many of us attempt to derive joy from some future or past event, dependent on some aspect of the external. Yet we will not find true, deeply fulfilling or sustainable joy there.

True, deep-seeded joy can only be experienced in the now, and from within. What is it about ourselves that blocks this expression? Are we too busy to notice? Too busy to cultivate meaningful joy in our lives? In truth, there isn't much for us to do, other than to get out of our own way. Life can be synonymous with joy, but this is often impossible to perceive or experience as long as our minds operate from a past or future state of being.

The Universe has no agenda other than to support us. Allow yourself to be nurtured by being present, to notice the miracles and marvels of this moment, just as it is. Allow yourself to be surprised and delighted beyond your wildest imaginings. In order to do this though, we must transcend the limitations of the mind—the limitations of the past and future. Give yourself the permission to be present to the potential of all that is and all the joy that resides within, just waiting to be expressed and experienced.

Affirmation:

I give myself permission to express and experience unlimited joy.

Present to the Child Within



A state where all things are possible exists,
but it can only be accessed by the young at heart.

There is no rule in life that demands that we increase our suffering and decrease our fulfillment as we age, yet too many of us follow it willingly. We use our years of experience against ourselves, rather than adapt our choices with each present moment. We take with us unnecessary baggage from the past. But take a moment to think back to a time in childhood, a time when seeing a butterfly would provide an immense amount of joy and fulfillment. That feeling, that state is available to us always, regardless of our circumstances, we just have to choose to connect with the child within.

Embodying a child-like state does not mean being naive, it means being connected. It means embodying a sense of wonder, awe, and hope. It means infusing a sense of innocence that holds the potential to see things as they are, brand new, without holding them in the light of past experiences, judgments, or perceptions.

Chinese Confucian philosopher, Mencius, stated: "Great is the human who has not lost his childlike heart." Many sages and teachers have shared similar wisdom through the ages. There is a child within each one of us. Time may reshape our bodies and minds many times over, but the child within is timeless and present for us in every moment.

Affirmation:

I nurture the child within by acknowledging its presence and needs.

Present to Your Purpose



A life purpose is not something to be found;
it is something to be lived.

It is all too common in our society to hear the reference to *finding one's life purpose*. When we observe this idea with conscious awareness, you will notice that it is referring to some future state. This leaves us in a state of wanting and striving to be somewhere where we are not; to have something that we don't seem to have right now. It can easily leave us feeling empty, unfulfilled, confused, or lost.

Yet our life purpose is here and now, always with us. Our life purpose in this physical form is simply to experience life, and we can only do that when we are present. We do not need to put onto ourselves illusory pressures and structures of what we should accomplish in any given lifetime, or within any given timeframe of our particular incarnation. Yes, you may become a parent or a business owner, or build homes for the needy, or write books. These are all nice, but they are not your life purpose. They are simply expressions of yourself in any given moment. And there is an infinite abundance of how we can each choose to express and experience ourselves at any given time!

The more we connect with this moment, the here and now, the more fully we live. And the more fully we live, the richer our life becomes. The present moment ushers a state of mindfulness. We no longer look for our life purpose, we become our life purpose.

Affirmation:

I honor my life purpose by living fully, living mindfully, and living presently.

Part 2: Present to Others

“The most valuable present that you can offer another is your presence.”

—Evita Ochel

Present to Partnerships



If you choose another to join your life journey,
journey with them to join life.

A partnership can mean many things to us throughout our lives. It can take the form of a short dating experience to a multi-decade marriage. We may open ourselves up to one partner in our life or many partners throughout our life. The form each partnership takes can be expressed in an abundance of ways; no rules, only possibilities. And while we can choose to never partner with anyone, there is a certain advantage that partnerships offer: the gift of the clearest self reflection. Partnerships provide the opportunity to see our true nature as it is, not as we think it to be. You and your partner reflect each other.

To attain this gift however, we require presence. You see, as long as we live in a partnership outside of the present moment, we miss this reflection and project our illusions onto our partner and partnership. Over time, this can poison partnerships. It is only when we are able to see and know ourselves clearly, to see our partner as they really are, not as we want them to be that we can appropriately nurture our partnership.

By being present to what is, we align ourselves with life to experience the full potential of our partnerships. The highest quality partnerships, those with most joy, ease, and effective learning, are those where both partners are present to journeying together for the purpose of conscious co-creation and personal evolution.

Affirmation:

I honor myself by being present to my partner.

Present to Children



The most valuable way to cherish and benefit a young being is through presence.

People often wonder why the world is in the state that it is when it comes to the amount of pain and suffering on both personal and collective levels. Yet when we examine the roots of the pain, fears and traumas that we live with or inflict on each other, they consistently lead back to our childhoods. This is not about laying parental blame, but about taking collective responsibility as a society. Our conditional love and non-present living is evident within each one of us and has done enough harm on this planet.

Whether you have children or ever choose to have children is not relevant here. What is relevant is that we each were once a child and we come into contact with various children throughout our lives. We can heal our past wounds with presence and we can also prevent many wounds in the children with whom we have the privilege to interact.

When we are in the company of children, we can choose to be present or to be elsewhere. If we choose the latter, we increase the chances of saying and doing things that can impart emotional wounds, which then reverberate throughout our entire society. If we choose the former, we give that child the most meaningful and valuable gift—presence. Each individual desires and deserves to be seen and heard; a child is no exception. In fact, as beings *in-form-ation*, they deserve an increased level of presence.

Affirmation:

I honor each child with my presence and conscious choice of words and actions.

Present to Parents



For better or for worse, each parent plays a transformational role in their child's life.

To get to this moment of your life, like all of us, you had someone whom you considered your parent, guardian, or primary caregiver. Perhaps this person or persons are still in your life and perhaps they are not. The gift that their presence offers is timeless. We may not always resonate with our 'parents', we may not see eye to eye, but their role in each of our lives is sacred. For better or for worse they have had one of the most influential effects on us and this is reflected in the person we are today.

For those of us who have had constructive interactions with our parents, may we always be grateful and appreciative for that. However, may we also remember that we are not our parents, and whether they are with us or not, we are whole and complete to navigate through this life on our own. For those of us who have had destructive interactions, may we always remember that healing happens in the present via a choice.

If your parents are still in your life, you can drastically change the quality of your interactions by being present. They are not the same people they were when you were a child; allow yourself to see them for who they are today. If your parents are no longer in your life be mindful of not pining for the past or resenting the past; it is no longer here. What is here is the present moment, which always provides the inner peace we seek.

Affirmation:

I am present to seeing all the gifts that my parent's presence has bestowed upon me.

Present to Siblings



When we see everyone as our brother or sister
we align ourselves with the oneness of all life.

Although many of us have familial brothers or sisters, tapping into the fullest potential of this reflection requires for us to transcend our genetic relations. In this lifetime a certain being may have played the role of your brother or sister, in another it was someone else. As long as we stay attached to each other's roles and titles, we unnecessarily limit each others expression. This includes our own.

Everyone has the potential to be your brother and sister. Who you allow yourself to see in such roles depends only on the perceptions you choose. From a past perspective you may have grown up with a certain group of individuals, but from a present perspective each being has the option to have or not have an intimate connection with you. The present moment allows each of us to choose whose energetic frequency is most in alignment with our present self. All too often it is only through illusory past or future expectations that we lock ourselves and others down into certain states of being.

The more you choose to be present, the more you allow yourself and each individual to express and experience the fullness of who they came here to be. Bless each person that you may have called a sibling, honor their path and role in your life, but be mindful of not locking them into an outdated vision. Get to know each being fully with presence.

Affirmation:

I have brothers and sisters as far and wide as my heart can see.

Present to Coworkers



When we appreciate the talents of others,
we enrich our own being.

Who do you work with? Who do you consider to be your coworkers? If you have a traditional job, these questions will be easy to answer. If not, the answers may not be so obvious, however each one of us works with someone. As a sole business owner, you may interact with clients or service providers. As a stay-at-home parent, you may interact with other family members or teachers. Each of us works with someone in order to accomplish the tasks that we deem to be important to us.

In any references to work, it is all too easy to get caught up in a task-oriented mindset. In such a state, our thoughts, words, and actions are projected onto a future state of being. Measurable and conceptual results such as sales, growth, and success are always measured against the past or future; little is left for the present. In such a mindset and environment, it can be easy to overlook the efforts and talents of others: your coworkers.

The more presence we infuse into our work, the more we are able to tap into each person's highest potential, as well as our own. We are less likely to jump to erroneous conclusions or choose destructive states of being. We are more likely to be effective and choose constructive states of being. In such a state and environment we all benefit.

Affirmation:

I respect the talents and efforts of each of my coworkers.

Present to Friendships



There is magic and great comfort
in being heard and understood.

One of the most valuable gifts that we can give ourselves and others are friendships. Unlike familial connections, the choice to choose who we wish to surround ourselves with is fully unbound. May we never take this for granted. Friendships can offer us rich foundations for personal discovery, self growth, and evolution. And like all things, friendships will come and go. When we are present to what is, we allow each one to enter and exit with grace and gratitude, rather than expectation and resentment.

To cultivate any high quality relationship requires presence. Each one of us is constantly changing, morphing, and evolving. By being present we can honor these changes in ourselves and each other. When we do this, we are best aligned to helping another, as well as aligning ourselves with the energetic signatures that match ours. We do no one a favor by trying to force a friendship or connection that is out of our resonance.

Therefore be present to each of your friendships. Observe mindfully from your present vantage point how you can nurture and best support each one. Release expectations and give of yourself freely. But honor and love yourself and the other enough to release a connection when its time has come. The present moment will always guide lovingly.

Affirmation:

I cherish my friendships by nurturing them with utmost presence.

Present to Animal Companions



Each being deserves to live a fulfilling life
based on love, joy, and respect.

Many of us share our lives with furry, feathery, or scaly family members. Each of these beings can play a transformational, and often healing, role in our life. That is if we are present to the opportunities their presence provides us with. There is no coincidence as to the time and place in which any animal makes its presence in our life. Many cultures have even examined the depth and meaning of the messages our animal friends bring.

In our day-to-day comings and goings we may often take their presence for granted. We may not realize how much of a toll our lifestyle takes on them when it is unbalanced. Remember that everything has an energetic frequency and our energies impact and influence each other. Animals, thanks to their greater ability to naturally connect with being and present moment living, therefore have a higher vibration and natural alignment to life. This is part of the reason why we feel so good in their company.

Beyond our homes, animals are all around us. Even if they do not directly share our life with us, they always have an indirect presence. The more present we are, the more we make connections between all of our choices and actions with respect to all animals. You and I have the power within to enable all animals to live liberated and fulfilling lives. It is not about what was or what will be but about what we each can do right now.

Affirmation:

I choose to act with reverence and compassion for all the animals on this planet.

Present to Strangers



The eyes may see divisive boundaries,
yet the heart only sees unifying love.

Unless we lead very solitary lives, each day we come into contact with numerous individuals. From the public transit driver to the cashier at your grocery store, there are numerous beings who touch our lives, and whose lives we touch, daily. While we cannot control what others say or do, we can always control our choice of words and actions. To do so, however, requires present moment awareness.

Imagine: in every interaction, you and I have the power to positively influence the life of another, and it doesn't take much. Often a genuine smile, an acknowledgment of presence via a simple hello, or a heartfelt thank-you goes a long way. We don't know the details of people's lives, especially when or if we consider them to be strangers but regardless what happened to them before or after our interaction with us, we can infuse love, joy, radiance, compassion, kindness, and care into our present moment with them.

Commit today to being more present with every person you meet or come into contact with. Take that moment to look into their eyes, to sense their spirit, to feel their energy. Take that moment to consciously connect and allow them to know that they have been seen. It is such a small step and takes so little effort, but it will have a profound effect.

Affirmation:

I take time to positively influence each being I have the privilege of interacting with.

Part 3: Present to Nature

“The magnificence of nature is always present
to all those who are present to it.”

—Evita Ochel

Present to Perspective



We will always see things the same way,
until we change our perspective.

The irony of life is that nothing is as it seems; everything is as we choose to see it. Do not overlook the simplicity of that statement. It is not meant to be cryptic, it means exactly what it says. We each translate our reality through our perceptions. We may think that we are all looking at the same thing or experiencing the same thing, but in reality we are each experiencing our unique reality. This is why, as I shared with you in an earlier reflection, we each hold the power to create our own heaven or hell anytime.

As we traverse through life, yes, there will be challenges. The secret of self-realized or self-actualized enlightened beings is not that they never face challenges again. It is that they understand that it is their perception that drives the meaning of every experience. Sometimes we may hear the reference to someone being an optimist or a pessimist. In truth though, we are all realists, because reality is always in the eye of the beholder. What is impossible for one is not for another, and vice versa. Therefore be mindful of what advice you dispense to others; may it uplift not tear down people's realities.

As we give more priority to presence in our life, we are enabled to be more conscious of the perceptions we choose to hold about any person, place, event, or experience. Once we are aware, we then also hold the power to change those perceptions accordingly.

Affirmation:

I am present to choose perceptions that are for my highest good.

Present to Wonder



If all of the great mysteries were solved,
we would lose the gift of wonder.

In our information-oriented and technology-focused world it is easy to get caught up in details and specifics. With a few simple clicks, most of us can find the answers today to pretty much any question we have. While this opens doors to greater knowledge, it can also make us very complacent when it comes to the natural wonder of life.

The good news, if you choose to see it as such, is that there are some things for which answers cannot easily be provided for. The answers to many questions, especially those that relate to the deeper workings of life and nature, can only be felt, sensed or experienced. When we are children, we have a natural sense of wonder about us. We sense and experience life at a much richer degree than most adults. As we grow up, this tends to diminish within us, mainly due to our decreased sense of connection with life.

However, we can get that connection back anytime we choose. We can cultivate awe and wonder anytime! As wonderful and capable as our mind is, it has its limitations; ones that do not apply to our heart/soul/spirit. The mind has to be trained to be present; the soul is naturally present. And it is in these sacred moments of presence that we can sense and feel the wonder of life in everyone and everything that surrounds us.

Affirmation:

I am open to wonder and marvel the beauty and nature of life.

Present to Appreciation



Each of our senses is rejuvenated when we allow ourselves to fully experience all that is.

It is no secret that that which we appreciate flourishes, and that which we depreciate, or ignore, falls apart. This goes for all things, whether they are physical objects or emotional connections. Appreciation is one of the most effective methods for infusing positive energy into anything that we care about. However, unless appreciation already comes natural to us, it requires focused presence. In order to appreciate something, we need to be present enough to see it or sense it first.

Appreciation is also one of the most powerful tools we have at our disposal with which to change our state of being. Nine things out of ten may have not gone the way you hoped, but appreciating the one that did instantly changes our demeanor. This, as you can imagine, also has incredibly positive effects on our health and wellbeing.

Through appreciation we can also chip away at outdated perspectives that keep us stuck in limited states of seeing, and being. Appreciation coupled with perspective is a powerful combination. When we add presence to this combo, we amplify our potential to be effective participants in the creation of our own lives. We transcend the archetypes of victimhood and empower ourselves to live fully, appreciating what is, and not dwelling on what was. From this point on, we begin to heal and transform our life.

Affirmation:

I am present to experience appreciation in my life on all levels.

Present to Diversity



We are unique individuations of one whole.

We are one. How often have we heard this phrase, especially over the last few years? It has become quite a popular sentiment. While it speaks the truth with regards to our common connection, it is also one of the most misunderstood and feared statements. Too many people interpret that 'we are one' means that we are all the same, or we need to all be the same in how we think, act, etc. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Diversity is the essence of life. When we look towards nature we see the incredible variety that is present. No two flowers are identical, no two creatures or trees or clouds. Yes, we may all come from the same source of creation, but we are in no way the same. The reason, in fact, that we can have wonder and appreciation is thanks to diversity. Therefore, we need not be threatened by that which is different from us. There are so many possible forms through which creation can express itself. Let's celebrate them all!

When we engage in present moment observation of ourselves, others, and our natural world, we begin to see the incredible gift that each uniqueness is. Allow yourself to honor the infinite expressions of being. None is better or worse than any other; each holds a sacred place and purpose in the realm of existence. Our only task is to be present enough to see that sacred purpose and appreciate its incredible presence.

Affirmation:

I celebrate diversity through my own being and that of all life.

Present to Exploration



Curiosity didn't kill the cat, it evolved it.

While we can easily get answers today, this is of little use if we don't first pose the preceding questions. For millennia, and to a large degree to this day, we were told what to think and how things are according to other people's views and interpretations of reality. Questioning was frowned upon. Even leading edge scientists of antiquity often got themselves into trouble for proposing questions and answers that were not popular with the status quo. Slowly, those tables are turning and we are encouraged to question.

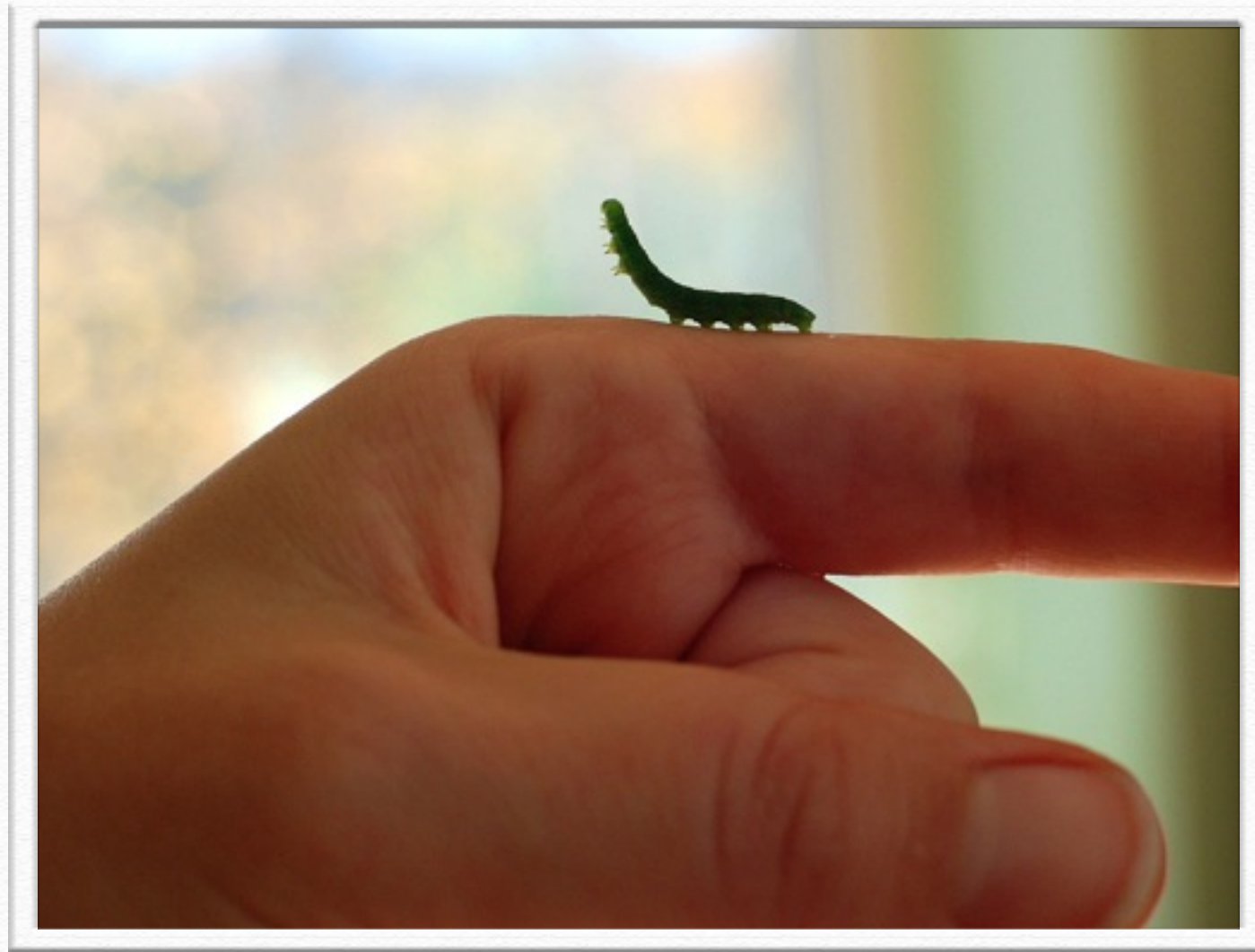
While information can open for us gateways to new ways of being and seeing, there is something even more powerful than it. This being, experience. We need to question to know, but we need to explore to experience. However, as long as we are operating from conditioned paradigms that govern the majority of our lives, we dismiss the opportunity for exploration. Yet it provides the most powerful data for us, as it turns the conceptual into the real and practical. Exploration allows us to turn theory into reality.

Explore with presence new ways of thinking, being, feeling, working, playing, eating! Give yourself permission to explore. Mobilize your courage to look beyond the status quo, to look outside the familiar, and into the potential and possibility of the unknown. Our personal and collective evolution depends on exploration, not stagnation.

Affirmation:

I allow myself to question and explore the nature of reality.

Present to Reverence



Nothing is too small to be significant
when presence is abound.

All of nature is sacred. Every animate and inanimate creation serves a purpose and allows the universal energy of consciousness to permeate through it via its unique expressions. This world of diverse beings is waiting to be seen and felt, explored, and experienced. How deep and how far we go will depend on our level of presence.

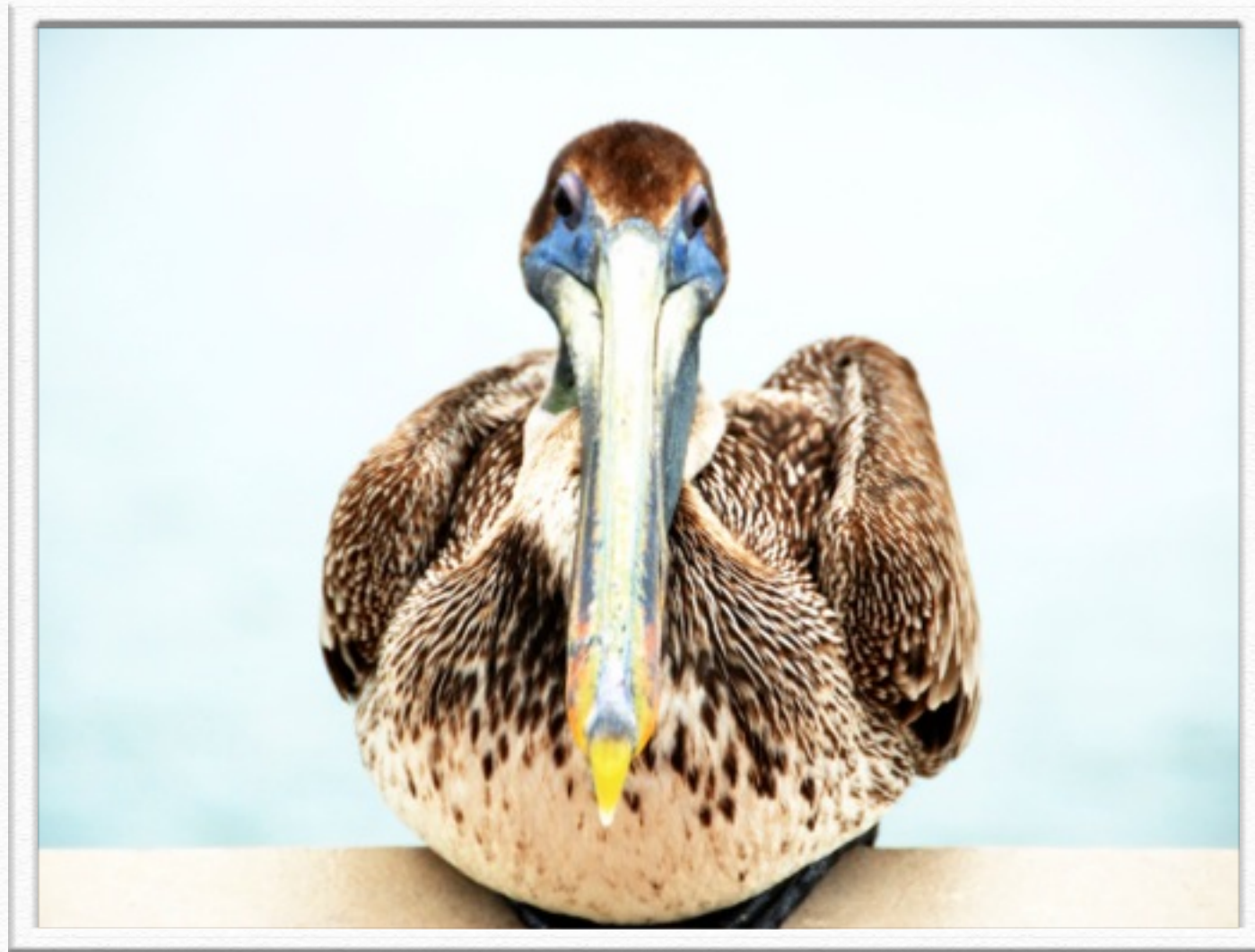
If our minds are operating from past or future states, we are not here to experience the fullness of this moment. We can only grasp a small fraction of what is around us, and even then the experience is very superficial. It is easy in such states to dismiss and disregard the incredible richness and variety that is nature. It is easy to adopt a state of superiority as the mind convinces us that the workings of our mind and all of our "to-do's" are what really matters. Everything else is just a bunch of unnecessary details that often only get in the way. This brings about the illusion that we are separate from nature.

When we are present to reverence, we open ourselves up to experience a high regard, respect, admiration, and appreciation for all parts of nature. From the tiniest critter to the grandest mountain, nothing is overlooked. In such a state, we are not only present to life, but we are in awe of it all. We also understand that we are no bigger or smaller, better or worse, but simply one part of the whole. And we stand in oneness with nature.

Affirmation:

I honor every life form for I am a part of them, and they of me.

Present to Presence



What was, need not judge what is; every moment provides an opportunity for a fresh start.

We hear a lot more about the importance of presence today, this book included, but are we listening? As with any vital message, the effectiveness is only as good as its level of application. With our minds today being so overwhelmed by so much noise and information and planetary turmoil, it is easy to lose sight of what really matters. Add to that a mind overcome by thoughts, worries, and anxieties of the past and future and we have little left with which to experience the presence and fullness of life. It is easy, in the busy-ness of the mind to overlook the significance of presence.

Yet it is only in the here and now that we can access our deepest fulfillment, joy, and inner peace. It is only in this moment that we have the power to elicit effective change. We have no power in the past or future. This is why those two states are amongst the main reasons for our suffering. They bring about the illusion that we are victims with uncertain fates. It is only when we seize the power of presence that we realize that we are capable beings, powerful beyond our grasp to be, do, and have all that we need.

So will you say yes to yourself right now, say yes to being more present? It is in truth one of the most valuable gifts we can ever give ourselves. And when we share presence with others, one of the most valuable gifts we can ever give them. Give this gift abundantly!

Affirmation:

I honor my presence by being present.

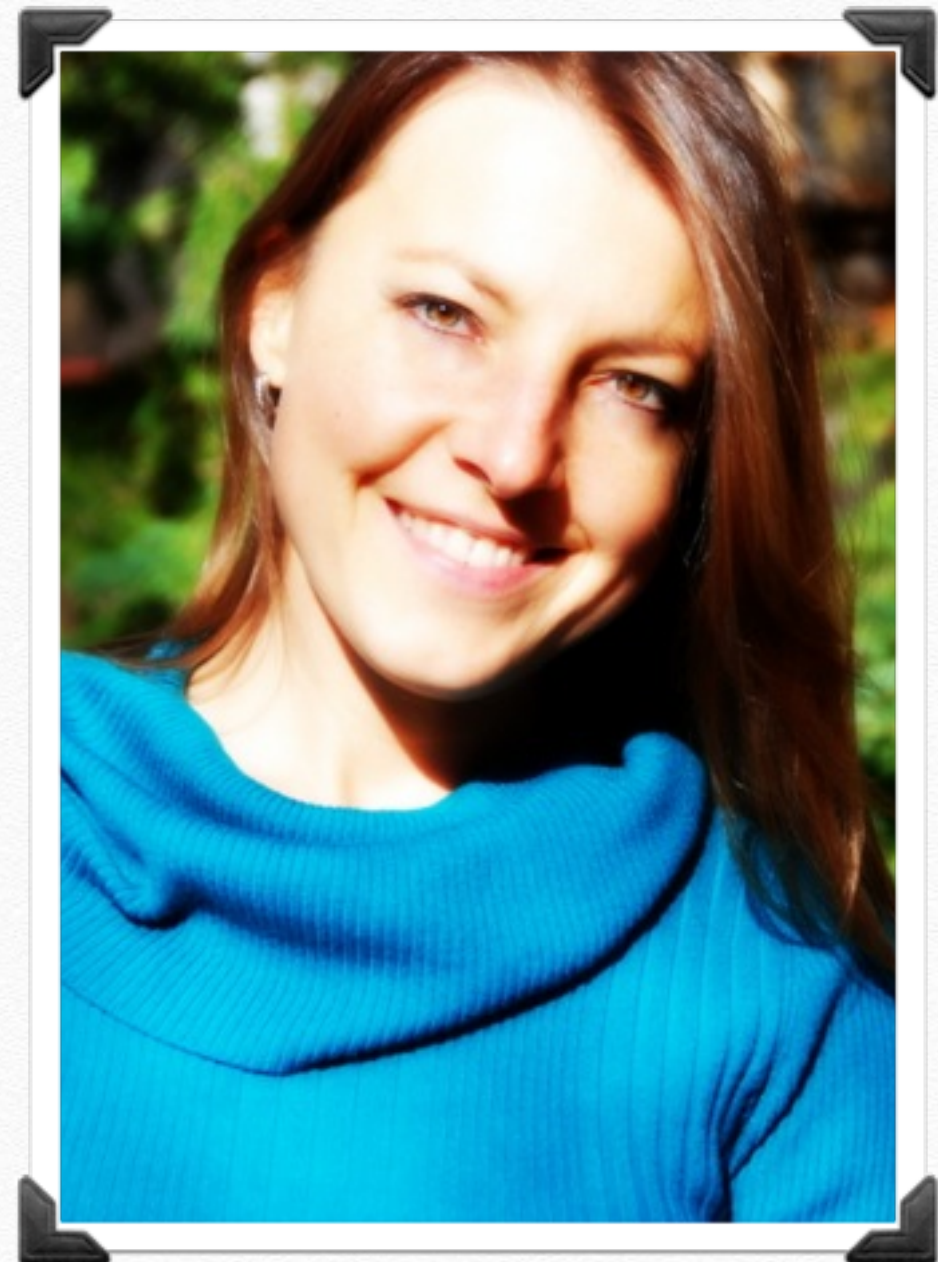
About the Author

Evita Ochel is a consciousness expansion teacher, writer, speaker, holistic nutritionist, yoga and meditation teacher, and web TV host. She is the author of the book *Healing & Prevention Through Nutrition*, and hundreds of articles on mind-body-spirit topics. She is also the creator of the *Healthytarian* lifestyle for the wellbeing of the mind, body and spirit, and the EBTv online video network, which features hundreds of videos to help individuals align with their highest potential.

Her health-oriented teaching focuses on natural, whole, plant-based and organic nutrition for optimal health and longevity. Her spirit-oriented teaching focuses on consciousness expansion and heart-centered living for optimal joy and inner peace.

Her teachings inspire and empower audiences worldwide to be the change they wish to see.

To learn more about her work, visit: EvitaOchel.com



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