



## Focus: Inner Redirection & Balance

### 3 Steps On The Way To Peace Of Mind

Recently I oftentimes heard people say one of the following two sentences: "I just want to arrive" and "I just want to be satisfied and happy". Both sentences basically include the wish for peace of mind or inner silence. However, oftentimes this wish is connected with things in the outside. Some people try for example to find some silence during their holiday where job life stops for a while. Others try to find some peace in spending a fulfilling time with certain people. Again others try to find peace by practicing yoga, tai chi, meditation or other practices. However, what does it actually mean to find your peace of mind?

The silence that most people know is the one they experience when the sounds and noises around them stop or when they can calm down in the sense of having nothing to do or not having to fulfill seeming commitments. And yet it is interesting that many people can hardly stand the silence that is created by external circumstances. Most of them quickly find something they can finally do. They read a book, do some sports or meet with friends. It is almost a paradox. Many people are longing in these hectic and turbulent times for peace, but as soon as the outer conditions provide this, they get into another mode of doing. This is mainly due to the fact that the outer silence brings the inner restlessness to the surface. When it is silent in the outside, then it happens quickly that a lot of thoughts, memories and emotions on the inside make a lot of noise.

Jiddu Krishnamurti, who was a major Indian philosopher and theosopher described it really well in his book „Freedom from the Known“:

*„The life that we usually live hardly knows aloneness. Even when we are alone it is hassled by so many influences, so much knowledge, so many memories and experiences, so much fear, misery and conflict that our spirit gets more and more dull, numb and falls into a monotonous routine. Are we ever alone? Or do we carry all burdens of yesterday?“*

*There is a rather nice story of two monks wandering from village to village. On their way they pass a young girl that is sitting by at the shore of a river crying. One of the monks approaches her and says: »Sister, why are you crying?« She answers: »Do you see the house over there on the other side of the river? I came this morning and had no difficulties in walking through the river; but now the water has risen and I can't go back; there is no boat.« - »Oh«, the monk says, »that is no problem at all«, and he picks up the girl and carries her across the river and leaves her on the other side. The two monks keep wandering. After two hours the other monk says: »Brother, we have taken the vow to never touch a woman. What you did is an incredible sin. Wasn't it a pleasure for you, an exciting incident to touch a woman?« The other monk answers »I already let her go two hours ago. You are however still carrying her with you.«*

*That's exactly what we do. We constantly carry our burdens around; we never abandon them, we don't leave them behind. Only if we give a problem our full attention and solve it immediately – and not keep it till the next day or the next minute – is there seclusion. Then we are in ourselves*



*alone even if we are living in an overcrowded house or sitting in a bus. And this aloneness testifies to a fresh spirit, to an 'innocent' mind.*

*It is very important to have inner seclusion, inner space; because this means to live in freedom, being unloaded, acting, being weightless. In the end benevolence can only blossom in the wide space, just like virtue can only unfold in freedom. We might have political freedom, but inside we are not free and that's why we don't have inner wideness. No virtue, nothing valuable can arise or grow in us without this wide space in us. Space and silence are necessary, because only if the spirit is alone, uninfluenced, undrilled, no bound by the infinite variety of experiences, it can encounter something completely new."*

How often did you encounter silence in the outside, probably even were alone in nature, but the thoughts raged inside of you? Probably you have also experienced being in bed at night, but not being able to sleep, because so many thoughts were going around in your mind.

In order to find this inner point, where there is just silence - no matter how many people are around you or how big the chaos is – there are 3 steps that can be very helpful:

- 1. Become silent**
- 2. „Take the garbage out“**
- 3. Center yourself and practice attentiveness**

### **Step 1: Become silent**

How often are you really silent? How often are you in a mode in which you don't do anything at all? You simply take time for yourself and for example sit in a comfortable chair, lie on the couch or sit on a beautiful meadow and do... NOTHING. You just sit there. No matter if you sit there with your eyes open or closed, you are just where you are. No book, no mobile phone, no picnic, nothing. You are doing nothing. Just simply are.

Many people take too little time for this in daily life, because they are constantly busy and there are seemingly so many things to do. Probably there is also a voice in you saying "I cannot not do anything!" The interesting question is „Why not?“ Modern society is extremely focused on performance. When somebody is not doing anything, they are called scapegrace or bon vivant. The crux just is that you can hardly find the point of inner silence when you don't get out of this performance thing consciously in between and get out of the doing mode. The first experiment could therefore be to make time for 15 to 30 minutes and do nothing.

This brings us directly to step two, because if you do nothing and it gets silence in the outside, then numerous thoughts might arise in you. That means that your are silent in the outside, but your mind might work full speed.

### **Step 2: Take the garbage out**

Thinking has been given too much meaning in daily life. On the one hand thinking has a meaning for our daily work, where we have to apply it with care, logic and reason. On the other hand the

mind keeps producing thoughts, which we enhance with feelings or old emotions, then form them to opinions, prejudices and stories, of which we then think they are real. Krishnamurti describes this kind of thinking as „*the thinking that is of no value.*” But what do you do with it?

In the movie „Peaceful Warrior“ there is a scene that describes pretty well what to do with the kind of thinking that has no value. In this scene the old, wise man Sokrates says to the young student Dan: “Take the garbage out!” Dan answers: „Take the garbage out yourself.“ Sokrates looks at him and says: „But I am talking about the garbage in your head.“

So it is about taking the thought garbage out of your head in order to open the door to inner peace. How does this work? It starts with observing what you think. You become the observer of your thinking, of your mind. As soon as you start observing, you create a gap between you and your mind. We oftentimes think that we are our thoughts or our mind. However, this is not the case. We are just so much identified with our thinking, our opinions and stories that it actually doesn't occur to us to make a step aside and realize that we are not our mind.

The mind is a useful tool that we can use when we really need it. However, at the same time it is about paying attention what kind of thoughts you actually produce that do not serve you. How often do you for example create so called low drama (i. e. the persecutor-rescuer-victim dynamic) not only in real-time situations with other people, but also in your mind? How often do you have inner conversations with people and “prove it to them” or judge the actions of others? Thoughts that do not serve you usually suck a lot of your energy. The result is mostly that you feel tired or exhausted and especially have no clarity anymore. Then you get stuck in your thoughts and can only function in a monotonous, known daily routine instead of getting an inner clarity about the next step.

Krishnamurti describes it like this: „*If you have the wish to see something clearly, the mind has to be very silent, without prejudices, without chatter, without dialog, without imaginations or pictures – all this has to be put aside so that you can see.*“

It could be painful to admit to yourself when, how often, with whom and what about you create low drama, want to be right, fight, whine or justify yourself. It could also be as painful to observe how often to take over the problems of others and think about them for hours or days. Yet it is exactly this pain that is necessary so that transformation can happen. It starts with observing your thinking and get out of these mechanisms.

### **Step 3: Center yourself and practice attentiveness**

As soon as you eliminated the biggest garbage you will realize that you get more and more energy back. The third step is now about practicing attentiveness with regard to which thoughts, stories and opinions you keep producing in each moment, now and now and now...

Attentiveness is not the same as concentration. Concentration is focusing, is exclusion. Attentiveness on the other hand is overall awareness and doesn't exclude anything. However, we

are oftentimes so occupied by our thoughts, small and big daily problems, our plans or even ambitious goals that we lose attentiveness.

Attentiveness has something to do with immediate presence. You have this kind of attentiveness for example when you there is a snake in your room. You observe every movement of the snake. You are completely awake and react very sensitive to the tiniest sound it makes and each little reaction it shows. You are completely in the now. Such a state of attentiveness is concentrated energy. In this presence your being reacts immediately. You don't think. You can observe a similar kind of presence in martial arts, such as judo or aikido.

Well, you might not want to have a snake in the room to train to get into the attentive mode. This is in fact not necessary. Attentiveness has a lot to do with being centered and grounded. When you are centered, your are present in the here and now and can perceive what is. How do you center yourself? Stand shoulder-wide on your feet, the knees slightly bend. Your physical center holds your body in balance. It is on the height of the belt buckle in the middle of your body.

We have yet another center, the so called being center that starts off in the size of a grapefruit and is movable. After reading the text so far, in which part of our body do you think we usually put our being center during the day? Correct, in the head, because we constantly think. Now look where your energetic center is and then use your intention to put it on the physical center. When the energetic center is on the physical center, then you are centered. Then nothing can knock you down. Then you are present in the very moment. That is exactly the mode you need to make the gap between you and your mind, to observe your thoughts and carefully take the garbage out and not create more of it.

There are certainly other aspects that are useful to find the place inside of you where you have peace of mind, where everything is just fine, where you are clear and the inner noise stops. However on the way to inner peace you will keep encountering these 3 steps.

Have fun experimenting!  
Yours Nicola Neumann-Mangoldt