



CENTER FOR INNER INITIATIVE

a school for inner, spiritual development

The Presence of the Present

“These roses under my window make no reference to former roses or better ones; they are for what they are; they exist with God today. There is no time to them. There is simply the rose, it is perfect in every moment of its existence. But man postpones or remembers, he does not live in the present, but with reverted eye laments the past, or heedless of the riches that surround him, stands on tiptoe to foresee the future. He cannot be happy or strong until he too lives in the Present, above time.”

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

We often want to think or daydream about the future, yet if a light of observation shines into our interior world, this light reveals that the attempt to think about the future is really an attempt to extend the past. It is an attempt to project our old, usual, and ordinary sense of self into some imagined events of the future.

This realization might bring us to an extraordinary conclusion: *The imagined future is an extension of the past.* Unless we make effort in another direction, we take our old sense of self with us wherever we go. This is the real reason why life seems boring and repetitive. It may appear that events in our life are boring and repetitive — but these events are an effect, not a cause. The cause is the sense of self we bring to the events of our life. This is why a change of outer events or a change of outer scenery never ultimately satisfies. Only a change in our interior state can make living interesting.

There’s much talk today about “living in the present.” What’s missing in all this talk is the initiatic understanding that “living in the present” requires something eternally new *within* us doing the *living*. An old sense of self, rooted in past definitions or limiting pictures of our self is not *living*. That sense of self is a corpse made up of the inheritance of our past — and which conditions our imaginings of the future.

We cannot drag a corpse into the present. And this is why “living in the present” is not so easy. It’s the “living” part of this equation that’s critical.

To experience a moment of Presence of the Present requires relinquishing our usual sense of self. In such moments, like The Fool in the Tarot Keys, we are stepping off a cliff. We don't know what will come. We step into the *Un*-knowing — but out of the dead and into the living. We step into the Present as a living Presence within us.