

SOME OF MY FAVOURITE QUOTINGS

- Carl Rogers “The curious paradox is that when I accept myself just as I am, then I can change”
- Krishnamacharya “To act in a yogic way means we attend to what we are doing with impeccable attention. So attentiveness is the fundamental quality. No need for beliefs, simply be attentive to all actions and witness how we perceive things”
- Dr Richard Moss “A rigid identification with the personal ‘me’ causes us to overreact to the events in our lives...individuals of expanded consciousness are no longer exclusively concerned with ‘me’ – they perceive issues differently and thus behave differently.”
- Mark Epstein “Hungry ghosts are phantomlike creatures with withered limbs, grossly bloated bellies and long thin necks...in many ways they represent a fusion of rage and desire. Tormented by unfulfilled cravings and insatiably demanding of impossible satisfactions, the hungry ghosts are searching for gratification for old unfulfilled needs whose time has passed ...these beings, while impossibly hungry and thirsty, cannot drink or eat without causing themselves terrible pain or indigestion... their long, thin throats are so narrow and raw then swallowing produces unbearable burning and irritation...their bloated bellies are in turn unable to digest nourishment; attempts at gratification only yield a more intense hunger and craving...this desperate longing for inexhaustible abundance is very common in the western psyche where it masquerades under the heading of ‘low self-esteem’. In traditional depictions of the wheel of life, the bodhisattva of compassion appears in the realm of the hungry ghost carrying a bowl filled with objects symbolic of spiritual nourishment. The message is clear: food and drink will not satisfy the unfulfilled needs of this realm. Only the non-judgmental awareness perfected by the Buddha offers relief”.
- Jerome Kagan “Although humans inherit a biological bias that permits them to feel anger, jealousy, selfishness and envy and to be rude, aggressive or violent, they inherit an even stronger biological bias for kindness, compassion, cooperation, love and nurture – especially towards those in need.....this built-in ethical sense is a biological feature of our species”
- Suzuki Roshi A student asked Suzuki Roshi if he kept an eye on his students to see if they were following the precepts, the Buddhist guidelines of conduct – he answered: “I don’t pay any attention to whether you are following the precepts or not, I just notice how you are with one another”.

- Old English monk (To western monk who had been wondering about how to integrate his practice in a western context so he was seeking advice from this old monk who had travelled many times between Europe and his monastery in Asia): “I have just one thing to tell you. If, as you are approaching the bus stop, you see the bus is about to leave without you, don’t panic. There will be another bus”.
- Nisargadatta “When I recognise that I am nothing, that is wisdom; when I recognise that I am everything, that is love – and between these two life flows”
- Larry Rosenberg “However practice is going, cherish it just the way it is, we may think that we want it to change but the act of acceptance in itself is a major change”
- Dalai Lama “The paradox of our age: we have bigger houses and smaller families; more convenience but less time. We have degrees but less sense; more knowledge but less judgement; more experts but more problems; more medicine but less healthiness. We have been all the way to the moon and back, but have trouble crossing the street to meet the new neighbour. We built more computers to hold more information to produce more copies than ever, but have less communication. We have become long on quantity but short on quality. These are times of fast food and slow digestion; tall man and short character; steep profits and shallow relationships. It is time when there is much in the window and nothing in the room”
- Dalai Lama “Too much obedience, devotion and blind acceptance on the part of a student spoils a teacher”
- Tsoknyi Rinpoche “One of the pitfalls when hatha yogis use the body solely is arrogance. People start identifying with and then clinging to the body – a transitory, composite impermanent – and so end up suffering in the aging process and having to let go of attachment to a body that they spent so much time cultivating.....sincerely take a look at any practice, and notice within yourself if compassion, faith and wisdom are developing from it. If they are, then stay with it. If they’re not, take a look and either change the way you experience the practice or change the practice itself”
- Gehlek Rinpoche “Depression is absolutely impermanent and dependent on conditions. The most important thing is not to submit to the habit of undermining ourselves”
- Tara Brach “We experience our lives through our bodies.....yet we are usually so mesmerised by our ideas about the world that we miss out on much of our direct sensory experience. Even when we are aware of feeling a strong breeze, the sound of rain on the roof, a fragrance in the air, we rarely remain with the experience long enough to inhabit it fully. In

most moments, an overlay of inner dialogue comments on what is happening and plans what we might do next”.

- Donna Farhi “Whatever you bring to your practice on the mat gets amplified. If you bring ego and selfish ambition to your practice, that is what tends to grow. If you bring an intention of peace for all beings, that will gradually expand and begin to fill your life and the lives of those around you. Intention is everything. You will make mistakes but with an intention of upliftment and kindness you can’t go far wrong”
- Winston King “Practice basically involves a sustained attempt to establish stability of mind and must be carried out in an uninterrupted, correct and systematic fashion over an extended period of time to furnish results”
- Suzuki Roshi “Life is like stepping onto a boat that is about to sail out to sea and sink.
- Thich Nat Hanh “While we practice conscious breathing, our thinking will slow down and we can give ourselves a real rest. Most of the time we think too much and mindful breathing helps us to be calm, relaxed and peaceful. It helps us stop thinking so much and stop being possessed by sorrows of the past and worries about the future. It enables us to be in touch with life which is wonderful in the present moment”.
- Chandrakirti “Attachment to one’s beliefs/aversion for another’s view: all this is thought”.
- Dudjom Rinpoche “Whatever perceptions arise, you should be like a little child going into a beautifully decorated temple....he looks, but grasping does not enter his perception at all. So you leave everything fresh, natural, vivid and unspoiled. When you leave each thing in its own state, then its shape doesn’t change, its colour doesn’t fade and its glow does not disappear. Whatever appears is unstained by any grasping so then all that you perceive arises as the naked wisdom of the nature of mind which is the indivisibility of luminosity and emptiness”.
- Javk Kornfeld “An image used to illustrate the quality of equanimity is that of a mountain. The mountain sits there as the sun shines on it, the rain falls, it gets covered with snow, struck by lightning. What does the mountain do? It remains unwavering. Equanimity is the power of the mind to experience the changes in the realm of form, the realm of feeling, the realm of mind, yet remain centered and unmoved. Equanimity is developed as we learn to keep the heart open through the changing circumstances of our life and our practice. As we grow in wisdom our heart also matures from an ongoing exuberance of youthg with its conditioned fears and desires to what is called a heart of greatness. Finding our heart of greatness comes through practice. Again and again we are challenged to return to this moment, however

painful or pleasant or boring, and to let it into our heart – to greet it with balance. Often we are knocked off balance. Yet equanimity is but another moment away. Can we accept this moment with balance. In its strongest stages equanimity gives the feeling of unshakeable stability, unable to be upset by any experience whatsoever”

Krishnamurti “I do not know if you have ever examined how you listen, it doesn’t matter to what, whether to a bird, to the wind...to the rushing waters... in a dialogue with yourself...If we try to listen we find it extraordinarily difficult, because we are always projecting our opinions and ideas, our prejudices, our backgrounds, our inclinations, our impulses; when they dominate we hardly listen to what is being said...One listens and therefore learns only in a state of attention, a state of silence, in which the whole background is in abeyance, is quiet; then, it seems to me it is possible to communicate”.

Jack Kornfeld “If you can sit quietly after difficult news
If in financial downtimes you can remain perfectly calm
If you can love unconditionally and see your neighbours travel to fantastic places without a twinge of jealousy
If you can happily eat whatever is put on your plate
And if you can fall asleep after a day of running around without a drink or a pill
If you can always find contentment wherever you are
You are probably..... a dog”

Donna Farhi “It becomes difficult to appreciate that we have hot running water when all we can think about is whether our towels are colour-coordinated. How can we appreciate our good fortune in having enough food to eat when we wish we could afford to eat out more often?”

William Blake "Man is made for joy and woe/and when that you rightly know/then through life you safely go".

Suzuki Roshi “When you are practicing meditation do not try to stop your thinking. Let it stop by itself. If something comes into your mind, let it come in and let it go out. It will not stay long. When you try to stop your thinking, it means that you are bothered by it. Do not bothered by anything. It appears that the something comes from outside your mind but actually it is only the waves of your mind and if you are not bothered by the waves, gradually they will become calmer and calmer...Many sensations come, many thoughts or images arise but they are just waves from your own mind. Nothing comes from outside your mind....If you leave your mind as it is, it will become calm. This mind is called big mind”.

- Thai Meditator (On the greatest hindrances faced by students): “Opinions, views and ideas about all things. About themselves, about practice, about the teachings of the Buddha. Their minds are filled with opinions about things. They are too clever to listen to others. It is like water in a cup. If the cup is filled with dirty, stale water it is useless. Only after the old water is thrown out can the cup become useful. You must empty your minds of opinions, then you will see”.
- Albert Einstein “A human being is a part of the whole called by ourselves universe, a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings as something separated from the rest, a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and affections for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty”.
- Suzuki Roshi A clinical psychiatrist questioned Suzuki Roshi about consciousness – his response was: “I don’t know anything about consciousness, I just try to teach my students how to hear the birds sing”
- Stephen Bodian “Open your awareness like the sky, welcoming the experiences that arise just as the sky welcomes the clouds, neither ignoring them nor indulging them. Instead of concentrating, just relax and let go, allowing everything to be just as it is, without any attempt to control”
- Suzuki Roshi “The mind of the beginner is empty, free of the habits of the expert, ready to accept, to doubt and open to all possibilities”
- Donna Farhi “We have to learn how to be non-violent toward ourselves. If we were able to play back the often unkind, unhelpful and destructive comments and judgements silently made toward our self in any given day, this may give us some idea of the enormity of the challenge of self-acceptance. If we were to speak these thoughts out loud to another person, we would realise how truly devastating violence to the self can be. In truth, few of us would dare to be as unkind to others as we are to ourselves”
- Pablo Casals (Famous cellist – practiced for three hours a day when he was 93, asked why he still practiced at that age): “I’m beginning to see some improvement”
- Joseph Goldstein “Spacious acceptance doesn’t mean that we act on everything equally. Awareness gives us the option of choosing wisely: we can choose which patterns should be developed and cultivated and which should be abandoned”

- David Hume (Scottish philosopher – writing in 1739): “for my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call myself, I always stumble onto some particular perception or other...I never can catch myself at any time without a perception and never can observe anything but the perception...I may venture to affirm of the rest of mankind that they are nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity and are in perpetual flux and movement”.
- Ikkyu “Every day, priests minutely examine the Law
And endlessly chant complicated sutras.
Before doing that, though, they should learn
How to read the love letters sent by the wind and rain, the snow and moon”
- Thich Nat Hanh “The mind is like a television set with hundreds of channels – which channel will you turn on?”
- Buddha “How does a practioner remain established in observation of states of mind in the mind – the practioner becomes aware when the mind is tense and when the mind is relaxed...the practioner becomes aware when the mind contains hatred and when the mind contains love...the practioner becomes aware when the mind contains worry and when the mind is composed”
- Alan Watts “The art of living is neither careless drifting on the one hand nor fearful clinging on the other on the other. It consists in being sensitive to each moment, in regarding it as utterly new and unique, in having the mind open and wholly receptive”
- Thich Nat Hanh “At one time you were a mountain, you were a cloud. This is not poetry, this is science”
- Two wolves “An elder native american was teaching his grandchildren about life. He said to them: ‘a fight is going on inside me...it is a terrible fight and it is between two wolves. one wolf represents fear, anger, envy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority and ego. The other stands for joy, peace, love, hope, sharing, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, friendship, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion and faith. This same fight is going on inside you and inside every other person too’. They thought about it for a minute and then one child asked his grandfather ‘which wolf will win?’. The elder simply replied ‘the one you feed’”.
- William Blake “He who binds to himself a joy/ Does the winged life destroy/ But he who kisses the joy as it flies/ Lives in eternity’s sunrise”

- Paul Hawken “The sense of loss makes us human and brings us more deeply in touch with our heart. The enormity of what is passing away is almost unspeakable. It’s not just species and ecosystems, but entire cultures, the seasons, civilization itself...the most important step to take is to feel...we are turning to nature as designer, mentor and guide...what to do? Engage one’s community, become more generous, co-operative and enthusiastic”
- Thich Nat Hanh “We have built a system we cannot control. We are constantly under the pressure of time. We cannot continue to live like this. It is not a sustainable economy. We have to have another dream: the dream of brotherhood and sisterhood, of loving-kindness and compassion and that dream is possible right here and now...we are all children of the earth...a positive change in individual awareness will bring about a positive change in the collective awareness”
- Tsongkapa (14thc) “The human body, at peace with itself/Is more precious than the rarest gem/Cherish your body, it is yours this one time only./The human form is won with difficulty,/It is easy to lose./All worldly things are brief,/Like lightning in the sky;/This life you must know/As the tiny splash of a raindrop;/A thing of beauty that disappears/Even as it comes into being./Therefore set your goal/Make use of every day and night/To achieve it”
- Dalai Lama “While we have this body and especially this amazing human brain, I think every moment is precious. Our day to day existence is very much alive with hope, although there is no guarantee of our future. Let us reflect on what is truly of value in life, what gives meaning to our lives and set our priorities on the basis of that. The purpose of our lives needs to be positive”
- Klas Nevrin “There is a limit to how yoga can change a person because he or she is highly dependent on environmental circumstances, including the presence of fulfilling relationships and beneficial living conditions...the neglect to address this limit often results in a rhetoric claim that yoga has a dimension of truth and authenticity supposedly lacking in other activities”
- Sarah Powers “Yoga can be understood as a set of behaviours that develops a holistic experience of body, heart and mind. It is a process of fully inhabiting ourselves and our life in a radically engaging and inquisitive way. Through this training we develop a healthy capacity to literally take up residence in our bodies and minds which can then lead us into simple presence. Presence is a quality of being that is open and aware. This body-mind presence serves as the ground for compassion and wisdom to emerge within us”.

- Upanishads “Understanding without practice is better than practice without understanding. Understanding with practice is better than understanding without practice. Resting in our authentic nature is better than any understanding or practice”.
- Sarah Powers “Teachers can act as invaluable guides to our own path by teaching us new ways of thinking, behaving and being. They encourage honesty, integrity and inquiry while helping us deal skilfully with the obstacles that we encounter, such as our inevitable physical limitations, negative emotional afflictions and mental distortions. Teachers help us navigate stormy seas when we might easily drown on our own and they encourage us to stay with our practice when we might otherwise give up or become distracted by and attached to accomplishments along the way. The teachers with whom we choose to spend time do not need to be fully enlightened; they just need to be a few steps ahead of us regarding the aspects of the path we are learning from them. Although we may need to abandon certain teachers and adopt others along the journey, our teachers will continue to act as our spiritual friends and mentors, helping us to deepen our capacity to listen to our own essential nature”.
- TS Eliot “Only those who risk going too far can find out how far you can go”
- Krishnamurti (To an audience, many of whom had been studying with him for years and still failed to grasp the essence of his teaching): “Do you want to know my secret....this is my secret: I don't mind what happens”
- Christina Feldman “The tyranny of self-improvement brings harshness, judgement and self-loathing that deny compassion”
- Sarah Powers “We have to cultivate a willingness to feel if we are to discover what it means to live an embodied wholeness: whether we feel lousy or exuberant, tight or agile, we need to reinvest daily in a commitment to let ourselves be assaulted or bemused without becoming oppressed by these feelings. We are training ourselves to stay connected to what is happening within us without retaliating or abandoning the scene”.
- Ram Dass “If you think you are enlightened, go and spend a week with your parents”
- Sarah Powers “The first noble truth states that life has suffering. Suffering manifests for all of us in myriad ways, including stress, fear, tension, anxiety, depression, disappointment, abandonment, estrangement, anger, terror, jealousy, shame and so on. Even if we have been graced with a wonderful life, take impeccable care of our bodies, have healthy genes and a strong constitution, we will eventually get sick, grow old and die. No riches, surgery, drugs or vaccinations can protect us from

this indisputable truth. Learning to graciously accept life's inherent difficulties decreases our tendency to feel betrayed by circumstances. This frees us to relate to things more honestly and directly”

Sarah Powers

“Like channel surfing with the television remote, when we are neither stimulated nor interested in the content of a moment, our mind can swing between two insatiable extremes: we either recklessly jump about from one detail to another, anxiously searching for something to cling on, or we simply sink into a hazy, vague disconnect and spaciness – neither of which brings sincere satisfaction”

Jeffery Paine

“Thomas Merton now suspected that Tibetan Buddhism might be the most mystical of all religions. Its bodhisattva ideal – that you achieve enlightenment not for yourself but to help all sentient beings – gave personal sainthood a universal dimension. Its concept of tonglen – of taking on others pain and returning to them your happiness – erased the boundaries between you and others in a vast interconnected web of compassion. Its practice of dzogchen – which holds that beneath ingrained, accumulated habits everyone's nature is already perfect – emptied the neurotic contents and made room for a sense of holy capacity within oneself”.

Sakyong Mipham

“How do we carry a dharmic view into the day...there are seven facets of awakened mind that we can consciously cultivate to enhance the path-like texture of our life. The first is egolessness – in order to grow, we must be willing to give up territory. Are we prepared to abandon our habitual patterns? To make progress, we need to be willing to change.....the second element to awaken is faith – the faith we're talking about here is based on knowing what we're doing, not in hoping for the best. It's as if we have checked our boat for holes and found none so we set sail.....we now need to be daring – we dare to jump out of our habitual tendencies into more dharmic ones,,,,,if we dare to jump out of laziness, we might become slightly aggressive so we also cultivate gentleness: that means slowing down so that we synchronise our intention with our speech and action....if we become too gentle we might become feeble: so fearlessness comes next – although we encounter obstacles, we steadfastly move forwards.... With fearlessness, comes awareness: no longer cloaked in habitual pattern, no longer using hope and fear to manipulate the environment, we are aware of what's happening in our life....the last entry on this list is sense of humour: it's a sign of pliability and intelligence....each morning we can choose one of these elements as a daily contemplation and practice – in the evening we can take a moment before going to sleep and reflect on what happened: ‘how did I use this day to nurture my mind and heart’”

William Blake

“The most sublime act is to set another before you”

Christina Feldman “Every moment of true attention is a moment of wonder. It is attention that allows the conclusions and assumptions of the past to fall away, freeing us to see all things anew. Total attention forges a powerful bond of connection between us and our present moment. Deep attentiveness is profound sensitivity: we are touched and taught by the events, people, sights, sounds we encounter. In the busyness of our days it is easy to neglect or dismiss our own capacity for genuine attention. Without full attention, we skim over the surface of life. We sleepwalk through our days or find ourselves repeatedly overwhelmed by the events we encounter. We forget that it is attention that reminds us to be still, to listen fully to the laughter of a child, to feel the glorious sensation of the sun on our face. Our capacity for love, empathy and intimacy is awakened through our willingness to be wholeheartedly present in this life. Alienated from authentic attentiveness, we long for the future, for dramatic life experiences that will awaken, enliven, inspire us. Learning the richness of deep attentiveness, we discover the wonder in the simplest sight, sound, encounter and feeling”.

Oscar Wilde “The most terrible things in my life never actually happened”

Heart sutra How we should view what is conditioned: “As stars, a fault of vision, as a lamp/ A mock show, dew drops or a bubble/ A dream, a lightening flash or cloud”

Sarah Powers “There are two inspiring motivations to practice yoga regularly. The first is that daily inward drawn attention teaches us how to inhabit ourselves, developing an attitude of attentiveness and kindness within. The second is to accelerate our ability to help, heal and naturally love others”

Mark Williams (Professor of clinical psychology at Oxford University): “If you’re drinking a cup of tea, are you really enjoying that tea or planning what you’ll be doing in half an hour? The problem is we tend to plan and to grade life: ‘when I get home from the supermarket, then I can relax’; ‘when I go on holiday, that’s when life is good’; ‘when I am at work, that’s when life isn’t interesting’. But these are all moments of your life that you’re not living. It turns out that if we can be present right here and now, then happiness will follow”.

Toni Jordan (From ‘Additions’): “Most people miss their whole lives you know. Listen, life isn’t when you are standing on top of a mountain looking at the sunset. Life isn’t waiting at the altar or the moment your child is born or that time you were swimming in deep water and a dolphin came up alongside you. These are fragments. Ten or twelve grains of sand spread throughout your entire existence. These are not life. Life is brushing your teeth or making a sandwich or watching the news or waiting for the bus. Every day thousands of tiny events happen and if

you're not watching, if you're not careful, if you don't capture them and make them count, you could miss it. You could miss your whole life".

- Shantideva (8th century yogi): "We are like senseless children who shrink from suffering but love its causes"
- Rollo May "Freedom is the capacity to pause between stimulus and response"
- Ed Brown "When you wash the rice, wash the rice – when you stir the soup, stir the soup. You're waking up to the way things are: smell, see, taste, touch – start to notice. This is what some people call reinhabitating your body – extending your consciousness into feet and hands, finding life and vitality in body and activity rather than going through motions so it's a chore and drudgery"
- Kimberley Snow "The past is gone, it's over – we don't have to keep rewriting history: visiting this theme park or redoing the exhibits keeps us from being aware in the present moment. We often have a sense of a gigantic past behind us with the future as a great mass in front of us that needs to be muscled into shape: and the present as this tiny crack between – but this little sliver we think of as the present is the whole thing, it's all we have"
- Shakira "I just think that it's very helpful to have a map of your psyche because when you have a map you know where to go"
- Ina May Gaskin (Midwife guru describing the process of giving birth): "You have interesting sensations to which you must pay full attention"
- Aldous Huxley "It's a little embarrassing to have spent one's entire life pondering the human situation and find oneself in the end with nothing more profound to say than try to be a little nicer"
- John Cage "If something is boring after two minutes, try it for four. If still boring, then eight. Then sixteen. Then thirty two. Eventually one discovers that it is not boring at all".
- Michael Stone "A practical way to translate mindfulness is as present-centered, non-judgmental awareness with acceptance – in terms of the body, we could also refer to mindfulness as immediate awareness...the meditative experiences lead to greater ability to concentrate, greater freedom from distraction, greater tolerance of change and turmoil around and inside oneself, and greater alertness about one's own responses, both physical and mental"
- Dogen "Think non-thinking....neither try to think nor try not to think"

- John Tarrant "Attention is the most basic form of love – through it we bless and are blessed".
- Barbara Ehrenreich (Author of 'Smile or Die'): "What we need to remind ourselves is that the alternative to positive thinking isn't to be depressed or negative – it's simply to be realistic....a study in the 1980s found that flight attendants who are required to be cheerful to passengers at all times actually became emotionally depleted and stressed from the effort it takes to fake it"
- Rene Dubos "About the experience of life, most people are under the illusion that they can be happy only if something especially good happens. Oddly enough, there is only one phrase I know to express that life is good per se, that just being alive is good...the French expression joie de vivre. Joie de vivre simply means that just being alive is an extraordinary experience. The quality of that experience anyone can see by watching a young child or a young animal playing in the spring. It is totally immaterial what goes on, except for the fact that you are alive. It does not mean that you are very happy with the way you live. You can even be suffering; but just being alive is a quality per se"
- Noah Levine "Pain and suffering are two completely different experiences. Pain is unavoidable. Suffering is self-created...everything takes effort: none of these practices or principles are easy to develop and going against the stream is an act of intentional redirection of our life's energy...the first teaching that the Buddha gave to people was often on the importance of generosity"
- Rienhold Niebhur "Grace to accept with serenity the things that cannot be changed, courage to change the things that should be changed and the wisdom to distinguish the one from the other" (the Serenity Prayer)
- Karen Armstrong "In Buddha's view, the more closely we examine ourselves, the harder it becomes to find anything that we can pinpoint as a fixed entity. The human personality was not a static being to which things happened. Put under the microscope of analysis, each person was a process. The Buddha liked to use such metaphors as a blazing fire or a rushing stream to describe the personality – it had some kind of identity but was never the same from one moment to another"
- Sogyal Rinpoche "We are, at the moment, as if many people all living in one person"
- Stephen Pinker "Our mental life is a noisy parliament of competing factions"
- Walt Whitman "I am vast, I contain multitudes"
- Chogyam Trungpa "The great collection of things in one's mind"

Andrew Olendzki “We do concentration practice – where there is a placing of the mind upon an object – reflexively all the time but in Buddhist practice we are invited to do it with deliberate intention, with sustained energy and with consistency over multiple mind moments”

Francesca Fremantle “We each think of ourselves as a single, unified personality but if we examine our experience carefully, we can see that our thoughts and feelings are changing all the time. One moment I am happy, the next moment I feel upset or angry, then something catches my attention and the anger is forgotten in a new interest. I begin to concentrate on some plan only to find a few minutes later that I am thinking of something completely different, without even having noticed. If a part of my body is hurting, then I feel that I am nothing but that pain. In other words, the ‘I’ is continually changing. There is no unifying, conscious thread running through all these different thoughts and feelings. Even the body is changing, although we only notice it over a longer time scale. We are an endless stream of momentary, interconnected psychophysical states. Instead of a fixed self, there is a continuous flow of moments of consciousness which is called the mental continuum or mindstream”.

Judith Lasater “Anxiety is related to not being present – anxiety is not a feeling, it is a thought – and the thought is always about the future: what might happen. In an actual stressful moment, we don’t have time to be anxious – sometimes in such moments we can be incredibly calm. Anxiety is a luxury that requires time – if we rooted in seeing things as they are, we would never be anxious – anxiety is the surface of fear”.

Mitch Albon (“Tuesdays with Morrie”): “People are only mean when they are threatened...and that’s what our culture does. That’s what our economy does. Even people who have jobs in our economy are threatened, because they worry about losing them. And when you get threatened, you start looking out only for yourself. You start making money a God. It is all part of this culture”.

Tilda Swinton “Loneliness is the last great taboo of modern western civilisation. Capitalism is built on the idea that one can go and buy another scented candle and get less lonely somehow. But I think the deal is that you are fully lonely and the sooner we accept and embrace our loneliness, the healthier we are. And that real love has nothing to do with that romantic idea of oneness, of distracting and healing each other from our loneliness, it’s about witnessing each other as individuals and saying ‘I’ll show you mine if you show me yours’”.

Robert Kull “I want to explore the anxiety I so often feel. It’s deep and poisons my life. I’ve seen over and over again that things work out – not always as I planned, sometimes much better – yet still I look ahead with fear.

Instead of relaxing into life, I'm often needlessly tense and worried. Even when things get really nasty – like my foot being ripped off in the motorcycle crash – life continues. So why not let go of the worrying?"

- Robert Kull "It's a challenge to live one day at a time and to meet physical pain with patience and compassion rather than with fear and anger. I see clearly that suffering results from holding on – physically, psychologically, emotionally, spiritually. Doubt, hate, certainty are ways of holding tight. Faith, love, wondering are open and loose"
- S N Goenka "Our task is to see and accept the world as it is, not as we would like it to be"
- Gregor Maehle "In yoga austerity (tapas) means simplicity. Behind the term simplicity lies my acceptance of the truth that to be happy I need nothing but to know who I truly am. By living a simple life without extremes and without constantly yielding to my desires, my mind is concentrated and focused. On the other hand if I follow the call of this world to 'spoil yourself', 'treat yourself', 'pamper yourself', I communicate to my mind that I am not in charge of my life. Rather I cement the belief that a constant stream of external stimulation and sensory satisfaction has to occur for me to keep my mental equilibrium – which means I am not in charge of my life but am a slave to my needs and desires. To wake upto the truth that I need nothing at all to be internally happy, that in fact constantly following external stimuli separates me from myself is tapas. Austerity will make us strong, whereas gluttony and decadence weaken. The more we believe we need certain things, the more we will be dependent on them. Simplicity makes the body strong and healthy and the mind calm and focused. It is the foundation of self-knowledge since it means giving up the lie that anything but self-knowledge can make us permanently happy".
- Ken McLeod "The practice of attention and the operation of habituated patterns are incompatible"
- Bernard Bouchaud Defining 2.42 in 'Yoga Sutras' (santosha): "Contentment comes from mental well-being that moves us to consider the positive in all beings and situations. Often, our frustrations come from regrets, agitation, suffering or comparing ourselves with others. Focusing on what others have – or don't have for that matter – instead of nourishing gratitude leads to everlasting discontent. Contentment is a dynamic and constructive attitude that brings us to look at things in a new way. It calms the mind, bringing a flowering of subtle joy and inner serenity that are independent of all outside influences and perishable things. It is very difficult, however, to sustain contentment. Though it may be easier to be happy when we are successful, only

an exceptional soul remains positive in the midst of adverse currents. Contentment means looking at every event with a smile. It helps to have a good sense of humour”

- Robert Kull “Joy comes from living fully in the here and now, no matter what the circumstances. To live like that I must give up wanting things to be different...it seems like desire prevents me from experiencing all of life – desire often includes the rejection of what is and the wish to have something different”
- Gregor Maehle “A strict set of ethics, once mastered can also be used to boost one’s ego and assert one’s superiority over others. There was a man who got up every day at 4am, was a vegetarian and neither smoked nor drank. He had no sex. The man claimed to be a messiah and many believed in him. His name was Adolf Hitler”
- George Eliot “The mind...is not cut in marble – it is not something solid and unalterable. It is something living and changing...we are a process and an unfolding”
- Dorothy Rowe “I would be there to offer alternative interpretations, to help the person see that whatever happens, we’re free to interpret in a multitude of different ways”
- Sharon Salzberg “One of the Buddha’s basic teachings is that because we are born, we experience suffering – not only suffering as grave pain, but also suffering as the instability, the sorrow, the hollowness of life...We might feel frightened in the morning, reassured in the afternoon and uneasy at night – we know at the end of our lives we die. There is change, breath, oscillation, rhythm everywhere”
- Sharon Salzberg “Dharma means the truth, the laws of nature, the way things are: deciduous trees lose their leaves in winter; change occurs despite our efforts to stop it; unwelcome thoughts arise unbidden in our minds no matter what we will; if I tell lies, my mind will be filled with fear and uncertainty”
- SN Goenka “Continuity of practice is the secret of success”
- Sayadaw U Pandita “The mind will get filled with qualities like mindfulness or loving kindness moment by moment – just the way a bucket gets filled with water drop by drop”
- Stephen Butterfield “Meditation is extremely boring – if we embrace boredom, it turns into equilibrium in which we are freed from the craving for entertainment. Our need to grasp onto happiness and fight discomfort is gradually relaxed”

- Susie Orbach "There is no human relationship without expectations brought from one's previous experiences of people – each new relationship is imbued with the emotional impact of our previous encounters. Our vision is constructed by the emotional repertoires we have already played in: this is both instructive and unfortunate. It guides us as to when to relax and trust and when to be wary. But at the same time it can prevent us from seeing who the other person is and what is possible in a situation. We have a tendency to render the new situation as an imitation of a situation we have been in before"
- Susie Orbach "Rejection is one of the things we find most difficult. Many of us will do almost anything not to feel rejected and its associated loss and hurt. We turn the situation inside out so that it appears to be us who have caused it. We get angry so as to bat away our feelings. We go dead inside in an attempt for it not to matter. In one way or another, we try to avoid, separate or hide from feelings of rejection and loss. We are not sure we can bear them".
- Susie Orbach "In each psychological stage disillusionment propels or prepares the ground for the further development of the self. As babies we must forgo the notion that we are the centre of the universe. As toddlers we are again disillusioned as we begin to perceive that we are separate people, that those on whom we depend are not part of us but distinct others with their own intentions. As adolescents we grapple with disillusionment as the limits of our power are continually and humiliatingly enforced. As adults, broken hearts, disappointments, illnesses disturb our illusions about our capacities to determine our lives. But with luck these shattered illusions do not limit our world but open it up for us, forcing us to be braver and bolder than we knew we could be. The experience of disillusionment is far from constraining – it is a way of developing in directions that were never before apparent"
- Lewis Richmond "A common experience among longtime practitioners is the discrepancy between what the tradition says should happen as a result of practice and the reality of what actually happens"
- Marcel Proust "The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeing new landscapes but in having new eyes"
- Henry Longfellow "If we could read the secret history of our enemies we should find in each man's life sorrow and suffering enough to disarm all hostility"
- Sharon Salzburg "Our lives are composed of continual change without ceasing – the ten thousand joys and the ten thousand sorrows come and go over and over again. Fortunately rather than being lost in these conditioned reactions we can learn to be balanced: we can feel pleasure fully yet without craving or clinging. We can feel pain fully

without condemning or hating it. And we can experience neutral events by being fully present so that they are not just fill-in times until something more exciting comes along. This nonreactivity is the state of equanimity and it leads us into freedom in each moment”.

- Judith Lasater “The ices of winter give way to the burst of spring buds – summer brings heat and dust, followed by golden leaves and the chill of autumn. All is subject to erosion by the elements – quantum physics teaches us about the uncertainty and impermanence of the very stuff of which the world is made”
- Buddha “In a battle, the winners and the losers both lose”
- Chinese poem “Ten thousand flowers in spring, the moon in autumn – A cool breeze in summer, snow in winter – If your mind is not clouded by unnecessary things – This is the best season of your life”
- Judith Lasater “This change comes from the process of paying meticulous attention to a thought: when we do, we have a greater chance of separating from it which I call disidentification. This means that we may continue to have the thought but realise that it is only a thought, that is a neurological-biochemical event – it is not who we are”
- Anne Klein “On one of his first visits to the west, the Dalai Lama said that if you’ve been practicing for about five years and instead of getting angry ten times a day you only get angry seven or right times a day, you should really understand that you’ve made progress...it’s a very compassionate teaching – it helps people to understand the extent of the path: what a big job it is even to reduce your anger by 20%”
- Bhante Gunaratana “Total attention should be coupled with wise attention – the three wholesome roots of nongreed, nonhatred and nondelusion – or in other words generosity, loving-kindness and wisdom”
- James Austen “Meditation is a passive activity – the intervals spent in quiet meditation are designed gradually to calm the overactive mind, to clarify its perceptions and to open up its spontaneous receptivities. Meditation is not monolithic: its passive activities represent an unusual mixture – purposefulness and letting go, attention and nonattachment, self-discipline and spontaneity, settling down in quiet solitude as the prelude to bringing your internal calmness and clarity out to engage with the disquietude of the unsettled world at large”
- James Austen “A message for meditators: learn to be much more patient with yourself – every mind wanders: it is a normal phenomenon”

- James Austen "My current morning practice begins with the usual soft focus on a spot low on the wall – later on I'll let go and let my eyes drift upwards. One message for meditators is to consider 'raising your sights'"
- James Austen "Enlightenment is a word that points to the character traits of simplicity and stability that evolve when we keep dropping off the selfish I-me-mine preoccupations and live a compassionate life with increasing clarity"
- Daito Kokushi (1283-1337) "Time flies like an arrow so waste no energy on trivial matters. Be attentive! Be attentive"
- Ken Wilber "The myth of the given... is the belief that the world as it appears in my consciousness, as it is given to me, is... fundamentally real... and that therefore I can base my worldview upon whatever presents itself to my consciousness. But the whole point is that what our awareness delivers to us is set in cultural... and many other contexts that cause an interpretation and a construction of our perceptions before they even reach our awareness. So what we call real or what we think of as given is actually constructed... our perceptions are conceptions."
- Buddha "There is one thing that, when cultivated and regularly practiced, leads to deep spiritual intention, to peace, to mindfulness and clear comprehension, to vision and knowledge, to a happy life here and now, and to the culmination of wisdom and awakening. And what is that one thing? It is mindfulness centered on the body."
- Richard Freeman "You could say that yoga can be summed up as one simple practice: what is actually happening in the present moment"
- Arjuna "The mind is fickle and wavering, as difficult as the wind to control" (Bhagavad Gita – about 1st century AD)
- Richard Freeman "It is important to remember that even though the deeper practices of yoga lead to states of mind in which thought comes to a point of cessation, yoga is not an antithought practice. Instead it is the refinement of the art of thinking, allowing chains of thought to unfold within an open sky of compassion and intelligence"
- Tim Parks "Awareness has to plunge into the flesh – then the mental chatter that is always hurrying off into the past or the future, the next email or the last text, can finally go quiet....I became intensely aware of each different person and far more courteous than I normally am – meanwhile the natural world – the grass, the trees, the sky – seemed nearer and clearer, as if a greasy windowpane had been replaced with something absolutely transparent"

- M Killingsworth “Human beings have this unique ability to focus on things that aren’t happening right now. That allows them to reflect on the past and learn from it – it allows them to anticipate and plan for the future – and it allows them to imagine things that might never occur. At the same time it seems that human beings often use this ability in ways that are not productive and furthermore can be destructive to our happiness... A human mind is a wandering mind and a wandering mind is an unhappy mind. The ability to think about what is not happening is a cognitive achievement that comes at an emotional cost”
- M Killingsworth “Mind-wandering appears ubiquitous across all activities. This study shows that our mental lives are pervaded, to a remarkable degree, by the non-present. Mind-wandering is an excellent predictor of people’s happiness. In fact, how often our minds leave the present and where they tend to go is a better predictor of our happiness than the activities in which we are engaged. Many philosophical and religious traditions teach that happiness is to be found by living in the moment, and practitioners are trained to resist mind wandering and to ‘be here now’. These traditions suggest that a wandering mind is an unhappy mind. This new research suggests that these traditions are right”
- Krishnamacharya “Life is like a river – at the beginning there are waterfalls and the river is full of energy: this is youth. Then the river becomes more focused and calm. At the end it loses strength, it gets wider and it disappears in the ocean”
- Gary Snyder “What would it take...we know that science and the arts can be allies. We need for more women in politics. We need a religious view that embraces nature and does not fear science – business leaders who know and accept ecological and spiritual limits – political leaders who have spent time working in schools, factories or fields and who still write poems. We need intellectuals and academic leaders who have studied both history and ecology and like to dance and cook. We need poets and novelists who pay no attention to literary critics. But what we ultimately need most is human beings who love the world”
- Sakyong Mipham “To understand what is going on we have to stabilise the situation. We have to slow down and get a feeling of who we are and what we are doing. Through the practice of meditation we learn to penetrate the confusion of our minds and our perceptions. Practice is taking the time to step back a little, release our grip and see where we are”
- Dalai Lama “Each morning as I wake up I think ‘today I am fortunate to have woken up. I am alive. I have a precious human life. I am not going to waste it. I am going to use all my energies to develop myself, to expand my heart out to others, to achieve enlightenment for the benefit of all beings. I am going to have kind thoughts toward others. I

am not going to get angry or think badly about others. I am going to benefit others as much as I can”.

- Pico Iyer “The mind is more than capable of seeing a stationary blue car and constructing out of it a six act melodrama”
- Dzogchen Ponlop “There is nothing more important than getting to know your own mind. Mind is the experiencer of each moment of our life and all that we perceive, think and feel. therefore the better we know our mind and how it works, the greater the possibility that we can free ourselves from the mental states that weight us down, invisibly wound us and destroy our ability to be happy. Knowing our mind not only leads to a happy life – it transforms every trace of confusion and wakes us up completely”
- Saki Santorelli “Meditation practice requires a disciplined and sustained effort. Yet at heart mindfulness meditation is about care, about a willingness to come up close to our discomfort and pain without judgement, striving, manipulation or pretense. This gentle, open, non-judgemental approach is both merciful and relentless asking of us more than we might ever have expected”.
- Matthew Remski “Yoga is to ply with grace the uncertain waves of life...the pleasure of inquiry eroding dogma... Over countless generations we transformed from beings who physically chew all day to beings who mentally chew all day as we ruminate on how to experience more sweetness.... We have truly exhausted our eyes... While the whole world looks for atman in HD, the yogi can enter absorption by feeling the warmth of his own hand laying upon his own thigh”
- Britta Hvlzel (Scientist researching with brain scans): “It is fascinating to see the brain’s plasticity and that by practicing meditation we can play an active role in changing the brain and increase our well-being and quality of life”.
- Pema Chodron “Since death is certain and the timing of death is uncertain, what is the most important thing?”
- George Santayana (American philosopher perhaps best known for saying "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it"): “To be interested in the changing seasons is a happier state of mind than to be hopelessly in love with spring”
- Katha Upanishad (‘Death as Teacher’ – about 2000 years old): “Arise! Awake! Pay attention...a razor’s sharp edge is hard to cross – that, poets say, is the difficulty of the path”

- Lori Deschene "I've realised that the greatest lesson that we can all learn is that less is enough. In a time when connections can seem like commodities and online interactions can become casually inauthentic, mindfulness is not just a matter of fostering increased awareness – it's about relating meaningfully to other people and ourselves".
- Buddha "Abstinence from false speech, abstinence from malicious speech, abstinence from harsh speech, abstinence from idle chatter: this is called right speech"
- Mark Epstein "What arises in our experience is much less important than how we relate to what arises in our experience"
- Blaise Pascal "We never keep to the present. We anticipate the future as if we found it too slow in coming and were trying to hurry it up, or we recall the past as if to stay its rapid flight. We are so unwise that we wander about in times that are not ours and blindly flee the only one that is. The fact is that the present usually hurts".
- Moshe Feldenkris "Nothing is permanent about our behaviour patterns except our belief that they are so"
- Ronald Dworkin "If we manage to lead a good life well we make our lives tiny diamonds in the cosmic sands"