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Dan Millman

Liberating the Mind — Here and Now

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I will now outline what I consider a *master method* for liberating the mind — a method so simple and so powerful that it can help heal the body of many symptoms and change the course of our life. Best of all, we can completely integrate this method within the normal course of our daily life — anywhere, anytime. It doesn't require even one second of "extra" time investment.

This key to unlocking the mind entails *remembering to bring our awareness back into the present moment*. Many of us think we already know about living in the here and now; the phrase has become part of popular culture. I had a lot to say about it in *Way of the Peaceful Warrior*; Ram Dass wrote the classic *Be Here Now*; and countless other authors and teachers have highly recommended the present moment. So we *know* about it, but how many of us *act* on that knowledge? How many of us remember to practice focusing our attention back to the present moment in the midst of our daily lives?

How, exactly, do we practice it? As an example, let me tell you about the time I had a dental appointment coming up in two weeks to get four fillings replaced. I was about seventeen years old and had a history of tooth decay; I didn't look forward to dentist visits. I

knew my dentist was going to pull out that big needle. But, hey, I told myself, it's not for two weeks. Why think about it now?

The next day, I drove past my dentist's office and suddenly remembered our appointment. I imagined myself lying back in the chair, saw a fleeting image of the overhead light, and felt a sinking sensation as my hands gripped the armrests and my stomach tightened — that helpless feeling... Then I snapped out of it as I realized where I was: Hey, I'll have plenty of time to suffer in two weeks. Why do it now? I'm here now, just driving home.

A week later, while in line at the supermarket, I turned around and saw my dentist just behind me. The clerk took my money and put my bags in the cart, but I hardly noticed. As I walked out to the parking lot, I could visualize the procedure and feel the needle ... Then, snap! I quickly tuned back into the present as a distracted driver backed out without looking and nearly ran over me, the shopping cart, and the fifty dollars' worth of groceries. The driver apologized, saying he was distracted. Back to the present: Why worry about the dentist now? I can feel helpless in a week. No need to worry now. I forgot about the dentist.

Another week passed. I woke up to a beautiful morning. Then it hit me: *Today is the day*. The sound of the drill in my mind blocked the birdsong outside my window. A dark cloud settled over my psyche. Then I remembered, Hey, just look at that sky outside! No problem now; I can suffer all I want at two o'clock. Back in the present, I stretched and enjoyed the rays of warming sun.

Just before 2:00 P.M., I sat in the waiting room, trying to concentrate on a magazine article, my hands trembling only slightly as I heard, in the background, the drill — the real drill. I felt myself tense, then realized, What am I tensing for? I feel no pain. I'm just sitting here now, reading a good article. Then the dental assistant stepped into the room and said, "*We're ready for you.*"

"Now?" I said, feeling a little like the man on death row when the warden opens the bars and invites him for a walk down the long corridor. I rose. My stomach dropped.

I found myself lying back in the chair, helpless. My dentist smiled, making some joke, but I didn't really hear him. I was too busy watching the syringe, poised above me. The moment had

arrived. My arms gripped the armrests. I prepared myself.

Then the nurse asked my dentist something and he turned toward her, giving me a brief reprieve. That's when I realized that nothing was happening — *in that moment*. Still no pain — just me, leaning back in a very expensive chair. I might as well enjoy it. So I relaxed.

Then I felt a very brief, almost painless little sting, and it was over. All that worry. As I thanked my dentist and walked toward the front door, the old saying played in my memory: "A coward dies a thousand deaths..."

This story illustrates how we can practice bringing attention back into the present moment in daily life: As in meditation, when we realize our attention has drifted out of the present — usually signalled by some troubling thoughts — we can gently bring it back; we can remember to be here now. Like anything, over time it gets easier and easier. Practicing this simple act of returning to the present moment has immeasurably enhanced the quality of my life. ###

About Dan Millman

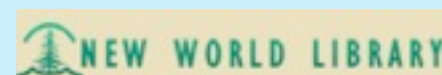
Dan Millman, a former world-champion athlete and college professor, is the author of numerous books, including *Way of the Peaceful Warrior*, *Wisdom of the Peaceful Warrior*, *The Life You Were Born to Live*, *The Laws of Spirit*, and *The Journeys of Socrates*. His writings have inspired millions of readers in more than thirty languages.

Dan teaches worldwide, sharing realistic ways to live with a peaceful heart and warrior spirit, transforming everyday life into a path of personal and spiritual growth. His work has influenced men and women from all walks of life, including leaders in the fields of health, psychology, education, business, politics, entertainment, sports, and the arts.

Dan and his family reside in Northern California.

Dan's website [The Peaceful Warriors Way](http://www.peacefulwarrior.com)

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