

The Emptiness Survival Kit

We can all agree – 2020 (*and 2021, and now 2022) sucked. Our lives slowed down to a halt, locking us within four walls, without the usual ways to escape (travel, socialising, office). Overnight we have converted to monk life. We had to face ourselves, the lives we live, our relationships, values, priorities, how we spend time, what we spend money on. Many felt and continue to feel isolated, lonely, depressed, lost, empty, lonely, stuck; many lost jobs, faced loss or lost their lives.

The Big Empty, existential emptiness, the void, darkness, nothingness, uncertainty, abyss, existential dread, death, feeling like “something is missing”, like “not living” are all symptoms of what I call the emptiness practice*. We all face emptiness in our lives. But 2020 with its uncertainty and loss amplified the scale, and the feelings of helplessness and grief made the void seem so much bigger and darker for so many more of us - myself for sure.

Emptiness is a tough practice. I created the Emptiness Survival Kit to help you get through it by facing it, expanding your understanding of it, navigating through it and ultimately changing the lens, shifting perspective on what emptiness is. The idea is to learn how to rediscover joy and emerge stronger and lighter in the midst of emptiness.

This is the culmination of everything I’ve learned in the last couple of years, summed in 42 essential quotes, tips and practises (plus bonus blog posts that I wrote since then) that helped me and hopefully will help you get through the emptiness practice. Not that it’s ever complete...

Happy positive disintegration. Light and Love.

Lola
Nomad of the Universe

** Feeling empty may be a sign of depression. Please make sure that you rule out mental health issues by checking with the doctor. This kit is not designed to help with any mental health conditions. Information provided here was selected subjectively and may not be helpful for everyone. This is not medical advice in any shape or form.*

Part 1. Face The Emptiness.

Day 1. The sun rises in the evening.

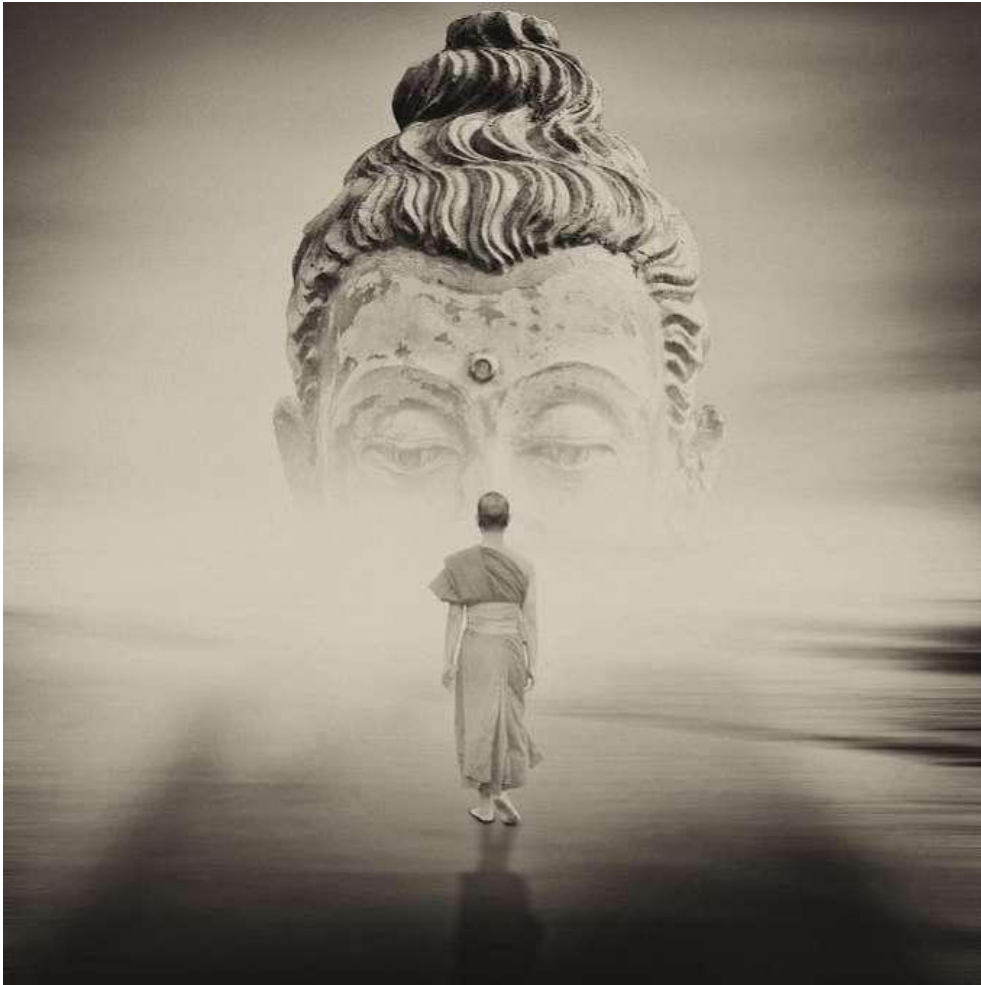


[Tricycle](#)

*Ride your horse along the edge of the sword
Hide yourself in the middle of the flames
Blossoms of the fruit tree will bloom in the fire
The sun rises in the evening.*

– Zen Koan

Day 2. Form is emptiness.

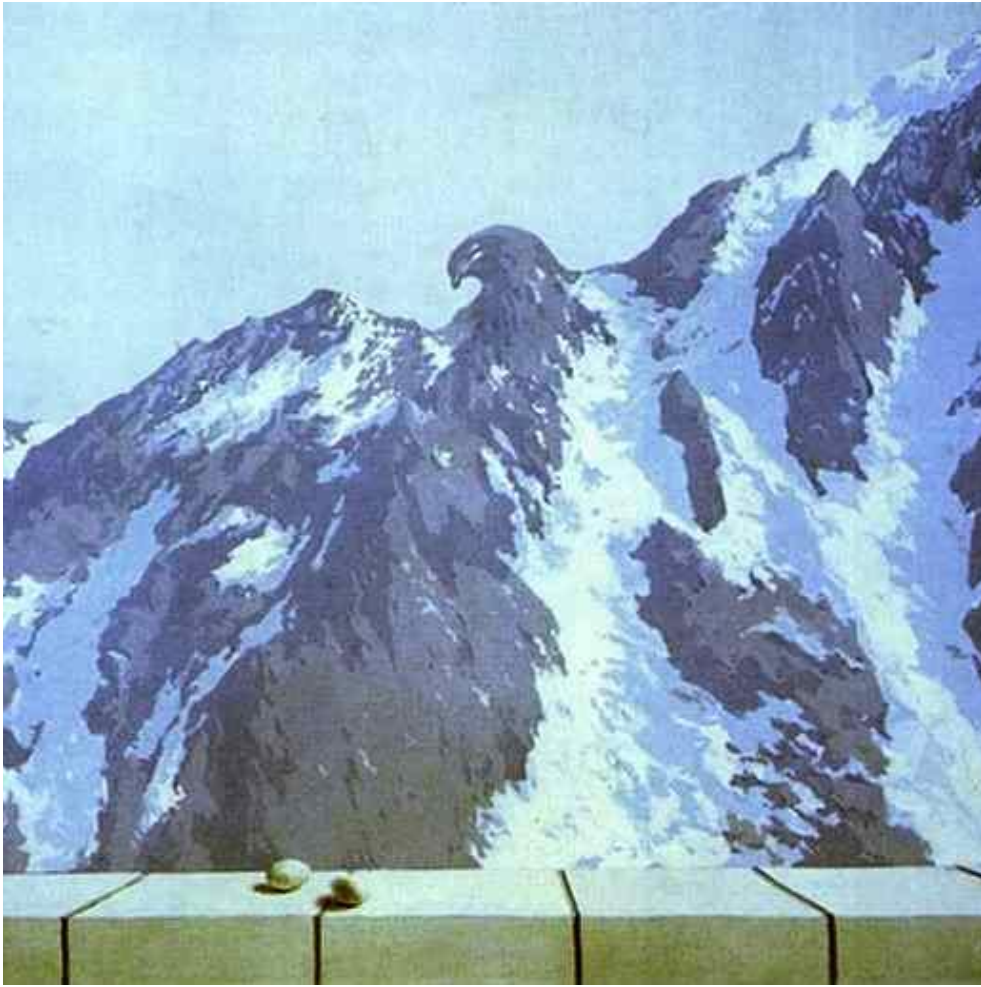


[Awakening Times](#)

Form is emptiness; emptiness is form.

– [Heart Sutra](#)

Day 3. Invite chaos.



[The Domain of Arnheim, René Magritte](#)

If you want change, you have to invite chaos.

Day 4. Super void.



[Is This Really Boötes Void?](#)

Just as stars clump into galaxies and galaxies into clusters, so clusters of galaxies congregate into even larger superclusters, hundreds of millions of light years across. Between these superclusters are equally enormous voids, containing almost no matter at all. One of the largest of these cosmic voids, 360 million light years in size, is half a billion light years away in the constellation Boötes.

From its centre, the sky would look black in all directions.

– Patrick Butler, “What is the Boötes void?”

Day 5. Being nothing you are everything.

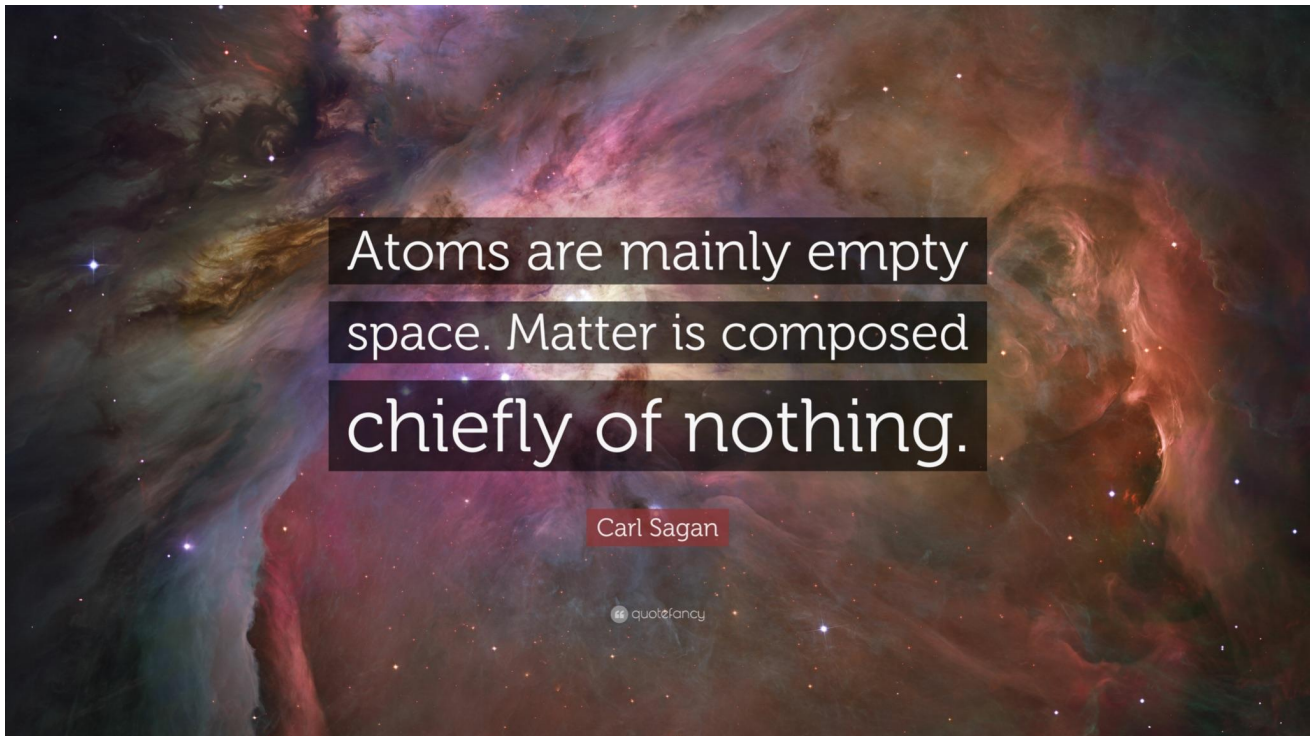


[Sukhi Barber](#)

You live in illusion and the appearance of things. There is a reality, but you do not know this. When you understand this, you will see that you are nothing, and being nothing you are everything. That is all.

– Kalu Rinpoche

Day 6. Vacuum is nature's default state.



[quotefancy](#)

*Nature does not abhor vacuum.
Vacuum is nature's default state.*

– Everything and Nothing. The Amazing Science of Empty Space.

Day 7. Your mind is the void.



[Tashi Norbu](#)

*People are scared to empty their minds fearing that they will be engulfed by the void.
What they don't realize is that their own mind is the void.*

– Huang-po

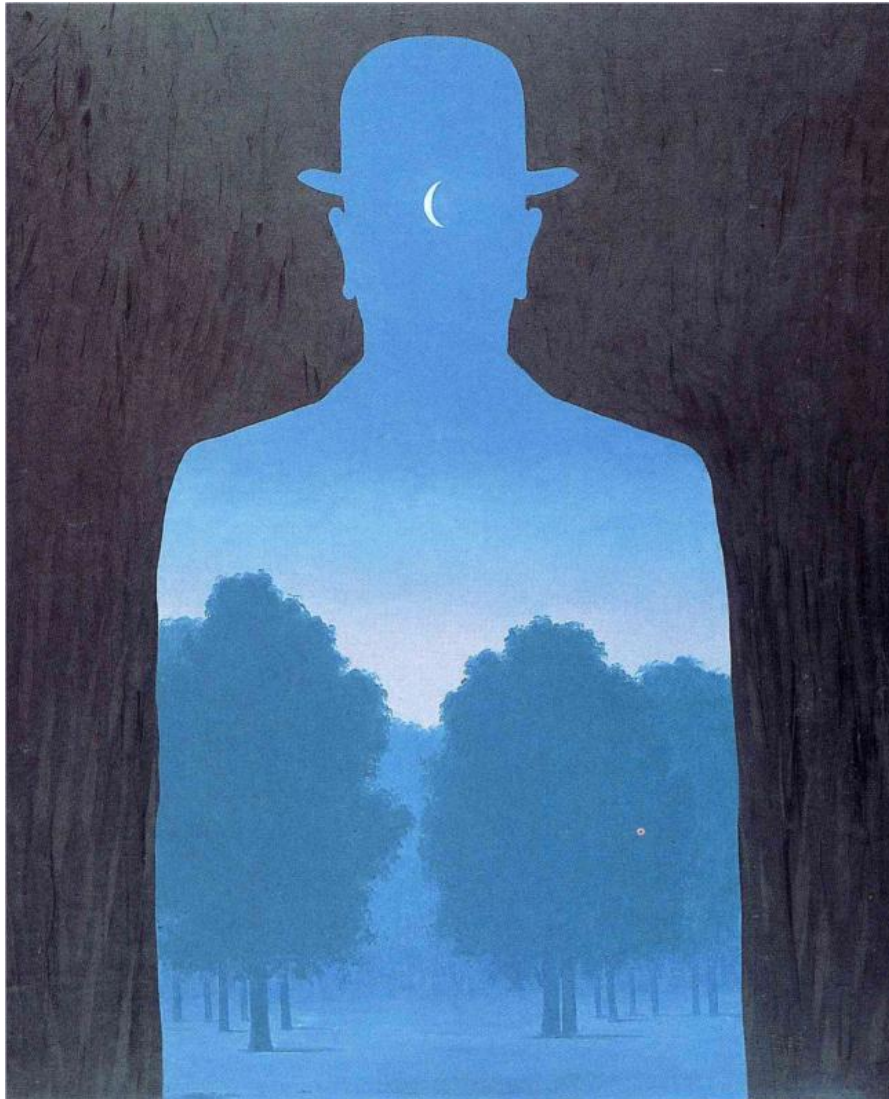
Day 8. Empty atoms.



*Almost all of ordinary matter (99.9999999% of it) is empty space.
If you took out all of the space in our atoms, the entire human race (all 7 billion of us)
would fit into the volume of a sugar cube.*

– [IFLScience](#)

Day 9. The blossoming of emptiness.

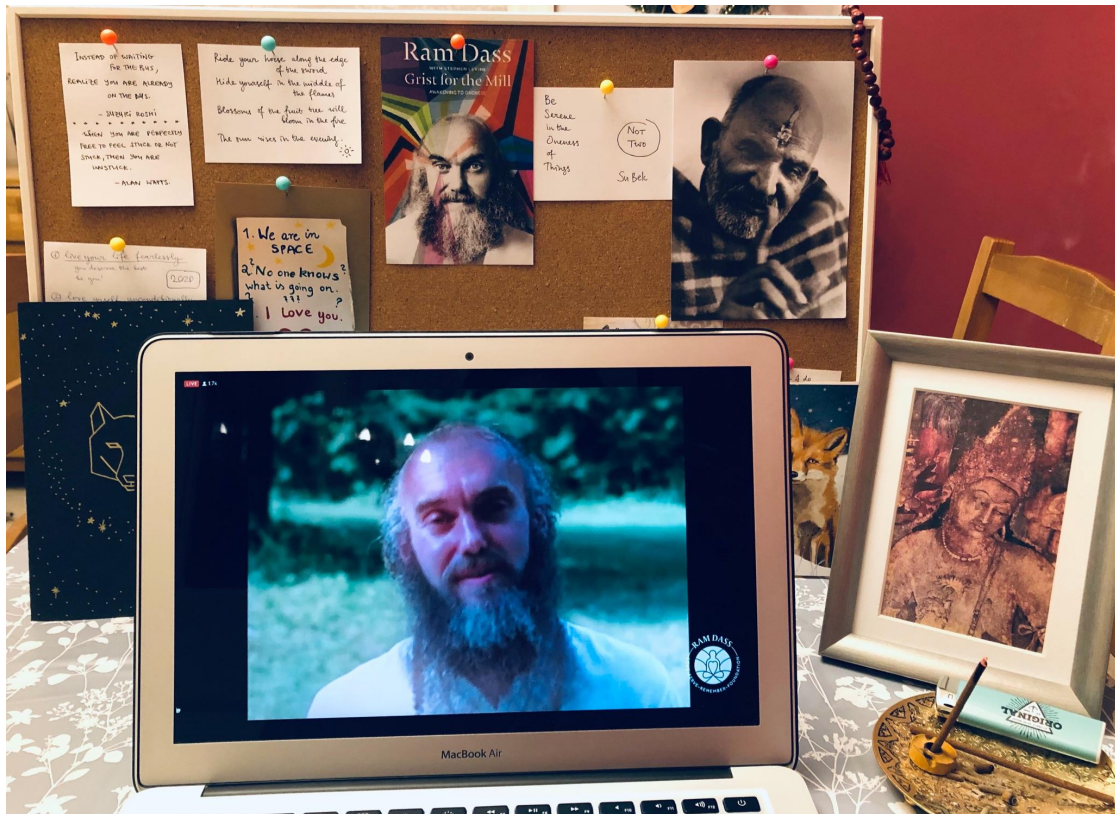


Rene Magritte

Throughout the course of our evolution, it is natural to be more rooted in emptiness, which is the natural state of the soul. As ego unravels to create space for the soul to fully enter, it is common for the unraveling ego to perceive the blossoming of emptiness as depression.

– Matt Kahn

Day 10. Be still.



My pooja table

*You don't need to leave your room.
Remain sitting at your table and listen.
Don't even listen, simply wait.
Don't even wait.
Be quite still and solitary.
The world will freely offer itself to you.
To be unmasked, it has no choice.
It will roll in ecstasy at your feet.*

– Franz Kafka

Part 2. SHED. EMPTY. LET GO.

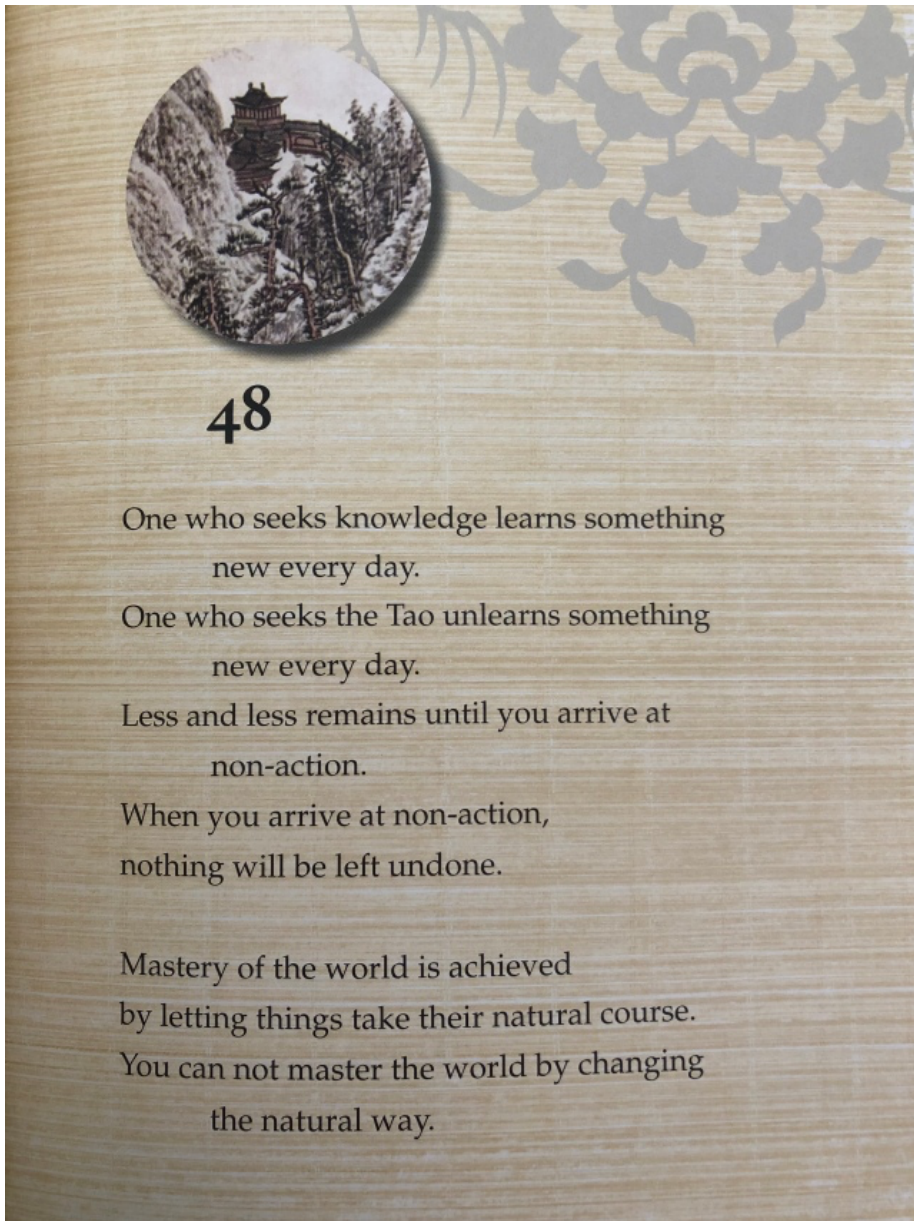
Day 11. Minimalism.



[How to Play the 30-Day Minimalism Game](#)

Minimalism is a brilliant concept to use to simplify your life. What can you shed? Empty? Let go of? Start small. For inspiration, watch one or both documentaries from The Minimalists [here](#) or on Netflix. Try their Minimalism Game (above), even if only for a couple of days. You may surprise yourself and discover that by shedding possessions that you no longer need you also let go of emotions, thoughts and feelings. You may find yourself buying less stuff, feeling happier, and if you continue, long-term, you may discover you need to work less, you can save more, get rid of mortgage, debt, etc. **Minimalism = freedom.**

Day 12. Nothing will be left undone.



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One who seeks knowledge learns something
new every day.

One who seeks the Tao unlearns something
new every day.

Less and less remains until you arrive at
non-action.

When you arrive at non-action,
nothing will be left undone.

Mastery of the world is achieved
by letting things take their natural course.
You can not master the world by changing
the natural way.

Tao Te Ching

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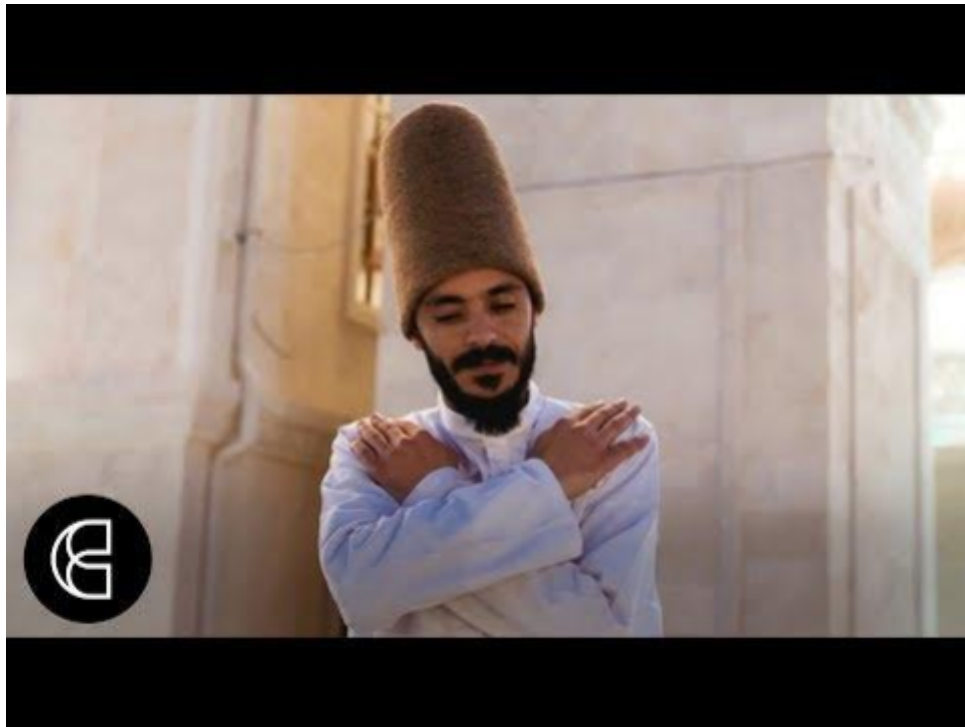
Day 13. Time in between.



The old world falls apart but the new has not yet emerged. Everything that once seemed permanent and real is revealed as a kind of hallucination. You don't know what to think, what to do; you don't know what anything means anymore. The life trajectory you had plotted out seems absurd, and you can't imagine another one. Everything is uncertain. Your time frame shrinks from years to this month, this week, today, maybe even this present moment. Without the mirage of order that once seemed to protect you and filter reality, you feel naked and vulnerable, but also a kind of freedom. Possibilities that didn't even exist in the old story lie before you, even if you have no idea how to get there. The challenge in our culture is to allow yourself to be in that space, to trust that the next story will emerge when the time in between has ended, and that you will recognize it."

– Charles Eisenstein, *The More Beautiful World Our Hearts Know Is Possible*

Day 14. Emptiness is what your soul wants.



[The Whirling Dervishes - Dancing to Get Closer to God](#)

*Everything is emptiness. Everything else, accidental. Emptiness brings peace to your loving.
Everything else, disease. In this world of trickery, emptiness is what your soul wants.*

– Rumi

Day 15. Kali meditation.



[Kali Meditation | Ram Dass Guided Meditation](#)

Paradoxically, feeling empty could be a sign that we need to empty more. Perhaps in a mad rush of socially driven acquisition we acquired excessive identities, possessions, thoughts, feelings, relationships, drama which are not what we are or what our soul wants. To liberate ourselves, we need to shed this excess - insecurities, frustrations, anger, fears, worries, addictions, unworthiness. In the Kali meditation, we offer everything that takes us out of the flow of the Universe, that brings our vibration down to Kali, a Hindu goddess, who lives off of our impurities. Sit or lie down comfortably, close your eyes, breathe deeply and slowly, think what you need to shed, empty and follow the above meditation.

Day 16. Addiction.



No Face (Spirited Away), wallhere.com

At the core of every addiction is an emptiness based in abject fear... Many of us resemble the drug addict in our ineffectual efforts to fill in the spiritual black hole, the void at the centre, where we have lost touch with our souls, our spirit, with those sources of meaning and value that are not contingent or fleeting. Our consumerist, acquisition-, action- and image-mad culture only serves to deepen the hole, leaving us emptier than before.

– Gabor Maté, In the Realm of Hungry Ghosts.

Day 17. The Void.



Universal Images Group via Getty Images

Did the void know what it was doing? Did it know itself? Maybe the void didn't even know what to do with itself and didn't even like itself. Maybe the nothingness knew only to fill itself with people, and in that way was a creator of sorts. Maybe the nothingness was a god, but not intentionally cruel - not confident in itself. Maybe it was not evil or saying ha-ha to me, just lonely, hating itself, wanting something else to stick inside itself to relieve itself of itself.

– Melissa Broder, Pisces

Day 18. Surrender Observe Allow Release meditation.



[SOAR Guided Meditation For General Suffering \(Empaths and HSPs\)](http://www.lonerwolf.com)

When it all gets too much, we can practice surrender. Try the “Surrender Observe Allow Release” meditation from the shamanic blog Loner Wolf. Sit or lie down comfortably, close your eyes, breathe deeply and slowly, close your eyes and follow the video.

Part 3. FILL THE EMPTINESS

Day 19. The Emptiness Meditation.



Lola Askarova, [Love addiction. love crushes. unrequited love and how to break the pattern](#)

When you feel the familiar chill of the void opening within you, the deafening vibration of the growing vacuum, the infinite sinkhole of the Big Empty, don't do what you usually do – run away, fill the emptiness, scratch the itch. Do the opposite. Stop. Turn around, slowly, and face it. Face the emptiness. The terrifying void. Face it calmly, openly, lovingly. Then – miracle. Your soul takes a deep breath. You don't become empty, you don't disappear and the billowing clouds of darkness do not consume you. Instead it's as if you go through, you come out on the other side stronger and full of light. You go through the veil and you see that the terrifying void is again just an illusion. You win this round.

Day 20. The Void.



[Blood Bros](#)

Reflect, journal or meditate on this:

HOW DO YOU FILL THE EMPTINESS?

Day 21. Don't think you must avoid it.



"...every craftsman searches for what's not there to practice his craft. A builder looks for the rotten hole where the roof caved in. A water carrier picks the empty pot. A carpenter stops at the house with no door. Workers rush toward some hint of emptiness, which they then start to fill. Their hope, though, is for emptiness, so don't think you must avoid it. It contains what you need!"

– Rumi

Day 22. Complete stillness leads to complete awakening.



DougMark Productions

In the Perfect Penetration Through Hearing practice, you simply listen without attachment to sound, to silence, or to the contrast between the two; there's no attachment at all. If you are able to listen in this way, you will eventually reach a point when listening still occurs, but it no longer has an object. In other words, there is still awareness, but that which you are aware of is empty. The Shurangama Sutra says, "when both awareness and the objects of awareness become empty, then emptiness and awareness merge and reach a state of absolute perfection."

Source: [The Way of the Heart: Teachings of Dharma Master Hsin Tao](#)

PS: Learning to hear silence in the midst of noise is - wow. This practice also teaches one to be breath. One follows their breath, like in a meditation, but goes beyond, ceases thinking and becomes breath itself - empties into awareness of breathing. "There is no longer any difference between "being" and "nothingness." And now you are not just nobody, you are nothing :) Awe and wonder...

Day 23. Chant or sing your heart out.



[Bliss \(I am the light of my soul\) - Sirgun Kaur & Sat Darshan Singh](#)

To fill emptiness (yourself) with light, try chanting. Chanting, also known as kirtan, is a type of sound healing, a powerful practice to release, reset and surrender. I chant when I am worried, scared, stressed or in need of re-centering. You don't need to know how to sing. In your music app of choice or on Youtube, search for Krishna Das (try Mere Gurudev or Jai Jagadisha Hare), Jahnvi Harrison (try Hare Krishna) or Deva Premal (try Om Mani Padme Hum or Om Shanti Om) and sing your heart out! The lyrics are usually very straightforward (or can be easily looked up) and include Tibetan or Sanskrit mantras, although there are chants in English (like the one above). Or [chant with Ram Dass](#).

Day 24. Kundalini meditation.

To literally fill yourself with light, practice this Kundalini meditation. It is an equivalent of high intensity physical workout, but for spirit, so you are unlikely to master it immediately. Ideally you need to sit still for an hour, but if you are a beginner meditator and your legs or your mind can't last this long, do it for as long as you can (e.g. count to 25) and change positions if you need to. Work to gradually increase the time until you do a full hour (treat leg pain as energy, observe it and absorb it. Magic! :))

Do this meditation for a week once or twice a day. Happy fireworks :)

See [the Reddit post here](#) for full instructions.

Day 25. The White Wolf meditation.



*When the emptiness practice (the Dark Night of the Soul) becomes too much and you start losing faith, trust and practice the [White Wolf Meditation by Loner Wolf](#). Make yourself comfortable, breathe deeply, slowly, close your eyes and follow the recording [here](#) (c.12min).
Be the light. Woof :)*

Day 26. Fill it with beauty.

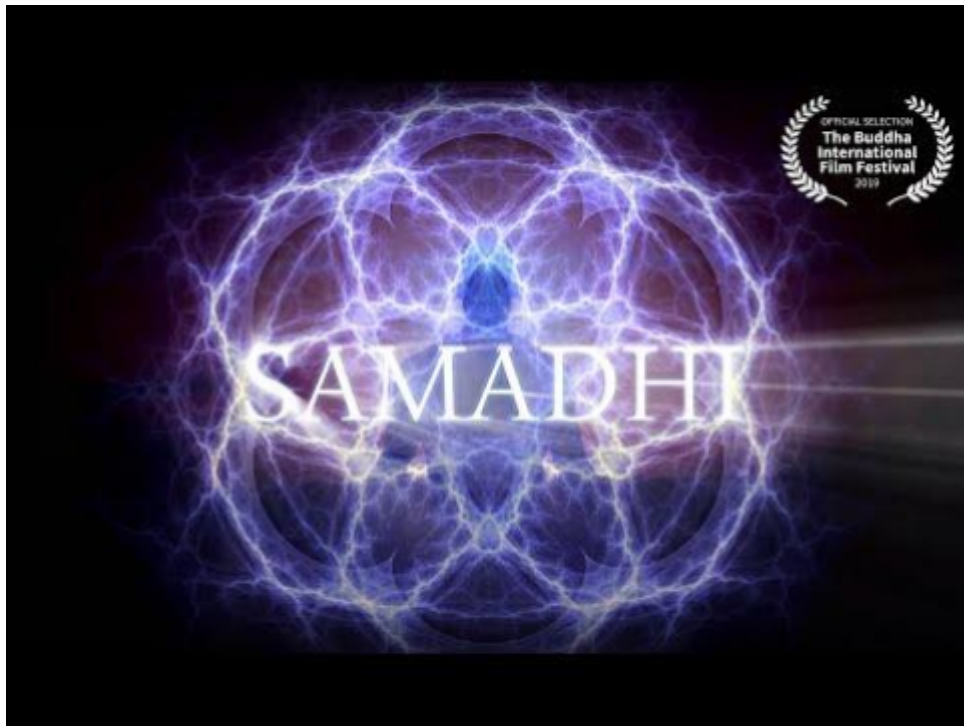


Dissolving Figurative Sculptures by Unmask

Beauty evolves from emptiness into form... all things “unfold” from a fertile, self-organizing, and living Void whose inherent structural patterns are echoed and embodied in all the ten thousand things.

– Christopher Alexander

Day 27. Samadhi — enlightenment, bliss, emptiness.



[Samadhi Movie, 2017 - Part 1 - "Maya, the Illusion of the Self"](#)

Samadhi – eternal bliss, the union with God, enLIGHTenment, ultimate destination of any spiritual seeker... yet something that is unattainable if we strive for it. This beautiful, thought provoking, perspective shifting documentary by Daniel Schmidt is dedicated to one of the most important concepts in Buddhism. And yes, emptiness is a big part of it. My biggest takeaway? Emptiness that I've been trying to transcend? It is me. I am it. Nothing to transcend. And emptiness is not nothing, it is form, it is movement. Wow. Enjoy.

Day 28. Emptiness is not a state but a way.



*Contingency is emptiness
Which, contingently configured,
Is the middle way.*

— Nagarjuna

“Emptiness is not a state but a way. Not only is it inseparable from the world of contingencies, it too is “contingently configured.” To experience emptiness is not a descent into an abyss of nothingness but a recovery of the freedom to configure oneself as an intentional, unimpeded trajectory through the shifting, ambiguous sands of life.” [Stephen Batchelor. Nagarjuna's Verses from the Center](#)

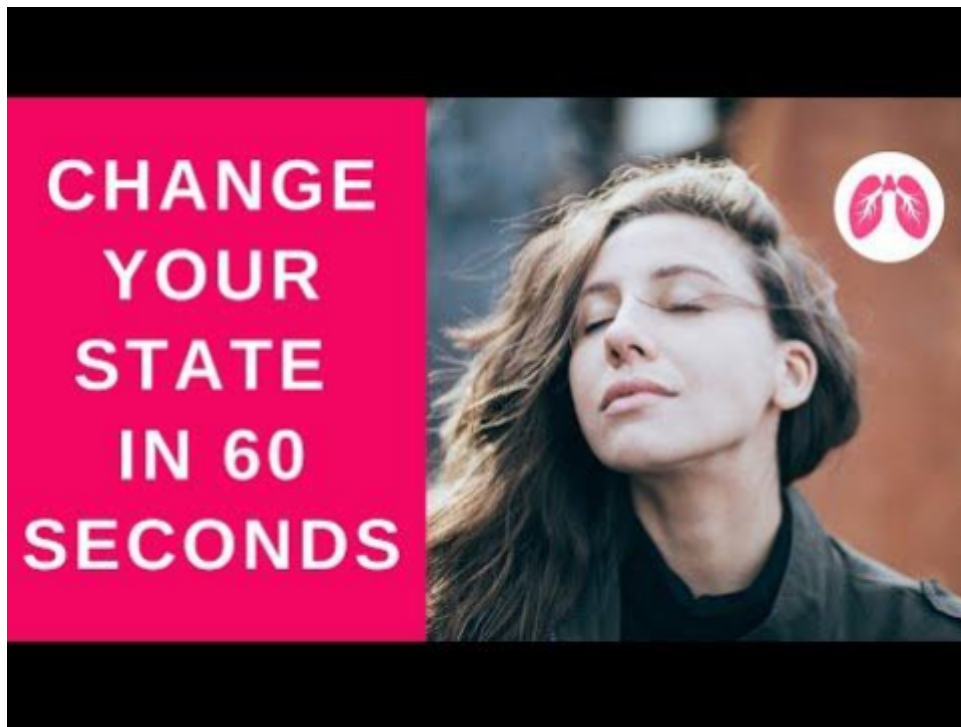
Day 29. Trust the process.



Ram Dass, Be Here Now.

Trust. The. Process.

Day 30. Breathe.

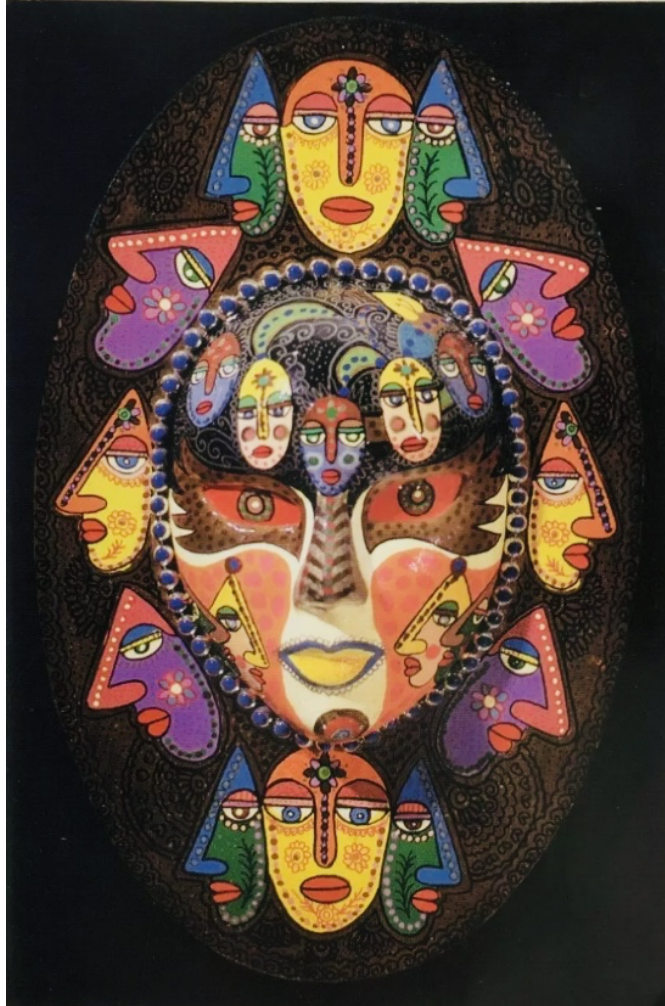


[Change your state in 60 seconds | Breathing Exercise | TAKE A DEEP BREATH](#)

When emptiness becomes too much and you feel restless, uneasy, anxious or empty, use this video by Take A Deep Breath to change your emotional state in 60 seconds. It is a powerful technique that only takes 60 seconds.

Part 4. Change the lens.

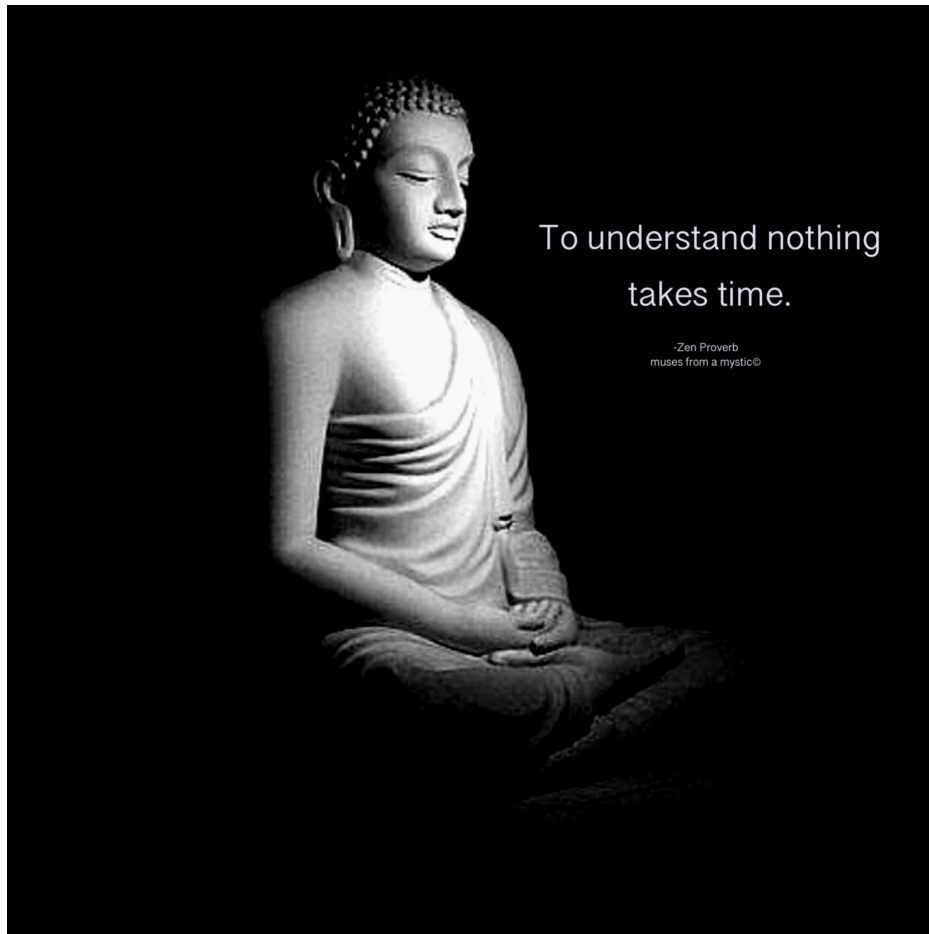
Day 31. Emptiness is an opportunity.



Emptiness is an opportunity.

[Maestro Souther Hamilton](#)

Day 32. You have to become less.



The whole point of a dark night of the soul is not knowing. If we were aware of what was going on, we would disrupt or sabotage the process. We need to not know to get through it while allowing it to run its course and achieve God's goals... The main purpose of it all is not to attain something.

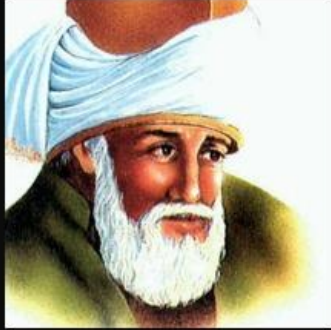
Rather, there's a certain consciousness — an awareness — that grows in the person who experiences this night. This will later lead to a full awakening — living from that 'higher mind'...

That's why the journey of true spirituality is often referred to as a path of descent.

You have to become less.

[Neo Mysticism](#)

Day 33. What a relief to be empty!

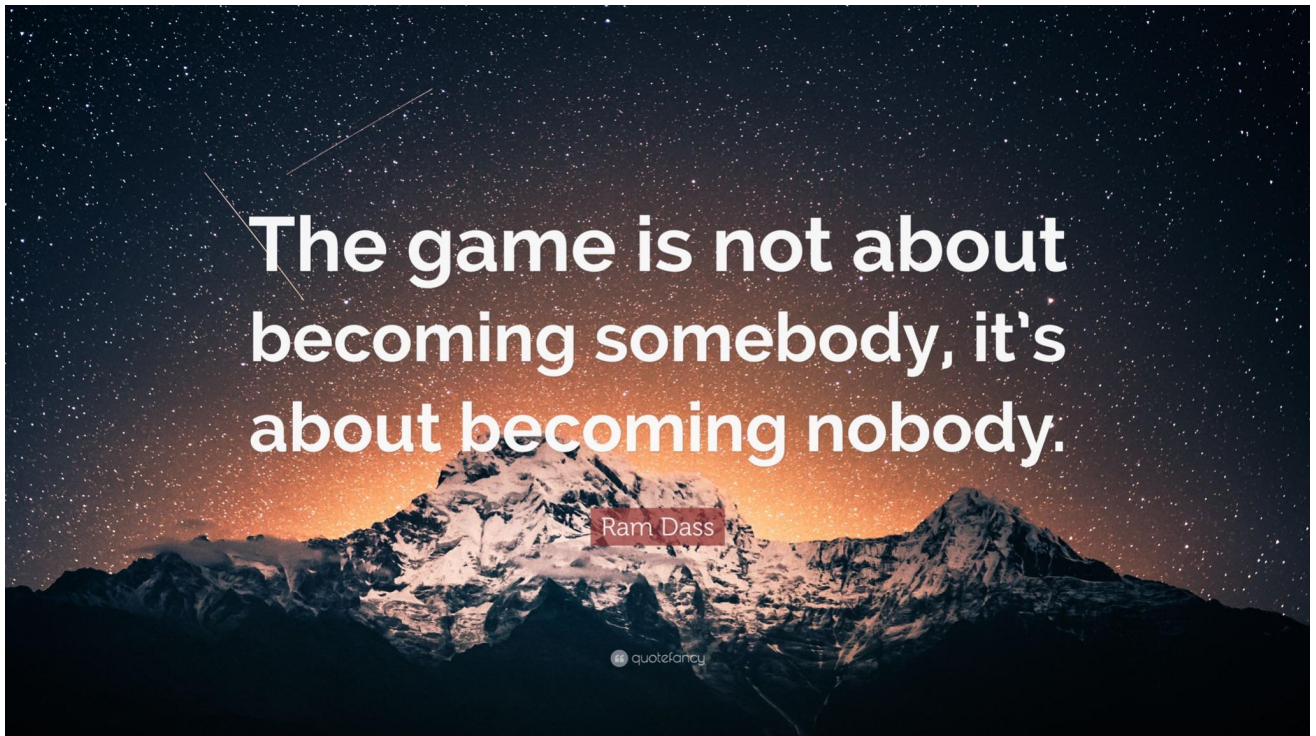


What a relief to be empty! Then
God can live your life.

~ Rumi

AZ QUOTES

Day 34. What a relief to be empty!



You stand nowhere;

there's nowhere where you are not,

and there's nowhere where you are.

– Ram Dass

Day 35. Watch The Watcher meditation.



Natural Warp

If you feel ready to glimpse your true nature and face emptiness, try the Watch the Watcher meditation (more about it [here](#)). Please note this can be quite an intense method so only try it if you feel ready to face anything.

Do your usual meditation practice and when your mind quietens and awareness expands, with your eyes closed, in your mind, look around and face the one who is meditating.

*This may be terrifying or exhilarating. Try to choose to feel awe or amusement, rather than fear.
If it becomes too much, stop the practice and try again later.
Do this regularly to remember who you really are.*

Day 36. Watch the source of the mantra.



[Ramana Maharshi - Abide As The Self](#)

Watch the source of the mantra.

– Ramana Maharshi.

Day 37. I am pure Spirit.

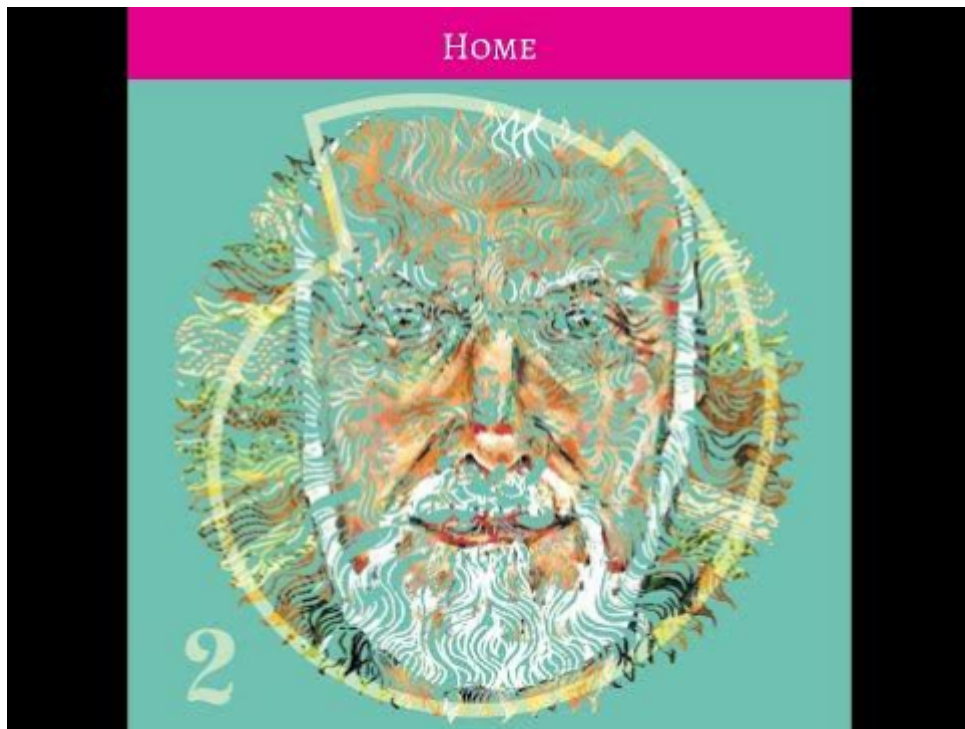


Ajanta Caves, Bodhisattva Padmapani

*I know that I am pure Spirit. That I always have been. And that I always will be. There is inside me a place of confidence and quietness and security where all things are known and understood. This is the universal mind, God, of which I am a part and which responds to me as I ask of it. This universal mind knows the answer to all of my problems. And even now, the answers are speeding their way to me. I needn't struggle for them, I needn't worry or strive for them, when the time comes, the answers will be there. I am confident, I am serene, I am sure. No matter what obstacle or undesirable circumstance crosses my path, I refuse to accept it, for it is nothing but illusion. There can be no obstacle or undesirable circumstance to the mind of God.
Which is in me, around me and serves me now.*

– Wayne Dyer

Day 38. *We aren't lonely.*



[EAST FOREST x RAM DASS - 'Home' - OFFICIAL STREAM](#)

*We aren't lonely – not because there are others there,
but because there is no one at all, including us.*

— Ram Dass

Day 39. I truly am it all already.



*I love who I am and what I have attracted to myself up until now.
I do not need another thing or even one tiny change
in order to be happy or complete.
I know in my heart that I am not going to get it all,
but that I truly am it all already.
The universe is endless, I am the universe, and therefore
I am without boundaries.*

— Wayne Dyer

Day 40. Trust the Dharma.

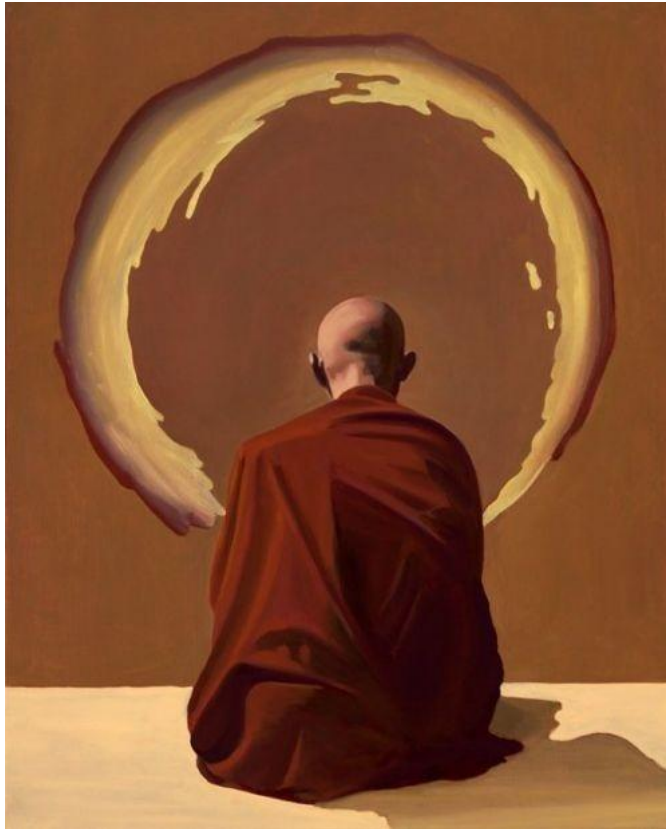


Ram Dass by Gabriel Alcala

Trust the dharma.

– Ram Dass

Day 41. Emptiness is a way.

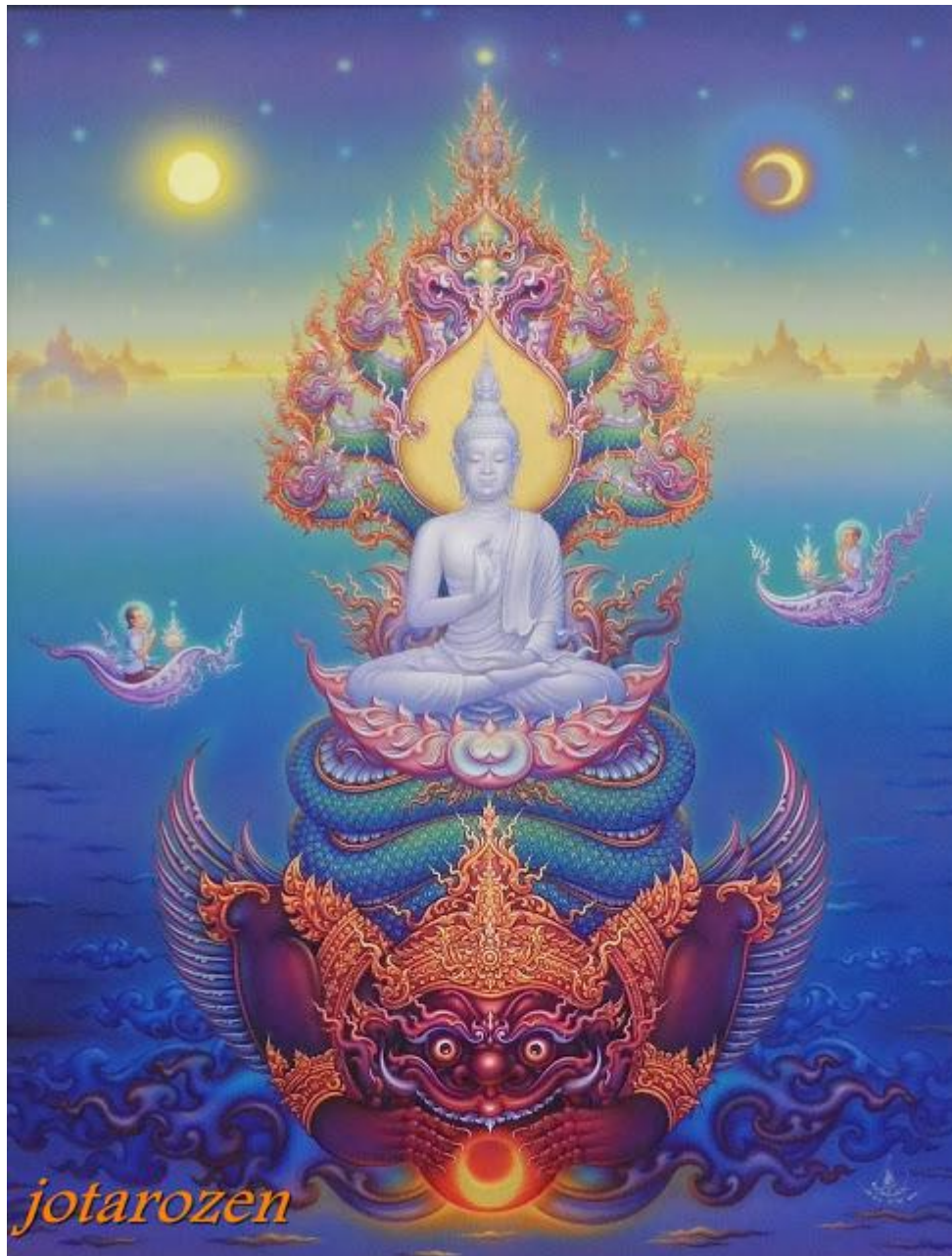


[Tumblr](#)

Emptiness is the way.

[And it is also the lens]

Day 42. I am emptiness.



Blessing Of Lord Buddha by Chalermchai Kositpipat

You are emptiness.

I am emptiness.

Bonus Material

This is a collection of my recent (2021-2022) blog posts on emptiness and how to cope with/overcome it by changing, expanding your understanding of it.

[Nothing Means Anything #emptiness](#)

[New mantra. No thoughts.](#)

[The Emptiness Mantra](#)

[Five Hindrances – going beyond emptiness](#)

[Non-doing does not mean inaction. Love yourself through stuckness.](#)

[Emptiness as freedom. The Void by Alan Watts.](#)

[When you realise you are stuck... surrender into the hopelessness #RamDass](#)