

*“Wise letting go
is not a detached removal
from life.
It is the heart’s embrace
of life itself,
a willing opening
to the full reality
of the present.”*

Jack Kornfield
After The Ecstasy, The Laundry



People often speak of letting go without having investigated what it actually means in practical living.

You probably think of letting go as being the opposite of holding on – and you doubtless have an incredible ability to hold on to just about anything and everything – and to become attached to people, relationships, material objects, beliefs, values, strategies for living, dreams, visions, and even your sense of life’s purpose and meaning. This is, after all, one of the defining characteristics of being human.

The question is whether your letting go is most often a mental decision to turn away from the object of your desire and/or to detach from your passion to keep it? A conscious decision to let go *as the opposite of holding on* causes the *unconscious* mind to react, tightening your grip on what you really don’t want to lose.

As our mystic above indicates, *wise* letting go entails the paradoxical act of embracing life itself. Furthermore, it is an embrace of the heart, not of the mind. But to more easily and quickly bring this wisdom into practical daily life, we can tap the mind’s ability to also embrace life through a different understanding.

To help the mind relax and turn its intelligence to the support of the heart, a distinction needs to be made between holding on to life and embracing life. Holding on rests in a *demand* that the moment be *different* than it is. Embracing life rests in a *willingness* for the moment to be *exactly* what it is.

It is easier to give the mind a new perspective if you take a paradoxical look at letting go and holding on as an interdependent polar pair – two sides of the coin of human experience. You simply cannot have one without the other because they actually define each other. Life experience comes and, without another way to perceive things, you are forced (biologically) to cling and hold on to whatever you value. Life then changes and you are forced, one way or another, to let go.

For the heart to embrace life with “a willing opening to the full reality of the present” requires opening to the *impermanence of all things*. The fact of this impermanence is revealed again and again in the fundamental flow of comings and goings that arise and pass away within the Presence of Now.

The essence of wise letting go is to
face and feel the facticity of impermanence -
to discover the rhythm of things arising and passing away.

With this understanding in your body/brain,
the ability to embrace life arises – regardless of the moment’s content.

When experiences arise, it is their rightful time to reach out, to touch you, and to shape you. So you take hold of the moment’s outstretched hand. Through these moments of interface, you receive the moment’s feel, texture, weight, shape, and temperature – it’s coloring and shading – it’s rhythm, timbre and tone - and hopefully, you learn and grow. When things come to the end of their rightful time, the occasion arises to let go – to clear the space for fresh inspiration and experience to arise.

This moment that we speak of is like a tea cup. Each is designed as a way to provide life and nourishment. But the cup becomes useless if it is always full, and equally so, if it is always empty. The moment brings us life and the nourishment of growth and creative desire through this rhythm of filling up and emptying out. Recognizing and relaxing into this dynamic flow brings the wise letting go we seek.

I invite you to explore your moments as they arise and pass away. Are they filled with precious thoughts, beliefs, visions, dreams, desires, a beloved, a passion, your purpose, objects that you have come to love? Within the moment, can you find what is reaching its end and what is just beginning? Can you tune in enough to hear the whisper of what has arrived and what is leaving? Can you sense the presence of what is in full bloom and what is beginning to wane?

Can you perceive this with your own mystical eyes? Can you feel this rhythm hidden in the flow of your day? It is there and yours to explore. Each moment is filled with the wisdom that can free your heart to *willingly* embrace the full reality of your life journey. With this freedom comes the mind’s relaxation into the wise letting go that is paradoxically beyond the mind and heralds the presence of your mystical heritage coming alive.

Please visit us again next month for another Reflection. I offer these thoughts to stimulate your mind, nourish your soul, and continue the awakening of your heart's compassion – for others and especially for yourself.

Ragini