

# Eckhart Tolle: the Beauty of Today

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Kyle Ford/Gallery Stock. Illustration by John Ciambriello

## **The perfect anniversary present? The Present.**

Most of us would agree that anniversaries are a cause for celebration. And yet some people feel ambivalent about anniversaries, birthdays and the like.

Some even feel a little guilty when they think about the past, though the memories may be pleasant. "Am I avoiding the present moment?" they ask.

They belong to a growing number of people who are "**practicing presence**"—endeavoring to let go of an excessive and unhealthy preoccupation with past and future, and embrace the place where life happens.

There is a fine balance between honoring the past and losing yourself in it.

For example, you can acknowledge and learn from mistakes you made, and then move on and refocus on the now.

## **It is called forgiving yourself.**

Or you can carry a burden of guilt (self-identification with mistakes) for many years. You may occasionally fondly remember events, places, or people from the past and while doing so be accepting of the impermanence of all things. Or you may wallow in nostalgia and see the past as more precious than the present.

Be vigilant, so that you don't allow a burden of negative past to accumulate in your mind, in the form of guilt, regret, resentment, grievances, anger, and so on. Forgiveness happens naturally as soon as you realize that the past cannot prevail against the power of Presence.

The future, too, needs to be honored, without making it more important in your mind than the present. Of course, you can make plans, and you can hold an intention in your mind of something that you wish to manifest in your life, and then take appropriate action.

But the power for creating a better future is contained in the present moment: You create a good future by creating a good present. How do you do that? By recognizing the goodness that is already inherent in the present moment, even in the midst of challenges.

Discontent, blaming, complaining, self-pity cannot serve as a foundation for a good future, no matter how much effort you make.

Where to find that goodness when recession hits, when you lose your job, your

home, when things seem to fall apart around you? In all the things that we tend to overlook: feeling the gentle breeze on your skin, the sunlight filtering through the clouds, the sound of the rain, the wagging tail of a dog, the shiny apple you are about to bite into.

You notice the in-and-out flow of your breath, the feeling of aliveness inside your body. And then there is the beautiful stillness behind it all, which is deep within you. It is through gratitude for the present moment that the spiritual dimension of life opens up.

So let's celebrate our anniversaries as they arise. What we are really celebrating, though, is the present moment, the doorway into Spirit, and all there ever is.