

# Pure Presence

Wisdom is not the gathering of more facts and information, as if that would eventually coalesce into truth. Wisdom is a way of seeing and knowing the same old ten thousand things but in a new way. It is often said that it's not about knowing more, but knowing with more of you. I suggest that wise people are those who are free to be truly present to what is right in front of them. It has little to do with formal education. Presence is pretty much the same as wisdom!

Presence is the one thing necessary to attain wisdom, and in many ways, it is the hardest thing of all. Just try to keep your heart open and soft, your mind receptive without division or resistance, and your body aware of where it is and its deepest level of feeling. Presence is when all three centres are awake at the same time! Most religions decided it was easier to believe doctrines—and obey often arbitrary laws—than undertake the truly converting work of being present.

The Zen master Thich Nhat Hanh teaches this wisdom through the ceremony and meditation of tea (a Buddhist parallel to the Christian Eucharist):

You must be completely awake in the present to enjoy the tea.

Only in the awareness of the present, can your hands feel the pleasant warmth of the cup.

Only in the present, can you savour the aroma, taste the sweetness, appreciate the delicacy.

If you are ruminating about the past, or worrying about the future, you will completely miss the experience of enjoying the cup of tea.

You will look down at the cup, and the tea will be gone.

Life is like that.

If you are not fully present, you will look around and it will be gone.

You will have missed the feel, the aroma, the delicacy and beauty of life.

It will seem to be speeding past you. The past is finished.

Learn from it and let it go.

The future is not even here yet. Plan for it, but do not waste your time worrying about it.

Worrying is worthless.

When you stop ruminating about what has already happened, when you stop worrying about what might never happen, then you will be in the present moment.

Then you will begin to experience joy in life. [1]

Richard Rohr