

Hear Yourself

What's in it for me? Discover the peace that resides in you.

The modern world is a chaotic place. We live in overcrowded cities, where we're surrounded by traffic, noise, and pollution – and work ourselves to death. Faced with distractions and the demands of everyday life, we've forgotten how to access the sense of peace that has been inside us since we were born. But it doesn't have to be this way. There are ways to reconnect, and they don't have to involve escaping to the mountains or living as a hermit! These blinks provide a glimpse of this more peaceful way of life and reveal methods you can use to access it. In these blinks, you'll learn

how human beings create their own misery; the importance of living in the “now”; and how being grateful every day can bring you peace and contentment.

To find peace within, you must first silence the noise.

Have you ever woken up in the morning and felt your mind racing? You slowly open your eyes, yawn, stretch and are immediately strangled by thoughts about the day ahead, the goals you have to achieve, and other people's expectations. If you resonated with any of that, you're not alone. We're all servants to what the author, Prem Rawat, calls the “busyness of life.” We let trivial things control our agenda to the point where time seems to melt into thin air. And, in doing so, we miss out on all the rich experiences that life has to offer. The key message here is: To find peace within, you must first silence the noise. In the modern world, there is always something fighting for your attention. Take technology. While it's a useful and necessary part of life, it is just as often an amplifier of noise and distraction. Just think about how many hours a day you waste on your phone. The need to be constantly connected means continually scrolling social media feeds and emails, responding to messages, and then feeling dejected if you miss out on something cool. But technology's not the only thing at fault. Your internal pressures, desires, and expectations also play a big role – things like getting a promotion, advancing in your career, or worrying about whether other people think of you as “successful.” It's not wrong to be ambitious. But the constant drive for achievement is a distraction from what is good in the present moment. It's like driving from A to B as fast as possible, without pausing to look out of the window. Many of us might acknowledge that our lives are noisy – but our problem is that we seek peace in the wrong places. We flee from stress by going on long vacations to remote islands or escaping up high mountains. But unless we can find peace within ourselves, the noise will always follow us. Reconnecting with the peace within isn't about cutting yourself off from technology or civilization. It's about building a solid foundation of calm and strength – and then using that to keep you steady, even in the darkest of times. In the following blinks we'll take a look at exactly how you can reconnect with your inner peace.

Peace comes when you let the unimportant things in life fall away.

Think about your favorite shirt for a moment. Imagine taking it out of a drawer, putting it on, and then heading out the door feeling fresh. Throughout the day, that shirt will get dirty - while you're working, running around, or eating spaghetti. Once the day is done, you'll probably want to wash it. What happens when you wash clothes? You remove the dirt. That is, you don't bring cleanliness from elsewhere and put it inside the clothes! You take away what's not desired and leave what is: a clean item of clothing. This same idea applies to finding your inner peace. You don't create peace and install it inside yourself. Instead, you uncover what's already there by letting go of what is trivial and not needed. The key message here is: Peace comes when you let the unimportant things in life fall away. Finding inner peace has a lot to do with choice. You choose to give your time and attention only to what matters: to tasks you must do or to things you find fulfilling. Everything else - the stress, the thoughts, the anxieties, the expectations - is just noise. But how do you let go of all the things you don't need? Well, one way is to stop focusing on the negative feelings within you and instead strengthen the positives. Think of it this way: in life there is both presence and absence. And it's far better to focus on what is than to fret about what is not. For example, there's a lot of hatred in the world; it's responsible for wars, violence, and the separation of loved ones. But we can't simply get rid of hatred. That would leave a vacuum - and in nature, vacuums always get filled with something. So we need to actively choose love instead. If you bring love to the forefront, then hatred starts to fade. Say you're worried about the criticisms your boss or colleagues might have about you at work. Instead of focusing on their concerns, try to strengthen your skills - and become the best version of yourself. Living happily and consciously is recognizing that you have a choice. You can pour your energy into what builds you up - and avoid the things that weigh you down.

Learning to live in the now will help you recognize you have everything you need in this moment.

Prem Rawat grew up in Dehradun, a city in India. Thinking back to his childhood, he remembers the magical autumn days filled with blue skies and big, puffy clouds. He describes sitting in his front yard beneath two magnolia trees, watching the sweet peas growing on the walls and smelling the delicate scent that hung in the air. One day, in his usual spot, Rawat started thinking. It occurred to him that whatever had created him had also created the magnolia trees and the dew on the lawn. In that moment, he experienced what it's like to just be - with no wants, no wishes, and no desire to do anything but feel. The key message here is: Learning to live in the now will help you recognize you have everything you need in this moment. That day in his garden, Rawat was living in the moment. But being focused on the present can sometimes feel like a hard task. People naturally look to the future; we're always running to that next meeting and ticking things off our to-do lists. And when we do, we lose sight of what's important. Have you ever bumped into an old friend and said, "Wow. How long has it been?!" It can be startling to realize how quickly the years pass. And it can even make you feel regretful for being distracted. How do you stop yourself from getting tangled up in life so you can refocus on what matters? In busy moments, Rawat recommends you pause and ask yourself two questions: "What is the value of time if we don't understand the value of each breath?" and, "If now is not important to me, how can yesterday or tomorrow be important?" These questions will help anchor you. They'll remind you that what is important is not happening tomorrow, but right now. Another approach is to

change your perspective of time. We tend to think of time as being divided into fractions: years, months, weeks, days, hours, seconds. These units of time are finite. But although the external world may function by the ticking clock, our internal world feels the moment as absolute, or infinite – what Rawat calls “a timeless today.” No matter what we do, or what plans we make for the future, we can only live in the present moment. Just like Rawat sitting under the magnolia tree, your timeless today gives you the freedom to just feel. There’s no need to improve yourself or search for something new. You can find the infinite peace you’re looking for right here, in the moment.

Embrace what you know, and focus on yourself – not on what others think.

Throughout his life, Rawat has traveled from country to country to spread his message of peace. He’s spoken everywhere from United Nations meetings to high-security prisons, and to everyone from world leaders to ex-guerilla fighters. As part of the Prem Rawat Foundation, he founded the Peace Education Program, which helps people find their place in society by reconnecting them with their inner peace. Once, Rawat was speaking to inmates in a prison in Pune, India, when one man came forward to ask him a question. The prisoner said that he was going to be released soon, and he had a big worry: What would people think of him on the outside? The key message here is: Embrace what you know, and focus on yourself – not on what others think. Other people’s judgment seemed to be a huge concern for the hundreds of prisoners Rawat spoke to that day. It’s a huge concern for many of us in our day-to-day lives as well. Too often, we waste energy worrying about other people’s opinions of our work, our personality, or even the home we live in. It’s like we seek approval from other people to fill an empty hole in ourselves. The thing is, no one can fill that emptiness for us. First and foremost, we must cherish who we are. To do this, you need to “start with yourself.” That is, you should accept and harness the wonderful strengths and resources already inside you. Next time you’re keeping yourself awake at night with worries about what your friends or colleagues think of you, consider these questions: Do I approve of myself? Do I like spending time with myself? Do I understand and appreciate myself? This isn’t about being self-centered – it’s about being centered in you. It’s not always easy to do. But if you stop focusing on other people’s judgment and instead concentrate on how much you approve of yourself, you’ll reduce the noise coming from other people’s opinions, needs, and wants. When you feel centered, the chatter of the outside world slips into insignificance. And you discover that the seeds of clarity, joy, serenity, and love are already inside you – just waiting to bloom.

Let go of expectations that don’t match reality.

If you're anything like most people, a series of expectations probably guides your day. You expect that your alarm clock will go off. You expect your important meeting will happen. You expect to pick up a salt shaker and find it filled with salt. Setting expectations is how we shape our lives. And it isn’t necessarily harmful. What is harmful is when we set expectations that don’t square with reality. A tremendous amount of anger and sadness comes from unfulfilled wishes – like friendships that end or relationships that fall apart. So it pays to be realistic about the future. The key message

here is: Let go of expectations that don't match reality. Setting expectations about areas of our lives like our relationships, home, job, and family can be exciting – but don't get hung up on them. It's all too easy to waste time regretting that the present hasn't measured up to your hopes and expectations. But when you feel disappointed, it robs the “now” of its wonder. The thing is, it's tricky to stand back from our thoughts and see how wedded we are to particular outcomes. Sometimes, we're so rigid in our assessments of how life should be that we feel the impact of unexpected events and disappointments even more. It's like when a stubborn person gets lost. Instead of believing what the map tells her, she presses on with her own idea of the correct way to go. Then, when she realizes she's taken the wrong route, she blames the map. Finding inner peace has a lot to do with being flexible – and simply accepting what is. Think of the way a tree sways gently with the wind, or the way a bird glides through a storm. The tree and the bird don't have expectations about how their journeys will end. They just keep moving, concerned only with the present. Of course, the real world might not seem as fun as life in a fantasy. But it helps you prepare for whatever comes your way. If you're having a good phase, be aware that bad times will come at some point. And if you're having a bad phase, know that good times will also follow. There's no need to worry, or to try to anticipate every possible future scenario. Simply believe that change is coming, dig deep, and feel your strength within.

Be grateful for every breath you take.

Did you know that trees have a heartbeat? Recent research shows that trees move their branches up and down at night, creating a pulse of water that flows throughout their entire body. Trees are masters of survival. They can prosper in whatever environment they're in and grow in the most unlikely places – from deserts to rivers to inside the cracks of rocks in mountains. In fact, we could learn a thing or two from trees. Whatever your circumstances are, you need to find a way to get clarity, peace, and understanding into your life. You do that by appreciating the most important thing you have: your very existence. The key message here is: Be grateful for every breath you take. When was the last time that you were truly grateful to be alive? We're not talking about seeing a hearse and thinking, I'm glad it's not me in there. We're talking about being fully awake to the passing of the day into night – and really feeling your existence. Gratitude isn't something that you can think into being; it's something you feel. For example, when Rawat feels gratitude, a voice inside him says, “I am alive, and I truly know I am alive.” And he feels this life-force pulsing through him. He imagines the human body – with all its complex parts and processes – sustaining him. His blood cells carry oxygen from his lungs to wherever it's needed. And each new breath powers his existence right here on this beautiful planet. Like with many other things in life, feeling gratitude is a choice. You can choose to appreciate your existence, your home, and the loved ones around you. Too often, we wait for a birth, a marriage, a personal crisis, or external success before we really give thanks for what we already have. But gratitude comes from what is – not what might be. If you can accept, experience, and appreciate things as they are, then you can stop desiring what you don't have – whether that's possessions or other people. When you value every breath, you discover that this is reality. And it is here that you can find immeasurable peace and joy.

Inner peace can set you free.

Prisons are not the kind of places you usually associate with freedom. Inmates are

locked behind bars and live out their days within the same four walls while prison officers keep a close eye on their activity. But prisoners can feel freedom too – as Rawat discovered when he started going into prisons to speak. He was surprised to find that even in the most bleak surroundings, some prisoners expressed such positive energy. Why? Because they'd found peace and serenity inside themselves. The key message here is: Inner peace can set you free. So, how did these prisoners learn to feel free even while they were locked up? During one of Rawat's visits to a prison, he realized just how much agency is taken away from people when they end up inside. Out in the wider world, they may have faced all sorts of pressures – but at least they had a home or a place they considered theirs. Behind bars, they lost that. The prison environment controlled everything – not just their freedom but also their time. The guards had all the power, and the other prisoners could often be unbearable to live with. Rawat realized that the happiest prisoners were those who recognized they still had a choice. While they couldn't get themselves out of prison, they could choose to connect with the peace, love, and self-respect they held inside themselves. In jail, having a choice can be incredibly liberating because choice is a type of power. Inmates may feel isolated and threatened. But being able to tune into a place that offers joy and calm is a lifeline. People often try to pass responsibility onto others as a form of escapism – and those in prison are no different. Inmates tend to blame others for their situation instead of facing up to what they've done. But the day a prisoner starts looking at himself instead, a profound thing happens: he discovers that he has more power than he knew. While he can't change the justice system, he can change himself. And by doing that, he transforms from a hopeless person into an empowered one. Whatever your circumstances are, you need to create your own sense of freedom. Our lives aren't perfect, but we can all feel peace inside us – if we choose.

A peaceful world starts with you.

Say you're building a house. You might start by layering bricks on top of each other, lining them with cement to make sure they stick together. The condition of each brick determines the strength of the house. If one brick is crumbling, it weakens the structure of those around it. The same is true of the individual and society. If one person decides not to show love and kindness to others, the ripples of that decision are felt throughout the world. But the opposite is also true. If we find peace within ourselves, at first it might only change how we think and act as individuals – but soon it will ripple outward. Our acts will combine with others; collectively, we can join together to create peace on a global scale. The key message here is: A peaceful world starts with you. Picture an image of the world from space. Zoom in to focus on a mountain range, and now come a little closer to see the forest on the side of the mountain. Keep zooming and you'll see a small copse of trees, then just one tree, and finally a bunch of leaves. If you continue to zoom in on the leaves, you'll eventually end up looking at three blobs of color: one red, one blue, and one green. You've reached the level of a single pixel – a microscopic, yet necessary, part of the whole picture. How does this relate to building a good society? Well, every human being is like one pixel. If the big picture of society looks wrong, we should explore what's gone wrong at the pixel level. We must look at ourselves and ask, Am I helping to build a good picture of my community, society, and world? The thing is, we grow up separating ourselves from others. We're taught from childhood about the differences between people – whether it's a different culture, different language, or different skin color. Of course, there are distinctive things about each of us. But we all share the same set of fundamental needs, including the need for peace in our hearts. If you can look inside yourself to build this peace and strength, you'll find you can share

these qualities with the people around you. Do that and you'll be creating a stronger, brighter world – one pixel at a time.

Final summary

The key message in these blinks: Our lives are noisy and distracting, but there are ways to rediscover the peace inside you. Instead of concentrating on what skills or possessions you lack – or striving toward unrealistic goals – focus on the positive things in your life. The ground beneath you might sometimes seem fallow, but there's an incredible world within that is full of fertile potential. Peace is possible – if you choose to let it bloom. Actionable advice: Release yourself from the past through forgiveness. Sometimes, the actions of others are so cruel that we can't bring ourselves to forgive. But the more we resist forgiveness, the more we prevent ourselves from healing. If you're struggling to forgive someone, try to think of forgiveness in a different way. Instead of seeing it as giving in, or letting the other person win, think of it as helping you cut a negative link to the past – and liberate yourself to start anew.