

# 11 Thoughts on Existence

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Special Excerpt by Chintav Shah

## Introduction

When you experience the limitless universe within yourself, each moment unfolds itself to you as the pinnacle of bliss.

And so you willingly surrender yourself to the infinitude of Truth, seeing yourself as One with the interdependent beauty of everyone and everything around you.

In discovering that culmination of happiness, you'll find where your life begins and ends.

These are a series of thoughts for people to explore. Hold none to be entirely true. If any offense is taken, I ask for forgiveness. These are merely thoughts, please do not give them more weight than what they are.

- (1) On Failure
- (2) On Ego
- (3) On Suffering
- (4) On Love
- (5) On Time
- (6) On Free Will
- (7) On Purpose
- (8) On Thinking
- (9) On Religion
- (10) On Truth
- (11) And Beyond

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# 1. On Failure

Have you ever thought about failure? We're conditioned to think that failure is "what not to do". But imagine, just for a second, that failure isn't a horrific downwards spiral. Instead, what if it's an awe-inspiring gateway to freedom?

I was looking back at some of my writing in my college years: "You are in the unique situation of failing so many times at so many things so repeatedly that you should be broken."

Interestingly enough, it was true. I was broken down to my core being. But in this state, I realized my core being was the only piece of me that was actually whole. Self-sufficiently happy and content. From here I could see that all my failures were never really failures at all. They were simply removing what wasn't meant for me from my path.

I learned three takeaways.

1. There's no reason to fear failure. Don't outwardly try to fail at everything, but if you do, remember it's for the best. It's a success at understanding a path you're not meant to go down. And to know that, is invaluable.
2. Go one step beyond learning from your failures. Allow your failures to let you take a hard look at yourself. Really look. Use it to consider why you failed and realize your flaws.
3. In that quiet space of consideration, you have the potential to lose your identity. To deeply question yourself, the world, reality, and truth. To realize "you" doesn't exist in a complete loss of ego.

#3 is the goal. Our identity is so deeply rooted within us that we don't realize how preconceived notions about who we are actually limit us. Failure gives us the unique opportunity to impartially reconsider all we once held as absolute. And so as we begin [embracing failure](#) in pursuance of this goal, our path to previously unimaginable heights begins. Once you destroy your ego, you will rise to where you're meant to be so much faster than if you had stagnated in normalcy.

"It is by going down into the abyss that we recover the treasures of life.

Where you stumble, there lies your treasure"

- Joseph Campbell

## 2. On Ego

What is ego?

Your ego is your sense of self. It's all the factors of nature, nurture, society, education, career, and environment that make up "you". It's a limiting and harmful by-product of your past conditioning that makes you think you are a certain way and gives a false sense of separateness and importance.

What your ego presents to you is not who you truly are. How do you see past your ego?

Well, our instinct is to hold ourselves together. We are taught to have a strong mind and suppress all thoughts of negativity and suffering. We are taught that negative thoughts are detrimental... that it's not how the mind should be. So we fight against them.

What if that instinct, that learned behavior is a test? Instead of overcoming it, you need to break through it. Instead of fighting against your thoughts, you have to recognize and question them to shatter your ego completely.

When you deeply question the nature of who you are, where you are going, who you want to be, and the world you live in, you have the potential to destroy your ego. By connecting the dots between the world and your actions, you can truly feel and understand what suffering means in relation to who you are as a person.

That's when your ego will fall away. You'll no longer think of yourself as "I" or "me" or have any sense of an individual "self". You experience Truth.

See yourself for who you really are. See the world for what it really is. Go deeper into your thoughts, breaking yourself down, choice by choice, action by action, seeing your flaws...shatter your ego. And then you'll see the beauty.

That's when your soul awakens.

"When you are no more, only then for the first time will you be"

- Osho

### 3. On Suffering

Suffering is key to finding your true self. Emotions of sadness, loss, failure, or dissatisfaction can guide you towards freedom. Suffering removes delusion. You see the world for what it truly is. You become alive.

Through suffering, you begin to break your preconceived notions. You start to feel the hurt, the pain, and the sadness that exist around you. And that's when your ego can't win. It can't win against true suffering. This is when you can go into your thoughts and begin to wonder...to truly wonder:

Who are you?

What have you done?

Why is there so much pain in the world?

How is this fair?

What's left?

What are you?

Who are you?

When you experience this emotional freefall, you feel these questions so deeply. You question your reality, and you're searching, grasping for something to hold onto. You are flung into nothingness with no parachute.

The next time you feel hurt or suffering, take those thoughts and go into them. Don't push them away and pretend everything is okay. Go into your thoughts and wonder why. Feel the pain so deeply that you could never wish that level of heart-wrenching sorrow on anyone. And then, something beautiful will happen.

You'll feel true compassion.

"Suffering only shows you where you are attached. That's why, to those on the path, suffering is grace"

-Ram Dass

## 4. On Love

Can you define love?  
Take a moment.  
Try to define it yourself.  
Write it down somewhere.  
(Go try!)

How'd you do?

Let's start with what love isn't.

It isn't possessive, stressful, worrisome, scary, jealous, or overbearing. Love isn't attachment. When all you do is think about another person...that isn't true love. It's temporary. It's an emotional attachment created by chemicals in your brain.

So what is love? How do you separate *love* from what your brain creates? Let's start with what happens when you know the true feeling of love.

When you love someone, your values are theirs and theirs are yours. Not because you are changing yourself but because you fully understand each other. You empathize with what they feel so deeply, that you understand who they are underneath all ego. With this type of love, there is no judgement and no insecurity. You are one and the same. There are no compromises, both people are living their truths in harmony, and encouraging and supporting the other to continue progressing.

When you feel this, it is impossible to knowingly hurt the other person. Instead, every thought, decision, and action is approached with compassion. You truly are rooting for each other...because you realize you are the same being! It is a whole, kind, loving, compassionate, beautiful relationship of trust and honesty.

Love goes beyond one person. When you feel the truest form of pure love, it encompasses every soul in the universe.

Love is the ability to not know anything but feel boundless empathy and care. Love is the dissolution of separation between you and someone, a group of people, the world, the universe. Love is blurring the lines outlining your sense of self until you are each and every individual being. It's a full understanding of connectedness and ultimate compassion - an outpouring of selflessness that comes from a detachment of self.

When you feel this type of love, you feel it permeate throughout your whole body. Past and future fall away, and time ceases to exist. There is nothing greater than the compassion you feel for all beings in each individual moment you are in. It is the most beautiful feeling in the world.

“True love is born from understanding”  
- Buddha

## 5. On Time

I want you to picture a circle. Bonus points if you draw it on paper. When you look at it, you see there's no way to pick which point is the beginning or end.

Now imagine your life events are the circumference of the circle. When you look at this circle – you can see the entire circumference in a single moment. You can see your whole life all at once. That could be time.

Time doesn't have to be linear. It doesn't have to go from one event to the next in sequence. Everything can be happening all at once. When you think about time in a nonlinear fashion, there is no past or future. There is only the present. You can know all of eternity in a single moment.

You can know your whole life, all of your lives, every detail - in a single thought. When you no longer structure your construct of the universe within the constraint of time, you begin to perceive its true nature. You realize there is nothing you can do but lose your sense of self and surrender yourself to the universe. You understand that which your ego tries to hide.

Yes, life may be predetermined. Yes, all of our "choices" may already be known and established. Yes, the path our life will take may already be set.

And yet, in the grand scheme of it all, we wouldn't change a single thing.

"We're so bounded by time, by its order. But now I am not so sure I believe in beginnings and endings."  
- Arrival

## 6. On Free Will

Is there a chance life is predetermined? Yes.

Can we still have free will? Yes.

How?

All of the events in your life can be predetermined. Let's say you know exactly how your life will play out and all of the choices you would make. Now consider, even though you know what you are going to do, you have no desire to change it or act contrarily. It simply is what is. You continue down the predetermined path. That is free will. To **fully understand why** and **consciously** simply exist in the moment, letting what is going to happen...happen. The point is even if you could change your path you wouldn't want to because you know it's exactly what needs to happen.

What if this "thought" to just exist was predetermined as well? When you go beyond your physical mind and body, when you are one with the universe...you can see all that is predetermined flowing through your physical self. The events and reactions that are happening to your body and brain, that is all predetermined. But the "you" that is one with the universe, your soul, in those moments where you are conscious, is free. When your soul becomes the observer, letting the predetermined occur and just watching - that puts you one level outside of the predeterminism happening to your physical self. That puts you in a place where you are one with your conscious soul and in this moment, it can freely be exactly what it is - an observer. You will feel free will when you feel your soul.

And when you feel this, you understand that the question of free will doesn't matter at all. The choices are all the same. You are just your soul, in each and every moment. And that is true freedom.

1. You have free will when you are one with the universe.
2. When this occurs, you consciously let go. You become a bystander, an observer to the events of life.
3. You truly understand that everything that is happening, was meant to happen and you can do nothing to control it. So you let go of any attachment to any outcome in each and every moment.
4. When you make this choice, you feel the ultimate bliss that comes with fully experiencing the present moment with no thoughts of control whatsoever.

Free will is not a decision your brain can make. You cannot "think" to understand it. You can't force your mind to let go to the extent necessary. Truly letting go is a feeling. It comes from the soul and it surpasses the mind. The freedom, the free will, the choice - is when you let go and choose to play the role given to you. It's your soul freely letting the predetermined pass through your physical self.

Maybe it is predetermined whether you will get to these moments of free will. But remember, once you are in them, you are free. So let this be the start of your path towards having free will. Even if life is predetermined, your physical self still has to exert effort to actualize that which will occur.

"Within this awakesness is the peace that surpasses understanding, and your life doesn't need to be doing better. It can just do what life does; it just flows. You don't care."

- Adyashanti, Emptiness Dancing



## 7. On Purpose

What is purpose? How do you find meaning in the world?

Try to imagine the following: I have no ultimate purpose that I want to achieve, or place that I want to hold in this world. I simply am, existing in every moment, in awareness, seeing the world for what it is, seeing everyone for what they are beyond their ego, and impartially accepting it all.

This isn't living a life without purpose. It's living a life understanding what purpose is. To **consciously** and **with contentment** not have a purpose might be the most true purpose there is. For it removes desire and delusion and attachment to future outcomes. It is accepting truth and reality for what they are and purely existing in each moment.

True purpose is to simply be awake to what the world is at all times ~

- Be awake to seeing the events of the world and letting them flow through you rather than trying to control them
- Be aware that you must bring the people around you up, there is only kindness to give to keep souls in harmony
- Have gratitude to be able to see the world, to see each moment, the beauty in it, the splendor, to smile with happiness - brought to tears at how perfect it all is
- Understand this game of life is truly so beautiful

When you understand this feeling of what true purpose is you will feel the contentment in your soul, the bliss, the feeling of overflowing joy...it is full beyond capacity, almost bursting with love to give, with happiness to give, and with truth.

When you live understanding this purpose, you exist fully in the present moment. You realize, *it's only when you start having attachments or desires to future or past outcomes that suffering starts*. And so you are no longer trying to find or achieve something.

By giving up the construct of purpose as a result of realizing the true nature of yourself, you become compassionately content in the fullest sense of the word. Content with exactly who you are, where you are, and the situation you're in at each moment, because you know everything is happening exactly how it should be happening.

In this state of being, you become the best version of yourself and are organically guided towards what it is you will go on to do. Reflecting and creating flow out of you, and fear or hesitation no longer affect your decisions because you are not attached to outcomes. This results in success without being attached to succeeding. All you have to do is let go and feel the underlying beauty of each moment you are in.

If you lose this state of mind, your purpose becomes finding a way back. It is to learn how to achieve and keep this mental state. This is what they mean when they say go inwards to find your purpose. It gives ultimate happiness and love in every moment.

What more can you ask for?

“What could be more futile, more insane, than to create inner resistance to what already is? What could be more insane than to oppose life itself, which is now and always now? Surrender to what is.”

-Eckhart Tolle, The Power of Now

## 8. On Thinking

Maybe you still have doubts.

Realize the body and mind are still a part of the physical world. You can only experience what your senses allow you to experience and what your brain has the ability to process. You cannot “think” to understand what lies at higher levels than your brain can handle. The brain is a limiter, but you *do* have the potential to realize past your brain’s constraints.

From the previous chapters, learn how to experience for yourself the unique oneness of the universe. There is nothing more important than this. Rethink your life, actions, and how you dedicate your time to design a way for you to directly experience this Truth. When you do, your core values and the trajectory of your life will change. You’ll discover the soul is different...it is true beyond this world, it is an understanding past all physical constraints. It’s freedom. You’ll realize that the ultimate truth is living and being guided by your soul in each and every moment.

Once you have experienced this, as time passes and the mind goes back to its default state, the awareness of your soul may not be maintained. You will fall off the path and only remember or know it as a concept, without living it in all waking moments. There is a constant battle between the mind and the soul. Usually the mind is winning so you can’t hear or recognize the presence of your soul. As you start to glimpse your soul more, you know that it’s there but you can’t feel it. Your mind is still winning, guiding you through all situations. But then when you have ego shattering experiences that push you into truth, your soul wins the battle and breaks free over your mind. That is everything. You feel those moments of complete freedom, of being one with the universe. And then you have to go back to daily life and the mind takes control again.

At these interludes, it is crucial to remember the world will keep giving you opportunities to break out of the loop. With this awareness, you can realize you have fallen back to thinking with your brain rather than experiencing with your soul, and identify crucial moments to guide you towards your higher self. Inevitably, you’ll find your way back to Truth.

“There’s a difference between knowing the path and walking the path”  
-The Matrix

## 9. On Religion

The underlying core message of all religions is the same. They all speak towards learning to let go of your attachments to live by your soul. To perceive the deeper construct of the universe in order to realize you are one with all beings. To exist with Truth flowing through you.

With this message, all religions converge in their teachings. The following quotes are not meant to be indicative of the entire religion but to show some similarities.

Buddhism ([Guide to Tripitaka](#)), 550 BCE

The Ultimate Truth is that there is no 'person', 'individual' or 'I' in reality.

Judaism ([The Guide for the Perplexed](#) - Maimonides), 1190

Know that this universe, in its entirety, is nothing but one individual being.

Jainism ([Pratikraman Bhagawanaham Sutra](#))

**bhagawānham, āchāryaham, upādhyāyaham, sarva-sādhuham**

The literal translation of the verse: 'I am the perfect God, I am the leader of congregation, I am the holy preceptor and I am the monk; I am the divinity of all these.' The verse implies oneness with all the living beings. One is not a separate entity but one is all of these living beings. One is it.

Islam ([The Holy Quran, Chapter 112: Al-Ikhlās: The Unity explanation](#))

Prophet of Allah, you who are teaching the world true, authentic and deep knowledge of Allah, tell the people that *that Being Whom their inner selves acknowledge*, that is, Allah, the compendium of all perfect attributes and the perfect One in beauty and goodness, is Allah Who is One and without any partner.

Emerald Tablet (Heavily influenced Christianity & Islam)

Highest are **They** of the consciousness of all the **Cycles**, working in harmony with the **Law**. Know They that in time all will be perfected, having none above and none below, but all **One** in a perfected **Infinity**, a harmony of all in the **Oneness of All**.

Christianity ([The Bible, Romans 12:5](#))

So in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.

Hinduism ([The Upanishads](#)), 800 BCE

When the Truth shines clearly in the heart of the knower, then he surmounts the apparent duality of his nature and becomes convinced that there is but One, and that all outer manifestations are nothing but reflections or projections of that One.

In his book, *Concordant Discord*, R.C. Zaehner writes "man will realize himself as the image of God and take his allotted place in the one body of Christ, 'the soul of the world', apart from which there is no true life."

"God" is in all of us - whether it is called God, a perfected soul, Dharma, Atman, jina, or some other name. We have the potential to experience God as us through Oneness, and this is the point of convergence in religions.

Recognize that religion is simply a way to explain God. It gives us a path to experientially understand God. When we follow this path, we find that God is our true self. With this change in perception, the journey begins.

"All religions are the same. They all lead to God. And God is everyone"

-Neem Karoli Baba

## 10. On Truth

We are all One and the Same. Our bodies and minds are part of the physical world that our senses can discern. This gives us a false sense of separateness. Our souls are beyond the physical world, all connected to each other...you are everyone and everyone is you. You cannot think to experience this. It goes beyond the brain's ability to interpret. You must feel it to understand.

When you do, you'll realize...  
the nature of your soul and the universe.  
that you cannot change the events of your life.  
predeterminism necessitates effort.  
the present moment is all there is and ever can be.  
ultimate bliss, love, compassion, and happiness that can be felt at all times.  
everything is One.  
there is nothing greater than Truth.

When you do, you'll realize  
there is only Love to give from your most pure self in every moment

### [Stage 7 — The End of the Search](#)

“Finally, we come to a stop. We realize that all that we are, and all that we need, can be found right Now. The search to become something, to lose something, to find something and to accomplish something perish. We see through the illusion of looking for truth, joy, peace, and love in any place outside of ourselves. We see the Truth That We Are mirrored in all beings and all things. While the ego still exists, we become aware of the ego as simply a tool; not the Truth of Who We Are. Transcending duality and the grip of the ego, we develop the capacity to give unconditional love and acceptance. This is the state of ultimate inner peace, freedom and what people refer to as ‘enlightenment,’ yet those who experience this know that no possible label or mental construct can encapsulate such an experience.”

-Aletheia Luna and Mateo Sol

## 11. And Beyond: So Now What?

By Chintav Shah

All read and interpreted above through the brain as a processor was true knowledge, the Message with a capital M, the Truth with a capital T.

But it was only knowledge, and knowledge will not bring one to the feeling of Truth, the world where the soul is free, the present moment where thoughts, attachments, concerns, and desires no longer govern our reality.

The need for direct experience of unraveling into ego-death, of undergoing the Hero's Journey, experiencing surrender by freeing oneself from one's shackles is necessary to re-establish a communion with one's higher self.

How is that possible - So Now What is it that you must do if you are in a state of knowing, but not walking the path? To start, looking at the previous pages, it's Chapters 1, 2, 3, and 4 that need full experiential understanding. To do so, the following options exist:

- 1) Evaluate yourself and your ego for flaws and truly deconstruct past regrets, poor behavior, or attachment
  - a) Essentially, undergo suffering through self-analysis that leads to surrender
  - b) Sometimes, suffering or shock to your expectations of the future will trigger this
- 2) Consume the message in a story where you can empathize with a character undergoing the Hero's Journey
  - a) Watch a movie that depicts the Hero's Journey towards truth, acceptance, beauty, and oneness after letting go of illusions

- b) Movies include: Batman Trilogy, Star Wars, The Matrix, Fight Club, American Beauty, The Fountain, Interstellar, Inception, Revolver, PK, Guide, Cloud Atlas
    - c) TV Shows include: Westworld, Sense8, Black Mirror, Undone, The Midnight Gospel, Upload, Altered Carbon, Bojack Horseman, Rick and Morty
- 3) Alter your default state of consciousness to allow (1) to more naturally occur, and be in a better state so (2) can occur with more impact and power. Examples are:
  - a) Fitness/exercise to produce an altered state of mind where one can let go of limiting thoughts and beliefs to more clearly perceive
  - b) Undergo a fast (food, social media/technology, week long solitude) that upends the dopamine expectations of the ego and results in one surrendering to the forces of nature
  - c) Vipassana Meditation or a Silent Retreat
  - d) Sensory deprivation or floatation tank
  - e) Tools to more easily alter your consciousness
  - f) Be guided by a teacher/shaman/guru who can remove your doubts or insecurities, assuming this teacher knows and walks the path

And when you succeed and enter the other side, through the Doors of Perception, where you see how the entire universe conspires to forge greatness in each and every moment, it will all make sense. And you'll want nothing more than to tell the world what you discovered.