

“Letting go of false solidity” from *The Untethered Soul* by Michael Singer

“...There’s just too much happening at once to following the cause and effect relationship between all of our different thoughts, emotions, and energy levels. As a result, we find ourselves struggling just to hold it all together. But everything keeps on changing—moods, desires, likes, dislikes, enthusiasm, lethargy. It’s a full-time task just to maintain the discipline necessary to create even the semblance of control and order in there.

When you’re lost and struggling with all these psychological and energetic changes, you are suffering. While it may not seem to you that you’re suffering, compared to what it can be, you are suffering. In truth, the very responsibility of having to hold it all together is itself a form of suffering. You notice this most when things start to fall apart outside. Your psyche goes into turmoil, and you have to struggle to hold your inner world together. But what exactly are you trying to hold onto? The only things in there are your thoughts, emotions, and movements of energy, none of which are solid. They are like clouds, simply coming and going through vast inner space. But you keep holding onto them, as though consistency can substitute for stability. The Buddhists have a term for this: “clinging.” In the end, clinging is what the psyche is all about.

In order to understand clinging, we must first understand who clings. As you go deeper into yourself, you will naturally come to realize that there is an aspect of your being that is always there and never changes. This is your sense of awareness, your consciousness. It is this awareness that is aware of your thoughts, experiences the ebb and flow of your emotions, and receives your physical senses. This is the root of Self. You are not your thoughts; you are aware of your thoughts. You are not your emotions: you feel your emotions. You are not your body: you look at it in the mirror and experience this world through its eyes and ears. You are the conscious being who is aware that you are aware of all these inner and outer things...

Clinging is one of the most primal acts. Because some objects remain in the consciousness while others pass through, your sense of awareness relates more to them. You use them as fixed points to create a sense of orientation, relationship, and security in the midst of constant inner change... You actually end up relating so strongly to this inner structure that you build your entire sense of self around it... The more consciousness narrows its focus onto this mental structure, the greater the tendency to utilize it to define the concept of self. Clinging creates the bricks and mortar with which we build a conceptual self. In the midst of vast inner space, using nothing but the vapor of thoughts, you created a structure of apparent solidity to rest upon.

Who are you that is lost and trying to build a concept of yourself in order to be found?... You are the one who did this. You are the one who was lost, scared, and confused because you focused your awareness away from your awareness of Self... If you dare to look, you will see that you live your entire life based on the model you built around yourself... You also want the people around you to have done the same thing. You want people to be steady enough so that you can predict their behavior. If they aren’t, it disturbs you. This is because you have made your predictions of their behavior part of your inner model. This protective shield of beliefs and concepts regarding the outside world acts as insulation between you and the people you interact with...

So we are all clinging and then building. Some of us are better at this than others. In most societies you are well rewarded for how good you are at clinging and building... Just think about how nice you are to people

when they behave in accordance with your expectations. Now think about how you close up and pull back from then when they don't...

...If you let go of your façade, and don't try to trade it in for a new one, your thoughts and emotions will be unanchored and begin passing through you. It will be a very scary experience... You just have to take the risk of letting it all go and daring to face the fear that was driving you. Then you can pass through that part of you, and it will all be offer. It will stop—no more struggling, just peace... You will be aware that each moment of each day is unfolding and you neither have control, nor crave it...

If you take this journey, you will get to the state in which you see exactly how the unfolding moments bring up a sense of fear... But if you really want to break through, you have to be willing to just watch the fear without protecting yourself from it...

What it means to live spiritually is not to participate in this struggle. It means that the events that happen in the moment belong to the moment. They don't belong to you. They have nothing to do with you. You must stop defining yourself in relationship to them, and just let them come and go...

...You want your model to break, and you honor the experience when something happens that can cause disturbance within you. Why should anything that anyone says or does cause you to get disturbed? You're just on a planet spinning around the middle of absolutely nowhere...

You must learn to be comfortable with psychological disturbance. If your mind becomes hyperactive, just watch it. If your heart starts to heat up, let it go through what it must. Try to find the part of you that is capable of noticing that your mind is hyperactive and that your heart is heating up...

Of course this will be painful. The reason you built the whole mental structure was to avoid pain. If you let it fall apart, you're going to feel the pain that you were avoiding when you built it. You must be willing to face this pain...

If you want permanent peace, permanent joy, and permanent happiness, you have to get through to the other side of inner turmoil... Your only way out is the witness... You are used to being aware of things in front of you. You now become aware of a universe behind your seat of consciousness... You will still have thoughts, emotions, and a self-concept floating around in inner space, but they will be just one small part of what you experience. You will not identify with anything outside the sense of Self.

Once you reach this state, you will never have to worry about anything ever again. The forces of creation will create creation, both inside and outside of you. You will float in peace, love, and compassion beyond it all, yet honoring it all. There is no need for false solidity when you are at peace with the universal expanse of your true Being."