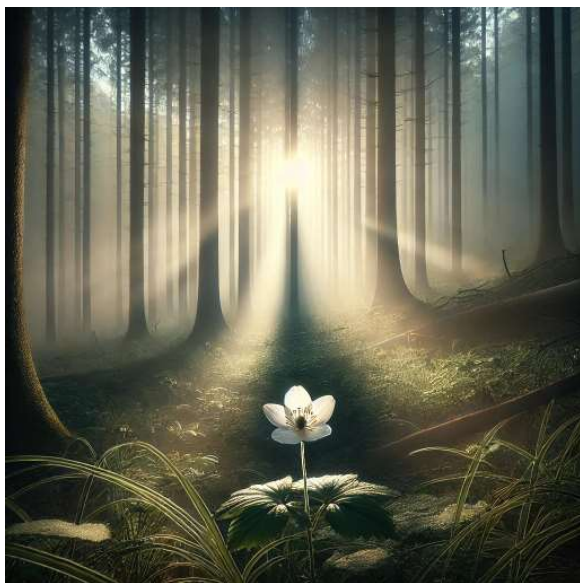


# The Fragrance of Being: *Resting in Presence*



## Introduction

In the journey toward self-realization, one of the most significant transformations is the recognition of presence. This presence is the space in which all objects arise — whether thoughts, emotions, or perceptions. It is not something one needs to attain or create; it is ever-present, silently witnessing the unfolding of life. The realization of presence involves a shift from identifying with the limited, time-bound body to recognizing the timeless awareness that is always here.

At the same time, we often hear advice like “live in the present” or “be present.” These phrases point to a key spiritual teaching, yet they can leave one thinking that the present moment is fleeting, something that must be grasped before it disappears. This article explores how the *present* and *presence*

- although often spoken of separately - are intimately connected, leading to a profound understanding of life beyond the limitations of time and identity.

## Chapter 1: Recognizing Presence

Presence can be understood as the silent witness of all experiences, the unchanging backdrop against which the drama of life unfolds. In non-duality, presence is synonymous with the true self, the foundation of all experience. While the mind cannot fully comprehend it, presence is intimately known, residing as the core of being.

As Rupert Spira notes, *"The presence of awareness is the only constant in all changing experiences."*

Presence is not an abstract concept; it is a living reality that can be felt and recognized directly. As Ramana Maharshi once said, *"That which is the source of the 'I' is the self."*

Though presence is not a phenomenal experience that can be seen, touched, or grasped, it is unmistakably known. The “perfume” of presence can be described as a “happy by-product” of being oneself knowingly. Many describe it as a subtle sense of being, a light shining within, or a spaciousness that allows everything else to arise within it.

## Chapter 2: The Water and Fish Analogy

A simple yet profound analogy illustrates the shift from identifying with the body to recognizing presence. Imagine a fish swimming in water, unaware that the water is its true essence. The fish focuses on its movements, environment, and other fish, not realizing that everything occurs within the medium of water. Similarly, individuals often focus on transient thoughts, sensations, and perceptions, unaware that the space in which all of these arise—presence—is their true self.

The shift from identifying as the fish to recognizing oneself as the water marks a pivotal moment in non-dual understanding. It reveals that individuals are not the limited, time-bound body or mind, but the space in which all phenomena arise and dissolve.

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## Chapter 3: Being Presence Knowingly

Brother Lawrence's *The Practice of the Presence of God* offers a beautiful parallel to the non-dual recognition of presence. He describes the sweetness of continually conversing with God, aligning with the ever-present awareness described in non-dual teachings. Here, "God" can be understood as a metaphor for the absolute—the unchanging presence in which all life takes place. He writes, "*There is not in the world a kind of life more sweet and delightful than that of a continual conversation with God.*"

This practice of presence requires no effort or strain, only a gentle shift from doing to being. As Francis Lucille notes in *The Perfume of Silence*, "*When you experience silence, it is as if you had been enveloped in a fragrant cloud... you have the feeling that you are resting in your real nature.*"

## Chapter 4: Presence in Daily Life

Living from the recognition of presence transforms all aspects of daily life. Grounded in presence, life is seen free from the distortions of the mind's judgments. Mooji highlights this in *White Fire*, "*As you come to recognize your own true nature, everything becomes easier and lighter, and life begins to flow effortlessly.*"

Similarly, Eckhart Tolle, in *The Power of Now*, encourages us to remain present and recognize that the present moment is all there is. "*Realize deeply that the present moment is all you ever have. Make the Now the primary focus of your life.* When grounded in presence, life becomes a joyful unfolding, free from unnecessary worry and attachment to outcomes.

## Chapter 5: Presence Beyond the Body

The recognition of presence reveals that individuals are not confined to the body. As Jean Klein observed, "*The body appears in awareness, but it is not who we are.*" This understanding brings deep peace, as the constant fluctuations of the body and mind are seen as passing phenomena, not as one's true self. Nisargadatta Maharaj similarly states, "*You are not the body; you are the formless, timeless awareness.*"

For some, presence is experienced as spaciousness or being; others describe it as light. Sufi mystic Abu 'l-Hosian al-Nuri says, "*There was a light gleaming in the Unseen... I gazed at it continually, until the time came when I had wholly become that light.*" This metaphorical light represents the recognition of the self as pure awareness, inseparable from the whole.

## Chapter 6: Reconciling the Present and Presence

How do we reconcile the terms "the present" and "presence"? Initially, the present seems to point to a fleeting moment in time, whereas presence refers to timeless awareness. However, from a non-dual perspective, these terms are seen as reflections of the same truth.

What we call the "present moment" is not a point in time but rather a doorway to recognizing presence itself. Gaudapada, in his *Mandukya Karika*, teaches, "*Neither is there any creation nor destruction, neither is there a seeker nor a liberated one, nor is there anyone in bondage. This is the ultimate truth.*" In the absence of time, what remains is presence—pure awareness. The "now" is not a fleeting moment but the reflection of timeless presence. Therefore, the present and presence are one and the same when understood beyond the conceptual mind. The present moment is the expression of presence, just as waves are expressions of the ocean.

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## Chapter 7: Actionable Practice

To help readers directly experience the reconciliation of the present and presence, here is a simple practice:

1. **Pause and Be Still**  
Take a few moments daily to sit quietly, letting go of thoughts about the past and future.
2. **Observe the Present Moment**  
Without labeling or analyzing, notice what is arising right now—sensations, sounds, or thoughts.
3. **Shift Attention to Awareness**  
Gently turn your attention from the contents of experience to the awareness that holds it all. Notice that this awareness remains constant, while experiences come and go.
4. **Rest as Presence**  
Simply rest in this awareness. Over time, you'll recognize that the present moment is not fleeting but a continuous, timeless presence.

Brother Lawrence beautifully illustrates this, *"In the noise and clatter of my kitchen, while several persons are calling for different things, I possess God in as great tranquility as if I were upon my knees at the Blessed Sacrament."*

## Chapter 8: The Flower (Poem)

The following poem, *"The Flower"* from the book *"Take Heart, Seeker"* by Walter Cecchini, illustrates the journey from distraction to resting as awareness itself:

### The Flower

Silence is the medium  
in which Being reveals  
its ubiquitous presence  
as happiness and contentment.

Few will withstand distraction  
as the mind is piqued  
by the intense fragrance  
emanating from source.

Rare are those  
who step out of the way  
when the mind charges  
into analysis and ownership.

Enjoy the fragrance  
but be not satisfied  
until you sit  
as the flower itself.

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## Conclusion

The recognition of presence is both the path and the destination in self-realization. Presence is not something to attain—it is our very essence. The present moment is not a fleeting point in time but a reflection of the ever-present awareness that we are. This understanding dissolves the illusion of separation and reveals the infinite.

*"We are the timeless awareness in which time itself arises."* - Mooji

*"You are not just the body. You are the totality of consciousness itself."* - Gangaji

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## Invitation to the Temple of Silence

### A Non-duality Zoom Group

**Dear Friend,**

You are warmly invited to join the **Temple of Silence**, an online Zoom group dedicated to exploring the essence of non-duality. In this gathering, we focus not on personal stories but on gently turning our attention to the boundless awareness that holds all stories and experiences within it—our true nature.

**The Temple of Silence Mission Statement:** *"The Temple of Silence Zoom group offers a decentralized space where friends gather, some seeking to realize their true nature, others resting in its recognition. Discussions focus less on fleeting personal stories and more on the reliable, wholeness of our True nature. Questions are welcomed, and when attention drifts into mental narratives, it is gently redirected to what never comes and goes. In this open space, all are invited to knowingly experience the oneness that underlies all appearances."*

**When:** Open meeting on Wednesdays at 10:00 AM Eastern Time on ZOOM

**Meeting ID:** 935 829 6350

**Passcode:** tos

*The Temple of Silence Zoom Group is not a therapy group, and there is no charge to attend the meetings. This document is part of "The Temple of Silence - From Knowledge to Experience" article series and was created as a public service. For those new to nonduality, this series of articles offers clear guidance into this profound understanding. We hope the content resonates with the deeper truth within you. We look forward to your presence in our next gathering.*

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Please visit [www.beingwalter.com](http://www.beingwalter.com) for more nondual articles, poetry and information regarding Walter's books *"Take Heart, Seeker"* and *"The Temple of Silence"*.