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Cultivating Clarity in Transition

Everything changes. Nothing stays the same. This is the human condition. At times we might resist this truth, preferring to find a place of safety, security, and certainty in the mind, or at the very least, some familiar territory. In times of great transition, we might, quite naturally, feel fearful, scrambling to rationalize or make sense of the present, in relation to a past we remember or a future that we once imagined to be true. This tension between the world as it is and the world as we think it should be can cause great conflict, both internally and externally. After all, without inner peace, there can be no peace in the world.

However, we do not need to be discouraged by challenging periods of transition, as they can also be a time of liberation. In many ways a trial serves to set us free, inviting us as individuals, communities, nations, and even as a global collective to reevaluate what is most important to us. It affords us the opportunity to celebrate that which is helpful: rewarding resilience, tenacity, respect, equality, kindness,

and compassion. At the same time, it allows us to see clearly that which is unhelpful: no longer fanning the flames of destructive, hateful, or harmful behavior.

But it requires each of us to take responsibility: for the thoughts we encourage; for the emotions we indulge; for the words we speak; and the actions in which we participate. Because, whether we are advocates for change or not, we are part of this great transition and the future will be what we collectively choose to make it.

Meditation and mindfulness have been around for thousands of years. I was grateful to find these skills when I was young. Training in some of the great centers of learning and becoming a Buddhist monk helped me through all manner of change. When I left the monastery, I went through another transition, searching for a way to take what I learned from these remarkable teachers and make it accessible to all. Thankfully, it has been a journey alongside an incredible team and some of my dearest friends.

It is difficult to describe just how much the perception of meditation has changed in the last decade alone, how much more comfortable people are in discussing mental health, and how taking care of the mind is now considered both credible and commonplace. It is extraordinary for 25 million people to be using Headspace, an app dedicated to health, happiness, and meditation. Ten years ago, this was unimaginable.

And this is what gives me hope for the future, this is what excites me about where we are going. To see so many people embracing the idea of training the mind, to see centers of education, business, rehabilitation, medicine, and even government, actively seek out these ancient traditions to help navigate these challenging times, is both heart-warming and reassuring.

Of course, there is no small irony that the mobile phone, the very object that stands front and center of this moment in time—which at first glance would seem to be responsible for so much of our confusion and stress—is responsible for the rapid growth and adoption of these practices. But this is also a timely reminder that technology is neither good nor bad. It is our intention that matters most, our relationship to technology, and our collective ability to apply it skillfully, that ultimately defines whether it is helpful in our life, and a force for good in the world.

We cannot always control what happens in the world, but through meditation we can change the way we perceive it and find clarity in how we relate to it. Meditation reminds us that we are in this together, not just in celebrating our

diversity, but sharing in our humanity. Coming back to this simple truth each day, pausing to take a breath, letting go of that which we find unhelpful or unhealthy, is to play our part in this transition; contributing not only to our own health and happiness, but also that of the world.



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