

The Unfolding Now, Chapter 18 *The Preciousness of Each Moment* by A. H. Almaas

1. True nature is the teacher, the Supreme Teacher. It is always teaching about its truth. All beings are its students, and it teaches every moment, for the experience of each moment is its teaching. True Nature is always manifesting its truth in one form or another. It cannot help but do that. It is its nature to reveal its essence, its truth.

We only need to see it, recognize it. We see this manifestation of True Nature as our experience, but the experiences we have are just the momentary forms of how True Nature is continuously presenting its truth.

2. So each moment of our life is the teaching. And we can see what the teaching is if we allow ourselves to be where we are. When we are asking, “What is the meaning of my life?” we can see what it is if we allow ourselves to be where we are. Then we are seeing what True Nature is manifesting at every moment.
3. And if we can truly and fully be where we are, then we realize that no moment is better than any other moment. Each moment is—all moments are—the expression of True Nature. There is nobody else, nothing else, that is manifesting anything.
4. Thus, each moment of our life is the teaching. And each moment has its own value because each moment is really the way that True Nature is manifesting itself, the way it is appearing, the form it is taking.

When we recognize the truth of our experience, the meaning appears and we can recognize that meaning. When we see the truth and abide in it, we recognize its value. So we look for meaning in our life—what the value of life is—but the fact is that it is not somewhere waiting to be discovered; it is always here. We just need to recognize that it is here.

5. At the beginning of our journey, when we are not able to be ourselves, value appears more in terms of what our mind thinks is valuable. But when we are real, when we are genuine, sincere, we recognize that true value is actually

the same as recognizing the truth of the moment. This value is not mental, it is heartfelt, and it makes our heart feel satisfied.

6. As we progress on the journey, we recognize that the value of the experience is where we are, the presence of where we are.

True Nature manifests its value directly by revealing its presence, not by camouflaging it in one form or another. Eventually, we reach the advanced stages of the journey where it is revealed that everything is itself and its nature—and hence inherently valuable, inherently beautiful, inherently precious. At that point, we realize that all manifestations, whether we can recognize them specifically or not, are that inherent value and preciousness of reality.

7. At the first stage, our experiences are of the same kind that we encounter in the advanced stages, but we just don't recognize them for what they are. We can only begin to recognize value when we discern truth, when we see meaning. When we see the meaning of our experience, a heart satisfaction, a sense of valuing what it is, naturally arises. Even in difficult or painful experiences, when we are able to understand and learn from them, we recognize value that we couldn't have imagined at an earlier stage. This value is not the value of gaining more money or recognition or even love; it's closer to our heart than that, more heartfelt.
8. We are always looking for that sense of value to make our experience worthwhile, so that we can feel that we are worthy, but we often suffer the absence or the limitation of worthwhile-ness, of the sense of value, because we do not see ourselves clearly. We don't recognize who and what we are and we don't know how to be where we are. We are distant from where we are, fighting where we are. Whatever the value is that we want—whether it is fame or love or success or enlightenment or a specific experience—we think that it is something we have to accomplish. We believe we have to go someplace to get it, when it is right here, right in this very moment, if we just relax and be in it.
9. If we relax in this moment and be completely in it, we begin to recognize that *this* moment is reality, that *each* moment is reality, and this reality is the most valuable thing, the most precious thing, because it is the way that True Nature is manifesting. True Nature isn't waiting for us to succeed in our practice for it to be here. It is already here.

VALUE WITHOUT CAUSE

10. When the heart, the feeling center of the human soul, is touched by realness, when it feels reality, it responds with love, with appreciation, with liking and enjoyment. We recognize that realness has value that is beyond the mind; it has an intrinsic worth that cannot be measured in worldly things.
11. This value is beyond words and impacts us at a place that is beyond our worldly life. That is why, after a life of strife and pain and difficulty, many people finally have a glimpse of True Nature and find that one moment of recognition is worth all the suffering that went before. For some reason, this knowing fills our heart with a fullness, a sweetness, a sense of recognition of the inherent value of existence.
12. So the value of existence at each moment is not the result of something else; it is its own nature, its own reality. It is not a matter of cause and effect. We do not value something because of something else.

At the beginning stages of our work, we might be unclear or a little deluded and think that the reason we value reality is because it gives us a great experience or it makes us happy or it opens up some new capacities or it gives us some other benefit. It is true that it does all that. But the more clearly we recognize what is manifesting in the moment—what the meaning of the moment is, what teaching is manifesting through any particular form—the more we recognize that the very existence, the factness, the pure, self-existing value of each moment, is not related to a reason. Its value does not come from doing this or that; its value is inherent.

13. When we recognize this inherent value of reality, when we experience it ourselves, our heart cannot help but be suffused with a sense of appreciation. And it's not that we value it because we think it is great. The value is not something that I give to or impose on reality; the value is reality itself—or *reality is the value*.
14. It is not that it's valuable *because* it is transparent and luminous and free and light; its own intrinsic nature makes experience and life supremely worthwhile. It makes every moment seem full of treasures, treasures that the mind cannot fathom. And those treasures are not someplace in the future but in the moment. Knowing this is simply a matter of recognition. It is a matter of being able to see clearly.

THE SOURCE OF ALL VALUE

15. We have said that the things that appear in our experience at the early stages of the journey are the same as in the later stages when reality reveals itself directly. In those beginning stages, veils are in the way, keeping us from seeing things directly, preventing us from seeing them completely and accurately. Instead we see our experience through all our reifications. But each form that appears at any stage of the journey is True Nature manifesting something to us in order to reveal itself—even veils and obscurations, barriers and obstacles. Every experience is here to teach us.
16. So the issue is: How good a student of experience are we at each moment? And what does it mean to be a good student? To practice, to learn, means to perceive the teaching that is coming through each moment of our life—not just during a meditation retreat or while reading this book or doing the practice exercises or pursuing our inquiry, but in each moment of our life. There needs to be no differentiation or separation of these activities from the rest of our life.
17. A good student is one who recognizes that in every moment, everything that happens—whether we think it is bad or good, painful or pleasurable—is nothing but True Nature teaching, manifesting its truth. The more we recognize this, the more our soul becomes suffused with the juices, the nectars, of fulfillment and satisfaction. The more real it becomes to us, the more our heart becomes full and pregnant with the natural fruition of recognizing the truth. We begin to recognize that ***we are all children of the moment, which means we are all children of True Nature.***
18. So when we are learning the practice of being where we are, we recognize at some point that we won't be able to pay attention to where we are if we don't value the moment. If we don't recognize that each moment has nutrition, has truth that helps us grow, we won't be able to let ourselves be where we are.
19. At the beginning of our practice, we're seeking the insights, the recognitions, the significant details of particular experiences as if these were what brings value. As we go on, we recognize that all these are coming from the presence of True Nature. Presence is actually what has value, what is value. We discover that the presence of True Nature is self-existing worth, self-existing value. It is its own value, and the source of all value.

20. As we come to recognize that intrinsic value, we can see that the teaching is appearing through everything—and we not only appreciate the moment, we will make sure never to ignore it or neglect it. We will seize the moment and learn not to waste it, not to distract ourselves. And I don't mean that we will spend twenty hours a day sitting in meditation or go live in a monastery. I mean that we will be where we are and appreciate being real, recognizing what is really happening and seeing as much truth as possible in the moment.

21. When we don't see where we are, we can be in the moment, but we are not seeing it clearly; we are running away from it, we are distracted, we are abandoning ourselves. When we are real, we let ourselves be where we are. And when we recognize where we are—for where we are *is* the moment as it is appearing clearly—we are allowing ourselves to be suffused by the teaching. And the more we recognize the value of the moment, the more our heart will open, revealing its depth, its fullness, its richness.

22. At first, our mind tries to explain why we love recognizing the truth, why we value reality and True Nature, why we think it is wonderful, beautiful, supportive, and something that liberates us. But all these are just conceptual stories we tell ourselves. The fact is that True Nature's value is inherent, beyond the mind, and we are just feeling it. And there is no reason for it. It is, and that is the way it is.

23. So, as you see, the teaching has that value because it arises from True Nature; it is the message of True Nature. And our learning is not restricted to what comes through a particular logos—although specific, defined channels of teaching do exist and can be helpful. The real teaching of True Nature is every moment.

THE DIFFICULTY OF EXPERIENCING VALUE

24. I know that it is difficult for us sometimes to let ourselves experience this inherent value in the moment. To value the moment means that it is okay to value ourselves, to recognize ourselves as worth it, as deserving this richness—and we have issues, questions, and beliefs about valuing ourselves. Many of us have painful or difficult histories. Certain experiences, beliefs, and projections make us feel that we are not worth it, we are not good enough, or that we have to do one thing or another to

receive or assign to ourselves any value or esteem. That leads to the belief that we have to try, we have to make an effort, we have to suffer a lot and tread a long path before we can arrive at what is valuable, at what the true value and meaning of life is.

But all these are just issues, obscurations, that have nothing to do with the truth. Value is True Nature and True Nature is what we are. Valuing the moment is valuing ourselves, is valuing our nature, is valuing everybody and everything.

25. To recognize inherent value, to experience it directly, is the same thing as being in the immediacy of the moment. And this is what allows our True Nature to manifest itself in a way that fulfills the heart, that fulfills life. We feel a sense of an inherent value. We understand that we don't have to accomplish a thing in our life for our life to be worthwhile. Whether or not we have success, invent something, accomplish some difficult feat, create a great piece of art, write a bestseller, or become famous is secondary. None of those things is necessary for us to recognize our sense of value *because value is not something that is accomplished; it is already here.*
26. This experience or recognition of a sense of worth, of a sweet fullness and deep fulfillment, doesn't make sense to the mind. We grew up learning that our sense of esteem, our sense of value, is a result of a cause. We were taught that we have to be "good" or do things in a certain way or learn or accomplish whatever someone else thinks is valuable; otherwise life has no worth.
27. So although value is an inherent experience in our heart of the recognition of our nature, there are obstacles that keep us from being in touch with it. Some of those come from the injunctions of our childhood, some of them result from positions we have taken or judgments we have made. Regardless of the cause, *we end up missing whatever value, whatever nutrition, whatever beauty there is in the moment.* And, that is really sad—not bad, just sad. It is sad that we cannot recognize the value inherent in the moment and therefore don't allow ourselves the enjoyment that reality makes possible each moment.
28. But when we really recognize ourselves and let ourselves be in the moment, we come into an amazing freedom that brings in a sense of a natural appreciation of just what is. Then we can accomplish and do all kinds of things, not to achieve value, only to express it.

It is the other way around from what we thought, you see? We have the treasures in us, and every moment is a matter of expressing them. And expressing them is a matter of participating with True Nature in revealing itself. We let ourselves be servants, conduits for True Nature to reveal its teaching. So, the more we accept where we are and let ourselves be where we are and the less we fight the moment and recognize it for what it is, then the more effective conduits we are for True Nature to teach us, and teach through us, directly.

29. So the teaching is happening in every way that experience appears. As you may have noticed, when you are inquiring, you discover at some point the meaning of what you are experiencing. Everything has meaning, and meaning is always there. Nothing is haphazard. Everything has a precise order. That is why I tend to agree with Einstein that reality is not probability, that God doesn't throw dice. Everything has a precise order, every single little thing has a meaning in the order of things—and all of it is revealing the truth of reality.

INQUIRY AS A REVELATION OF IMPLICIT VALUE

30. What inquiry does is show us this meaning. We see that everything is interconnected—one fabric of revelation. With that understanding, we are able to recognize what is being revealed. When we get the revelation, we can't help but feel satisfied and capable of valuing our experience regardless of how painful or difficult it may have been.

31. We begin our journey of inquiry feeling that we value our experience because we have learned from it; we say that we have grown from it. That is true, but it's just a way of explaining it. All that our learning means is that we are getting closer to the self-existing value. When we recognize the self-existing value, which is True Nature itself, we recognize that the fact that we have learned, that we have grown, is a side effect, a reflection of the true value and meaning of existence. Yes, the meaning first appears as relative, but at some point we recognize that the meaning is *us*—all of us.

32. So it doesn't matter what is happening in the moment. No moment is better than any other moment. No one's experience is better than another person's experience. Your experience in the moment is the way True Nature is teaching. It is not accurate to say, "That guy is at a more advanced place than

I am, so I should be like him.” You are comparing yourself and making a judgment that your experience is not as valuable—and so the sense of your own value is lost. No, your experience is the right teaching at that moment for you, and for the rest of reality, too. Your experience is just as valuable, just as necessary, as the experience of somebody supposedly more advanced on the path or having more sublime experiences.

33. The more we learn that each moment has its own intrinsic value, the easier it is for us to let ourselves just be in each moment, however it is manifesting. Then we recognize that where we are is where we are supposed to be. Are you sad? Bursting with excitement? Feeling sexual? Having an attack of jealousy? Tired and cranky? Feeling hopeless, inadequate, or afraid? Or are you sitting on top of the world? Well, then, that is what reality is manifesting. Who are we to judge that we shouldn’t be that way? Who are we to say that we should be like some other person?
34. We may find it useful to recognize where we are in relationship to the whole picture, but that doesn’t change the fact that each place has its own value. Something is being revealed in this moment that isn’t going to be revealed in any other place or time or through any other person, and it is just as necessary as what is happening to someone else or what will be happening to you a minute, a month, or many years from now.

35. *Value is truly nothing other than our heart’s intimate contact with the immediacy of the moment—with each moment, with where we are precisely. In that contact, in that being with and knowing reality as it is, we recognize the unquestionable rightness and preciousness of where we are and what we are.*

36. Nothing touches us more deeply than the implicit value of our own beingness. It is value beyond mind, beyond concepts, beyond ideals and hopes and dreams. This preciousness of simply being here now with awareness and understanding fills our heart with contentment and satisfaction. We realize that where we are, which is what we are, is also the most real and precious nature of life itself.

37. We are always looking for that sense of value to make our experience worthwhile, so that we can feel that we are worthy, but we often suffer the absence or the limitation of worthwhile-ness, of the sense of value, because we do not see ourselves clearly. We don’t recognize who and what we are

and we don't know how to be where we are. We are distant from where we are, fighting where we are. Whatever the value is that we want—whether it is fame or love or success or enlightenment or a specific experience—we think that it is something we have to accomplish. We believe we have to go someplace to get it, when it is right here, right in this very moment, if we just relax and be in it.

38. If we relax in this moment and be completely in it, we begin to recognize that *this* moment is reality, that *each* moment is reality, and this reality is the most valuable thing, the most precious thing, because it is the way that True Nature is manifesting. True Nature isn't waiting for us to succeed in our practice for it to be here. It is already here.

True Value: Amber inherent already there is each and every moment existence is not valuable it is value itself, being is value, it is already here. self existing. You don't get it, you already are it. You are value. It is complete, meaningful, significant, precious, lovable in itself not because of anything just because it is. And value gives meaning to life, appreciation, gratitude, celebration, wonder, joy fulfillment all arise from the bed of value. The work is not valuable because it is a means to an end, the work is value itself, the work is Being and Being is itself precious every step of the journey is value itself. Babies are valuable. Their value is absolute and it doesn't depend on what they do, they don't do anything. Yet they are totally unquestionably absolutely valuable

Delusion: Value is relative to and dependent on external (or self) approval, recognition, acceptance or appreciation. - somethings, some people are more valuable than others, value can be gained, or lost, it is the result of an accomplishment which in turn form the basis for self esteem
Insecure: Comparative value is dependent
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Difficulty: Insecure because value is relative, and dependent on others' evaluations. These can cause one to lose or feel the lack of self esteem. To feel inferior and vulnerable value can be lost, or taken away or eroded, it is also dependent on others evaluations, Value is something that must be maintained, and enhanced. In order to keep the supply of value coming one needs to keep producing. And the need for value is bottomless, It has to be fed constantly, One must keep performing. In this context achievements are not expressions of who one is, but are pursued to gain significance, recognition and identity, they are the means of an end, they are meant to produce value. And any failure threatens to make one feel one's life is empty and insignificant and without value.

Reaction: You try to get what you already have. Anxiety, ambition drivenness. You act on yourself. You effort and strive to accomplish goals through which you hope you will earn and maintain value. and this activity is based on rejection of the now hope for something better and a desire for that, and this rejection-hope-desire, separates you from the relaxed calm of being with what reality is giving you in the moment. You cannot relax, and trust and simply be Being you feel you must Do.

Get the idea of absolutely valuing your self and your experience right now and tell me what occurs,

Get the idea that you are value itself and tell me what occurs.

Get the idea that your value depends on your performance and tell me what occurs