Living In (All) the Moment(s)

For me to "live in the moment" isn't really different than most people's meaning for the term: I'm focused on the now, instead of the past or present.

I typically find this state when I'm facing fear. I can tend to dwell on the past or dream and plan about the future, so often I have to be scared and/or adrenaline-d into the moment (maybe this is a fault). A good hard run brings me into touch with the moment, as do most hard conversations or difficult acts of self-integration. It's very hard to go through these experiences or most challenging new experiences while on autopilot.

But more powerful even than adrenaline is gratitude. And ironically, I find this key to present awareness in past-awareness and global awareness.

When I stop to think about my life (typically this happens when I'm driving), I might come to realize that – compared to both most humans who have ever lived (past awareness) and most humans who are living (global awareness), I have been given so many gifts that I should appreciate. I'm reasonably industrious, reasonably open, healthy, gifted with resources, free. I have stability and live in a peaceful place. In the big picture, I live in a true paradise.

When I do become aware of this, I can be overwhelmed with the input of everything that is blessing me: health, opportunity, skills, family, friends, good memories, good role models, and so on. I become present to the beauty around me in that moment – the sunlight, the skyscrapers – and to the things that have happened to get me to a place of such beauty.

I remember all of the things I've done and left undone, and I either celebrate them or resolve to do what needs to be done so I can experience these moments of gratitude and presence without conflict.

So maybe living purely in the moment is overrated anyway. Maybe the best state is really to be able to live in all the moments: to be able to see how your past connects to your present connects to your future.

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