

Reminders To Myself

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I started writing these “reminders” (I refuse to call them “poems”!) at age 18, after my mother died and I started studying various religions looking for answers. They are in roughly chronological order. Some of them were inspired by a specific source, which is listed.

They are meant to allow the reader to puzzle out their meaning, because it’s in figuring it out for yourself that you’ll get the most meaning out of it. Some of them are similar, as I re-discovered a concept years later (or figured out a better way to say it), and some of them appear contradictory – when you find such a pair, can you hold them both in your mind together, without rejecting one or the other?

Note : I chose to use the word “Dao” instead of “God” in most places because “God” is such an emotionally charged word that probably means something different to everyone who reads it. In the ancient Chinese religion/philosophy of Daoism, Dao is the way of nature (or the universe), the source that creates and nourishes all things, and absolute ultimate reality itself. By using “Dao”, I hope to minimize any prior associations you might have with the word “God”, but if you prefer to say to yourself “God” when you read “Dao” here, go right ahead. In the few places I do use “God”, I’m intentionally trying to shake up your notion of what “God” is.

The following is probably my most favorite reminder, I believe it is the shortest description of how to “attain enlightenment”, or as I prefer to call it, how to be happy. It was inspired by a saying attributed to Buddha, but I’ve modified it so much that less than 40% of the original remains as-is :

Let go of what has happened
Let go of what will happen
Let go of what could be
Let go of likes and dislikes
Attend fully to the present moment
And let go of it as well

Let go of what has happened

The past causes anger and guilt, both of which are solved by forgiveness. You are not hurting anyone but yourself if you refuse to forgive another. Forgiving yourself is harder, but find a way.

Let go of what will happen

Thinking about the future leads to fear. However, “letting go” doesn’t mean “don’t plan ahead”! ☺

Let go of what could be

From how you were treated as a child, to the guy that just cut you off in traffic – as soon as you think “if only” or “I could’ve been”, STOP! What could have been is not part of the reality that’s in front of you right now.

Let go of likes and dislikes

“Likes and dislikes” means you are seeing things as “good and bad”, “right and wrong”. There are no inherent good’s or bad’s, but that you have decided that they are so (if you disagree with that, good! – think about it!). Thinking that you are right and another is wrong is **what starts wars!** I’m not saying you should have no likes and dislikes – we’re all human, we’re all going to have opinions – but realize them for what they are, and don’t get caught up in them. If you can laugh at your own preferences, you’re doing ok.

Be fully engaged in the present moment

Pay attention to what’s going on – not what you can get out of it, not what you’re going to say next. Act because it’s the correct thing to do in this moment – not because that’s the way you think you should act, not because you’ll be rewarded or punished in an afterlife, just act the way you want to be.

And let go of that, too

Even Zen masters get angry or sad (usually to the surprise of their students), but then *immediately* get over it.

Unfortunately, the “how” to do all of this is entirely up to you! Find whatever works for you.

Don't judge anything,
Including yourself -
Let everything just be

Moderation in all things,
Including moderation!

Actions just are;
Judgments are labels
We attach to the action

No better, no worse –
Just changes!

If you're lonely
When you're alone,
Seek better company

To name it
Is to limit it

Dao is a verb (action, relating, process)
Not a noun (object, thing)

Also by R.B.Fuller, but came up with independently

What is God?
What isn't?

Dao
Is not only
That which can be described,
But is also
That which cannot be described;
This description of Dao
Is inadequate Inspired by Dao De Jing

Dao
Takes care of
Everything
And cares about
Nothing

Trying to be something
Merely exaggerates
The feeling that
You aren't already

Dao
Cannot create self
Outside self,
Only express self
Within self

Live by
Unplanned action,
Calculated inaction

No better,
No worse,
Just different

Everything is unique –
Nothing is special

There is nothing
That can be done,
But there are
Things to do

There is nothing wrong
With trying,
Just don't attach
Your happiness
To the results

Don't limit with
Preconceptions, desires, or labels –
Just experience the moment

I
Choose
Always
Not
To
Do it

=====
In the beginning,
There was Dao
And Dao was, without
form or expression

No right, no wrong –
Just different perspectives!

Into two parts Dao split,
One knowing itself as Dao,
And that which
Knew not it was Dao

No past, no future –
Just becoming!

Yet each contained
A portion of the other
Within itself, so that
They were not truly separated

Guilt comes from
Dwelling in the past;
Fear comes from
Dwelling in the future

Still Dao could not express;
Thus form was created
Out of that which
Did not know itself as Dao

That part which knows
Nurtures the other with love,
So that form may express;
Thus was the universe born

Acceptance
Does not always imply
Understanding

=====
Forgiveness
Needs to be given,
Not received

Denial of what
You don't want to admit
Doesn't change
What is
One bit

Ego –
 “I caused this thing to happen”
Pride –
 “I caused this *good* thing”
Guilt –
 “I caused this *bad* thing”

The moment we think
 We need something,
We are caught by it

Look –
 It’s everywhere!
Look for it –
 It’s gone!

A personality is but
 A reflection of the
 Soul behind it
As the image of the
 Sun is seen
 In the lake

There is a reason,
 But I don’t need to know it

Judgment
 Requires
 Comparison

The distinction between
 Observation and judgment
Is the feeling behind it

Life is a game,
 And the only rule is :
There are no rules

God does not
 Reward or punish;
Things happen
 That we like or dislike

Growth does not
 Come from pain –
Pain comes from
 Not flowing with growth

We cannot be there
 While wondering
How to get there

True abstinence (of any form)
 Is not denying a desire,
It is removing the desire

The moment we think
 We know something,
We are caught by it

The meaning
 Is more important than
The name

Faith –
 Accepting what is
Without
 Needing to understand why

Pay no attention
 To the goal at the end –
Just be sure that the path
 Is worthy of travel

The moment it lets go,
 The falling leaf
Dances
 With all its being

There is no
 One answer –
And that's the answer!

Anger
 Is caused by
 Unfulfilled expectations

Living in the moment –
 Having no preferences

Be neither
 Pessimist nor optimist –
For what
 Is
Hides behind
 What is expected

Ego is not that which
 Does, thinks, sees –
It is that which knows it
 Does, thinks, sees

Pray not for an outcome –
 Pray to do your best.

The ego abhors
 A perfect stillness,
For there
 The self
 Dies

Necessity may be
 The mother of invention,
But creativity is
 The mother of necessity

How do you
 Get rid of
Something
 That isn't?

Blame –
 Finding a cause
 For an unwanted effect

“Good” and “bad”
 Cannot exist
Without goals

Expect much –
 Be disappointed;
Expect nothing –
 Be amazed!

The feeling itself
 Is real –
It may or may not
 Reflect reality [From the Seth Material](#)

It isn't
 When thought about,
And vise-versa

The leaf
 Casts no shadow
The sun
 Makes no beam;
What is this then
 That dances in front of me?

It's not in words
It's not in feelings
It's not in thinking
It's not in not-thinking
It's in Being,
 Completely,
 NOW

Paranoia
 Involves thinking
We're worth
 Being thought about

Seeing only the worst
 Is biased;
So is seeing only the best

God does not need
 Our thanks –
But we need to learn
 To be thankful

Imagination spins a web
 Fueled by emotion
 Shaped by thought
To become reality

The trick is to
 Want something enough
 To make it happen
Without needing it
 To be happy

Pay close attention
 To the present moment –
It will never!
 Happen again

Experience the moment
 Without desire –
Upon reflection, seek understanding
 Without judgement

Prophets don't disagree –
Their followers do!

While searching for a Way,
Being is full of questions;
While travelling along your Way,
Being is full of being

Flower
Stream
Cloud
Mountain –
Is the beauty without
Or within?

Clinging to the left,
Aversion to the right –
Instead, walk quietly
Thru the middle

Perceiving
“Cause” and “effect”
Gives rise to
Striving
Guilt
Pride

The reward for cultivating
Patience
Is peace of mind

Words
Are but shadows
Of what is

We are hurrying
When our mind
Isn't where
Our body is

Be responsible
For your actions, but :
No credit,
No blame

Live by
Principle,
Modified by
Circumstance,
Tempered with
Compassion

The power of
The word
Is only in the
Meaning
Behind it

Unrequited love
Sucks

When enlightenment
Becomes a goal
It is already
Out of reach

We are all waves
In the ocean of Dao –
Unique and individual,
Yet always connected underneath

If there are no options
Whose consequences
You're willing to accept,
Then you are
Where you should be

Dao is
Creator
And
Created

Change
What you can
Accept
What you can't

The pessimist mourns
The loss of what was;
The optimist is thankful
That it graced his life

What our eyes
See
Is colored by what our mind
Believes

By our actions
Do we learn
Our true nature

Killing
In the name of a teacher
Invalidates
That teacher

We cannot change
Our circumstances
Without first changing
Ourselves

Be firm
In the desire
To accomplish the task,
But flexible
In how
It is achieved

Don't make
Something out of nothing
Nor
Nothing out of something–
Just see things
As they are

Don't make fun of those
Lesser than you,
For you are surely
Lesser than someone else –
How would that feel?

Your "true path"
Lies in
Whatever direction
You take

I cannot measure
God's love for me
By the events in my life

All gods exist
So that events
Can have causes

Soul does not know
Pain
From
Pleasure –
It is all
Experience

When praying, do not
Beg or plead
Insist or demand
Bargain or make deals

A lifetime
Is to the Soul
As childhood
Is to an adult

Always
Let go
Never
Give up

Be not
Bothered
By that which is
Unavoidable

Reality is always
More complex
Than our description of it

Dao is in
All things
Like fire is in
Wood ([Upanishads](#))

Everything we do,
We do out of
Love
Duty
Fear
Ask yourself : why am I doing this?

Nothing
Is sacred or profane
But that
We
Make it so

We are here
To learn
Self-accountability

Not wanting
Problems
Is itself
A problem [Buddha](#)

Wanting to end
Desire
Is itself
A desire

If you have it and you want it,
You fear its loss
If you have it and don't want it,
You strive to avoid it
If you don't have it and want it,
You strive to get it
If you don't have it and don't want it,
You fear getting it

My happiness
Depends on
The parking space I find –
How silly!

The barking dog
Is "bad"
The chirping bird
Is "good" –
Why is that?

There are always
Consequences
For every
Choice
We make

Desire arises
When you are not
Fully immersed in
The present moment

Desire
Requires
Comparison

Can you accept
The effect
Without needing to know
The cause?

Desire causes suffering
When our happiness
Is attached
To the outcome

The only one
Who suffers
When you don't
Forgive another
Is you

The past is only as
Real
As our emotional
Reaction
To it

The trick is to
Accept things as they are
And
Strive to improve them

He has no Shadow
Who stands perfectly aligned
With the Light

Treat unwanted habits
(Yours and others')
With
Awareness
Affection
Amusement

We are here to learn
To choose
Co-operation
Without
Coercion

The end of a relationship
Is not separate from
Its beginning

It costs me
Nothing
To change lanes
Except ego

Neither happiness
Nor suffering
Can be separated
From living

Never give up
Hope,
But don't tie your
Happiness
To the outcome

If happiness is real –
So is suffering;
If suffering is illusory –
So is happiness;
Which is it?
Choose!

Experience cannot
Be described
By words

Getting angry
At another driver
For taking "my" spot in traffic –
What nonsense!

Is it good for you or others?
Do it!
Is it bad for you or others?
Don't do it!
What is so hard about that?

Who are you
Competing with
While driving?

Follow the rules,
Break the rules –
Either way,
You define yourself

The anger in another
Is due to
Their suffering

The trick is to
Remember the joy
And not be sad or angry
At its loss

What do you notice –
The good or the bad?
What do you hold on to –
Joy or anger?

When you are
One
With your surroundings,
There are no
Distractions

The only
Right way
Is to realize
There is no
Right way!

When you don't see
Contrasts
There can be
No right or wrong

Don't be fooled –
It's
ALL
Delusion!

Don't ever
Mind
What ever
Happens [Modified from Krishnamurti](#)

**If you kill another
In the name of your god,
You are SO missing the point!**

Have fun,
Learn some,
Harm none

Do not
Seek joy
Or
Avoid sadness,
But experience them
Fully
When they happen,
And then
Let them go

The thought
Is NOT
The reality!

As soon as you
Have a thought,
Let it go

Dao –
All that is,
Flowing

Suffering does not cease –
It ceases to be something
Separate
From us

DON'T
Overthink it!

The past creates
Who I am now
Only if I let it

Comparing
What is
To
What could be
Only leads to
Suffering

Everything
Is ultimately
Ephemeral

A ritual is
Useless
Unless it has
Meaning
For you

Why get angry
At someone else
For doing
What you have done
To another?
The teacher
Is the pointer,
Not the Way

Sometimes traffic
Is easy,
Sometimes traffic
Is hard;
When fully listening
To music you love,
There is no difference

You can let go of
Guilt
By resolving to
Change

Let go of what has happened
Let go of what will happen
Let go of what could be
Let go of likes and dislikes
Attend fully to the present moment
And let go of it as well [Inspired by Buddha](#)

No one
Binds me
Except me

The one "right" view
Is to have
No view

Do no harm	Practice patience
Do not compete	Practice tolerance
Do not compare	Practice forgiveness
Do not separate	Practice compassion

Try to do
Your best,
Not to be
The best

In whatever you do,
Don't play
To win,
Play
To play [Inspired by Alan Watts](#)

Act
Without
Trying
To achieve
A result [Inspired by Alan Watts](#)

Do it
Only because that's what
You want to do

There is nothing
That can be done,
But to experience
What is happening

Reality is
The present moment,
Experienced fully,
Without bias

The desire to
Avoid suffering
Is the source of
The suffering

Suffering happens;
Hanging on to it
Is optional

STOP
Keeping
Score!

Life is not
Lessons
It's not
Karma
It just
IS

Trying to
"Fix" others
Has been the
Root of
Much suffering

The soul's
Choices
Don't always
Make sense
To the self

The sage sees things
As they are
We see things
As we are

Are you
Acting
Or
Re-acting?

You have no one
 To blame
For who you are
 But yourself

Everything you see
 Is
Emptiness
 Taken form

What is behind everything?
 Duality
What is behind duality?
 Oneness
What is behind oneness?
 Emptiness

Throw out
 What you
 "Should" be

It's ok to have
 Attachments,
Just don't get
 Attached
 To them

You can never have
 Too much
 Patience