

20 Opportunities Quick Guide

*20 one-minute exercises that are the equivalent of
transformative meditations.*

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1. **First, Change Yourself** ... Picture a bad situation getting better.
2. **The True Teacher** ... Expect something good.
3. **Intuitive Teaching** ... Close, then open your hand.
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13. **Learn to Return** ... Return to the here and now by turning attention away from space and time.
14. **The Servant Leader** ... Ask your higher self, "Is that really a problem?"
15. **Language Reduces Experience** ... Be both a noun - an object - and a verb - that which you are doing.
16. **Separateness is a Subtle Deception of Physical Life** ... Don't believe in separateness which leads to ownership which leads to greed.
17. **Naming, Categorizing, Labeling** ... Encourage yourself with your back to the mirror, then do it facing yourself.
18. **The Senses as a Gateway to Observation** ... Observe something with your senses, then simply replay it.
19. **Holistic versus The Divided Self** ... Look into the sky and reflect on the whole of all stars converging in your eye.
20. **The Role of Belief** ... Conceive of a goal, then BELIEVE, then plan.

#1 *First, Change Yourself*

Opportunity: Picture a bad situation getting better.

Picture someone with whom you have a problem. (Don't have any? - I want to come to live in your house!) Now picture the problem itself. Now ... and here is the whole exercise - picture that somehow, some way, this problem can get better. Maybe you can even believe that it is already getting better.

"How are you going to do it?"

Don't answer that question.

"Why?"

Don't answer that question.

"What, exactly will I do for the solution?"

Don't even think about it.

If you can move your heart toward, "I think this can work." You are doing the exercise. While you are holding a new possibility of your problem disappearing or at least improving - do not try to picture *how* you got there! Do not think of the logistics of the specific changes that healed this problem. Just picture moving toward this new possibility.

You probably have an opportunity to do this every day with somebody. Start to believe in your heart that things can work. Now you are in your heart. And this is where awakening occurs. Next, ask your head, "How are we going to do that? What's a good path?" As long as you first went to belief, it is a good move to now, ask your head about the logistics.

#2 *The True Teacher*

Opportunity: Expect something good.

So, let's do the exercise. Your assignment right now is to commit to yourself for some time in the next week, to look for a transformational moment.

I know that I'm supposed to be showing you exercises of how to have a spiritual awakening and get transformed, and I just told you, "Oh, you want to get transformed? Then transform yourself." Yeah. That's how it works. If you're not looking for a transformation - something that will change you - and you don't believe you can get there, don't even try. But, if you can look for it, you'll find it. It's there. There exists an existential orientation where you expand your perceptual field, that can be rich enough to change your very existence!

Let me ask you a question. Do you believe that there may be something in this day for you - that the world is taking care of you - and it is ripe with opportunity? It's a state of mind. It's not a technique - it's a state of mind.

So, if you are expectant of the miracle, then you won't miss it when it comes by. And the miracle is that somebody said something to you that transformed you. And you got a chance to say, "Thank you."

Now, do you want to know a little secret? If you get ready to say, "Thank you," and do it even in situations where you're not even sure you just learned something - or even when a situation feels bad or unfortunate for you - you can turn it around. Not that the situation needed to be turned around. You are the one who got turned if you can be grateful before you know why something is good for you. The very act of thanking can cause you to reap a benefit from what looked unfortunate.

#3 *Intuitive Teaching*

Opportunity: Close, then open your hand.

So, today's wake up call is to do a sixty second exercise to promote your chances for intuitions. Take one hand, either one, and close it. Now, without thinking - try not to think about your hand - "Oh, look, my fingers look so chubby" - or any thoughts of association - or "Why are we doing this?" Just let your thoughts go through, if they come in, or block them, if you have the ability. Just watch your hand closing. And now, slowly, staying in pure observation mode - open your hand.

-pause-

And now, replay what you just did, in your mind. Use your inner vision with your eyes closed or, at least, with your eyes not looking out. Also replay anything your other senses may have experienced so that you create an exact re-enactment.

That's the whole exercise - it only takes a minute. And you can do this over and over during the day. You are clearing - you're meditating while you are in motion, while the day is happening - while you're doing things. You cleared out your mind and practiced the act of not using your mind to touch that which is happening. You became a pure observer. And you did it even more powerfully by pausing to replay it. This is another version of mindful walking with the added practice of replaying what you just did.

Now, if you use this exercise to clear your mind while you are speaking - to your own self - you can have enough clarity - open space - to receive intuitions, even though you're active. And that's being an intuitive teacher.

When you cleared your mind and purely observed, you were *in your heart*, so to speak. And the best part is that although you practiced engaging your heart in this very simple way, you are preparing yourself to access the ability to go to no mind and engage your heart when you have a serious problem. And that is the real purpose of this wake up call.

#4 *The Test of Awakening*

Opportunity: Look at a color and see if it looks good.

This next wake up call was the final test when I taught the guys in prison. I taught in both the women's and men's prison, but today we're with the men. I was with them for 3 months, 5 days a week, 6 hours a day. We bonded. We got very close. And we had a very high level of trust by the final test. Somewhere in the middle of the 3 months, they had already tested out on the math I taught them, so I had some freedom to color outside the lines a bit. So, I had a lot of fun.

So, their final test - and your wake up exercise right now is ... look at a color. When I did this at the prison, everyone in the room, except me, was completely confused, thinking, "How can this be a final test?" So, let's do it now, then I'll explain.

Ready? Look at a color in your environment, right now. Maybe it's a piece of your clothing. Maybe it's something on the desk or the wall - a color you like. Just, look around to find which one you're going to look at. And for a very short period of time - it does not have to be long - just look at it.

-pause-

And now ask this one simple question, "Does that color look better, the same, or worse than the last time you stopped to look at that color - not the object - the color?" It's a very good question, it turns out.

If you can now take this one step further, try to make your experience of the color become better - more beautiful. (Another favorite version of this exercise is to do it with faces.) If you can change it, then you are the master of your destiny. You are actually commanding your presence. You are waking up right now. You're moving toward more wakefulness, not less. And this is always in your power. And I dare say, there is no situation where less wakefulness is better than more. No matter what's happening around you, you can always bring more presence to it and that always makes things get better.

#5 *Points of View*

Opportunity: Open your mind by accessing a tough viewpoint.

To do this exercise, you simply spend sixty seconds to access a time when you entertained a viewpoint that you thought you couldn't. Right now, I'll give you a crazy viewpoint, so you could access this one if you want. Take the idea that the earth goes around the sun. Everybody knows that! Scientists used to think that the sun went around the earth, then they learned better. Well, your test today - in order to exercise your ability to be spiritually awake and entertain an alternate point of view - is to try to accept the possibility that there is yet another view - that maybe we do not know everything, yet.

I was given this view back in the mid-seventies. I was teaching in a Waldorf school and a visiting master teacher was giving a talk. He said that there is a way to see the sun going around the earth. He said that ancient scientists had a point of view that basically stood on the earth and thought the sun rose and set every day by going around the earth. Then he told us that modern scientists changed their viewpoint to a position as if they were standing on the sun, as it were. From there they could see that the earth went around the sun - along with the other planets. Then, he blew my mind! He suggested that there are a multitude of views - not just these two. He threw out one alternative by having us imagine that we moved our viewpoint past the earth, past the sun, out into our galaxy. He said that out there we would see our whole solar system rotating and flying through space. He said that out there, we could find a point of view that moved - a moving *path of view* - where we would see the sun going around the earth!

I was flabbergasted. Is flabbergasted really a word? If it is, I was. That happened to me fifty years ago. I access it often when I need to awaken myself to appreciate someone's weird point of view or when I want to help others to consider new alternatives.

#6 *Vulnerability*

Opportunity: Lean until you step forward.

Are you ready? We're going to fall. I'll show you how to fall 2,000 times a day. Ready? Stand up. Lean forward, farther, farther, farther, until you fall. What did you just do? You took a step, didn't you. If you take a step forward, it's the way to recover from falling. It's called walking. And you do it all day long. How many steps do you take a day? Well, that's how many times you fell and got back up and THAT is how to move forward! So, it's like a reminder - if you wish it to be - that you're not falling - you're proceeding - you're going forward - you're waking up - you're making progress.

#7 *The Unseen*

Opportunity: Listen for the next idea in your life.

It's a one minute exercise. It's very simple. Although you would probably do it over and over. Take yourself to a state where you are listening for a question like, "What am I to do with my life, next - What's the next thing I want to do with my life?" Then, you blank out your mind. Now, note what ideas come into your mind ... but, whatever comes - don't touch it. Don't try to figure out what it means. Don't analyze or categorize or finalize or advertise it (thank you, Bob Dylan). Just leave it alone. You respect that if it's a real being, then it's not up to you to handle it. It's up to you to listen. So, you look and you listen. That's your job. You take the unseen and you let it come in and work. Work how? Well, you do this exercise - which maybe took a minute - several times over the next week, and you notice if there is a pattern among the words or phrases you noted. Once again, do not over examine them and don't overthink anything. Just note it - maybe write it down - or type it or say it, so that you see the different ways the idea came in over the next week. Maybe there's a pattern - a synchronicity that is one big idea coming to you from several ways that it appears.

#8 *Fun*

Opportunity: Give an hour as a labor of love.

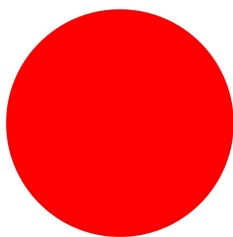
So, I have an exercise for you. Try in this next week, to go to your real work - the work that you really don't want to do - and try to give that labor. Consciously make a switch and say, "I'm going to give my next hour as a labor of love - it's a gift." And see what happens. It's like mindfully walking - at first, you're just walking, and now, you're meditating. Maybe your day goes up and maybe something good happens. You've given the gift of labor.

#9 *Reawakening the child in the adult*

Opportunity: Stare at a color, then look for an afterimage.

We're going to do an exercise with an afterimage. It's really cool. It's from Waldorf schools, from Steiner and Goethe. From this exercise, we'll make a little parable that works in real life.

Ok, ready? You know how a child can stare, and just be looking with devoted attention and no self-consciousness? Well, we're going to try to re-create that childlike staring ability. But not in an awkward way, trying to stare at people. We'll look for an afterimage of a red circle. You can do this with anything, and it takes 60 seconds or less.



When you stare at the red circle, you are going to be a child. Just look. And now, as you pick up the red into your eye, put it onto the white half of the area. In other words, now, stare at the white half. If you practice this, you can see an afterimage. Many people get it on the first try. I've done this with children and adults many, many times over the last 50 years. Generally speaking, you see a kind of glistening afterimage. What color is it? It's the complementary color of the first color you looked at, so it would be a greenish, glowing circle.

What's the point? Do this often, so that you get better at it and you will be practicing awakening by being attentive. So, that's right away a good thing. But there's a parable here - a metaphor for life. You gave your attention, and the world gave back to you an experience - something that you might not have seen, at first. It was there, but you weren't noticing it.

#10 *Heart Thought*

Opportunity: Use a problem to fuel a change or a learning experience.

So, here's the wake up exercise I'm recommending today. In the next week, try this exercise, if necessary, several times. Maybe it will work right now! Do you have any annoying or intrusive situations in your life? Well, as my wife says, "Turn that little frown upside down." Let's try to turn a "doubt or downer" to at least consider that this problem can be used to fuel change. Ready? Ok, right now, picture one of your problems. Is it something financial, health, or a relationship? If nothing comes to mind, picture it later.

Next, clear out your lower awareness of it and wait ... Can you see any way this could be used to fuel a change or a learning experience? Then, for this next week, try to catch yourself several times a day with "doubts and downers" and look for life's deeper messages.

That's it! That's the whole exercise. I'll see you in one of those tomorrows.

#11 *Teach Yourself*

Opportunity: Read each part of your day as if it is a part of your life.

So, if every single little part has the whole, all of the other parts in it, you can play a nice game. So, today's exercise is a game that helps you *teach yourself* using these ancient teachings. It assumes that the whole universe is in you!

One way to play this - there are many ways to play this game - one way to play is to assume that you are all of humankind. So, what happens to you is a model of what happens to all of humankind. All of humankind grows up like you grow up. When you're born, that's like when humankind was born - when it was young. When you are growing up as a child, that's like humankind growing up like a child. I think humankind is just getting out of childhood right now.

So, the game is to use clues from how you grew up to see how humankind might grow up. There are clues from the crazy things we do, when we go through puberty and fiiiiiiiiinally come out of our teens and start to grow up. I think that is what humankind is doing right now. I don't know, but you can play this game and keep watching. This would mean that when you are in your older age and mature, maybe you are going to do things that humankind is going to do when it finally starts getting a little mature. Maybe.

And then you can play it with a day. Instead of all of humankind to one life, how about one life to one day? So, when you got up this morning, that's like your early, early childhood. When you were in the middle of your day, that's like the middle of your life. And that means toward the end of your day, activities you choose and the way you behave and your posture toward life may be a clue as to how you are going to be in later life.

It's a really fun game. You can play it all of the time.

#12 *Moving Toward and Away*

Opportunity: Use a pain to practice alternatively moving toward and away.

There are times where the opposite of redirecting your focus is to focus directly on the pain, itself. At times, Victor Frankl recommends that you make an intense study of what's going wrong, and face the problem. It is what it is.

Focus on it and go directly toward calling it what it is. And perhaps you can end up loving it. Maybe the way to wake up to a spiritual view would be to ask yourself, "Can you use the pain of what happened? Can you use the suffering? Can you use the event that caused all of the suffering as a way to move forward - to maybe use it as a fuel for change in your life? And then, maybe even be thankful for it? There's the highest goal of goals. Not to minimize that there might be a serious problem, here - but to have a higher view.

#13 *Learn to Return*

Opportunity: Return to the here and now by turning attention away from space and time.

So, we're going to do an exercise to get outside of time. Ready? Close your eyes, where there is nothing moving. Go to the place of NOTHING. There's nothing around you. There's no space. There's no physical objects of a physical world. Can you tell if time is passing? No.

...

It's time you're getting out of. And you can return to that place where things are still - not moving - any time you want. Where is it? Here. When is it? Now. The here and now is available at all times to return to. It's just pure meditation.

#14 *The Servant Leader*

Opportunity: Ask your higher self, "Is that really a problem?"

So, let's try an exercise. Right now, think of something that can bother you - that really looks like it can send you into sadness or despair, where you don't see a way out. If you don't come up with something right now, remember this the next time something happens to you where you are a little bit sad - you're down - you don't know how to be resilient and bounce back.

Now ... ask your higher self. Be the servant leader. Ask your higher self, "Is that really a problem? Is there really nothing good coming from this? Is it really true that I can't be resilient enough to bounce back? Do I really think that there's no way out, here?"

And ... listen.

That's the exercise. Serve something higher and lead yourself, and therefore anyone who is around you.

#15 *Language Reduces Experience*

Opportunity: Be both a noun - an object - and a verb - that which you are doing.

So, the goal is - the exercise for today as we try to wake up - to see ourselves as a paradox. Here's the question, "Are you a noun, are you a verb, or are you a paradox?" A noun might be the "human being" as a thing - as a noun. You're not a thing. You're not an object. If you assign yourself to being only a noun, you will see the whole world as objects - you will project this view onto everything you see. Objects. Things.

Or are you a verb - a "human doing?" "I'm going to see what I get done today." You don't want to do that either, because, if you're thinking only of what you'll get done too much, you're not here on the ride. You won't see what's going on all around you.

But, if you're the paradox - a noun and a verb - it's impossible - it's paradoxical. If you're a "human becoming" - not a "human being" - not a "human doing" - a "human becoming" - maybe we can recover where the ancient languages and the people who spoke them were. Then we'll see things as integrated - not apart. And then, although language may be reducing, you will not.

#16 *Separateness is a Subtle Deception of Physical Life*

Opportunity: Don't believe in separateness which leads to ownership which leads to greed.

I don't think separateness is true. It's a deception. You come to the physical world, and it looks like everything is separate ... here! But spiritually - in your spirit - in your feelings - we feel together with things. In singing, there are ways that we can be one. So, which is real - one or separate? Which is truer? Which is the deception?

Well, let's look at it. If you go with the separateness, it leads to ownership, because if something is mine, it's not yours - if it's yours, it's not mine. So, you start to feel ownership of things. Do we want that? Or is that possibly a great thing - like a gym that you went in to work out? Is the physical world a workout to overcome separateness? Maybe, if you go with the separateness, but the spiritual is truer, then you would use the physical separateness every day, (like we are going to do with our wake up call today), to overcome separateness.

Think about it. If we have ownership of things, if everything were truly separate, it leads to a greedy feeling. You get these paper things you put in your pocket - "mine-not-yours certificates" I call them - I guess we call it money. Who's to say *you* should have that money and *they* shouldn't have that money? The other gets cut out. So, physicality leads to separateness leads to ownership leads to greed. Do we really want to go down that road?

How can we reverse that and use the fact that we're down here in this gym where everything appears separate? One way - in today's exercise / wake up call - you would overcome it by *gifting*. The next "mine-not-yours certificate" you spend, pretend it's a gift and you intended to spend it to make some 'other' feel better. The company who's going to get the profit - the person you're handing it to - every time you spend - for like a day - think of it as a gift you want to give. And you will start to reverse the feeling of separateness - at least for you - with the other.

#17 *Naming, Categorizing, Labeling*

Opportunity: Encourage yourself with your back to the mirror, then do it facing yourself.

Here's a recommended exercise I'll give to you. Go to the mirror. Face it. Maybe it's the morning. Maybe you're getting ready to go out and get dressed. Now, turn your back on your mirror. And give yourself an encouragement - "You can do it today" - some kind of a statement that you would like to say to yourself that is soulful - something that is right to the heart of YOU. And now, turn around and look into the mirror and do it. And look into your eyes - into you. And see if you feel a difference.

Now, see if you remember not to turn your back on the world - and the people you'll be with - and the trees and the flowers and the air and the birds. Try to not 'phone it in' today. And give yourself this reminder - maybe at the beginning of the day.

#18 *The Senses as a Gateway to Observation*

- . Opportunity: Observe something with your senses, then simply replay it.

So, the wake up call today is, "Use your senses as a gateway to observation! And stay in them all day, all of the time." Every morning I go out on the porch - I close my eyes and I take in - sometimes there's a smell, the fragrance of the outside - I listen to the birds - I have just looked at some of the trees or bushes or the sky or the clouds - and I take in the beauty of that scene and what I heard. Then I close my eyes and replay it. And then, I start my day. It takes less than sixty seconds.

So, guess what your exercise is for today - your wake up call? Go take in something coming into your senses. Especially if it's something growing or alive. I consider almost everything alive. So, take it in. Goethe said, if you take in the beauty of a flower, you complete the flower's mission in life. It has a purpose - it's alive - it's a sentient being - and it's really grateful that you took it in. So, you get a double good for this experiment.

#19 *Holistic versus The Divided Self*

Opportunity: Look into the sky and reflect on the whole of all stars converging in your eye.

So, I have a little exercise to re-member that we're really all whole. Just look at the sky. The sunlight is coming in and makes all light around us, so during the day you can't see the stars. But they're there. And, according to where you are on the earth and how good your eyes are and how the cloud cover is, you can see five to ten thousand stars. Ok? But how many are up there? Well, we don't know. But the latest scientific reports are that we think there are some sextillions of stars.

They're all there, ok? When you look up, and you see all of them, all of those individual beams of light - some of which are not a star, it's a galaxy itself with thousands and millions and trillions of stars within a galaxy - sometimes they're coming into your eye as separate beams. And they are all in the iris of your eye at one time - joined. But by the time it gets from the front of your iris, to the back of your eye, they're separate and you see a separate picture- something that is whole, that has parts. And when you take a step a little bit over to the side, you can still see all of them. That means all of the stars are shining light on that step also - and over here - and over there - and over here - and over here. They're shining light everywhere - something that can be whole and taken apart - that has sextillions of parts, at least. (That's just modern science. We don't know anything. Who knows what is really out there?)

So, the next time you look at it, remember that there is a whole that has many parts that is coming together in your eye - and shining on you - and giving you something - that we used to understand - that we are just starting to re-member. That's it. And it takes sixty seconds to do it. You know what you do? You look up at the sky. And just remember, you're a whole - there's a whole - not an 'us & them' - we're all together. I'll see you in one of those tomorrows.

#20 *The Role of Belief*

Opportunity: Conceive of a goal, then BELIEVE, then plan.

So, how do you make a wish? Well, today's wake up call is to make a wish. But, there's two steps to it. First, you have to hitch your wagon to a star. What's the star you're wishing for? What is the end result you want - that you are making the wish about? Step two, do you believe it? Do you believe it can happen? You can conceive of it - but can you believe it? Because, the step three that everybody is always talking about - how to get there - how to accomplish your wish - is non-important compared to these two steps. What's the star you are hitching your wagon to and do you believe it's possible. From that comes all of the logistics of how to get there, and the determination and the will and the energy with which you will get there.

So, your wake up call for today is hitch your wagon and believe. That's the role of belief. Belief is a cause, not a consequence.