

# What We Can Be

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November 2024

What are we to make of this life? We find ourselves suspended in the moment, experiencing only that which is in our current perception. We often spend our days reliving the moments that have passed and struggling with anticipation over the moments yet to have occurred. Our worldly senses give weight to time, but we ourselves attribute meaning to the moment.

Is there purpose? What calls us to action? We have all felt motivated, obligated and driven to contribute to our realm. We have all also felt stagnant, unsure, frustrated, lost and alone. We are all so similar, riding the highs and lows of life, some of us patiently waiting for the next exciting story, some of us finding the ambition to create that opportunity for ourselves.

I believe as complex as the moment feels, we have it within ourselves to see the human endeavor for what it is; the opportunity for progress, the chance to develop. Life gives us each the ability to test ourselves, to pursue greatness - a definition that is up to us to decide individually, but tugging similarly upon all of our heartstrings. We find ourselves here with the purpose of becoming the best we can be.

*What a gift it is for fate to offer a chance to commit yourself.*

I am but a conduit for the lessons I have learned and digested for myself. The human experience, mimicking everything else in this universe, is infinite in possibility. By no means do I aim to set in stone my personally understood notions about existence. I merely aim to provide a framework of my current line of thinking in hope that I may offer words someone may read to find themselves viewing the world through a much more magnificent paradigm. I have been frustrated, I have questioned why. But I have been rewarded for my efforts, refusing to give up on the longing I felt to make sense of the good I've experienced in this life. This is my testimony, may it find you well.

*"The first thing to do is to first know yourself"*  
Wallace Thornhill

No words have rung truer to my ears on this subject. If we are to make sense of our purpose and what we are to become, we must investigate ourselves with grace and honesty. We must find satisfaction within ourselves in the moment. We must come to understand and accept that we have the choice to be whoever we want to be. Our virtue is our choice, our personality is our choice.

There are no mistakes in our progression. We are who we are because of every single moment and decision that we have made up to this point. If we were to go back and change our ways, we would not be the people we are now. There is only one path through time that each of us takes, one single possible sequence that has led us to where we are. We should find appreciation in that journey, for it is all we know and all we are.

The moments we feel frustrated by our actions should be viewed as our greatest lessons. The memories that linger the longest do so because of the weight and meaning they bring into our lives. It is up to us to make the decision whether or not to incorporate these offerings into our character moving forward. Staying the same is boring. Hubris is one of the lowest places we can go. If we want to become better, improved actors, we need to incorporate different actions.

These actions are practices. Our best practices are simply that, habits that we must consistently engage with consciously until they are engrained in our character. We must permit ourselves to open our hearts and allow new light in.

We will never arrive at a place of being someone we are completely satisfied with. If we have, then we have lost the plot. We are forever changing, forever encountering new situations we are not prepared for. What we can do is take on life with positivity and appreciation for the challenges. We should not have expectations, for they are the root of disappointment. Rather, we should put our energy into our hopes and dreams of becoming wonderful. We should set our sights on offering our best to the world, for what more could any of us ask?

Suppose you take on a passion that calls at your heart. In the moment of trial, you put everything you can into the task and come up short of your expectation. Have you truly failed? Is it reasonable in any way to ask for more from yourself than you possibly could have given? How could we be so self critical with ourselves when we know we deserve care and support. The best you can give is all you can ask. This is why we must have grace. Fear, anguish, frustration and anxiety are snowballing emotions for all of us; but so are happiness, bliss, appreciation and compassion. We must recognize the weight negative emotions have on our psyche and push them away. The less we engage with demise, the less influence it will have on our actions. It is up to us and us alone to be the arbiters of our minds. Wield yourself with confidence, for your life is yours to lead.

Do you think of your thoughts? Or do they arrive in your mind, offering the chance for action. I am of the opinion that most thoughts are of the later nature. I do not preemptively compose self-deteriorating internal dialogue, my mind simply provides me with such ideas. We can recognize that we are not as responsible for these 'bad' thoughts as we might imagine. However, we are definitely responsible for deciding to withhold from giving them focus and attention.

That brings me to the first practice I believe we should all engage with in order to become the best we can be: we should all live to accept personal responsibility. Our actions are ours alone, our responses to life's stimuli are our decisions to make. Deciding to be the best version of ourselves is truly our responsibility in this life.

Life offers us opportunities, not prizes. We live for the experience, not the result. How could we contend with our dreams if we are unable to take on the power of will and commit to being amazing? We owe it to ourselves to put our best foot forward. We owe it to ourselves to harvest the highest fruits of our labor. This life is fleeting, we should enjoy it to the upmost while we can, in every moment we get.

Further, it should be clear that we are not individualistic creatures. Some of you may feel more isolated from the shared human experience, but undoubtedly many of you find appreciation for the rest of your kind. In my opinion, we are all of the same essence. As Ram Dass writes "we're all just walking each other home". Part of personal responsibility is removing the feelings of necessity to manipulate and change others around us, to allow

people to develop how and when they are ready. Their path is theirs. We can offer contrast and ideals that they may look to, but the choice and responsibility to navigate the path is theirs. Sovereignty is among the most beautiful aspects of our human endeavor.

What we do owe to those around us is our best. We can take upon the responsibility, for the sake of everyone, to offer the best impact possible. Every interaction with a stranger, every conversation with a family member, every memory made with a friend leaves a trace of influence in their experience that will shape their journey. I want to leave those I engage with the best possible sentiment. I want to offer the greatest experience in my power to those around me, as I would appreciate from my peers. We have all heard of the Golden Rule. I think it's a treasure to act in such a way. I believe this is a definite step in becoming the best that we can be.

Second is the importance I see in practicing intellectual honesty. We are all creatures of passion, constantly letting our emotions intertwine with the rational side of our minds. This is not a failure of faculty, it is a fruitful aspect of existence. However, we deserve to check ourselves and our notions. We deserve to approach the world and life we are responsible for with a fair understanding of what is at play.

Biases run deep in the human psyche. It is easy to attach onto what 'sounds right', often without experiencing for ourselves the evidence that others claim define reality. We are perceptive beings, we deserve to make sense out of our observations and our reasoning. We should consider foreign testimony, but utilize a wealth of information to paint the picture of how we see the world. Our intuitions rarely lie, but our influenced bias can build up strong walls of opinion. Everyone has different callings and interests, but we all deserve to know the truth of this world. Knowledge is power, and 'true information' enables true sovereignty.

*"Hubris is one of the lowest places we can go to intellectually. Hubris, a form of arrogance, believing that I am right, believing that I have explained everything, being offended when my brilliance is questioned, believing that human understanding can penetrate the ultimate degrees of truth."*

Michael Clarage

May we all find the courage to have enough grace for ourselves and our intellectual egos to lower our walls of resistance. May we all consider new ideas in that may be initially unsettling. This is the excitement of our experience, to develop and progress; to find ourselves enabled and empowered to be something greater. We should aim to be honest with each other, and we should definitely aim to be intellectually honest with ourselves. We should readily investigate and contemplate the foundations of our worldviews, we should be aim to be comfortable not needing a concrete answer.

How could we so readily accept that in this breath of a moment of human history, limited by languages of finite characters and linguistic potential, among unsettled investigations into natural phenomena, from an undiscovered and uncharted realm constantly providing new discoveries we understand anything for certain?

We do not know that which we have not experienced. We will always continue to learn from our experiences. We are forever of dynamic faculty.

The third suggestion I present is to choose to be as compassionate as possible. We should, in our moments going forward, commit to not withholding love.

Love is our greatest gift. Bliss, the emotion of feeling connected to something greater, of feeling beyond yourself, is something many of us have been so blessed to experience. Those of us that have had the pleasure of knowing what love feels like understand it's draw, it's power.

I think of uncontrollable laughter. Considering the frenzy we engage with during these outbursts, we are overcome with unity in thought. Those around you can't help but express joy for the moment. Seeing and hearing each other, feeling the energy in the present vigorously fuels your own excitement. For that time, you are all without concrete focus, yet are all of the same mind. For me that is bliss.

The greatest passion, love is fulfilling to the highest degree. It overtakes our longing for independence, the tireless dread of loneliness. It distracts from frustration and takes us away.

Love is the ultimate appreciation of experience. It is that which you find within yourself that drives you to offer your best to the world. We are surrounded by temptations to be frustrated and to cast blame, attempting to remove the responsibility for our assessment and emotional attachment to a situation by placing it upon someone or something else. We should practice accepting our emotions and our responsibility. We should learn to appreciate life and its challenges just as much as we appreciate the times of security and pleasure. All moments are defining, all memories are valuable.

How we engage with each other is up to us. We can choose to offer blissful interactions. Let us be cooperative in this journey, offering lifting words and encouraging actions. Let us be the signs others desire, affirming they are where they are meant to be.

*May we all recognize how great it is to be here together in this moment.*

We only perceive ourselves until we consider what we mean to each other. Our lives don't have to be self-centered, we don't have to be isolated. We can allow ourselves to see the patterns in our ideals, our passions, our dreams to recognize how similar we all are. My life is better because you are in it. My days are brightened by the words you offer, by the smile you show. I am strengthened by the honesty with which you speak, I am resilient because of the faith you have in me.

Compassionate behavior isn't wearing a smile and exchanging pleasantries. It is empowering each other with honesty while understanding the weight of our intentions. We are the vessels of delivery for the most important lessons. We offer each other the gift of perspective. We should engage, not ignore.

So what can we be? We can be splendid, self-appreciating, honest beings who value each other and the wonderful opportunities life provides us. We can prove to ourselves that we are resilient, and that our strength is a virtue. We can take responsibility for ourselves and act with our best intentions in mind. We can change our reality by developing our personalities. We can love and we can grieve. We can be whoever we want to be, we just have to try.

Let us not be idle for fear of failure, let us instead find the courage to be something more; for what we do for ourselves, we do for each other.

To forever and back,  
Cason