

**PRESENCE**  
(and related terms: awareness, attention, mindfulness)

A.H. Almaas – *The Point of Existence*

“What is **presence**? What is Essence? The self can experience itself either purely and immediately, or through memories and structures created by past experience. When it is seeing itself directly, it is aware of itself in its primordial purity, without veils, without obscurations. It recognizes this pure condition as its ontological nature. This primordial purity or ontological nature is recognized as the self’s ultimate truth. So we may say the self has an essence. The central property of this Essence, or true nature, is that it is an actual ontological **presence**. **Presence** is the essence of the self, just as protoplasm is the essence of the body (25).”

Index to *The Point of Existence*, subheadings under “presence” include: as Buddha nature, as center of self, dynamic flow, indistinguishable from **awareness**, unifying all aspects of experience, see also essential **presence** (which includes sub-heading: as point of existence).

A.H. Almaas – *Inner Journey Home*

We saw in the last chapter that the dimension of pure **presence** turns out to be nothing but our simple everyday **awareness**, even though we do not ordinarily recognize it as such. This does not mean that it is pure **awareness**. It is more accurate to say that it is our ordinary **awareness**, recognizing that this **awareness** includes the cognitive dimension, which is inseparable from our ordinary **awareness** except when discriminated through meditation practice... We normally cannot separate **awareness** and knowing.

Yet the **awareness** responsible for perception is more fundamental than knowing and cognition. This becomes clear when we experience another boundless dimension of true nature, pure **awareness**... It is similar to that of pure **presence**, but without the cognitive element (324).”

Jon Kabat-Zinn – *Coming to Our Senses*

“Since you are far more than the sum of your thoughts, ideas, and opinions... dropping in on the bare experience of the **present** moment is actually dropping in on just the qualities you may be hoping to cultivate – because they all come out of **awareness**, and it is **awareness** that we fall into when we stop trying to get somewhere or to have a special feeling and allow ourselves to be where we are and with whatever we are feeling right now. **Awareness** itself is the teacher, the student, and the lesson (62).”

“In letting go of wanting something special to occur, maybe we can realize that something very special is already occurring, and is always occurring, namely life emerging in each moment *as awareness itself* [italics in original] (63).”

“For **mindfulness** is the knowing quality of **awareness**, the core property of mind itself. **Mindfulness** is the field of knowing. When that field is stabilized by calmness and one-pointedness, the arising of the knowing itself is sustained, and the quality of the knowing strengthened.

That knowing of things as they are is called wisdom. It comes from trusting your original mind, which is nothing other than a stable, infinite, open **awareness** (77-8).”

Ken McLeod – *Wake Up to Your Life*

“**Attention** is the ability to experience what arises without falling into the conditioned reactions that cause suffering (27).”

“In pristine **awareness**, **awareness** and experience are not separate (27).”

“Active **attention** is the door through which we step out of a life of reaction and habituation and into a life of **presence**. The energy of active **attention** penetrates patterns, disrupts their operation, and eventually dismantles them (52).”

“Technically, **mindfulness** means being present with the object of **attention** – in this case the breath (65).”

“Suppose that you have to carry a glass of wine across a room full of people. **Attention** works in two ways. One way is focusing on the glass to avoid spilling its contents. This aspect corresponds to **mindfulness**. The second is knowing where people are in relation to your own position so that you avoid bumping into them. This aspect corresponds to **awareness** (67).”

“Active **attention** is characterized by two qualities: stability and clarity. Stability in **attention** is called **mindfulness**. Clarity in **attention** is called **awareness**. Active **attention** consists of **mindfulness** and **awareness** together (67).”

**Awareness** as a quality of active **attention** is different from the natural **awareness** mentioned in chapters 1 and 2. Natural **awareness** refers to original mind, the pristine **awareness** that is our human heritage. The aim of practice is to dismantle conditioned patterns and uncover natural **awareness**.

**Awareness** as a quality of active **attention** is a form of knowing that develops from **mindfulness**. The two usages are related in that the **awareness** of active **attention** is how we first experience the possibility of natural **awareness**, or original mind (67-8).”

Tenzin Wangyal – *Wonders of the Natural Mind*

“Dzogchen contemplation is **presence** in the state beyond thoughts because the conceptual, thought-creating mind, which is accustomed to keeping the mind’s **attention** by its continuous production of thoughts, is at rest (87).”

“In terms of spiritual practice there are different types of **presence**:

**presence** in energy, **presence** in power, **presence** in joy, and **presence** in clarity; but when we talk about **presence** in the context of Dzogchen it specifically indicates being **present** in the inseparability of clarity and emptiness in the natural state of mind (87).”

Writing-2\Buddhist quotes\presence, attention, awareness, mindfulness