



DR. GAIL BRENNER

The
End



Self-Help

DISCOVERING PEACE AND HAPPINESS RIGHT AT
THE HEART OF YOUR MESSY, SCARY, BRILLIANT LIFE



The End *of* Self-Help

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DR. GAIL BRENNER

Ananda Press

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*Dedicated to the possibility,
alive in you in this very moment,
of knowing that you are free.*

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Introduction



Several years ago, I was speaking to my mother, sharing with her the most wonderful discovery imaginable. I described how, in any moment, anyone can know the deepest peace that's completely fulfilled and lacks nothing. I explained how this experience is always here and available, the living possibility for all of us. A flash of understanding lit up in her eyes, as she questioned, "Why doesn't everyone know this?"

I had posed the same question years earlier when I began to discover that it was truly possible to move through emotional pain and be at peace. If we don't *have to* suffer, why do we? Why don't we just know how to be okay?

Personal suffering is a reality in this human life we live. But it's not the ultimate reality, and that's what this book is about. The understanding that underlies true and lasting peace used to be reserved for Indian sages and monks on the mountaintop. *Now life is moving to bring this possibility to all of us.* It's the only thing that can bring sanity to our strained and stressed lives.

When we don't really know what to do about our pain and confusion, we do our best. And this is how the self-help movement came into being. It offers strategies and perspectives to help you find relief from suffering, but it contains a fundamental

misunderstanding that, sadly, will keep you searching for happiness but not actually finding it.

With advice to love yourself more, think more positively, and remember to feel grateful, you might feel better for some time. But until you know yourself to be essentially whole, and not the wounded and broken one who needs to be fixed, the true solution to your personal suffering will remain out of reach.

What is offered here is a radical departure from conventional techniques for happiness. It directs your attention not toward an imagined better self you hope to become, but right here to realize that peace is possible in any moment no matter what the content of your thoughts and feelings. It's the absolute truth that's been so easily overlooked.

“Until you know yourself to be essentially whole, the true solution to your personal suffering will remain out of reach.”

My Story

My interest in suffering and the end of suffering is long standing. Like you, I just wanted to be happy. I put together a functional life of work and friends, but I was continually plagued by anxiety, confusion, and relationship troubles. I tried the mainstream route of psychotherapy—fifteen years of it—but very little changed in the way I felt or the choices I made in my life. I even became a clinical psychologist, studying happiness and offering a healing space for others, and still I suffered.

Just feeling better wasn't enough for me. When I read in ancient spiritual teachings that enduring peace was possible, I believed it at the core of my being. I didn't know how to find this peace, but something in me said, “Yes!” I was absolutely on fire to know it in my own experience.

The search took me to Buddhist meditation retreats and the most lovely and helpful teachers. I learned to watch thoughts and feelings pass through my awareness without getting involved with them. I became more peaceful as I realized I had a choice about whether or not I engaged with a habit. And I was amazed to discover that the beliefs I held onto so strongly about myself and others weren't absolutely true. I saw how hard I was working to keep my life going and started to question my ideas about who I was and how I wanted to live in the world.

My journey left no stone unturned. Near the beginning, I spent a 10-day silent meditation retreat in tears that felt like I was crying out lifetimes of sadness and grief. Meditation offered relief from the confusion of feelings, as I learned to allow them to be without acting on them, but I had burning questions about the nature of reality that kept me searching.

As my path progressed, I noticed tendencies to judge others, which came from my own inner sense of feeling inadequate. And I saw that I was afraid to let go of control, fearful of losing my hard-won sense of independence. The more I looked into my experience, with the sincere willingness to tell the truth, the more fear became apparent. So much fear had gone unnoticed!

There was a time when I would stop whenever I felt fear, close my eyes, and simply feel it. Many times during the day, I sat on my couch feeling physical tension, contracted chest and jaw muscles, and shallow breathing. As I made the space for these sensations to be, without spinning in thought or wanting to change them, sometimes they would lessen, and sometimes not. But it didn't matter—it was relaxing to finally give up the fight and just be.

It wasn't immediate, but over time, I realized I felt less stressed. I didn't worry so much about making the right decision or trying to figure everything out. I was lighter, happier,

and more loving. One morning I woke up and, much to my surprise, I realized that I hadn't been anxious for quite some time.

I was feeling better, but I still wasn't completely at peace. Looking deeper, I discovered that my thoughts themselves were not the problem. Why? If you study a thought, you'll see that it's merely a temporary appearance of words. But if you pay attention to it and repeat it in your mind, it comes to life with meaning and substance. And this is the beginning of a great deal of trouble.

It was amazing to realize that if I believed the content of a thought, I was on the road to beliefs, expectations, shoulds and should nots, emotional reactions, and all the accompanying confusion. This is what I used to call "my life." But when I didn't pay attention to these thoughts, they could arise, but I remained peaceful.

In my quest for understanding, I saw that I was not my habits of worrying or needing to control, as these eventually diminished to a great degree. So who am I? I realized that everything I took myself to be was made up and temporary. My roles as woman, daughter, psychologist, or partner—they're just labels with no real substance, and they limit me. Taking them away revealed that I was somehow still here, alive and present.

I thought about all the people in my life who are important to me and imagined losing them. I looked at every single object in my home and felt into the possibility that it could all disappear. I met the end of money, relationship, career, place to live, health, and the physical body itself. What if all of it were to go? I could not find a way to not be at peace—yet I was *still* searching.

I was on my way to Europe for yet another retreat when over dinner, my friend Rupert Spira, a spiritual teacher, asked me what I was looking for by going there. I answered, "Stability in the presence that doesn't come and go." His fiery response: "Then put your attention on what doesn't come and go!"

It hit me like a lightning bolt. The stability I was traveling to Europe to find had always been here—I was too busy trying to figure out my confusion to stop and notice it. Thoughts, perceptions, physical sensations, people, my ideas about myself and others come and go—these are objects that arise and disappear. But what is stable and ever-present? The reality of being aware. It's the pure energy of life without any thing in it, the ground of being that is the true source.

With this insight, the structure of my personal self collapsed. I realized there had been an entity that I called “me” that seemed to be located as a knot in my forehead. When that contraction dissolved, there was only vast, alive space, like my head had blown open. I perceived no more barrier between me and anything else.

Around that time, I was having a conversation with a friend, and what happened was only speaking, hearing, seeing, smiling. Yes, there was the semblance of two people at a kitchen counter, but the separate forms were barely noticed, leaving the experience of pure intimacy and what I could only call love.

What a relief to realize that I didn't have to get rid of anything! I had put so much effort into quieting thoughts and eliminating painful emotions. But who was doing all this efforting? Being aware simply is and has no resistance to anything that appears. The experience of peace is indescribable. It's simply the outpouring of life in its natural state, unhindered by fears, needs, desires, and identifications.

Living this new discovery, I truly found peace and happiness right here at the heart of my messy, scary, brilliant life. I sometimes play out habits, then wake up to realize I've never left my true home. When emotions come, I experience them fully. It's life bringing me just what is needed to allow me to open again and again.

And now I live a normal life. But what is ordinary on the surface is absolutely extraordinary. The deepest peace...a heart overflowing...complete acceptance of things as they are...clear seeing that simplifies choices...unwavering willingness to not move when things get hard. It's love in motion.

Back to You

This process of investigating how you make yourself limited and discovering your true identity is not for the faint of heart. If you are less than completely open, you'll travel a rocky road. You must be willing to question everything and to lose all you hold dear. There is no reason to embark on this investigation other than because you feel moved to.

Yes, I was motivated to find an end to suffering—and discovered it. But that is an understanding from the limited, personal perspective. Looking through the eyes of universal awareness, things just happen, and who is to say why. I'm overcome by the grace of it all.

So why read this book, go to retreats, or investigate the nature of reality? If you've read this far, I'm assuming that you want to be free. You want an end to your suffering, you want to know the absolute truth, and you somehow think that this is possible for you. It is.

You're about to travel a pathless path—pathless because it goes nowhere but to the realization of being here now, awake and alive. You don't become anything. You simply recognize what you've overlooked in your experience—and it's available now.

A path this revolutionary requires guidance, and that's why I've written

“You're about to travel a pathless path because it goes nowhere but to the realization of being here now, awake and alive.”

this book. It offers a bridge between the common psychological problems people experience and the true spiritual understanding that sets you free. The mind is a force to be reckoned with, and familiar habits can keep you looking out at the world through a very murky window. Together we'll meticulously explore how you get stuck in unhappiness and how to discover that the peace you long for is always available right here, right now.

We'll unravel how you're held back by your past and paralyzed by your worries about the future. You'll learn how to study fear, sadness, shame, and all your emotions so they no longer define you. And you'll begin to tap into the well of infinite potential once you know you're not a separate, damaged, and limited self. All along, I offer reflections, experiments, and guided meditations (available online at www.GailBrenner.com/books) that support you in realizing and living daily life in the deepest peace and acceptance.

Even though you may be living with your attention out in a worldly life of work and family, your true home is and always has been here. As an important stepping stone to realizing this, you'll learn how to recognize patterns of thinking and behavior you play out in your life and how to stop running from your feelings and welcome them instead. There is a good chance you'll feel happier and your life situation will improve. But there's more. And this is why what's offered here goes well beyond the popular suggestion to be mindful of your experience.

If you want to be completely free, stay with the investigation until you know who you are. You are not anything your thoughts tell you that you are. You're not your emotions or attachments to people and things. You're not your habits, addictions, or personality traits. Or even a person with a body. Anything that comes and goes is not real and is not you. You are aware, alive to each moment, and as awareness, you've never not been here.

In our study together, I invite you to take it slowly. The most important quality to bring to this journey is openness—to everything. Don't believe what you read, but let it inspire you to question your own experience. Don't take anything for granted. Keep looking within to see what is actually true for you.

Although the inquiry into who you are can be serious business, keep it light as well. Your true nature is closer than you could ever imagine, and the signs of it are everywhere. Recognize moments of peace and happiness, and experience them deeply. Let yourself be awed by beauty in all forms. Notice when you're spontaneously joyful or lost in the flow of an engaging experience. Feel the depths of love. These are moments of pure being, and you can learn from them when you're bogged down by fear, need, lack, or desire.

Here is my best attempt to explain what can only be known directly and to put words to that which can never be spoken. May your journey home be fruitful.

Always in love,

Gail

November 2014

Santa Barbara, CA

Thank you for reading.
If you're interested in more,
the ebook and paperback are available
for purchase on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

Finding Yourself

The self-help industry is fundamentally flawed. It perpetuates the myth that we are limited, damaged, inadequate selves who need to be fixed. Sadly, it keeps millions of people just like you hoping for a better future when they will finally be happy and fulfilled.

But what if this inadequate self isn't who you are? What if it's possible, at any moment, to be happy and free?

Discovering this possibility is a journey that leads you to the amazing fact that all you seek has always been here. What you discover won't be new or unfamiliar. *You've always been who you really are, despite your distractions.*

- You've already delighted in the burst of joy that comes out of nowhere, if only for an instant;
- You've felt the all-consuming feeling of love;
- You know the wondrous sense of the unity of all;
- You've experienced the spark of unexpected creative expression, and
- You've dissolved into a bout of uncontrollable laughter.

You know in your heart of hearts that you're bigger than your imagined limits.

Happiness isn't nearly as elusive as you might think—if you know where to look for it. There's a current alive in each of us that flows toward contentment, toward resting effortlessly in peace and ease. This current is so strong that every action we take is an attempt to find happiness.

When you seek approval, you're trying to feel whole and relaxed. If you strive for money or material goods, you're searching for the moment of ease when you finally fulfill your desire. If you overdo anything, you're really looking for happiness, peace, and relief from inner turmoil.

You might think you want a relationship or the perfect job or even your mother's love. But, your real desire is the inner longing to be free of conflict, satisfied and complete, with no sense of something missing.

This is the ease of being you've been searching for your whole life. And you absolutely *can* know it in your own direct experience.

But you won't discover it in the objects, people, and situations in the world. You won't even discover it in your own thoughts. These are changeable, unreliable forms you can't trust to make or keep you happy. If this is where you're looking, then you probably already know your search will fail.

*“The good news
the most amazing news
is that the peace you
long for is available,
here and now,
in this very moment.”*

The good news—the most amazing news—is that the peace you long for is available, here and now, in this very moment...and endlessly. You come to know it when you learn how to stop relying on

ideas about how you wish things were—and say “Yes!” to the reality of how things actually are.

The path to realizing the unlimited potential for happiness in every moment is radical. It involves a shift in consciousness that

invites you to question everything you take to be true—all the stories, beliefs, hopes, expectations, and feelings that make up who you think you are—and discover that they're the very source of your dissatisfaction, unhappiness, and personal suffering.

Take an honest look at the thoughts and feelings that consume your attention. Are you:

- Waiting for others to do something so you can be happy?
- Obsessing over all the things you don't like about yourself?
- Recycling thoughts about what should or shouldn't happen in your life?
- Living in fear, shame, worry, or depression?

No wonder you're not happy. These everyday problems set you up for frustration and disappointment. They make you think the present is unfulfilling, and they delude you into believing that the ease you seek will be available at some future time. This "if only" thinking keeps you chasing happiness rather than living it. And while you're distracted by these thoughts and feelings, the deepest peace and happiness—available *right now*—go unnoticed.

Let me be clear: we're not just talking about that smile-on-your-face feeling we call happiness. It's not even the satisfaction you feel when things are going well—these are *expressions* of it.

When you deeply accept everything as it is, the inner war with your own experience ends, and you're not only peaceful, but joyful and content, as well. This is your natural state: what you knew before any conditioned habits or emotional pain concealed it. It's the pure aliveness that remains—when the pressure to do, fix, try, and accomplish falls away. Fear subsides, and you feel intimately connected with everything.

This is the happiness that is always available, always ready

to be discovered. Even though you may not consciously experience it, you and I both know that it's here. Even if it's hidden, this loving presence is alive in your true heart.

Coming Home to Now

You're right to want happiness. But too often you look for it in the wrong places. With your best intentions—and using a colorful array of strategies—you constantly search for a sense of well being. But this very activity distracts you from what you seek.

There's a purity in everything that happens. But then you personalize it by analyzing, overthinking, worrying, ruminating, and endlessly discussing your problems. To feel safe, you try to change your thoughts, change your ideas about the past, and control the future. You orient your life around obtaining approval, love, and recognition because you want to finally feel whole. And when you don't find that wholeness, you eat, drink, get high, text, and stay ridiculously busy—anything for some momentary relief from your troubled emotions.

When you look outside yourself, you find that even satisfying relationships, material objects, and positive circumstances don't last. Something eventually changes—and it might be your enjoyment of them. Have you ever loved receiving a new possession only to lose interest in it later on? You won't find happiness in these fleeting things you can't control.

These exhausting attempts to be happy feel to most of us like normal life—a lot of trying without truly being fulfilled. But actually, this is *resisting* life—fixating on problems, or on escaping them. All the struggling to locate this sense of ease somewhere else—in pleasant thoughts and feelings or more positive life circumstances—has kept you from realizing the miracle that you can live it in this “now” moment.

Isn't this exactly what you've been longing for?

The Power of Attention

If the peace you seek is available now, why don't you know it? To answer this question, let's investigate the most powerful force you control and your best ally—your attention. A lot of your attention is consumed by thinking. Thoughts lure you in to think them, believe them, and make them seem absolutely real. They tell stories that create worries about the future and regrets about the past. They make you hope, search, desire, judge, fantasize, and assume.

And what about emotions? If you pay attention to emotions, they pull you into dramas, fill you with a sense of inadequacy, dread, or despair, and lead you to make choices that lack clarity and intelligence. You walk through life with unhappy feelings casting shadows on your everyday reality.

These patterns of thinking and feeling are highly conditioned—you've probably been repeating them for decades. When they take up your attention, they seem so real that you don't even consider that there may be other aspects to your reality. If you feel sad about an event from your past, for example, the story of what happened and your emotional response to it are what seem completely real to you. And you suffer.

But I'm inviting you to focus your attention elsewhere—beyond the content of thoughts and feelings. And the place to look is right at the heart of your direct experience. You're an expert at paying attention to the stories and dramas in your life. *But when your attention is glued there, it misses the simple fact of being aware.*

The alternative is this: when attention unglues from thoughts, feelings, or any other object, it rests in itself—pure awareness—and you're at peace. This is the ground of being that is always here and unchanging—no matter what appears. It's what you consciously realize when your attention no longer gets caught up in draining mental and emotional habits.

Who Are You?

As unbelievable as it may sound, this pure awareness *is* who you are, and when you know this, you're happy. *Unhappiness is merely a case of mistaken identity.* What you believe to be you is a congealed mass of mostly distorted thoughts and feelings, habits and reactions. This idea of you is not absolutely real—and it's always going to feel incomplete. You *think* you're the one with this less-than-perfect life, waiting for things to change so you can finally feel okay, waiting for the time when you can stop struggling to be better than you are. If you're not happy, this is how you identify yourself—whether you realize it or not.

But what if you're not this anxious, dissatisfied person? Your true identity is not an individual with a name, a body, a past, emotions, and beliefs about yourself and the world. This is the story *about* you, but not who you actually are.

While you've been busy with your attention captured by feelings and thinking of yourself as separate and limited, you've missed the absolute truth: you have always been all that you ever wanted. Knowing yourself as pure awareness—the life force that perceives but is unchanged by what occurs—you're completely fulfilled, lacking nothing, infinite beyond imagination. You are radiant, pure, and transparent, encompassing everything, excluding nothing. By your very nature, you're completely at peace, even if difficult experiences arise.

“While you've been busy with your attention captured by feelings and thinking of yourself as separate and limited, you've missed the absolute truth: you have always been all that you ever wanted.”

Worry? Self-judgment? Loneliness? Jealousy? Discontent? Betrayal? These thoughts and feelings arise for a time in the

totality of you—but have nothing to do with who you really are.

Living this understanding is the revolution that changes everything, while at the same time seemingly changing nothing. This shift of attention to being aware doesn't alter the outward appearance of the world, but it unveils endless depths of peace and clarity. You realize that you're one with everything. You see the conditioned tendencies and repetitive story lines, but you know they aren't actually you so they no longer trap you.

When you know you are presence—the simplicity of being aware, rather than the complexity and confusion of what you're aware of—problems lose their impact. You're happy and at peace, taking nothing personally. Here, nothing needs to be changed or improved. Without doing anything, you are alert, awake, completely at peace, and problem-free.

The Perfect Starting Point

By now, you're probably asking, "Sounds good, but how do I get there?" And that's what this book is about. We're so used to thinking as the way to solve problems. That's fine if you want to build a skyscraper or figure out how to drive to a new destination. But thinking doesn't work in this case because the happiness you're searching for is already here before thoughts appear. You have to *look outside your mind*. And from the perspective of the mind-driven person you believe yourself to be, this is a profound shift.

What's needed is to stop doing anything to search for happiness outside yourself so there's space to experience happiness now. How do you stop searching? "You" can't. *The search ends when the idea of you as a personal self who believes she needs to do something to be happy is seen to be false.*

The belief that we're separate leaves us living with a great deal of confusion. We assume thoughts are true when they aren't.

We strive to improve ourselves even though we never achieve our goals. We let fear guide our choices without even knowing what fear actually is. We hope to get what we want then feel disappointed when we don't. Time after time, we blindly march along, stuck in the rut of our conditioning. And we never stop to question these unsatisfying habits.

The aim of this book is two-fold: to clear up these areas of confusion and to illuminate the ever-present truth of peaceful, aware presence. Our inquiry is laser-focused as we investigate exactly what's making you unhappy so you can revel in the reality of true happiness. With a merciful heart, you'll feel the pain of living in fear and separation, and together we'll discover another way.

The starting place for our investigation is right here, with whatever you're aware of in any moment. I'll walk with you as we explore how common tendencies such as feelings of inadequacy or the need to be in control hijack your happiness. We'll examine fear, guilt, shame, grief, and resentment to shed light on the nature of stories and emotions. We'll investigate the tentacles of conditioning that live in the body.

We'll invite fundamental questions, such as:

- What is the effect of holding onto a story?
- What do I believe? Are these beliefs true?
- What exactly is this feeling that I give so much importance to?
- Who am I?

And we'll keep asking questions until all concepts lose their power to define who you are. You'll realize that letting go of what you think you are releases your awareness into the truth of who you really are. You'll glimpse the simple delight of having

no resistance to life's unfolding. You'll effortlessly experience enthusiasm, uncaused joy, and simple appreciation.

And you'll recognize this potential was here, all along. *You were just too tangled up in distorted thinking and messy emotions to see it.*

Living the Yes! to Life

Denying our reality is so programmed in us that we've lost touch with the ability to say "Yes!" to life. We're masters at how to resist—which means we know how to suffer. If you believe your negative thoughts, and take your feelings as accurate barometers of your inner state, you're fighting against what's actually true. How do you know? You encounter edges everywhere.

If you think, "He shouldn't have said that," you believe your expectation about what he should have said and resist what he actually said. If you continue your career as an employee while brushing aside your passion for starting your own business, you're running on fear, resistant to the natural movement of being. If you agonize about a sad story that says you're not good enough, you're resisting the truth of your magnificence.

If you experience any conflict whatsoever, look for unexamined attachments to thoughts and feelings that have grabbed your attention. For the moment, you've forgotten who you are.

When you live in the Yes! to what is, you know that you are timeless presence where nothing is separate from anything else. You melt into the deepest acceptance of things as they are. "Not this" yields to, "Oh, this," fear dissolves into love. Emotional reactions lose their charge, along with ideas about how your life should be. With no resistance, you are one with truth and truly happy. The mind-constructed, fear-based life comes to an end, and surrendered living begins, emanating from presence. You fully embrace your human life, while flowing with things as they are.

To realize this presence, nothing needs to be destroyed or gotten rid of. This book is not about changing your inner psychology or resolving your feelings about the past, as those are temporary fixes at best. You don't need to think more positively, believe affirmations, figure out your feelings, fix yourself, manifest your desires, or become a better person. These take so much effort!

The realization of your true nature ends self-help or personal development. Why? Because there is no self to help or person to develop. It involves something much simpler: the discovery that you're not the separate entity you think you are. Here is where peace lies.

How do you come to know this way of being? Go beyond the unsatisfying objects we call thoughts and feelings to explore what else is present in your conscious experience. Then you get to experiment with living true—maybe starting right now: How do you meet your loved ones, freshly and intimately, with no scars from your history together? What about all those things you thought were so vital to accomplish? How is it to live without angst, needs, and problems? What *is* your true life purpose?

Miraculously, you have a fresh perspective on habits and situations that felt stuck, although nothing has changed except your identification with thoughts and feelings. The loving

response—*not* one based on fear and separation—becomes obvious.

*“Miraculously,
you have a fresh
perspective on habits
and situations that felt
stuck, although nothing
has changed except
your identification with
thoughts and feelings.”*

If you have any doubt in your mind, know this: you can realize peace. If you're struggling, you've misidentified yourself as someone you're not. Clarity is so close—it takes no

time at all for a simple shift of attention to being aware. Here you unveil the in-the-moment direct experience of you: clear and awake. You're home.

Walking the Path

Like a fish searching for water, you're looking to discover what's already here, and, in that sense, nothing needs to be done. But you're being asked to see beyond strongly programmed habits, so what you bring to this exploration matters. Can you be profoundly honest with yourself about what isn't working for you? Can you harness that unhappiness so you're available to a new way of being?

It serves to be totally fed up with your suffering. But have compassion as the mechanisms of conditioned habits are exposed. Be completely open in your mind, heart, and body.

In the pages of this book, you're invited to shed the light of awareness on habits you mindlessly play out in your life and to recognize those moments of pure being that we often take for granted or overlook. At the end of each chapter, you'll find reflections, experiments, investigations, and meditations that guide you to explore your in-the-moment experience. The more you work with them, the better. You can read all about the possibility of knowing your true nature—but until you step off the sidelines and into the Yes, you won't find that elusive peace and happiness. It was a light bulb moment for me when I stopped passively listening to what others were telling me about discovering peace and began to intentionally live it in my moment-to-moment experience. This changed everything for me.

Fortunately, you have a portable laboratory with you at all times to support your exploration: your own direct experience. At any moment, you can ask your inner scientist what's making you feel stuck. As you become an expert in spotting how you get

trapped into suffering, you realize that infinite possibilities have always been available. Eventually, the mind gives way, and all is revealed.

What do you have to lose? See through the false, distorted, limited view of reality. Recognize your translucent, wondrous self, so fresh and alive, shining everywhere.

Explorations



1. Become familiar with your attention. Think a thought for a moment, then focus on taking a breath. Now move your attention to the sensation of your back against your chair. Notice how you can pay attention to different aspects of your experience.

Listen to the guided audio meditation at
www.GailBrenner.com/books.

2. Try this experiment to just see what happens—you don't have to be absolutely sure of the answer. When you see an object, are you aware? When you hear a sound, are you aware? Do you need to be focusing on something in order to be aware?
3. Think of something, anything, that brings you joy. Now stop focusing on that thing and just experience the joy itself.
4. Take some time to reflect and maybe write a list:
What are the ways you say “No” to life?

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To learn more, please visit www.GailBrenner.com

About the Author



Gail Brenner, Ph.D. is a clinical psychologist and blogger who joyfully helps people discover that suffering is optional. Through investigating her own experience, and working with clients for over 25 years, she has discovered how to unravel common problems of everyday life to reveal the deepest acceptance and peace. To learn more, please visit www.GailBrenner.com

THE HAPPINESS YOU LONG FOR IS ALREADY HERE

The self-help industry is fundamentally flawed. It perpetuates the myth that we are limited, damaged, inadequate selves who need to be fixed. Sadly, it keeps millions of us hoping for a better future when we will finally be happy and fulfilled.

But what if this inadequate self isn't who you are? What if it's possible, at any moment, to be peaceful and free? Well, it is, and that's what *The End of Self-Help: Discovering Peace and Happiness Right at the Heart of Your Messy, Scary, Brilliant Life* is about.

The approach offered here is the only real medicine for your struggles. It questions everything—every conditioned habit, everything you take for granted—so you realize that nothing needs to be changed or fixed to be happy. You awaken to the (literally) mind-blowing understanding that you're always whole, always free. And you're finally fully here in the moments of everyday life.

Explorations and guided audio meditations in each chapter bring these insights alive in your own experience. *You discover the end of self-help because you realize that you're not the incomplete, broken self who needs help.* Weaving a psychological perspective with spiritual inquiry, what's revealed is the living, breathing possibility of peace now... and now...and now...

“Brimming with crystalline clarity and the love of truth, Gail Brenner's *The End of Self-Help* invites us to see through the illusion of the separate self and discover our inherent freedom, wholeness, and well being in the midst of our ordinary lives. This beautifully written book sparkles with vibrant insight and is a welcome antidote to the endless and errant self-improvement project!”

—John J. Prendergast, Ph.D., author of *In Touch: How to Tune in to the Inner Guidance of Your Body and Trust Yourself* and senior editor of *The Sacred Mirror* and *Listening from the Heart of Silence*.



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