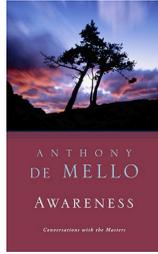


Your Kindle Notes For:



Awareness: Conversations with the Masters

Anthony de Mello, SJ and J. Francis Stroud

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Even the best psychologist will tell you that, that people don't really want to be cured. What they want is relief; a cure is painful.

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You're only in love with your prejudiced and hopeful idea of that person.

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But this is really to say to our friend or to our God or to anyone, "You are my happiness. If I don't get you, I refuse to be happy." It's so important to understand that. We cannot imagine being happy without those conditions. That's pretty accurate. We cannot conceive of being happy without them. We've been taught to place our happiness in them.

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It's only when you're sick of your sickness that you'll get out of it.

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Believe me, it really doesn't matter whether you agree with what I'm saying or you don't. Because agreement and disagreement have to do with words and concepts and theories. They don't have anything to do with truth. Truth is never expressed in words. Truth is sighted suddenly, as a result of a certain attitude.

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All I can do for you is help you to unlearn. That's what learning is all about where spirituality is concerned: unlearning, unlearning almost everything you've been taught. A willingness to unlearn, to listen.

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And challenge it all. Recall those lovely words of Buddha when he said, "Monks and scholars must not accept my words out of respect, but must analyze them the way a goldsmith analyzes gold—by cutting, scraping, rubbing, melting."

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I want you to understand something right at the beginning, that religion is not—I repeat: not—necessarily connected with spirituality. Please keep religion out of this for the time being.

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We don't want to look, because if we do, we may change. We don't want to look. If you look, you lose control of the life that you are so precariously holding together. And so in order to wake up, the one thing you need the most is not energy, or strength, or youthfulness, or even great intelligence. The one thing you need most of all is the readiness to learn something new.

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The first reaction is one of fear. It's not that we fear the unknown. You cannot fear something that you do not know. Nobody is afraid of the unknown. What you really fear is the loss of the known. That's what you fear.

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Why not concentrate on the now instead of hoping for better times in the future? Why not understand the now instead of forgetting it and hoping for the future? Isn't the future just another trap?

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We're always fixing things, aren't we? It never strikes us that things don't need to be fixed. They really don't. This is a great illumination. They need to be understood. If you understood them, they'd change.

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Do you want to change the world? How about beginning with yourself? How about being transformed yourself first? But how do you achieve that? Through observation. Through understanding. With no interference or judgment on your part. Because what you judge you cannot understand.

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As the life of awareness settles on your darkness, whatever is evil will disappear. Whatever is good will be fostered. You will have to experience that for yourself.

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It's going to take a lot of awareness for you to understand that perhaps this thing you call "I" is simply a conglomeration of your past experiences, of your conditioning and programming.

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Just as we have the same name for Niagara Falls, but Niagara Falls is constituted by water that is constantly changing. We use the same name for an ever-changing reality.

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Now there's human living for you. That's what life is all about. That can only come from awareness. And in awareness you will understand that honor doesn't mean a thing.

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There's only one reason why you're not experiencing bliss at this present moment, and it's because you're thinking or focusing on what you don't have.

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What you are aware of you are in control of; what you are not aware of is in control of you.

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Awareness, awareness, awareness, awareness. What they trained us to do in that course was to become participant observers. To put it somewhat graphically, I'd be talking to you and at the same time I'd be out there watching you and watching me.

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The main preoccupation of society is to keep society sick! And the sooner you realize that, the better. Sick, every one of them.

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Are you your clothes? Are you your name? Are you your profession? Stop identifying with them. They come and go. When you really understand this, no criticism can affect you. No flattery or praise can affect you either.

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As one man said, "I got a pretty good education. It took me years to get over it." That's what spirituality is all about, you know: unlearning. Unlearning all the rubbish they taught you.

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Negative feelings are in you. No person on earth has the power to make you unhappy.

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You're defining yourself in terms of the feeling. That's your illusion; that's your mistake.

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We see people and things not as they are, but as we are. That is why when two people look at something or someone, you get two different reactions. We see things and people not as they are, but as we are.

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And that's all right. To say no to people—that's wonderful; that's part of waking up. Part of waking up is that you live your life as you see fit. And understand: That is not selfish. The selfish thing is to demand that someone else live their life as YOU see fit. That's selfish. It is not selfish to live your life as you see fit.

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It is said widely in the East, "Those who know, do not say; those who say, do not know."

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The highest knowledge of God is to know God as unknowable. There is far too much God talk; the world is sick of it. There is too little awareness, too little love, too little happiness, but let's not use those words either. There's too little dropping of illusions, dropping of errors, dropping of attachments and cruelty, too little awareness.

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The poor little fish in the ocean says, "Excuse me, I'm looking for the ocean. Can you tell me where I can find it?" Pathetic, isn't it? If we would just open our eyes and see, then we would understand.

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How does one lose oneself? Did you ever try to lose something? That's right, the harder you try, the harder it gets. It's when you're not trying that you lose things. You lose something when you're not aware.

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Happiness releases you from self.

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Pleasant experiences make life delightful. Painful experiences lead to growth. Pleasant experiences make life delightful, but they don't lead to growth in themselves. What leads to growth is painful experiences.

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Wakefulness, happiness—call it what you wish—is the state of nondelusion, where you see things not as you are but as they are, insofar as this is possible for a human being.

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Another illusion is that external events have the power to hurt you, that other people have the power to hurt you. They don't. It's you who give this power to them.

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“These people don't bring delinquency with them; they become delinquent when they're faced with certain situations here. We've got to understand them. If you want to cure the situation, it's useless reacting from prejudice. You need understanding, not condemnation.”

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Ideas actually fragment the vision, intuition, or experience of reality as a whole.

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Now, that could be very admirable, or it could also be a compulsion. No great merit in it if it's mechanical.

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The beauty of an action comes not from its having become a habit but from its sensitivity, consciousness, clarity of perception, and accuracy of response.

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You need to be liberated from that. Don't carry over experiences from the past. In fact, don't carry over good experiences from the past either. Learn what it means to experience something fully, then drop it and move on to the next moment, uninfluenced by the previous one. You'd be traveling with such little baggage that you could pass through the eye of a needle. You'd know

what eternal life is, because eternal life is now, in the timeless now. Only thus will you enter into eternal life.

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Did it ever occur to you that you could be happy in tension? Before enlightenment, I used to be depressed; after enlightenment, I continue to be depressed. You don't make a goal out of relaxation and sensitivity. Have you ever heard of people who get tense trying to relax? If one is tense, one simply observes one's tension. You will never understand yourself if you seek to change yourself. The harder you try to change yourself, the worse it gets.

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The Japanese have a nice way of putting it: "The day you cease to travel, you will have arrived." Your attitude should be: "I want to be aware, I want to be in touch with whatever is and let whatever happens happen; if I'm awake, fine, and if I'm asleep, fine." The moment you make a goal out of it and attempt to get it, you're seeking ego glorification, ego promotion. You want the good feeling that you've made it. When you do "make it," you won't know.

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Loneliness is when you're missing people, aloneness is when you're enjoying yourself.

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Dying is wonderful; it's only horrible to people who have never understood life. It's only when you're afraid of life that you fear death. It's only dead people who fear death. But people who are alive have no fear of death.

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Wisdom occurs when you drop barriers you have erected through your concepts and conditioning.

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You were not allowed to enjoy the solid, nutritious food of life—namely, work, play, fun, laughter, the company of people, the pleasures of the senses and the mind. You were given a taste for the drug called approval, appreciation, attention.

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But they're taking pictures alright, and later they'll show you pictures in an album, of places they never saw but only photographed.

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That's a symbol of modern life. I cannot warn you enough about this kind of asceticism. Slow down and taste and smell and hear, and let your senses come alive. If you want a royal road to mysticism, sit down quietly and listen to all the sounds around you. You do not focus on any one sound; you try to hear them all. Oh, you'll see the miracles that happen to you when your senses come unclogged. That is extremely important for the process of change.

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The doctor said, "Father, you've got two patches on your lungs. It could be cancer, so you'll have to come back next month." He never touched another cigarette after that. Before, he knew it would kill him; now, he was aware it could kill him. That's the difference.

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Every word there is measured. To see at last with a vision that is clear and unclouded by fear or desire.

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And love is generated through awareness and through no other way, no other way.

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Do you know where wars come from? They come from projecting outside of us the conflict that is inside.

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The religion that makes people good makes people bad, but the religion known as freedom makes all people good, for it destroys the inner conflict [I've added the word "inner"] that makes people devils."