

The reading for last week focused on the ways in which time—focused on the past—bears down on us, robbing us of our freedom. As we have already seen, the alternative is to focus on the future. In the reading for this week we begin to make that move.

The future offers the potential for real aliveness. But how can we connect with that aliveness, especially in light of the ‘pastness’ on which we focused in the previous chapter? The reading suggests two alternatives, though of course there are more: a focus on not-knowing and cultivating an attitude of gratitude. See if you can find ways to work with one or both of these in your ordinary experience. If you have time, you can also focus on these in more formal practice sessions, letting experience arise and allowing it to be unknown and unexpected.

Last week’s reading suggesting that it was too limiting to try to overcome the pastness of linear time through a focus on the immediacy of the present, because the present could not be separated out in this way. To explore this more, let’s try working with Ex. 19 from the TSK book. Here it is, slightly reworded:

*Remain sensitive to all thoughts, feelings, and sensations. You may eventually be able to see a past and a future tinge . . . to all your lived present moments. Each ordinary present has a subtle past-present-future structure to it that provides a feeling of personal identity, continuity, and direction.*