

Thought Freedom

**Is there any freedom from the mind,
and if so, what is it?**



By Anne Sermons Gillis

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Do you feel dragged around by your mind chatter? Do you want freedom from thought or emotions? Maybe you've tried to forget your thoughts and feelings by watching a movie, drinking a glass of wine, or by harnessing them. "If I could just get rid of these thoughts." "I need to just think positive." Then, when you get rid of them, change them, or forget them, more disturbing thoughts take their place.

Is there any freedom from the mind, and if so, what is it? ***Freedom from thoughts and feelings does not mean we won't have thoughts and feelings. It means we do not buy into our thoughts and feelings. We do not give them power over us.*** Every seasoned meditator knows that at some point, thoughts and emotions surface and resurface, but to go beneath the turbulence of thoughts and feelings, one must stay present and ride the waves. Surfers have fun on their surfboards, as they turn gigantic and powerful waves into toys. Can we ride the waves of our thoughts and emotions, without being battered about by them? Can we even ***play*** with them? Sometimes I start laughing when I catch a preposterous thought. But I make sure not to criticize my thought flow. I realize that whatever is ***thinking me*** has a sense of ***humor*** as well as a sense of ***horror***.

Imagine you are on an island. The night sky is ablaze with stars, you hear ocean waves rolling in, but your mind can't relax. You think about all the things you have to do when you return home from vacation. You mull over what you left undone. Your body may have taken a vacation, but your mind is still working. I used to say that by the time I unwound and could relax, my vacation was over. This is the story of our lives. ***We substitute real life with thoughts and feelings.*** We don't revel in the stars at hand or listen to the song of the waves. We are off on some mind trip that keeps us bound to the past. ***We are on a train that's bound for Glory, but when we get to Glory, we don't get off the train.*** We've invested so much time in the vehicle that's taking us where we want to go, that we don't want to give it up.

Seasons come and go, and when we reach the end of our lives, we suddenly realize ***all the time we've wasted on inconsequential.*** People write about how they would wear purple hats and eat more desserts, if they could do it over. But if that's all they are going to do with another life, they might as well forget it. Eating more ice cream and wearing a purple hat will only get you another course of life ***as it's always been.*** I really have nothing against purple hats or the Purple Hat Society. They are sweet, and the idea serves many. The purple hat/ice cream exposé points out that glamour, eccentricity, and gluttony will not be helpful in calming the seas of our minds.

The main function of our lives is to stay present and aware so we can experience what's really going on. We do not need to mentally *comment* on everything that happens in our lives: ***we need to experience life.*** The mind generates words and feelings, but we don't need to continually run after them. We must let them pass. ***Freedom comes with an awareness that watches a thought or emotion but doesn't get freaked out about it.***

Here are some of the ways I get freedom from my mind:

- I watch how my mind categorizes people, things, and events. Rather than believe the thoughts, I think, “That’s what the mind does. It has its little tricks.” ***I use one thought to detach from another thought.*** When my mind churns, I dive deeper. My self-talk goes like this, “This level of mind will not bring you what you want. It gives you a lot of reasons to put others in an unfavorable light, but you are smart enough to know why it does that.” I then focus my awareness on my breathing and let go of the uproar.
- If I can’t detach, I ask for help. “Help,” I say to the Universe. “I am willing to have my mind freed, but something is hanging on.” I then refocus on my breath. Relief usually comes, but only when I am willing to drop the content of the drama.
- ***I look for myself.*** There’s a space in the center of my head that I bring into focus. It’s behind the eyes. I try to experience it, and when I get in the right space, I have that “Here I am” feeling. I don’t comment on it; I just sense that space. It is calm and peaceful.
- I also focus on the three parts of my body that house emotional upset feelings. One is in the center of my chest. Another is in my solar plexus region, and the third spot is in my lower abdomen. I center my awareness in each space and watch my body’s sensations. I stay focused on the area of unrest. ***Just watching helps me detach.***

There are many paths to bring us into conscious awareness, that move us into freedom. It doesn’t matter which one we take, but it is imperative that we stop aligning with our thoughts and feelings. Join me in stopping the mental mayhem. I’m sure that when we do, our lives will be EZier and EZier.



ANNE SERMONS GILLIS

Anne Sermons Gillis is the foremost expert on ease. She is an international speaker, minister, author, breath worker, and personal growth coach. Anne’s wisdom, humor, and exuberant presentation style make learning fun. Armed with years of experience in human dynamics, Gillis consistently delivers more than promised. She teaches people how to have accomplishment without struggle by presenting refreshing material that is immediately accessible. “Life is not meant to be a series of to-do lists punctuated by eating and sleeping.” says Gillis. Her approach to nondualism is called Radical Presence. She is the author of [five books](#): *Offbeat Prayers for the Modern Mystic*, *EZosophy: The Art and Wisdom of Easy or At Least Easier Living*, *Standing In The Dark*, *Words Make A Difference*, and *The Living Book*, plus other products and services available on her website.

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