



## **Book Review**

### **The Presence Process**

**by Michael Brown**

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*In Network Magazine, Claire Haugh*

*"Today, we all face an increasing flow of events about which we may feel we can do nothing. This is not true. It is crucial now that we experientially realise we are each responsible for navigating the quality of our personal experience.... Personal peace is not given to us by others ~ it arises through our response to ourselves."*

These invitational words are from Michael Brown, acclaimed author of *The Presence Process, A Journey into Present Moment Awareness*. Born in South Africa, Michael Brown lived a “blissfully unconscious life” as a music journalist until he was impacted by an acutely painful neurological condition. His only choice, he says, was either to alter the quality of his experience or live in continual suffering. During a nine-year odyssey, which led to the integration and healing of his neurological condition, he realised the means by which we can all become responsible for the quality of our personal experience and liberate ourselves from past traumas and projected fears.

The Presence Process is not just a book, it is a 10-week journey that teaches us tools to accomplish and maintain personal peace in the midst of accelerating change, discomfort, conflict and chaos. It reveals the mechanics shaping the way we feel about life and how we manifest our experience, in a manner that empowers us to respond consciously to every facet of our lives. As the author says: It is not about feeling better, it is about getting better at feeling.

*“All our emotional, mental and physical discomforts arising in this life experience are the effects of unresolved experiences that occurred in time. As we intentionally move our attention into the present moment, these unresolved experiences surface, unravel and come to resolution.”*

How does The Presence Process work? The first half of the book offers information to prepare for the commitment involved in undertaking the extensive 10-week journey and to explain some of the challenges that might be encountered on that life-changing path. There is a chapter to be read each week, combined with a twice-daily 15-minute practice of conscious connected breathing. There is also a weekly “statement” to help activate Present Moment Awareness. For example, the statement for Week 1 is “This moment matters.” Just those three words... This phrase then becomes a conscious response to everyday events, as often as possible, during the first week. As each week of The Presence Process progresses there are deeper insights and tools to empower the reader to respond consciously to life.

What does it mean when we are invited to respond rather than react to life? When faced with an upset or challenge in our lives, we often avoid the true feelings that arise. Michael Brown says we do this in one of several ways: we sedate, we control or we run away. Invariably, the upset or challenge is an “echo” from the past, from our childhood, even

from a time before we had words. So, rather than talk our way out of the discomfort we are invited to feel and to breathe and to stay in Present Moment Awareness. Not only that, we are encouraged to see that every “upset” is actually a “set-up”, an opportunity to seize the moment, recognise that what’s happening is an echo from the past. It is an effect but it is not the cause. Rather than sedate, control or run away, we are asked to stay compassionately present with what is happening. By strengthening our ability to remain present in these uncomfortable moments, feeling everything unconditionally and breathing for 15-minutes twice daily, we create change at the causal level of our being.

Why would someone do The Presence Process? Michael Brown acknowledges that there could be many reasons for embarking on an intensive 70-day process and not throwing in the towel, such as: “We are curious... We are choosing to grow up emotionally... We are aware of going round in circles and getting nowhere... Emotional, mental or physical symptoms are unbalancing the quality of our life experience... Our life experience is uncomfortable and nobody can relieve us of this discomfort, and we suspect nobody but us can... The prospect of Present Moment Awareness (living in the now) fascinates us... We are exploring the potentials of our humanity...”

As a facilitator and trainer of Transformational Breath®, the inclusion of 15-minutes breathing practice twice daily in The Presence Process makes so much sense. It is through the breath that we access the long-held and unresolved mental and emotional issues that are holding us back in life. It is also through the breath that we integrate these issues at the causal level and therefore liberate ourselves to live authentically in the present, in the here and now. My journey with The Presence Process (Week 4 as I write...) continues to be one of “stepping up” and taking full responsibility for the quality of my personal experience in this life. My inner child, that part of me that didn’t know how to be fully present in all those challenging childhood events and instead chose to bury those moments and feelings in the depths of my unconscious, says “Thank you. Don’t stop!” My adult self, still tending to act under the influence of unintegrated past events, and yearning to be free, appreciates my decision to say “Yes” to the ongoing journey.

It seems a paradox to attempt to put into words what is essentially a direct felt experience when reading and working with this book. However, The Presence Process is a rare gem offering a way of being connected to Present Moment Awareness and living life in the now. It presents a clear pathway for accessing and fully resolving deeply suppressed past emotional and mental trauma. It may not always be an easy journey (remember the intention is not to cling to the need to feel better, but to step into life and get better at feeling), but in spite of the frequent challenges it is almost certainly a very worthwhile one.

If you find yourself with the book in your hand, and if you feel ready, I heartily recommend that you read it...! Then having read it, and again if it feels right for you, follow your heart and inner wisdom. If you’re ready to take the leap, embark on this powerful 10-week journey...and enjoy!

### **Further Reading**

- Michael Brown wrote The Presence Process and later followed with The Alchemy of the Heart. He created The Presence Portal ([www.thepresenceportal.com](http://www.thepresenceportal.com)) as a resource for this empowering work. He also offers a free download entitled Being Our Companion which contains supportive information prompted by questions asked by thousands of readers who have been on this journey.