

*You cannot possibly say that you are what you think yourself to be! Your ideas about yourself change from day to day and from moment to moment. Your self-image is the most changeable thing you have. It is utterly vulnerable, at the mercy of a passer by. A bereavement, the loss of a job, an insult, and your image of yourself, which you call your person, changes deeply. To know what you are you must first investigate and know what you are not. And to know what you are not you must watch yourself carefully, rejecting all that does not necessarily go with the basic fact: 'I am'. The ideas: I am born at a given place, at a given time, from my parents and now I am so-and-so, living at, married to, father of, employed by, and so on, are not inherent in the sense 'I am'. Our usual attitude is of 'I am this'. Separate consistently and perseveringly the 'I am' from 'this' or 'that', and try to feel what it means to be, just to be, without being 'this' or 'that'. All our habits go against it and the task of fighting them is long and hard sometimes, but clear understanding helps a lot. The clearer you understand that on the level of the mind you can be described in negative terms only, the quicker you will come to the end of your search and realise your limitless being. - Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj*

I really like the way Nisargadatta highlights the ephemerality of this 'self' we think we have. We solidify it so much, never seeming to notice how our idea of who we are is changed and changing continuously throughout the day by each passing encounter and circumstance. We are affected much more by negative events. If we met five people who said nice things to us during the day we still tend to dwell on the one negative comment we received. So the first step is to become aware of this - to practice noticing the shifting nature of self concepts and feel the 'I amness,' - the calm underlying beingness. That's what the pab - coming back to this sense of being, every 15 minutes, technique - is designed to do I think. And meditation helps too. So we don't need to seek anything outside ourselves. All we need is patience and perhaps a little faith in the process.