

This Moment Is Unique(Excerpt) by **Andrew Olendzki**

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The Unique thing about each person's lived experience is, well, its uniqueness. Because everything is changing all the time, every single thing that happens is new. The entire universe is in a fresh configuration every moment. There may be patterns that repeat, but no two sets of phenomena are exactly the same, ever.

Human consciousness is a natural part of all this. The mind is an apparatus that creates experience, using the senses of the body and the neurons of the brain. With an alchemy we still don't have the means to understand very well, a moment of awareness arises when one of the six sense bases comes in contact with a particular stimulus, which is shaped into a knowable object. Each moment's experience is further accompanied with its own inimitable combination of feeling tone, interpretive perception, and emotional response, all of which occur in an instant and then cease. Consciousness is thus a series of episodic events, flashing again and again as phenomena are cognized for an exceptional instant before they vanish, never again to reappear in the same way.

Trying to communicate with another about our own lived experience, we find ways to convey what is happening for us; because others have similar experiences, what we say and do can resonate with them. We seek through our dialogue to evoke in others our own experience, and empathize with what they are expressing in order to experience it for ourselves. Much of the time we are successful, but because of the uniqueness of all experience, all of this secondary discourse--- telling someone else what is happening for you --- can only ever be a shadow of what is lived directly.

Our modern world tends to look at things from the outside, enhancing the objective and diminishing the subjective. The contemplative arts of early Indian traditions place more emphasis on the subjective perspective, and can help us recover and celebrate the immense value of being right here, right now. You only have one shot at this moment--- don't miss it.