

## Chapter One

*"Rejoicing in your own aloneness is what meditation is all about. The meditator is one who dives deep into one's aloneness, knowing that we are born alone, we will be dying alone, and deep down we are living alone. So why not experience what this aloneness is? It is our very nature, our very being." Osho*

*"Speaking about myself, it took me forever to be in touch with my aloneness. Loneliness made me fearful. I wanted to cling to somebody, to some relationship, in order not to feel lonely. Deep down I knew I was in pain. It took me years of meditation to have the courage to confront myself, to become friends with myself. Now I can be your friend without being needy. I can walk beside you in my own shoes. Join me." Krishna Prem*

Out of your loneliness, you have invited everybody in the world to live with you. And your life is just one big crowd. Take a step back from yourself and see who you've brought along: parents, relatives, girlfriends and boyfriends, colleagues at work, social pals, teammates, teachers, bosses, employees...not to mention the virtual hordes following you on Facebook, Twitter and the rest.

They define who you are. They are you, molded as a reflection in their image. And as you've already noticed, this book is called *Aloneness, A Love Story* – a title that's not going

to hit the top spot on the New York Times Bestseller List any time soon.

Why not? No, it's not just my lousy writing. It's because the book that you and everybody else have been reading for eternity is titled *Togetherness, a Love Story*. It takes two to tango, right? In other words, longing for a soul mate, finding true love, bonding with friends...this is the opium dream of our collective mind because it means we need never feel our loneliness.

Most of the movies we see conclude with "...and they lived happily ever after." The reason they say that, as we all know perfectly well, is because we want to believe that love is forever. And what we want, Hollywood is happy to provide because that's what fills the till at the box office.

Karl Marx was wrong, Religion is not the opium of the people. Hollywood is. But then Tinsel Town hadn't been invented in Marx's day, so the old, woolly-bearded thinker can be forgiven. He died in 1883. He didn't even get to see one of those early, black-and-white, Mickey Mouse-loves-Minnie Mouse cartoons in the late 1920s.

In my first book, *Gee, You Are You* I shared colorful stories about my life. My new book *Aloneness, A Love Story* is about my spiritual life where I am talking about meditation. But then why, you may ask, is the title referring to aloneness? Well, because really I have no choice. If I want to talk about meditation I have to address the uncomfortable issue of aloneness.

That's where Osho comes in – he's an expert on both. I'll tell you more about this later, but let me start by recalling how Osho said to me, "You need to clean your basement, Krishna Prem."

When I first met him, I said, "Osho, I didn't have parents, I didn't have a family life. I was brought up by a sister, my life is so dysfunctional, I am so glad you are saying we can just move straight ahead to meditation."

He replied, "Who said that? If you are not healthy and you meditate, it will not work. Unfortunately, in your case, I have a lot of work to do, because we need to start on your primary issues. So that when you meditate, you don't bring your past unfinished. You can't go from a dysfunctional life into meditation, you need to heal first."

That was my invitation to drop the past. I got the point; only when you drop the past can you learn to meditate. First, I cleaned my basement. Now I am in the attic. I am meditating and cleaning the attic.

Osho told me, "Once you do that, you can go into your living room and relax. Once you are again comfortable in your own skin, sitting in your favorite chair, having a beer, listening to music, then you can be a happy, healthy human being."

By the way, I'm not trying to recreate Osho by writing this book – trust me, the guy's got plenty of books of his own. I am trying to explain the context in which we can become happy, healthy human beings, based on my own experience.

So, once you finish your housecleaning and once you learn to meditate, you can start living in your living room. Osho said to me, "It is amazing, but most people, instead of cleaning the basement, instead of learning how to meditate, instead of learning to relax in their living room, remain standing outside on their own porch and never come in."

We are outsiders when we could be insiders. We are strangers in a strange neighborhood. Nobody is living inside themselves. Nobody is wondering *Who am I?* Everybody is

saying, *I will tell you who I am, once I am rich enough, or famous enough, or successful enough not to be in pain.*

It does not happen like that. Rich people are in pain wanting to be happy and poor people are in pain wanting to be rich. We need to participate in our own lives but we don't know how. You need to find the door of your own house, open it, leave the porch behind and enter inside the home of your being...oh yes, and you're welcome to have a beer in the living room.

This book is all about looking at life from inside the house, looking from the state of meditation out into the world. And the person reading this book, nine out of ten times, is doing just the opposite: looking from the outside world at meditation. I've got news for you; meditation is not a spectator sport. You can't look at it. You can only be it.

We are going to look at how trust looks like from the inside out.

We are going to look at how love looks like from the inside out.

One of the keys in this book is to ask yourself what you want, and it's unlikely to be a static answer, because what you want is an ever-shifting target. It's an ongoing journey. Even

when you know what you want, you are still going to have to follow a steep learning curve, mastering the art of not falling asleep when you reach a comfortable plateau, look around, stretch, yawn, and start to think *Hey, this is good enough. Let's chill.*

Many people learn just enough so they can live their lives on a seemingly snug and secure plateau. But it is never that way. There is always another moment to climb and grow. When you stop growing you begin to die.

The real winner again and again – and we are going to say this on every page – is a meditator who loves life, who enjoys himself while at the same time finding inner fulfillment. Someone who understands how to add meditation to daily life.

I am glad to be alive. I am glad I am participating in my own life and, in the words of Walt Whitman, doing my best to “celebrate myself.” Participation is often hard work, but sometimes it can be music, song and dance.

Now, if you do not happen to be a fully conscious, fully awake human being – and let's face it, they don't arrive on Planet Earth by the busload – you are going to do many things wrong. Life is often going to tear you up, but if you have passion,

you are going to look forward to it. If you don't have passion, it's going to be hard work, but if you add passion to work it becomes a play.

Passion is not created by your parents. It is created by you. Oftentimes, the passion that your parents wanted to instill in you was experienced as pain. Your parents of course, meant well, but mostly they were busy, anxious, stressed-out people who never really had the time to stop and meet you – the real you.

Did your parents ever say to you, "Time to go to your piano lesson? Time to go to dance class?" Or perhaps they said, "You don't play well enough, you're wasting your time." Many people give up because they are told they are not good enough and, in a way, it is true.

You don't just walk up to a piano and become an instant Mozart, you have to put in the time and the effort, but you also have to ask yourself *Is it worth it? Is this what I love?*

If it is really coming from you, Mozart is not far away. If it is coming from your parents, Mozart is somewhere a couple of light years beyond Uranus – no crudity intended.

The role of parenting is to give space and love. If you offer just space, there is no shape to it. If you offer love as well as space, the child can grow, can make mistakes, and is big enough to become himself, or herself.

Talking of space and love, people who are in love can swing both ways, if you don't mind me giving a novel twist to a popular sexual expression. They offer so much love it stifles you, or they demand so much space you begin to wonder why there's no love in the room. For me, it is both; it is love and space together.

By the way, you may have noticed by now that I'm not comfortable with linear, rational, step-by-step thinking and a steady progression in concept development. It's not my style. My thinking is all over the place. In fact, sometimes I don't think at all. But if you take my hand and come with me into this book, I promise you I'll take you to a place of profound understanding and deep insight where you will say, "I got it. Thank you, Krishna Prem."

You don't need to be an over-educated intellectual to make this journey with me. In fact, that could be a handicap. Which reminds me, my heart goes out to all those young men and women who in these troubled times of COVID-19 are

graduating from college and university and can't find a job because the global economy also caught the virus and is intensive care, being intubated.

Going through all that disciplined thinking and learning, just to be unemployable? To misquote Bob Dylan's "Subterranean Homesick Blues," after twenty years of schooling there's no day shift to get on. I mean, it takes quite a sense of humor to appreciate the cosmic joke when the coronavirus just stole your future.

But, joking or not, the current education situation offers a lesson to be learned: when they toss their black mortarboard caps into the air on graduation day, in which direction are these ambitious young people looking? Of course, to the future, to their careers, to the challenges and successes that lie ahead of them.

But where does life happen? Not in the glittering mirage of the future. It happens here, now, in the present moment. It requires no degrees, no graduation. It demands no success, nor failure. It's happening whether we bother to recognize it or not.

So, a stolen future doesn't have to be a disappointment. It can be a blessing, an opportunity to live in the only place

where anyone can ever live. In one, single, ungrammatical word: “herenow.”

One of the reasons people don't meditate is because they don't understand the concept of being in the moment. When I say, "Be here, now," they don't get it, and neither did I for a very long time until I pierced the question.

Here, in the present moment, time does not exist. Theoretically, like Stephen Hawking, Carl Sagan, and other popular scientists have patiently explained to us, time exists as a continuum: flowing from the past, through the present and into future.

In reality, this flow is just an appearance. It appears in the mind, because the mind has the ability to recall the past and think about the future. Beyond this shadowy realm of mental construction, neither past nor future exist. No, really. Trust me. They don't. There is only now...now...now....

“Excuse me, Krishna Prem, what time is it?”

“Now.”

“Are you shitting me?”

One of the big concepts in this book is: be here now. Sure, you can schedule your life, make appointments, pretend that time exists – everyone else is pretending, too, so it's convenient to tag along.

Time is mind. I forgot who said that, maybe Albert Einstein, but anyway it's true. Past/present/future are crammed into your mind, together with all the stress and pressure that time, or lack of it, creates in you. When you think about it, it's truly bizarre; first we invent time, then we complain there's not enough of it.

Like the White Rabbit said, as he glanced at his watch while hurrying past Alice, “Oh dear! Oh dear! I shall be too late!” Chances are he got so stressed he developed a stomach ulcer and died of a heart attack.

One can't help conjecturing that he'd have been better off getting totally ripped with a hookah-smoking caterpillar. Grace Slick and Jefferson Airplane could have shown him the way – insider's joke for those of you old enough to remember the 1960s.

But I digress. Here's the bottom line: this whole book is about how to get your mind to work for you, instead of your

mind being your boss, stressing you out and creating stomach ulcers.

People don't meditate, because they don't know about the concept of being in the moment. Eckhart Tolle keeps telling them to appreciate the “power of now” but somehow they don't hear him. They actually think the past is their life – can you imagine?

We don't need to deny the past. We need to become friends with the past. We need to thank our past for teaching us enough to bring us to the point where we can kick the past in the butt, preferably over a cliff, and then take a jump ourselves into the present.

What I want to do in this book is show people how the past can become a teacher. So that when you look into the past, you can say “Thank you, fuck you...and fuck off!”

Once the burden of the past disappears and you can live in the present, you can shrug off the emotional weight you've been carrying all these years. When you can really be in the present, this moment feels so brand new to you, that you know it can't possibly be a continuation of something old.

You find yourself saying “What is my situation this morning? How can I make my life work for me? How can I be creative? How can I respond freshly, innocently, immediately to this moment that’s opening up in front of me?”

You forgive your ex-wife and thank her for teaching you what love is, by teaching you what love is not. Then there is a possibility not to simply meet somebody new, but to do things differently next time instead of repeating your old mistakes, entering into a new adventure.

People ask me what I am still doing in India after forty-five years. What is wrong with me? And what is wrong with me is that I love Osho. I think he is a genius. Beyond being enlightened, I simply love what he put together and what he did for me – or rather, what I allowed myself to do to myself with his guidance, encouragement and support.

I will never forget that feeling, the first time I did Kundalini Meditation – one of his inventions. I cried aloud, "Oh, my God! How did I not create this meditation myself?" It was so simple, four stages lasting a total of one hour: shake for fifteen minutes, dance for fifteen minutes, stand or sit for fifteen minutes listening to music, and then lie down and become enlightened again, every day.

I want to suggest something to you; get out your old CD, or your old audio cassette tape if you are as old as me, and try the Kundalini Meditation again. Or, if you don't have it, or have never tried it, look it up on Spotify. I will share the link.

You can be at home, turn on Spotify, press Kundalini, and have the shake of your life. This meditation brings me in the moment. I call this meditation "getting divorced" because when my wife was with me and I was about to begin Kundalini Meditation, I would mentally grant myself a legal separation from my significant other. When you meditate, you can't bring anyone with you. In my imagination, I whispered in her ear, *Guess what? You are not with me right now. Our relationship is over. Finished.*

Then I would shake, dance, sit and meditate. And then I would go out looking for my wife, looking forward to seeing her, because I'd become a brand-new person, involved in a brand-new relationship.

For me, the shaking is dropping the past, dropping my marriage, dropping my parents, being alone and as the result of being alone, you might find that you enjoy your wife, you enjoy your parents, you enjoy your friends. So funny: you need to get divorced to find your wife again.

Many people think that, when they have completed Kundalini Meditation, they have meditated for one hour. Strictly speaking, that's not true. Yes, you've done the technique for an hour, but the shaking is not meditation, the dancing is not meditation, the sitting and listening to music is not meditation. It is all preparation for that final stage, when you finally take the risk, *I am alone. I am lying here, on my back, eyes closed, doing nothing and it feels okay. I feel brand new in my life right now. I feel relaxed.*

For those previous 45 minutes you were preparing yourself to slip into the present moment. It may feel a little weird to lie down and do nothing, neither active nor sleepily passive, neither speaking nor snoring. Just think: Zen monks do this all the time, so fifteen minutes isn't going to kill you.

Give it a try. Take a risk, take your clothes off, take your parents off, take your beloved off, be alone and see what comes out of it, or, more accurately, into it. It is brilliant. It is called life. Enjoy:

*Spotify, Kundalini Meditation Link [Here](#)*

*For complete instructions for the Osho Kundalini Meditation, go to <https://www.osho.com/meditation/osho-active-meditations/osho-kundalini-meditation>*