

Many modern teachers have extracted quotes by Sri Nisargadatta to make it appear as though he taught no practice and nothing to do. This is an error and a distortion. The focus of this selection is to report essential teachings of Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj that people often tend to overlook.

Instructions and Encouragement for Practice by SRI NISARGADATTA MAHARAJ

Nisargadatta's Teaching is that of practice, just as Sri Siddharameshwar Maharaj (Nisargadatta's Guru), Sri Ramana Maharshi and Acharya Sankara's Teachings are of practice. For every one quote that might indicate no practice in the book *I am That*, you can easily find ten that explain the importance of practice and how to practice. The following quotes are presented in the order in which they appear in the book.

Nisargadatta said:

1. Go deep into the sense of 'I am' and you will find.

How do you find a thing you have mislaid or forgotten? You keep it in your mind until you recall it.

The sense of being, of 'I am' is the first to emerge. Ask yourself whence it comes, or just watch it quietly.

When the mind stays in the 'I am', without moving, you enter a state that cannot be verbalized but can be experienced. All you need to do is to try and try again.
2. I see what you too could see, here and now, but for the wrong focus of your attention. You give no attention to your Self. Your mind is all with things, people and ideas, never with your self.

Bring your self into focus, become aware of your own existence.

See how you function, watch the motives and results of your actions. Study the prison you have built around yourself, by inadvertence.
4. Look at the net [one's personal world] and its many contradictions. You do and undo at every step. You want peace, love, happiness and work hard to create pain, hatred and war. You want longevity and overeat, you want friendship and exploit. See your net as made of such contradictions and remove them - your very seeing will make them go.
5. How do you go about finding anything? By keeping your mind and heart on it. Interest there must be and steady remembrance. To remember what needs to be remembered is the secret of success. You come to it through earnestness.
7. Take the first step first. All blessings come from within. Turn within. 'I am' you know. Be with it all the time you can spare, until you revert to it spontaneously. There is no simpler and easier way.

8. We are slaves to what we do not know; of what we know we are masters. Whatever vice or weakness in ourselves, we discover and understand its causes and its workings, we overcome it by the very knowing; the unconscious dissolves when brought into the conscious. The dissolution of the unconscious releases energy; the mind feels adequate and becomes quiet.
11. Refuse all thoughts except one: the thought 'I am'. The mind will rebel in the beginning, but with patience and perserverance it will yield and keep quiet.
15. Be alert. Question, observe, investigate, learn all you can about confusion, how it operates, what it does to you and others. By being clear about confusion you become clear of confusion.
16. By eliminating the intervals of inadvertance during the waking hours you will gradually eliminate the long interval of absent-mindedness, which you call sleep. You will be aware that you are asleep.
17. Detach yourself from all that makes your mind restless. Renounce all that disturbs its peace. If you want peace, deserve it.

Questioner: In what way do I disturb peace?

Nisargadatta: By being a slave to your desires and fears.

19. Think clearly and deeply, go into the structure of your desires and their ramifications. They are a most important part of your mental and emotional make-up and powerfully affect your actions.

Remember, you cannot abandon what you do not know. To go beyond yourself, you must know yourself.

21. You must watch yourself continuously - particularly your mind - moment by moment, missing nothing. This witnessing is essential for the separation of the self from the not-self.
23. Since it is awareness that makes consciousness possible, there is awareness in every state of consciousness. Therefore, the very consciousness of being conscious is already a movement in awareness. Interest in your stream of consciousness takes you to awareness.
27. When you understand that names and shapes are hollow shells without any content whatsoever, and what is real is nameless and formless, pure energy of life and light of consciousness, you will be at peace - immersed in the deep silence of reality.
30. Why not turn away from the experience to the experiencer and realize the full import of the only true statement you can make: 'I am'?
31. Just keep in mind the feeling 'I am', merge in it, till your mind and feeling

become one. By repeated attempts you will stumble on the right balance of attention and affection and your mind will be firmly established in the thought-feeling 'I am'.

32. You may begin with selfless work, abandoning the fruits of action; you may then give up thinking and in the end give up all desires. Here, giving up (tyaga) is the operational factor.

Or you may not bother about anything you want, or think, or do and just stay put in the thought and feeling 'I am, focussing 'I am firmly in your mind.

All kind of experience may come to you - remain unmoved in the knowledge that all perceivable is transient, and only the 'I am' endures.

33. Questioner: When I look within, I find sensations and perceptions, thoughts and feelings, desires and fears, memories and expectations. I am immersed in this cloud and see nothing else.

Nisargadatta: That which sees all this, and the nothing too, is the inner teacher. He alone is, all else only appears to be. He is your own self (swarupa), your hope and assurance of freedom; find him and cling to him and you will be saved and safe.

34. Seeing the false as false, is meditation. This must go on all the time.

36. I can tell you about myself. I was a simple man, but I trusted my Guru. What he told me to do, I did. He told me to concentrate on 'I am' - I did. He told me that I am beyond all perceivables and conceivables - I believed.

I gave him my heart and soul, my entire attention and the whole of my spare time (I had to work to keep my family alive). As a result of faith and earnest application, I realized my self (swarupa) within three years.

37. Establish yourself in the awareness of 'I am'. This is the beginning and also the end of all endeavour.

42. 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'.

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 realize your limitless being.

45. Questioner: How is it reached?

Nisargadatta: Desirelessness and fearlessness will take you there.

47. The Supreme is the easiest to reach for it is your very being. It is enough to stop thinking and desiring anything, but the Supreme.
49. It is untruth that is difficult and a source of trouble. It always wants, expects, demands. Being false, it is empty, always in search of confirmation and reassurance. It is afraid of and avoids inquiry. It identifies itself with any support, however weak and momentary. Whatever it gets, it loses and asks for more.
50. Nisargadatta: Even if I tell you that you are the witness, the silent watcher, it will mean nothing to you, unless you find the way to your own being.

Questioner: My question is: How to find the way to one's own being?

Nisargadatta: Give up all questions except one: 'Who am I?' After all, the only fact you are sure of is that you are. The 'I am' is certain. The 'I am this' is not. Struggle to find out what you are in reality.

57. Remembering yourself is virtue, forgetting yourself is sin.
60. The right procedure is to adhere to the thought that you are the ground of all knowledge, the immutable and perennial awareness of all that happens to the senses and mind.

The idea - 'I am the witness only' will purify the body and the mind and open the eye of wisdom. Then man goes beyond illusion and his heart is free of all desires.

65. By its very nature pleasure is limited and transient. Out of pain desire is born, in pain it seeks fulfilment, and it ends in the pain of frustration and despair. Pain is the background of pleasure, all seeking of pleasure is born in pain and ends in pain.
66. Sorting out and discarding (*viveka-vairagya*) are absolutely necessary. Everything must be scrutinized and the unnecessary ruthlessly destroyed.

Believe me, *there cannot be too much destruction*. For in reality nothing is of value. Be passionately dispassionate - that is all.

67. When through the practice of discrimination and detachment (*viveka-vairagya*) you lose sight of sensory and mental states, pure being emerges as the natural state.
70. To know the world you forget the self – to know the self you forget the world.
- What is the world after all? A collection of memories. Cling to one thing that matters, hold on to 'I am' and let go all else. This is *sadhana*.
72. Be fully aware of your own being and you will be in bliss consciously. Because you take your mind off yourself and make it dwell on what you are not, you lose your sense of well-being, of being well.

75. As you are now, the personality is only an obstacle. Self-identification with the body may be good for an infant, but true growing up depends on getting the body out of the way.

Normally, one should outgrow body-based desires early in life. Even the Bhogi, who does not refuse enjoyments, need not hanker after the ones he has tasted. Habit, desire for repetition, frustrates both the Yogi and the Bhogi.

77. There are so many who take the dawn for the noon, a momentary experience for full realization and destroy even the little they gain by excess of pride. Humility and silence are essential for a sadhaka, however advanced. Only a fully ripened gnani can allow himself complete spontaneity.

79. Be attentive, enquire ceaselessly. That is all.

92. By all means be selfish - the right way. Wish yourself well, labour at what is good for you. Destroy all that stands between you and happiness. Be all - love all - be happy - make happy.

96. Memory is material - destructible, perishable, transient. On such flimsy foundations we build a sense of personal existence - vague, intermittent, dreamlike. This vague persuasion: 'I am so-and-so' obscures the changless state of pure awareness and makes us believe that we are born to suffer and to die.

99. Freedom to do what one likes is really bondage, while being free to do what one must, what is right, is real freedom.

106. All you have to do is to see the dream as dream.

107. Whatever name you give it: will, or steady purpose, or one pointedness of mind, you come back to earnestness, sincerity, honesty. When you are in dead earnest, you bend every incident, every second of your life to your purpose. You do not waste time and energy on other things. You are totally dedicated, call it will, or love, or plain honesty.

113. Find the permanent in the fleeting, the one constant factor in every experience.

115. Nothing can block you so effectively as compromise, for it shows lack of earnestness, without which nothing can be done.

116. Begin by disassociating yourself from your mind. Resolutely remind yourself that you are not the mind and that its problems are not yours.

119. Give your undivided attention to the most important in your life - yourself. Of your personal universe you are the center - without knowing the center what else can you know?

127. To go beyond the mind, you must have your mind in perfect order. You cannot leave a mess behind and go beyond. The mess will bog you up. 'Pick up your rubbish' seems to be the Universal law. And a just law too.

128. Just remember yourself. 'I am', is enough to heal your mind and take you beyond. Just have some trust.

If you want to know your true nature, you must have yourself in mind all the time, until the secret of your being stands revealed.

130. It is not the worship of a person [guru] that is crucial, but the steadiness and depth of your devotion to the task. Remember, wonder, ponder, live with it, love it, grow into it, grow with it, make it your own - the word of your Guru, outer or inner.

Put in all and you will get all. I was doing it. All my time I was giving to my Guru and to what he told me.

132. When you are concerned with truth, with reality, you must question everything, your very life.

134. Have your Guru always in your heart and remember his instructions - this is real abidance with the true.

136. The illusion of being the body-mind is there, only because it is not investigated. Non-investigation is the thread on which all the states of mind are strung. All states of mind, all names and forms of existence are rooted in non-inquiry, non-investigation, in imagination and credulity.

137. When we are absorbed in other things, in the not-self, we forget the self.

138. Sadhana (practice) consists in reminding oneself forcibly of one's pure 'beingness', of not being anything in particular, nor a sum of particulars, not even the totality of particulars, which make up a universe.

141. Attachment is bondage, detachment is freedom. To crave is to slave.

144. That immovable state, which is not affected by the birth and death of a body or a mind, that state you must perceive.

146. Leave alone your desires and fears, give your entire attention to the subject, to him who is behind the experience of desire and fear. Ask: who desires? Let each desire bring you back to yourself.

148. The desire to find the self will surely be fulfilled, provided you want nothing else. But you must be honest with yourself and really want nothing else.

If in the meantime you want many other things and are engaged in their pursuit, your main purpose may be delayed until you grow wiser and cease being torn between contradictory urges.

150. Whatever work you have undertaken - complete it. Do not take up new tasks, unless it is called for by a concrete situation of suffering and relief from suffering. Find yourself first, and endless blessings will follow. Nothing profits the world as much as the abandoning of profits. A man who no longer thinks in

- terms of loss and gain is truly the non-violent man, for he is beyond all conflict.
153. When you have understood that all existence, in separation and limitation, is painful, and when you are willing and able to live integrally, in oneness with all life, as pure being, you have gone beyond the need of help.
 154. The end of pain lies not in pleasure. When you realize that you are beyond both pain and pleasure, aloof and unassailable, then the pursuit of happiness ceases and the resultant sorrow too. For pain aims at pleasure and pleasure ends in pain, relentlessly.
 156. What is birth and death but the beginning and the ending of a stream of events in consciousness? Because of the idea of separation and limitation they are painful. Momentary relief from pain we call pleasure - and we build castles in the air hoping for endless pleasure which we call happiness. It is all misunderstanding and misuse. Wake up, go beyond, live really.
 157. Have your being outside this body of birth and death and all your problems will be solved. They exist because you believe yourself born to die. Undeceive yourself and be free. You are not a person.
 158. Just look and remember, whatever you perceive is not you, nor yours. It is there in the field of consciousness, but you are not the field and its contents, nor even the knower of the field. Simply look at whatever happens and know you are beyond it.
 159. All you need to do is to cease taking yourself to be within the field of consciousness.
 160. Do not waste energy and time on regrets. Learn from your mistakes and do not repeat them.
 162. The body exists in time and space, transient and limited, while the dweller is timeless and spaceless, eternal and all-pervading. To identify the two is a grievous mistake and the cause of endless suffering.
 166. Why play with ideas? Be content with what you are sure of. And the only thing you can be sure of is 'I am'. Stay with it, and reject everything else. This is Yoga.
 167. Questioner: I can reject only verbally. At best I remember to repeat the formula: 'This is not me, this is not mine. I am beyond all this.'

Nisargadatta: Good enough. First verbally, then mentally and emotionally, then in action. Give attention to the reality within you and it will come to light. It is like churning butter. Do it correctly and assiduously and the result is sure to come.
 173. Easier to change, than to suffer. Grow out of your childishness, that is all.
 174. This is childishness, clinging to the toys, to your desires and fears, opinions and

- ideas. Give it all up and be ready for the real to assert itself. This self-assertion is best expressed in the words: 'I am'.
175. So far you took yourself to be the movable and overlooked the immovable. Turn your mind inside out. Overlook the movable and you will find yourself to be the ever-present, changeless reality, inexpressible, but solid like a rock.
176. You are conscious. Hold on to it.
180. What I say is true, but to you it is only a theory. How will you come to know that it is true? Listen, remember, ponder, visualize, experience. Also apply it in your daily life. Have patience with me and above all have patience with yourself, for you are your only obstacle.
185. You seem to want instant insight, forgetting that the instant is always preceded by a long preparation. The fruit falls suddenly, but the ripening takes time.
186. After all, what I am offering you is the operational approach, so current in Western science. When a scientist describes an experiment and its results, usually you accept his statements on trust and repeat his experiment as he describes it.
190. Who is willing to take what I am willing to give?
193. Whatever he does, if he does it for the sake of finding his own real self, will surely bring him to himself. [...] Whatever you do for the sake of truth, will take you to truth. Only be earnest and honest. The shape it takes hardly matters.
195. The very facts of repetition, of struggling on and on and of endurance and perseverance, in spite of boredom and despair and complete lack of conviction are really crucial.
197. Meet your own self. Be with your own self, listen to it, obey it, cherish it, keep it in mind endlessly. You need no other guide.
- As long as your urge for truth affects your daily life, all is well with you. Live your life without hurting anybody. Harmlessness is a most powerful form of Yoga and it will take you speedily to your goal. This is what I call *nisarga yoga*, the Natural yoga. It is the art of living in peace and harmony, in friendliness and love. The fruit of it is happiness, uncaused and endless.
200. There is nothing wrong in repeating the same truth again and again until it becomes reality. People need to hear words until facts speak to them louder than words.