



“Spirituality means waking up. Most people, even though they don’t know it, are asleep. They’re born asleep, they live asleep, they marry in their sleep, they breed children in their sleep, and they die in their sleep without ever waking up. They never understand the loveliness and the beauty of this thing that we call the human existence.”

Anthony de Mello
Jesuit Priest
(1931–1987)

Have you ever wondered where the time goes? Whether it be that suddenly the weekend is over, looking back on a long career, or considering how a child has ‘suddenly’ become an adult, sometimes the time just disappears. There is a fascinating concept that describes this time warp called highway hypnosis. In short, this is the phenomenon of driving extended distances without recollection of the event itself. Somehow we can float through aspects of our life without really paying attention. I think of hours that are seemingly missing from my life because I was in some form of highway hypnosis.

The emphasis on Mindfulness the past decade (or more) points to the importance of really paying attention to what is in front of us. Late Jesuit Priest Anthony De Mello elaborates on our need to tune our awareness to what is lovely and beautiful before us. This is the heart of spirituality - to notice.

To notice loveliness is in part a matter of perspective. For many we work in places where sadness and fear are commonplace. Yet those same people often note that these places are also filled with meaning, hope, and even joy. Do we believe it is there? Can we see it? Perhaps Fr. De Mello is pointing us toward something bigger. To notice that beauty can be mixed with hardship also implies that the source of beauty and goodness can still be in the difficult, heartbreaking places.

This is the spiritual life then. To pay attention. To notice. To respond and yes, even to be changed. If we can do these things then we walk through our lives with eyes wide open to experience *“the loveliness and the beauty of this thing that we call human existence.”*