

Eckhart Tolle

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eckhart_Tolle

"A true spiritual teacher does not have anything to teach in the conventional sense of the word, does not have anything to give or add to you, such as new information, beliefs, or rules of conduct. The only function of such a teacher is to help you remove that which separates you from the truth ... The words are no more than signposts."^[21]

Eckhart Tolle, born Ulrich Leonard Tölle on February 16, 1948, is a German-born resident of Canada,^{[1][2]} best known as the author of *The Power of Now* and *A New Earth: Awakening to your Life's Purpose*. In 2011, he was listed by the [Watkins Review](#) as the most spiritually influential person in the world.^[3] In 2008, a *New York Times* writer called Tolle "the most popular spiritual author in the United States".^[4]

Tolle has said that he was depressed for much of his life until he underwent, at age 29, an "inner transformation". He then spent several years wandering and unemployed "in a state of deep bliss" before becoming a spiritual teacher. Later, he moved to North America where he began writing his first book, *The Power of Now*, which was published in 1997^[5] and reached the [New York Times Best Seller lists](#) in 2000.^[6]

The Power of Now and *A New Earth* sold an estimated three million and five million copies respectively in North America by 2009.^[7] In 2008, approximately 35 million people participated in a series of 10 live webinars with Tolle and television talk show host [Oprah Winfrey](#).^[7] Tolle is not identified with any particular religion, but he has been influenced by a wide range of spiritual works.^[8] He has lived in [Vancouver, British Columbia](#) since 1995.^[9]

Inner transformation

One night in 1977, at the age of 29, after having suffered from long periods of suicidal [depression](#), Tolle says he experienced an "inner transformation".^[8] That night he awakened from his sleep, suffering from feelings of depression that were "almost unbearable," but then experienced a life-changing epiphany.^[12] Recounting the experience, Tolle says,

I couldn't live with myself any longer. And in this a question arose without an answer: who is the 'I' that cannot live with the self? What is the self? I felt drawn into a void! I didn't know at the time that what really happened was the mind-made self, with its heaviness, its problems, that lives between the unsatisfying past and the fearful future, collapsed. It dissolved. The next morning I woke up and everything was so peaceful. The peace was there because there was no self. Just a sense of presence or "beingness," just observing and watching.^[14]

Tolle recalls going out for a walk in London the next morning, and finding that "everything was miraculous, deeply peaceful. Even the traffic."^[12] The feeling continued, and he began to feel a strong underlying sense of peace in any situation.^[7] Tolle stopped studying for his doctorate, and for a period of about two years after this he spent much of his time sitting, "in a state of deep bliss," on park benches in [Russell Square](#), Central London, "watching the world go by." He stayed with friends, in a Buddhist [monastery](#), or otherwise [slept rough](#) on [Hampstead Heath](#). His family thought him "irresponsible, even insane."^[14] Tolle changed his first name from Ulrich to Eckhart; by some reports this was in [homage](#) to the German philosopher and mystic, [Meister Eckhart](#).^{[10][15]} A 2012 interview article states that he saw the name Eckhart on one of a pile of books in a dream, and knew he had written the book; soon after in real life he ran into a psychic friend who called him Eckhart out of nowhere, so Tolle changed his name.^[16]