

# Get Unbusy

Defecting from the Cult of Busyness

“ The wise man, free from the duality of existence and nonexistence, content and without desire, does nothing even though in the eyes of the world he is an actor. ”



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CLASS ONE:  
DEFECTING FROM THE CULT OF BUSYNESS

I. Defining the Problem

From the *Bhagavad Gita* 14.12:

lobhaḥ pravṛttirārambhaḥ karmaṇāmaśamaḥ spṛhā |  
rajasyetāni jāyante vivṛddhe bharatarṣabha ||

**When activity prevails, Arjuna, then greed, hustle and bustle, endless projects, restlessness, and the obsession with action arise.**

From the *Ashtavakra Gita* 18.3; 18.57-58:

kartavyaduḥkhamārtaṇḍajvālādagdhāntarātmanaḥ |  
kutaḥ praśamaḥpiyūṣadhārāsāramṛte sukham ||

**How can there be happiness for one whose heart is scorched by the heat of the sun – the pain of having things that need to be done – without the refreshing shower of the nectar of tranquility?**

kartavyataiva saṁsāro na tāṁ paśyanti sūrayaḥ |  
śūnyaḥkāra nirāḥkāra nirvikāra nirāmayāḥ ||

**Samsara is nothing other than having something that needs to be done. The sages do not see that. They conform to emptiness and are formless, unchangeable, and taintless.**

akurvannapi saṅkṣobhād vyagraḥ sarvatra mūḍhadhīḥ |  
kurvannapi tu kṛtyāni kuśalo hi nirākulaḥ ||

**One whose mind is bewildered is always distracted because of his agitation, even when not doing anything at all. The skilfull one remains calm even when doing what must be done.**

## II. Why We're So Busy

From the *Bhagavad Gita* 14.7; 18.24; 18.27:

rajo rāgātmakam viddhi tṛṣṇāsaṅgasamudbhavam |  
tannibadhnāti kaunteya karmasaṅgena dehinam ||

**Know that activity, whose very essence is passion, arises from craving and attachment. It binds the embodied being to attachment to action, Arjuna.**

yattu kāmepsunā karma sāhaṅkāreṇa vā punaḥ |  
kriyate bahulāyāsam tadrājasamudāhṛtam ||

**An action is known to have the nature of the constituent of activity when it is done with great effort by one who driven by desire and egoism.**

rāgī karmaphalaprepsurlubdho himsātmako'śuciḥ |  
harṣaśokānvitaḥ kartā rājasah parikīrtitaḥ |

**An actor is proclaimed to be endowed with the constituent of activity when they are passionate, desirous of the fruits of action, greedy, violent, impure and at the mercy of the vicissitudes of life.**

## III. Doing What Needs to Be Done

From the *Bhagavad Gita* 3.8; 3.25; 3.35:

niyataṁ kuru karma tvam karma jyāyo hyakarmanah |  
śarīrayātrāpi ca te na prasiddhyedakarmanah |

**Do what is necessary to do, for action is superior to inaction. Inaction would not even keep your own body sustained!**

saktāḥ karmaṇyavidvāṁso yathā kurvanti bhārata |  
kuryādvidvāṁstathāsaktaścikīrṣurlokasaṅgraham ||

**Arjuna, while those who are ignorant perform actions out of attachment, the wise one, unattached, acts in order to maintain the world.**

śreyānsvadharmo viguṇaḥ paradharmātsvanuṣṭhitāt|  
svadharme nidhanaṁ śreyaḥ paradharmo bhayāvahaḥ||

**It is better to do one's own duty imperfectly than to do the duty of another well. It is better even to die doing one's own duty; the duty of another is perilous.**

## **Exercise for Class One**

This week spend fifteen minutes a day reflecting on 1) busyness in your life and what motivates it, and 2) the duties or requirements in your life that you tend to avoid or are lazy about accomplishing. See if you can identify how the ego is involved in both the compulsion to keep busy and being lazy about doing what you need to do.

CLASS TWO:  
GETTING ORGANIZED

I. Joyful Effort Vs. Laziness

From the *Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life* 7.1-3:

evam kṣamo bhajedvīryam vīrye bodhiryataḥ sthitā |  
na hi vīryam vinā puṇyam yathā vāyurṁ vināgatiḥ | |

**Once you have cultivated patience, you should then begin the practice of joyful effort, for Awakening depends on making effort. Just as nothing moves without wind, without effort there is no merit-making.**

kiṁ vīryam kuśalotsāhastadvipakṣaḥ ka ucyate |  
ālasyam kutsitāsaktirviṣādātmāvamanyanā | |

**What is joyful effort? It is being happy about doing good things. The obstacles to it are said to be laziness, attachment to contemptible things and depression or low self-esteem.**

avyāpārasukhāsavadanidrāpāśrayatṛṣṇayā |  
saṁsāraduḥkhānudvegādālasyamupajāyate | |

**Laziness arises due to inactivity, an appetite for pleasure, sleepiness, and a craving for lying around brought about by complacency regarding the suffering inherent in cyclic existence.**

II. Keeping Your Priorities Straight

From the *Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life* 4.16, 4.20, 4.23:

ārogyam divasaṁ cedam sabhaktam nirupadravam |  
āyuhkṣaṇam visamvādi kāyo yācita ko'pamaḥ | |

**Today there may be health, enjoyment, and no problems, but life is fleeting and deceptive and the body is just on loan.**

ata evāha bhagavān-mānuṣyamati durlabham |  
mahārṇavayugacchidrakūrmagrīvārpaṇopamam | |

**That is why the Blessed One said a human birth is very hard to obtain, as rare as a turtle who just happens to stick its neck into the opening of a yoke floating in the great sea.**

nātaḥ parā vañcanāsti na ca moho'styataḥ paraḥ |  
yadīdṛśaṁ kṣaṇaṁ prāpya nābhyastaṁ kuśalaṁ mayā | |

**And so, having obtained a momentary opportunity like this, were I not to use it to practice virtue there would be no greater betrayal, no greater foolishness.**

### III. Knowing When To Act and When to Relax

From the *Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life* 6.10:

yadyastyeva pratikāro daurmanasyena tatra kim |  
atha nāsti pratikāro daurmanasyena tatra kim | |

**If there's something you can do about it, why stress out? And if there's nothing you can do about it, why stress out?**

### IV. Making Commitments You Can Keep

From the *Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life* 7.47-48:

pūrvam nirūpya sāmagrīmārabhennārabheta vā |  
anārambho varam nāma na tvārabhya nivartanam | |

**Before beginning, take stock of your resources and then decide whether to undertake a project or not. It's better not to begin at all than to quit something you've started.**

janmāntare'pi so'bhyāsaḥ pāpādduḥkhaṁ ca vardhate |  
anyacca kāryakālam ca hīnam tacca na sādhitam | |

**This habit (of not doing what you say you will) extends into future lives. And because of this vice one's suffering increases. Another timely opportunity to act is wasted and what needs to be done is left unaccomplished.**

V. Being Intoxicated With Whatever You're Doing

From the *Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life* 7.62-66:

yadevāpadyate karma tatkarmavyasanī bhavet |  
tatkarmaśauṇḍo'tṛptātmā kriḍāphalasukhepsuvat | |

**You should be addicted to whatever action you undertake. Like someone who craves the thrill that comes from playing a game, you should be insatiable and intoxicated with that action.**

sukhārtham kriyate karma tathāpi syānna vā sukham |  
karmaiva tu sukham yasya niškarmā sa sukhi katham | |

**Every action is performed with the hope it will bring about happiness, even though that happiness may or may not come about. But how can an action bring about happiness if no action at all is performed?**

tasmātkarmāvasāne'pi nimajjettatra karmaṇi |  
yathā madhyāhnasamtapta ādau prāptasarāḥ karī | |

**And so when a job has been completed you should throw yourself into another task, just as an elephant who is sweltering in the midday sun immediately plunges into a lake.**

balanāśānubandhe tu punaḥ kartum parityajet |  
susamāptam ca tanmuñceduttarottaratṛṣṇayā | |

**And when your strength begins to decline you should quit so that you can re-engage later. When the job has been completed well, you should leave it and move on with the craving for more and more.**



## VI. Enduring Difficulties and Turning Problems into Opportunities

From the *Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life* 6.14-18; 6.21:

na kimcidasti tadvastu yadabhyāsasya duṣkaram |  
tasmānmṛduvyathābhyāsāt soḍhavyāpi mahāvyathā | |

**There is nothing whatsoever that remains difficult if one practices discipline.  
So through practicing with small difficulties even great ones become  
endurable.**

uddamśadamśamaśakakṣutpipāsādivedanām |  
mahatkaṇḍvādiduḥkham ca kimanarthaṁ na paśyasi | |

**Don't you regard as insignificant the suffering that comes from things like  
bugs, flies, and mosquitos, hunger and thirst, or things like the itch of a rash?**

śītoṣṇavrṣṭivātādhvavyādhibandhanatāḍanaiḥ |  
saukumāryaṁ na kartavyamanyathā vardhate vyathā | |

**I should not be soft on myself when faced with things like heat or cold, rain  
and wind, sickness, or imprisonment and torture, since it only makes it worse.**

kecitsvaṣoṇitaṁ drṣṭvā vikramante viśeṣataḥ |  
paraṣoṇitamapyeke drṣṭvā mūrccchām vrajanti yat | |

**Some people, when they see their own blood, rise to the occasion, while other  
people faint even when they see another person's blood.**

taccittasya drḍhatvena kātaratvena cāgatam |  
duḥkhaduryodhanastasmādbhavedabhibhavedvyathām | |

**All this derives from either mental resolution or faint-heartedness. And so one  
should overcome pain and become invulnerable to suffering.**

guṇo'paraśca duḥkhasya yatsamvegānmadacyutiḥ |  
saṁsāriṣu ca kāruṇyaṁ pāpādbhītirjine spṛhā | |

**And besides, there are good things about suffering. Because of it, I lose my  
pride; it brings compassion for those in the cycle of suffering, fear of doing  
bad things, and a longing to be a Conqueror.**

## **Exercise for Class Two**

Spend fifteen minutes a day this week reviewing the death awareness meditation and thinking about your priorities in life. What changes or adjustments do you need to make to insure that you are doing the important things? And remember to make commitments you can keep!

CLASS THREE:  
MINDFUL ACTION AND THE IMPORTANCE OF DOING NOTHING

I. Action in Non-Action and Vice Versa

From the *Ashtavakra Gita* 18.61:

nivṛttirapi mūḍhasya pravṛtti rupajāyate |  
pravṛttirapi dhīrasya nivṛttiphalahāginī ||

**For the fool even inactivity manifests as activity, while for the wise man even activity comes back to him as the fruit of inactivity.**

From the *Bhagavad Gita* 4.18:

karmaṇyakarma yaḥ paśyedakarmaṇi ca karma yaḥ  
sa buddhi mānmanuṣyeṣu sa yuktaḥ kṛtsnakarmakṛt

**One who sees inaction in action and action in inaction has understanding among men, disciplined in all actions he performs.**

II. Mindful Action

From the *Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life* 8.1-4:

vardhayitvaivamutsāhaṁ samādhau sthāpayenmanaḥ |  
vikṣiptacittastu naraḥ kleśadamṣṭrāntare sthitaḥ | |

**Having thus fortified one's perseverance, one should establish the mind in meditative integration, for a person whose mind is distracted lives within the jaws of the mental afflictions.**

kāyacittavivekena vikṣepasya na sambhavaḥ |  
tasmāllokaṁ parityajya vitarkān parivarjayet | |

**Distraction does not arise when the body and mind are kept secluded. And so one should renounce the world and turn away from intellectual disputations.**

snehāna tyajyate loko lābhādiṣu ca tṛṣṇayā |  
tasmādetatparityāge vidvānevaṁ vibhāvayet | |

**One does not renounce the world due to attachment and because of craving for acquisitions and the like. Therefore, a person in the know should consider this when renouncing it.**

śamathena vipaśyanāsuyuktaḥ kurute kleśavināśamityavetya |  
śamathaḥ prathamam gaveṣaṇīyaḥ sa ca loke nirapekṣayābhiratyā | |

**Knowing that one who has become thoroughly familiar with the discernment that comes from mental tranquility destroys the mental afflictions, one should first seek mental tranquility. And it comes from joyful indifference to the world.**

### III. Mindful Nonaction

#### A. Stopping Mental Turbulence

From the *Yoga Sutra* (1.2-4, 12):

yogaścittavṛttinirodhaḥ

**Yoga is stopping the turbulence in the mind.**

tadā draṣṭuḥ svarūpa'vasthānam

**When that happens, the seer abides in his or her true nature.**

vṛttisārupyam itaratra

**Otherwise, one identifies with the turbulence (in the mind).**

abhyāsavairāgyābhyām tannirodhaḥ

**This stopping (of the turbulence in the mind) is brought about through practice and imperturbability.**

B. Like a Bump on a Log

From the *Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life* 5.47-54:

yadā calitukāmaḥ syādvaktukāmo'pi vā bhavet |  
svacittaṁ pratyavekṣyādau kuryāddhairyeṇa yuktimat | |

**Whenever one wants to move or speak, one should examine one's mind and then, with composure, act appropriately.**

anunītaṁ pratihataṁ yadā paśyetsvakaṁ manaḥ |  
na kartavyaṁ na vaktavyaṁ sthātavyaṁ kāṣṭhavattadā | |

**When one sees the mind becoming attracted or repulsed, then one should not do or say anything but just keep still, like a bump on the log.**

uddhataṁ sopahāsaṁ vā yadā mānamadānvitam |  
sotprāsātiśayaṁ vakraṁ vañcakaṁ ca mano bhavet | |

**When the mind becomes arrogant, contemptuous, full of pride and conceit, scornful, superior, duplicitous, or deceitful,**

yadātmotkarṣaṇābhāsaṁ parapaṁsanameva vā |  
sādhikṣepaṁ asaṁrambhaṁ sthātavyaṁ kāṣṭhavattadā | |

**when it looks as though it's going to exalt itself or disrespect someone else, when it becomes abusive and agitated, one should just keep still, like a bump on a log.**

lābhasatkāra-kīrtiyārthi parivārārthi vā punaḥ |  
upasthānārthe me cittaṁ tasmāttiṣṭhāmi kāṣṭhavat | |

**When the mind longs for acquisitions, honor, fame, or a retinue of followers or admirers, I should then just keep still, like a bump on a log.**

parārtharūkṣaṁ svārthārthi pariṣatkāmameva vā |  
vaktumicchati me cittaṁ tasmāttiṣṭhāmi kāṣṭhavat | |

**When the mind is self-interested and averse to the interests of others, or when it just wants to talk out of a desire for an audience, I should then keep still, like a bump on a log.**

asahiṣṇvalasaṃ bhītaṃ pragalbhaṃ mukharaṃ tathā |  
svapakṣābhiniṣṭaṃ ca tasmāttiṣṭhāmi kāṣṭhavat | |

**When it is impatient, slothful, paranoid, impudent, or gossipy, or when it is bent on self-aggrandizement, I should then keep still, like a bump on a log.**

evaṃ saṃkliṣṭamālokya niṣphalārambhi vā manaḥ |  
nigṛhṇīyād dṛḍhaṃ sūraḥ pratipakṣeṇa tatsadā | |

**Perceiving the mind to be troubled or uselessly engaged, a strong person should always firmly restrain it through applying the antidote.**

#### IV. The Importance of Taking Time Off

From the *Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life* 7.31a:

chandasthāmaratimuktibalaṃ sattvārthasiddhaye |  
chandaṃ duḥkhabhayātkuryādānuśaṃsāṃśca bhāvayan | |

**The forces deployed to accomplish the goals of all living beings are will power, steadfastness, joy, and relaxation.**

From the *Ashtavakra Gita* 16.3:

āyāsātsakalo duḥkhī nainaṃ jānāti kaścana |  
anenaivopadeśena dhanyaḥ prāpnoti nirvṛtim | |

**Everyone is unhappy because they are always exerting themselves, and no one knows this. With this teaching, a fortunate one obtains emancipation.**

## V. Living a Retreat Lifestyle

From the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* 1.12, 14-15:

surājye dharmike deśe subhikṣe nirupadrave |  
dhanuḥ pramāṇaparyantaṁ śilāgnijala varjite |  
ekānte maṭhikāmadhye sthātavyaṁ haṭhayoginā ||

**The yogi who practices hatha yoga should live in a solitary hermitage, located in a place that is an arrow shot away from rocks, fire, and water, and in a locale that is peaceful, where supplies are easily obtained, and which is well-governed in accordance with religious principles.**

evaṁ vidhe maṭhe sthitvā sarvacintāvivarjitaḥ |  
gurūpaḍiṣṭamārgeṇa yogameva samabhyaset ||

**Staying in a hermitage like this, one should leave all cares behind and practice yoga following the instructions given by one's teacher.**

atyāhāraḥ prayāsaśca prajalpo niyamāgrahaḥ |  
janasaṅgaśca laulyaṁ ca ṣaḍbhiryogo vinaśyati ||

**One's yoga is destroyed by six things: over-eating, working too much, too much talking, not adhering to morality or an excessive attachment to moral rules and regulations, hanging around with other people, and inconstancy.**

utsāhātsāhasāddhairyaāttatvajñānāśca niścayāt |  
janasaṅgaparityāgāṭṣaḍbhiryogaḥ prasiddhyati ||

**One's yoga will succeed because of six things: cheerfulness, resolution, constancy, knowledge of reality, faith, and staying away from other people.**

### **Exercise for Class Three**

Every day this week choose one activity you usually do without paying much attention – brushing your teeth, washing the dishes, walking to the mailbox – and try to bring a sense of mindful presence and open awareness to that act.

Also designate one day this week as your “Sabbath.” Take a day off from all work and all media: turn off the phone, computer, TV, etc., and just rest, relax, read, meditate, do some yoga – alone and quiet.



CLASS FOUR:  
ACTING FREELY WITH WISDOM

I. The Master of Laziness

From the *Ashtavakra Gita* 1.8; 16.4; 18.25; 18.30:

ahaṁ kartetyahammānamahākṛṣṇāhidamśiṭaḥ |  
nāhaṁ karteti viśvāsāmṛtaṁ pītvā sukhī bhava ||

**The one who thinks “I am the actor” has been bitten by the big black snake of egoism. Drinking the nectar of confidence, say “I am not the actor” and be happy!**

vyāpāre khidyate yastu nimeṣonmeṣayorapi |  
tasyālasya dhurīṇasya sukhaṁ nānyasya kasyacit ||

**Happiness belongs to the master of laziness, for whom even the chore of opening and shutting the eyes is tiring – and to no other!**

kṛtaṁ dehena karmedaṁ na mayā śuddharūpiṇā |  
iti cintānurodhī yaḥ kurvannapi karoti na ||

**One who when acting thinks, “This action is done by the body, not by my purified form,” doesn’t act at all.**

nodvignaṁ na ca santuṣṭamakartṛ spandavarjitam |  
nirāśaṁ gatasandehaṁ cittaṁ muktasya rājate ||

**Neither agitated nor pleased, the one who has abandoned activity is a non-actor. The mind of the liberated one shines forth without expectation or doubt.**

## II. Action Without an Actor

From the *Bhagavad Gita* 3.27-29; 5.8:

prakṛteḥ kriyamāṇāni guṇaiḥ karmāṇi sarvaśaḥ |  
ahaṅkāravimūḍhātmā kartā'hamiti manyate ||

**All actions are done just by the constituents of nature, but one who is deluded by the ego thinks, "I am the doer."**

tattvavittu mahābāho guṇakarmavibhāgayoḥ |  
guṇā guṇeṣu vartanta iti matvā na sajjate ||

**But, Arjuna, one who knows the true nature of the distinctions between actions and constituents, and who thinks, "Constituents depend on other constituents," he is not attached.**

prakṛtyaiva ca karmāṇi kriyamāṇāni sarvaśaḥ |  
yaḥ paśyati tathātmānamakartāraṁ sa paśyati ||

**One who sees that all actions are actually done only through the workings of nature and thus that the self is not an actor at all, truly sees.**

naiva kim citkaromīti yukto manyeta tattvavit |  
paśyañśṛṅvansprśañjighrannaśnangacchansvapañśvasan ||

**Whether he is seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating, walking, sleeping or breathing, the disciplined one who knows how things really are would think, "I'm not doing anything at all."**

## III. Action Without Desire

From the *Ashtavakra Gita* 18.19-20:

bhāvābhāvavihīno yastṛpto nirvāsano budhaḥ |  
naiva kiñcitkṛtaṁ tena lokadṛṣṭyā vikurvatā ||

**The wise man, free from the duality of existence and nonexistence, content and without desire, does nothing even though in the eyes of the world he is an actor.**

pravṛttau vā nivṛttau vā naiva dhīrasya durgrahaḥ |  
yadā yatkartumāyāti tatkr̥tvā tiṣṭhate sukham ||

**For the wise man there is no stress either in activity or non-activity. When it's time to act he acts and stays happy.**

#### IV. Action Without Expectation

From the *Bhagavad Gita* 2.47-49; 3.9; 5.12; 6.2:

karmaṇyevādhikāraṣṭe mā phaleṣu kadācana |  
mā karmaphalāheturbhūrmā te saṅgo'stvakarmaṇi ||

**Your prerogative is over your actions, not over any of the results. Do not let the results be the motivation of action, but do not be attached to inaction either.**

yogasthaḥ kuru karmāṇi saṅgam tyaktvā dhanañjaya |  
siddhyasiddhyoḥ samo bhūtvā samatvaṁ yoga ucyate ||

**Giving up attachment, perform actions as a practise of yoga, Arjuna. Be the same whether you are successful or unsuccessful; this equanimity is what is called yoga.**

dūreṇa hyavaram karma buddhiyogāddhanañjaya |  
buddhau śaraṇamanviccha kṛpaṇāḥ phalāhetavaḥ ||

**Arjuna, action alone is much inferior to action done with the yoga of understanding. Take refuge in understanding; those driven by the pursuit of results are pathetic.**

yajñārthātkarmaṇo'nyatra loko'yaṁ karmabandhanaḥ |  
tadārthaṁ karma kaunteya muktasaṅgaḥ samācara ||

**Everyone in this world is bound by actions unless they are done as sacrifices. So perform action with that as the purpose, Arjuna, freed from attachment.**

yuktaḥ karmaphalaṁ tyaktvā śāntimāpnoti naiṣṭhikīm |  
ayuktaḥ kāmakāreṇa phale sakto nibadhyate ||

**The disciplined one, letting go of the obsession with the future results of action, obtains perfect peace. The undisciplined is bound by attachment to the outcome of actions done out of ignorant desire.**

yaṁ sannyāsamiti prāhuryogaṁ taṁ viddhi pāṇḍava |  
na hyasannyastasaṅkalpo yogī bhavati kaścana ||

**You should know, Arjuna, that yoga is what they call renunciation. No one becomes a yogi who has not renounced expectation of selfish advantage.**

V. The True Self is Already Free

From the *Ashtavakra Gita* 1.6-7; 1.12; 15.4; 18.13; 18.51:

dharmādharmau sukhaṁ duḥkhaṁ mānasāni na te vibho |  
na kartāsi na bhoktāsi mukta evāsi sarvadā ||

**Virtue and vice, pleasure and pain – these are all in the mind and they are not you, my king. You are neither the producer nor the recipient of karma. You are truly and always free.**

eko draṣṭāsi sarvasya muktaprāyo'si sarvadā |  
ayameva hi te bandho draṣṭāraṁ paśyasītaram ||

**You are the one witness of everything. You are always completely free. Your only bondage is seeing yourself as something other than the witness.**

ātmā sākṣī vibhuḥ pūrṇa eko muktaścidakriyaḥ |  
asaṅgo niḥspṛhaḥ śānto bhramātsaṁsāravāniva ||

**The true self is the observer – all-pervading, complete in itself, one, free, aware, inactive, detached, without desire, and at peace. It's a mistake to think it's trapped in samsara.**

na tvaṁ deho na te deho tā kartā na vā bhavān |  
cidrūpo'si sadā sākṣī nirapekṣaḥ sukhaṁ cara ||

**You are not your body, nor is the body yours. You are neither the doer of action nor the recipient of the result. You are eternally the essence of consciousness, the independent observer. So go happily!**

kṛtyaṁ kimapi naivāsti na kāpi hṛdi rañjanā |  
yathā jīvanameveha jīvanmuktasya yoginaḥ ||

**For the yogi liberated in this very lifetime, just here living out his life, what is there to be done when there is no attachment in his heart?**

akartṛtvamaṭṛtvam svātmano manyate yadā |  
tadā kṣīṇā bhavantyeva samastāścittavṛttayaḥ ||

**When one realizes that his true self is neither the doer nor recipient of karma, then the distortions of the mind are completely destroyed.**

## VI. Work as Play, Life as Art

From the *Ashtavakra Gita* 18.49; 18.64:

yadā yatkartumāyāti tadā tatkurute ṛjuḥ |  
śubhaṁ vāpyaśubhaṁ vāpi tasya ceṣṭā hi bālavat ||

**The master does whatever comes to him to do, whether it's agreeable or distasteful. His or her conduct is like that of a child.**

sarvārambheṣu niṣkāmo yaścared bālavan muniḥ |  
na lepastasya śuddhasya kriyamāṇo'pi karmaṇi ||

**The sage who is without desire in all undertakings behaves in a childlike fashion. Acts done by a pure one like this are without stain.**

## **Exercise for Class Four**

For fifteen minutes each day this week, practice doing a household chore or a task at work consciously letting go of your expectations about the result of that action. Remember that detaching from the “fruit” of action does not mean being careless or inattentive to doing the action to the best of your ability. Focus entirely on the activity, not on what result you hope will come from it.