

An Excerpt from *Dancing With Life: Finding Meaning and Joy in the Face of Suffering* by Phillip Moffitt

Three Ego-Renunciation Practices

"After some years of experimentation, I discovered three ego-renunciation practices that loosen the ego's grasp on the mind but don't require you to make any outward changes in your life. The first is *renouncing your attachment to being right*. Most of us cling to the need to be right, and making this renunciation can dramatically affect both how you interact with others and how you interpret events. When the renunciation starts to be real, you have a much easier time making decisions and have less of a need to position yourself with others or in your own mind. **Giving up always being right doesn't mean you forsake your opinions or your right to seek social justice, but you are not defensive, judgmental, or self-righteous in your approach to life. You mindfully live with the fact that even when you're wrong it's okay because you are coming from your deepest intention. Also, you learn from being wrong (or right), therefore you become a more effective person.**

"The second ego-renunciation practice is committing to *no longer measuring the success of your life by how many of your wants are met*. This renunciation allows you to still have desires, but they're not at the center of your life. You fulfill those wants that can be fulfilled while living from your deepest values, and you slowly abandon the rest. This means that your sexual desires are constrained by non-harming, material gains are limited by ethical and generous behavior, and your ego need for achievement and attention is less of a priority than

living according to your core values. Of course, you still have to fulfill your basic needs and live up to your responsibilities as best you can, but you renounce measuring success by what you have or what you have achieved. You may be surprised to discover how much you have been judging your life by this standard. It is so common that it is almost entirely unconscious, and it is devastating to inner growth because the ego can always distract you with yet another want.

"The third ego renunciation is *giving up being the star of your own movie*. The unfolding of events that make up your life is like a movie, is it not? And you interpret every scene or event from the vantage point of being the star of your movie — is it good or bad for you, do you like it or not, and so on. Once you renounce being the star of your own movie, **you begin to see the unfolding of each scene and the movie as a whole from multiple perspectives. You don't forsake your role in the movie, but once you cease making it be all about you, the movie creates less anxiety and you are more able to live from your core values.**"