

## **Things to Do** **by Shawn Nevins**

1. Fall and rise a thousand times if need be.
  2. Become a habitual seeker.
  3. Give up, then try again.
  4. Realize that you want to help others.
  5. Be thankful.
  6. Become a decent human animal.
  7. Look for the source of thoughts.
  8. Look in whatever way keeps your attention.
  9. Will to do one thing -- one iron in the fire.
  10. Find a teacher(s).
  11. Always desire more, never be content.
  12. Surround yourself with fellow seekers.
  13. Spend time alone.
  14. Know that the Hound of Heaven is real.
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1. Fall and rise a thousand times if need be: I know some people who will set a goal to meditate every morning, do so for a week, then give up after they miss a morning. They despair over their temporary failure. The key is to keep at it, even if you miss every other day. Even if you never manage to meditate every single morning, to keep trying is what matters. If you approach the task in that manner, you will discover of what you are capable, and what you are -- likely different than your original conception.
  2. Become a habitual seeker: The same idea as Richard Rose's vector. With enough time, you become someone who continually questions the world around and inside of them. You will want to know the truth of matters and be open to more than one possibility or the easy answer. Your eyes and ears will always be open to new sources of information.
  3. Give up, then try again: You can't control this one, but it is useful to know that it will occur. There is some magic in the process of giving up, as it weakens our conception of what we are. Our conceptions of our self as a seeker are stripped away, leaving only Rose's "egoless vector" which searches simply because there is nothing else to do. This temporary giving up is also the rest period necessary for any exercise.
  4. Realize that you want to help others: The ego prevents us from reaching out to others. With persistent self-analysis, you will come to have true consideration for your fellow man -- you will see your flaws in others and others' flaws in you. There is the thought that we should help others because it will help us in the long run, but this is not the same as truly wanting to help another. It is a milestone when we want to help simply because it is the natural reaction.
  5. Be thankful: You are fortunate to be willing and able to ask questions of self-definition. You are fortunate for this day of possibilities stretching out in front of you. There is a bit of

magic in giving thanks, as doing so recognizes that we are not the center of the Universe and relinquishes some of our imaginary control of life.

6. Become a decent human animal: Meaning that with honest introspection, you will become more compassionate and less defensive as you recognize your vanities. Also entails learning how to provide for yourself in the world. On a physical and social level, we become more at ease and better players of the game. You do not need to become a saint or an expert mechanic, however.
7. Look for the source of thoughts: Or look for the source of feeling, or intuition. Whatever you believe yourself to be, look to find where it originates. This will lead you to the source of your self. This question is phrased in many ways and may change over time. I began wanting to know what my purpose was, and ended by wanting to know what (if anything) was unchanging within me. Richard Rose describes this as backing away from untruth, which is correct in that we should not postulate what we might find. However, there is an intuition of the eternal within us which is helpful to follow -- a garbled message from the Absolute.
8. Look in whatever way keeps your attention: You will get bored of looking within. Keep looking for teachers and methods, so that when you come to the end of your current way, you won't lose time wandering in search of another. Every person must find their own way -- a customized method of going within. You must craft your own key.
9. Will to do one thing -- keep one iron in the fire: Focus is the solution to any problem. If you are trying to play the stock market, get a promotion, find a spouse, and get a college degree, you will obviously have trouble finding time to meditate, read, and seek out spiritual teachers. Time spent looking within is rewarded with proportional results -- up to a point. Like any exercise, rest is part of the equation.
10. Find a teacher(s): A teacher is a friend with more experience on the spiritual path. It may be a series of teachers -- each giving you a tool to use in your inner exploration. A book or tape may be as important as a living person.
11. Always desire more, never be content: There are side benefits to a spiritual search. One may make fascinating friends, have travel opportunities, may even be regarded as a teacher in their own right, all before finding an answer to their deepest question. There arises the temptation to settle for a lesser prize. This is a powerful temptation whose only cure is to project out your life strand and ask if you are heading where you want to be. When you are old, what will you want to say about your life? When it is just you facing the unknown, where will you find certainty?
12. Surround yourself with fellow seekers: There is tremendous benefit to associating with like-minded people. Better yet, is sharing an apartment or house with a group of seekers. It is a resource of ideas and inspiration, as well as help with the everyday problems of life. You will learn from each other's successes and failures. When one member is in despair, his fellows can in a sense, carry him until he recovers. If the group is too small, less than four

perhaps, then the odds are the number of depressed members will outweigh the number of inspired and drag down the whole lot.

Because each spiritual path is unique, it is difficult to work with a group. Groups tend to either homogenize or break apart. However, if the majority of members are sincerely seeking (looking within), this will enable diversity and understanding.

13. Spend time alone: From a few minutes a day to weeks-long isolations. This is a time to evaluate what you have accomplished and where you want to go. It is a time of intense concentration, intense looking within. When alone, it is easier to realize that we are the sole judge of our life and what matters is that we find the thing which settles our soul. A person may camp out, get a cheap motel room, go to a retreat center, or even hide out in their own room.
14. Know that the Hound of Heaven is real: Refers to the poem by Francis Thompson. There is something calling you -- God, Rose's Invisible Current, or the Voice of the Silence. Become aware of your intuition (heart), your hunger and yearning for certainty. You hide with endless diversions from your hunger and yearning. You fill the emptiness in you with material goods, or even love. Yet, you are truly, always alone. There is simply you and a haunting question that sooner or later you must confront.