

Attention Changes the World

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Attention is the essence of contemplation. We are all aware – or should be – how weak and unfaithful our attention span can be. This is why we need a daily practice of meditation, embodied in the routines of our private lives. It is not by thinking about it or even by willing it that we grow in attentiveness but through practice. [. . . .]

Attention purifies our hearts and changes the world. We can see this because our own personal afflictions are blessedly relieved if someone genuinely gives us their attention when we need it most.

Compassion is the first fruit of attention. It is the life that flows from the death of selfishness.

After meditation: “Candlemas” by Denise Levertov in *THE STREAM & THE SAPPHIRE: Selected Poems on Religious Themes* (New York: New Directions, 1997), p. 11.v

Candlemas

With certitude

Simeon opened

ancient arms
to infant light.

Decades

before the cross, the tomb,
and the new life,

he knew

new life.

What depth

of faith he drew on,

turning illumined

towards deep night.

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