



Photo by Richard Kalvar

Being Nobody

You will see how wonderful it is to live in the air this way, without hanging on, unattached. It simplifies life a great deal. Try being nobody. Let go of the branches.

Francis Lucille

FOR MOST PEOPLE, THE IDEA OF being nobody is inconceivable—an unmitigated calamity, a fate worse than death.

Put simply, nobody wants to be nobody.

As Nobody, nobody notices you. Nobody gets no recognition for his efforts, no rewards and no praise for his successes. Nobody may never be rich, never be famous, never be a pioneer in his chosen field.

Nobody seeks Nobody out for help or advice, since Nobody has no point of view to promote, no opinions to defend, no judgments to uphold about right or wrong.

Nobody is nothing special.

Nobody is perfectly free.

Free to live in the moment, Nobody feels no pressure to achieve, create, or succeed, so his efforts are spontaneous and joyful.

Free from the constraints of time, Nobody experiences no stress, no rush to complete anything, having all the time in the world.

Free of expectation, Nobody is also free of disappointment, yet optimistic, open to life and always ready to be pleasantly surprised.

Free of obligations, Nobody has time to relax, to meditate, to contemplate the reason for his existence. (If someone were to say to Nobody, “Don’t just sit there, *do* something!” Nobody would just smile and reply calmly, “Don’t just do something, *sit* there!”)

Nobody has nothing to prove to anybody, so it doesn’t matter what Nobody does or how he does it. Since Nobody does not judge, Nobody has nothing he has to get right, nor does he have any problem with himself or anyone else being wrong.

Nobody isn't particularly concerned with keeping busy or acquiring more things. Nobody is more interested in *being* than in *doing*—in stripping things away, in letting go of layers of belief, layers of concepts, of ideas and opinions that no longer serve him.

While others may excel at doing this or that, Nobody is a master at doing nothing, which, ironically, is the most difficult thing of all.

Doing nothing doesn't mean being passive or inactive: Doing nothing just means not forcing things, recognizing and being completely awake and open to the situation as it is, without adding anything of oneself to it. So when Nobody does decide to do something, it engages his entire being.

Having no overassertive ego to satisfy, no concern about how others will judge or perceive him, Nobody has all possible actions open to him, and will do exactly what is required in every situation.

Nobody is not bound by all the things that others are: the need to keep up appearances, or to maintain whatever artificial, temporal things prop up his ego and his identity.

Nobody thinks of 'identity' as a feeling of something missing, of somebody looking for something to hold on to for security. Nobody knows the wisdom of insecurity.

Nobody has a personality, but it doesn't define him. In fact, Nobody's personality is more authentic than most people's, as he isn't seeking approval from anyone.

Nobody knows that his passing thoughts, emotions, preferences, and attachments do not define him, either—in fact, nothing does.

Free from the constraints of psychological memory, Nobody sees the world not as a projection of himself, but as it really is. By relinquishing the limited sense of power that lies in thinking of himself as an isolated, individual self, Nobody gains real power.

Nobody has only one thing to be wary of: getting caught up in the games of the mind. Saying, "Look at me, I am Nobody" would be trying to turn being Nobody into being Somebody—like a monkey who can't let go of one branch before grabbing a new one.

Nobody knows that to really practice being Nobody means *not knowing* who he is—living life as an adventure, stepping into the unknown and being comfortable with the uncertainty and passing nature of it all.

As to how Nobody became Nobody, well, that was the simplest thing in the world: Nobody was *already* Nobody—all that was required was to realize it and to live it.

To live it, Nobody simply stopped trying to be Somebody—letting go of his habitual addiction to striving and struggling, giving himself up to an effortlessness knowing.

Nobody knows there is no need to worry: whatever is meant to happen will happen. But a tranquil, attentive, selfless mind—a mind without the ego's compulsive need for a mission—can act joyfully, creatively and spontaneously, with greater ease and wisdom and less resistance, resentment, or regret.

Nobody knows emptiness is not 'nothing,' but is, in fact, the mysterious, ultimate source of Everything. And just as Nothing can be both Anything and Everything, Nobody can be both Anybody and Everybody.

Released from the distorting gravity of an isolated, personal self, Nobody feels great empathy and compassion for others. Freed from being the center of the universe, nothing is external to Nobody. Everything in the world becomes his concern.

Nobody is not free *from* the world; Nobody is free *for* the world.

In this quiet and humble way, Nobody contributes something rare and valuable to the world simply by existing. ■