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How to Live in the Moment

Oprah.com

Six visionaries on what it takes to seize the day.



**The Samaritan:
Greg Mortenson**

The coauthor of Three Cups of Tea and author of Stones into Schools is the founder of Pennies for Peace and has established more than 131 schools in rural Pakistan and Afghanistan.

"It's sad to see people spending thousands trying to find themselves. You can find great joy by serving others, and you don't have to devote your whole life to it. Practice doing one good deed a day. Help an old lady, a neighbor, a new kid in school—make it a habit. After a while, you'll be doing amazing things."



**The Altruist:
Karen Armstrong**

The former nun is the creator of the Charter for Compassion, whose signatories (Prince Hassan of Jordan, the Dalai Lama) fight extremism, hatred, and exploitation throughout the world.

"Sometimes you wake up at 3 A.M. when everything seems dark, and you think, "Life isn't fair. I've got too much to do. I'm too put-upon." It's a rat run of self-pity! But when you feel compassion, you dethrone yourself from the center of the world. Doing that has made me a more peaceful person."



**The Doer:
Kristine Tompkins**

The former CEO of Patagonia has, along with her husband, bought up 2.2 million acres in Argentina and Chile to create new national parks.

"The millions of species with whom we share the Earth have intrinsic value. We have to reach, if not perfect harmony between man and the natural world, at least a truce. I have a border collie-like personality—I'm happiest with a job to do. I glaze over if things are going smoothly, and excel when faced with very big problems. You see something that needs to be changed? Jump out of your chair and put your shoulder to the wheel."



**The Artist:
Faith Ringgold**

The Caldecott Honor winner is best known for her painted story quilts,



which include *"Dinner at Gertrude Stein's"* and *"Dancing at the Louvre."*

"Back when I was starting out, someone at a party asked me what I did, and I said, 'I'm an artist.' And a friend of mine said, 'Faith, would you please stop telling people you're an artist? You're not an artist. You're an art teacher.' I thought: 'That's interesting that she thinks she can tell me who I am. I'm the one who determines when I'm an artist. And that's right here, right now.'"



**The Individualist:
Kay Ryan**

The author of the 2005 poetry collection The Niagara River is the 16th Poet Laureate of the United States.

"I remember lying in bed as a young teenager and deciding to hypnotize myself by saying these words: *Be what you are, be what you are, be what you are.* I said it hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of times, the intention being to protect me from what I felt was going to take me away from myself. And to this day I still say that when I think I'm trying to fit somebody else's expectations."



**The Seeker:
Stewart Brand**

Founding editor of the Whole Earth Catalog and author of the new Whole Earth Discipline, Brand is president of the Long Now Foundation, whose goal is to promote "slower/better" thinking as a counterpoint to today's "faster/cheaper" way of living.

"I'm a great believer in boredom as a motivator, particularly when things are going well and whatever it is you're doing, you can do in your sleep. Well, if that's how you feel, chances are, you *are* doing it in your sleep. So I try to notice when I'm getting bored, and I either let it build up, so I can feel motivated to haul off and do something weird, or respond to it right away. A combination of curiosity and boredom is what motivates me. Passion, I'm not so sure."

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