

A Musing

Podcast Transcript

003 ▸ Emptiness

Society teaches us to see emptiness as incompleteness... as a void we need to fill. But, is there another perspective about this idea?.

Subscribe

- > [Audio Podcast](#)
- > [YouTube](#)
- > amusingpod.com

00:00:00.300 - 00:00:03.360

Welcome to A Musing, I'm Diego.

00:00:11.189 - 00:00:14.449

Today's episode, emptiness.

00:00:32.350 - 00:00:35.730

I have a phobia of open water.

00:00:35.730 - 00:00:38.930

It's not a paralyzing fear, per se.

00:00:53.770 - 00:01:00.570

And it's not a fear of getting eaten by sharks, although, yeah, there's that too, thanks a lot, Jaws.

00:01:01.590 - 00:01:08.250

It's a fear of the enormous void that's underneath me the entire time I'm floating on the surface.

00:01:10.430 - 00:01:16.690

It's a fear of how many things are under me that I can't even begin to list, and how many of them could make me their lunch.

00:01:17.810 - 00:01:28.010

It's a reverence for a world that, no matter how many Nat Geo documentaries I've watched, is still extremely alien to me.

00:01:35.911 - 00:01:40.271

That unknown emptiness freaks me out.

00:01:40.271 - 00:01:44.511

Of course, that may not be the same emptiness that you dread.

00:01:44.511 - 00:01:51.091

Perhaps yours is, I don't know, outer space and the thought of its endlessness.

00:01:51.091 - 00:01:56.931

Or perhaps it's the feeling of being in the dark and capable of seeing anything around you.

00:01:56.931 - 00:02:02.311

Maybe it's the emptiness of being single as your biological clock ticks away.

00:02:06.611 - 00:02:09.791

The empty feeling of contemplating your own death.

00:02:09.791 - 00:02:14.931

The emptiness of a life with not much to show in the way of progress.

00:02:14.931 - 00:02:18.691

That unfinished project you've been avoiding for way too long.

00:02:20.531 - 00:02:24.951

The emptiness and silence between you and that loved one that you had a fight with.

00:02:26.091 - 00:02:29.051

The void left by the death of someone you loved.

00:02:52.811 - 00:02:57.511

And we have a very odd relationship with emptiness, don't we?

00:02:57.511 - 00:03:03.211

In most cases, we're taught that we're supposed to fill, well, everything.

00:03:03.211 - 00:03:06.751

Fill your living space with stuff.

00:03:06.751 - 00:03:10.731

Your life with a career and a mate and some kids.

00:03:10.731 - 00:03:13.171

Fill your bank account or else you're doing it wrong.

00:03:13.171 - 00:03:14.751

Fill your garage with a nice car.

00:03:14.971 - 00:03:17.391

Fill your time with busyness of some sort.

00:03:17.391 - 00:03:22.751

A hobby or reading, watching, fixing, cleaning, doing something.

00:03:22.751 - 00:03:26.991

More stuff, more noise, more doing.

00:03:26.991 - 00:03:31.451

There's an uneasiness when it comes to the idea of emptiness.

00:03:50.383 - 00:03:54.303

One of my go-to authors is Rumi.

00:03:54.303 - 00:04:00.223

Rumi is a Persian poet and Sufi master born in 1207.

00:04:00.223 - 00:04:02.283

Check out what he wrote about emptiness.

00:04:04.163 - 00:04:11.003

I've said before that every craftsman searches for what's not there to practice his craft.

00:04:11.003 - 00:04:15.183

A builder looks for the rotten hole where the roof caved in.

00:04:15.183 - 00:04:17.503

A water carrier picks the empty pot.

00:04:18.283 - 00:04:21.563

A carpenter stops at the house with no door.

00:04:21.563 - 00:04:27.183

Workers rush toward some hint of emptiness, which they can then start to fill.

00:04:27.183 - 00:04:29.943

Their hope, though, is for emptiness.

00:04:29.943 - 00:04:33.223

So don't think you must avoid it.

00:04:33.223 - 00:04:35.323

It contains what you need.

00:04:40.363 - 00:04:44.383

That's from page 24 of The Essential Roomie.

00:04:47.643 - 00:04:52.563

Notice the inverse way of thinking in Roomie's words.

00:04:52.563 - 00:04:58.883

He's encouraging his reader to see the idea of emptiness as a positive thing.

00:04:58.883 - 00:05:03.523

Not as a sign that there's something wrong, but as a sign of opportunity and potential.

00:05:04.923 - 00:05:09.403

Picture that emptiness you've been staring at with dread in your own life.

00:05:09.403 - 00:05:13.343

Is there an opportunity to see things from a different perspective?

00:05:15.123 - 00:05:27.023

And before you oversimplify this point by comparing it to the cliché, look at the glass, have full idea, consider what is perhaps the most important point in all of this.

00:05:27.023 - 00:05:29.863

This isn't about the emptiness itself.

00:05:30.523 - 00:05:35.603

It's about you and what you do with that emptiness.

00:05:35.603 - 00:05:40.203

Seeing the emptiness as a negative paralyzes you.

00:05:42.503 - 00:05:51.063

Seeing the emptiness as an opportunity and potential sets you free to move forward and make positive use of that emptiness.

00:05:57.102 - 00:06:03.202

Let me introduce you to another go-to text of mine, the Daode Jing.

00:06:03.202 - 00:06:08.302

This is a classic Chinese text written by the 6th century philosopher Lao Tzu.

00:06:08.302 - 00:06:13.242

Here's what he says about emptiness in verse 11 of the Daode Jing.

00:06:13.242 - 00:06:20.342

We join spokes together in a wheel, but it is the center hole that makes the wagon move.

00:06:20.342 - 00:06:28.602

We shape clay into a pot, but it is the emptiness inside that holds whatever we want.

00:06:28.602 - 00:06:34.742

We hammer wood for a house, but it is the inner space that makes it livable.

00:06:34.742 - 00:06:39.842

We work with being, but non-being is what we use.

00:06:45.415 - 00:06:50.095

Emptiness is an unavoidable element in our universe.

00:06:50.095 - 00:06:54.455

Without it, we wouldn't be able to appreciate non-emptiness.

00:06:54.455 - 00:07:01.595

I mean, what's a drinking glass without the emptiness inside except a solid, unusable chunk of glass?

00:07:28.735 - 00:07:30.495

Whatever the circumstance is for you.

00:07:30.495 - 00:07:33.695

Whatever shape it has for you.

00:07:33.695 - 00:07:35.355

Don't run from it.

00:07:35.355 - 00:07:37.075

Don't fear it.

00:07:37.075 - 00:07:38.515

Respect it.

00:07:38.515 - 00:07:40.435

Understand it.

00:07:40.435 - 00:07:44.235

And see it as a reality that brings opportunity for you.

00:07:44.235 - 00:07:51.635

Opportunity for action, for change, for growth, for creativity.

00:07:51.635 - 00:07:56.235

And you can apply this concept to whatever the emptiness is in your own life.

00:07:57.695 - 00:08:10.815

Use it to create something new.

00:08:10.815 - 00:08:12.675

And let me know how that goes.

00:08:12.675 - 00:08:17.535

You can write me at contactamusing@gmail.com.

00:08:26.675 - 00:08:28.015

Thanks for listening.

00:08:28.015 - 00:08:30.715

Hit subscribe, and I'll catch you in the next episode.

.