

## **Illuminating the Empty Space**

We are the light of our own empty space.

===== What is the Empty Space? =====

Take some clay. Feel it in your hands. Now spin it upon a potter's wheel. What is shaped? A bowl comes out. However, the bowl is defined by an empty space, a space enclosed by the bowl's very form. The empty space holds the water, fulfilling the purpose of the bowl. The actual physical form of the bowl is reflected by the empty space it projects. The final use and form of the bowl is determined in the moment of artistry used to spin out the shape.

In this example the bowl is made from clay. The clay forms the body, but the actual bowl projects out as more than a clay shell; it must include the "empty space" in its definition. In fact a bowl is more about the "empty space" than the materials comprising the bowl.

In living, we each have a physical form which is mirrored by an empty space. The process of shaping this space is the very definition of a person's free will.

Free will is the ability to express the very nature of the empty space. Free will is the whim of the moment, the place before the dream, the moment of shaping.

In part, our initial empty space is formed by parents, elders, teachers, culture, our bodies and tendencies of the mind. Yet each person has an incredible degree of freedom to shape his or her own empty space. At certain times this process is more dramatic than others, such as being a teenager, or experiencing a mid-life crisis. These moments stand out as a time to question earlier frameworks that shaped our forms. These times can be difficult due to the twisting of our core shape and beliefs: a time when our very nature is in flux. Often a person reshapes their empty space without the benefit of outside perspective, adding to the frustration and chances of something "breaking". A person never truly breaks, but radically changing one's own empty space reflects out to form a vastly different person after the experience.

===== Consciousness =====

Consciousness is the awareness of one's empty space.

To fill the empty space painters splash out art, poets weave words, scientists document facts, parents embrace children, prophets preach, couch potatoes watch television... and the list goes on. The point is: being conscious, people feel a need to fill this space.

As the physical form is an accessible part of our being, some conclude that the empty space must likewise be filled with something physical, something tangible. Others feel the mind should provide a definable label for their reflected nature. This is the very search for the meaning of life: a person trying to figure out what to place within their empty space.

The meaning of life isn't something that fills the empty space.

Perhaps this is why people have such a hard time defining the soul. We know the soul includes the empty space. For some the soul takes on the ethereal aspects of the empty space as the indefinable qualities of life. A Taoist knows the soul is always at hand. To be an artist is to touch and reveal the empty space of the soul.

The meaning of life is the artistry to craft the empty space.

===== Paths =====

It's time to come full circle in the book.

Another definition of the Tao is that it's the empty space.

A Personal Tao could be described as the process of defining one's empty space. It's the expression of free will to have a hand in shaping your own empty space. Free will means no single, predefined final form to this empty space is forced upon a person. The empty space is defined only upon using and completely living life. Yes a limit exists to the number of destinations that are available, yet living is the freedom of action to shape our life.

Instead of worrying about the shape of life, follow Wu-Wei, flow to what feels right without thought: express the empty space with peace, love and exploration. Such action becomes true artistry upon one's soul.

The only limit being the imagination itself.  
Be free, be yourself.