

*Effortless Living:
Non Striving Wins*



RELEASE THE GRIP

There comes a point on every inner journey where striving—once a familiar companion—begins to feel heavy. Striving asks you to push harder, move faster, and prove more, often in pursuit of approval or a fleeting sense of worthiness. You may have spent years tuning yourself to the expectations of others or to impossibly high internal standards. And though your intentions were noble, the cost has been real: exhaustion, self-pressure, and the subtle belief that rest or stillness is somehow “falling behind.”

When we strive, we forget that our worth is not something to earn—it is something we carry innately. We pour our energy outward toward goals, deadlines, and external markers of success, while our inner life grows thin and unattended. Even when we achieve what we set out to do, the experience may feel strangely empty, as though the effort disconnected us from our own spirit.

Striving creates its own momentum, a cycle that feeds itself. The desire to feel whole can morph into a belief that we *should* feel a certain way. That “should” becomes the spark that ignites more striving—pulling us away from the present moment and the quiet wisdom available there.

Nonstriving is not apathy. It is not giving up, slacking off, or losing interest in what matters. Nonstriving is clarity. Presence. Intention without pressure.

It is the art of holding a steady vision while loosening your grip on how things must unfold. It’s a softening—an invitation to trust the larger current carrying your life.

Imagine yourself in a kayak gliding through rapids. You cannot control the river, nor would you want to. If you fight the current, you exhaust yourself. If you surrender entirely, you get tossed about. Instead, you stay engaged, awake, responsive. You paddle with awareness, eyes softened toward what is ahead, not locked on the obstacles you fear. This is nonstriving: merging with the river of life while remaining rooted in your own guidance.

Evan Weselake’s (2004) story of surviving an avalanche offers a profound metaphor. Buried under tons of snow, unable to move, he initially fought with everything he had. But each attempt depleted him. Only when he shifted inward—relaxing his body, releasing the panic, surrendering to the moment—did his breath return. Nonstriving became his lifeline. In that deep stillness, he found the spaciousness he needed to survive until rescue arrived.

Sometimes letting go is not weakness—it is wisdom.
It is the doorway back to your own strength.

Try This: Drawing as an Act of Surrender

For this exercise, gather:

- A poster-sized paper
- A piece of colored chalk or charcoal
- A model willing to hold a pose for three minutes

Ask your model to choose any pose. Place your paper on an easel or table, and begin outlining their form **without once looking at the paper**. This is an invitation to release control, drop perfection, and trust the movement of your hand.

Let the drawing draw itself.

Let fun replace pressure.

Let curiosity replace self-judgment.

If half the body ends up floating off the page, or if the eyes land where the nose should be—celebrate it. This is about presence, not precision. About allowing, not achieving. When the three minutes end, stop. Look at what has emerged. Receive it with soft eyes.

Reflecting on the Experience

How you approached this small creative moment mirrors how you move through challenging situations in your life:

- Did you sneak glances to “improve” the drawing?
You may have a habit of trying to force outcomes or prove yourself.
- Did your need for accuracy drain the joy out of the process?
You may unintentionally add pressure to moments that need ease.
- Did you worry the drawing would turn out “bad”?
You may feel like a failure when things don’t unfold perfectly.

Let this exercise become a gentle teacher. Through journaling, explore:

- What did I notice about myself as I drew?
- Where do these tendencies show up in my life?
- How might I soften, surrender, or release my grip in moments of stress?
- What happens when I allow myself to “be” rather than strive to “do”?

If your model is willing, try a few more poses. Let each drawing be an act of freedom.
Let each line be a reminder that you do not need to control every outcome.
Let yourself become a beginner again—open, curious, willing.

When you loosen your grip, life has room to breathe through you.
In that space, you may discover that freedom was never somewhere else—it was waiting
inside you all along.