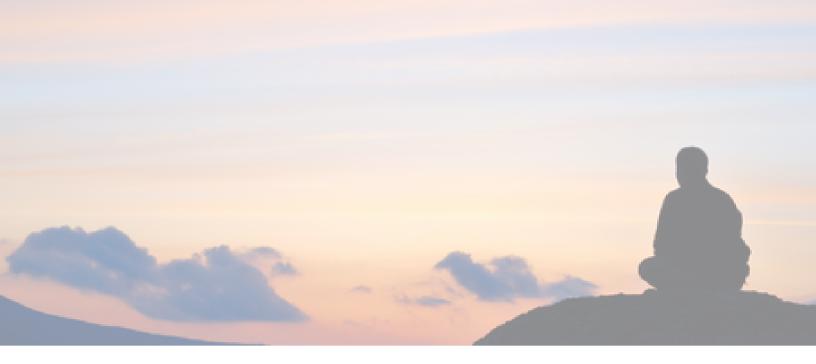
## 2023 MANUAL

Deeper Still Advanced Teacher Training

Transform the world by Transforming Yourself

DAVIDJIMEDITATIONACADEMY.COM



# 2023 Deeper Still Training

I'm so grateful to have you on this journey with me.

I've set up this training because I believe there is always room to grow, strengthen our connection to source and improve as a teacher of meditation and timeless wisdom.

I will work with you over the next several months to integrate the teachings even deeper into your particular circumstance so you can infuse the wisdom in a practical way at the level of the soul and then share it with the world through your personal practice.

I've laid this training out very carefully to build on the Level I Masters of Wisdom & Meditation Teacher Training and create a unique experience for you that goes deeper with more expansive readings, provoke even deeper explorations through insightful, thought provoking lessons, and culminates with even deeper end game for you.

We will continue our journey of exploring many diverse wisdom traditions and the expressions of many different teachers throughout history so that the depth and breadth of your understanding takes you to an even deeper mastery of the wisdom teachings.

You will expand your daily practice; strengthen your comfort as a teacher; learn to give personal Nakshatra mantras; and, gain confidence with the business of teaching meditation.

I'll be supporting you every step of the way and am excited to get started.

Journey with me... Peace ~davidji

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### GETTING STARTED

Intention



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# Intention Setting

### Setting Your Intentions Using the Five Realms

Our intentions can be as tiny as taking a deep breath in the midst of a challenging moment and as big as surrendering to the divine plan of the Universe. There's no right or wrong. We get to choose. But whatever intention we decide on can only be fueled by action

PHYSICAL REALM - (Every aspect of your physical body: your body, diet, health, exercise, nature, sleep, sex, digestion, even your looks)

EMOTIONAL REALM - (How we react to certain people, situations, and circumstances – the words, conversations, and interactions that push our buttons and trigger us; and how we respond to them)

MATERIAL REALM - (Money, wealth consciousness, career, house, car, possessions... essentially the "stuff" we have, desire, covet, or are working towards bringing into our lives)

RELATIONSHIP REALM - (The relationships we have with our self, our front row, our family, colleagues, friends, those with whom you have a grievance, etc. and we want to either birth, re- pair, shift, or end them)

SPIRITUAL REALM - (Your connection to something bigger than yourself- God, the divine creator, your understanding of spirit, your relationship with Source, etc.)

# FOUNDATIONS

My Meditation Practice

### MEDITATION & YOU

Meditation facilitates in the discovery of our inner guru, or "remover of darkness."

It interrupts the repetition of our customary thought patterns and automated habitual ways of being. In clearing the traffic jam in our heads, the content clouding our vision, the potential for new possibilities seems imminent. Such an act spearheads the transformation from a victim's mentality to one of empowerment in which the control lies in our hands. We become rejuvenated with the revelation that it's not something or someone that can solve our issues or eradicate our inner darkness. But rather, the remover of darkness lies within. Meditation awakens the guru within.

The spiritual benefits of meditation are those that carry over into every waking moment. Meditation perpetuates an inner stillness less disturbed by the demands and pressures of 21st century life. It counteracts the tug of war effect created by traumas from the past or anxiety about the future by rooting us in the present moment. Such relief creates further openness to new possibilities in the present moment, releasing us from strict adherence to our conditioned responses and choices.

When more spiritually liberated from the conditions that seem to define us — our title, status, roles, possessions, etc. — we revert to a more organic state of being that is more aware of our connection to our fellow beings, to the planet, and the universe. It also cultivates a more intimate sense of union with whatever higher power that exists in your concept of the universe.

Meditation comes in a variety of shapes and forms — studied throughout your Masters of Wisdom & Meditation and your Deeper Still Advanced Teacher Trainings — each of which strives to deepen one's present moment awareness and sense of unity or "oneness" with one's unconditioned self and with the rest of the world, as well as the universe.

### YOUR MEDITATION PRACTICE REVIEW

What does your meditation practice look like? How often do you meditate, when, where... what type of meditations do you do, etc?

Are you living the life of a meditator? What benefits are you seeing? Do you feel more calm, patient, less forceful, gentle, understanding... etc? Meditation can help us respond to stress constructively instead of acting out conditioned patterns of response — often characterized by fight or flight. It's the often instinctive reaction to threats to our safety, happiness, or self-esteem. "Fighting" may manifest as reactive, angry, argumentative behavior, whereas flight may entail emotionally shutting down, withdrawal, or escape into certain addictions.

Meditation creates a state of restful awareness, which extends into waking moments, creating room in one's consciousness for more insight — decreasing attachment to previous interpretations, while the need to defend them become less urgent. One becomes more aware of the bigger picture — one's point of view accommodating a more expanded landscape.

When responding reflexively — through fight or flight — instead of reflectively, we trigger a series of physiological reactions designed to ensure our survival in the event of a physical threat in the environment.

- Raised heart rate and blood pressure
- Faster breathing
- Stress hormone release
- Shifting blood circulation away from digestion to muscles
- Sweating
- Stickier blood clotting cells
- Weakened immunity

### THE ANTIDOTE TO STRESS

Over time, chronic stress and maladaptive patterns of response can lead to emotional, physical, or sexual dysfunction; increase one's chances of getting sick; and may manifest as chronic illness such as irritable bowel syndrome, fibromyalgia, lupus, Crohn's disease, migraine headaches, panic attacks, and palpitations.

Meditation counteracts the effects of stress by contributing to:

- Decreased heart rate
- Normalization of blood pressure
- Quiet breathing
- Reduced stress hormones
- Reduced sweating
- Strengthened immunity

## FOUNDATIONS

Being a Teacher

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### WHAT CHARACTERISTICS DO YOU VALUE IN A TEACHER?

Who inspires you as a teacher? What characteristics appeal to you?

Do you define yourself as a teacher? What are your teaching "superpowers"?

### WHAT CHARACTERISTICS DO YOU VALUE IN A TEACHER?

What are you weaknesses as a teacher? What are you still working on?

What has bothered you about other teachers? What do you want to avoid as a teacher?

## FOUNDATIONS

Nakshatra birthStAR Mantras

# Nakshatra birthSTARs

Nakshatra birthSTAR Mantra Meditation is a powerful practice for moving into the stillness and silence within. The Nakshatra birthSTAR mantras are very personal expressions for each person. Each personal Nakshatra comes from the name of the light from the star that heralded the moment when you passed from the unmanifest into the manifest – from stardust into birth. According to the ancient Jyotish calculation of heavenly bodies, this is the star in alignment with the earth at the moment you were born – the first star seen by the earth as you passed into this earth realm. The vibration of this mantra will resonate on the deepest level and guide your students to that stillpoint that rests at the core of their being.

It derives from the yogic tradition of India, which focuses on achieving a one-ness ... unity ... stillness ...silence ... bliss ... no separation between anything ... your pure unconditioned self. The mantra is used for its sound or vibrational quality so we don't say the mantra out loud because that moves it from vibration to a word, which will hold the mantra at the level of the mind, intellect or ego.

Repeating the mantra is not a clear pronunciation; it's just a faint idea. Explain that they should listen to the mantra – don't say it. Reinforce the concept that the mantra is all you need for a powerful and transformational meditation practice – it takes your awareness from the manifest world of individuality to the unmanifest realm of universality.

During meditation – when a thought drifts into our awareness, drift back to the mantra. Outside of meditation, throughout the course of your day, when the mantra comes into your awareness, drift back to your thoughts.

Almost any mantra used with the right intention in a daily practice can take one from a very personal constricted state of existence to higher states of consciousness, including more expanded and universal states.

#### The 27 Nakshatras

The Nakshatras are one of the oldest references we have to astrology from the Rig Veda, dating back about 5,000 years ago. The Vedas are the religious scriptures of the great seers and sages of India. The nNkshatras are like the zodiacal signs but more specific. Their meanings are derived from the constellations, fixed stars and the mythology behind these portions in the sky.

They are rich in meaning and have ruling deities that reveal the stories or myths that bring to life the symbology referred to in our own lives.

#### BirthSTAR Mantras—Nakshatra Mantra Meditation

As a Mantra & Sacred Sounds and Deeper Still graduate you will be certified to teach the ancient technique known as Nakshatra BirthSTAR Mantra Meditation. Nakshatra (pronounced NAKSHATRA) is the Sanskrit word for BirthSTAR. According to the ancient Jyotish calculation of heavenly bodies, this is the star in direct alignment with you at the moment you were born—the first star the earth saw as you passed into this earthly realm.

The Moon orbits completely around the earth every 27.3 days. This is known in modern astronomy as a side real month containing 27 days of 24-hour periods. And yet, thousands of years ago, the ancient scientists of the sky not only calculated this information, but also gave each 24-hour period in the month a Sanskrit vibration based on the star or star clusters visible during that time. Ancient Chinese, Babylonian and Egyptian astronomers also used the concept of Nakshatra BirthSTARs, to track the seasons, mark the passage of time, and celebrate auspicious occasions.

We now know it takes thousands and—in some cases, millions—of light years for the light of a star to be visible on planet Earth. When you learn the Sanskrit name of the light from the star that heralded the 24-hour period when you passed from the unmanifest into the manifest—from stardust into birth—it is one of the most magnificent sounds you will ever learn. The vibration of this mantra will resonate on the deepest level and guide you to that still point that rests at the core of your being.

#### Taking You Back to the Source of Everything

At the moment of your birth you were pure, and whole, and perfect. But it's been a few years since that moment and a lot has happened since then. Since a Nakshatra is a 24-hour period, your vibration includes several hours when you were in the womb, the moment of your birth and the hours when you first stepped foot (or peeked your head) into this world—the whole cycle of your individuation. When you practice Nakshatra Mantra Meditation, every meditation brings you back to that divine moment of your pure perfection, and reconnects you to the purity and perfection of your unconditioned essence.

#### How The Birth Star Star Mantra is calculated

There are hundreds of thousands of meditators around the world who practice Nakshatra Mantra Meditation, and millions who have practiced it dating back to the most ancient times.

There are 27 Nakshatra Bijas (or seed sounds) in this school of meditation, and they are raw, pure, and universal. In Nakshatra BirthSTAR Mantra Meditation, each meditator uses their unique BirthSTAR sound as a mantra that reflects the vibration or the atmospheric quality of the universe at the moment of his or her birth. Every moment in life contains a certain energy inherent in the atmosphere in a particular place at a specific time. You can feel it at any moment, wherever you are.

There are certain qualities to this very moment based on where you are and what's going on. So imagine going back thousands of years and drinking in the bigger picture—the relationship of the earth, the moon, and the stars that were present in a particular 24-hour period.

To determine someone's Nakshatra BirthSTAR Mantra, the place, date, and time of a person's birth is correlated to the specific vibrations of the universe that were written down in Sanskrit thousands of years ago. Based on your birth information, a Vedic mathematics program then calculates the vibration from the 27 possibilities.

Once identified, that vibration is merged with several other vibrations, including other Bija sounds, to create an individual's personal Nakshatra BirthSTAR Mantra.

Once you learn your personal mantra, you repeat it silently during your meditation to move more easily into stillness and silence.

It's pretty powerful to meditate using the sound that the universe was making at the moment you passed from the unmanifest into the manifest. It's also very powerful to know the exact alignment between the earth, the moon, and the stars that existed at the moment you were born is the exact same relationship that existed among the earth, the moon, and the stars 5,000 years ago, when this vibration was first discovered and written down. We humans come and go every hundred years, but the sun, the moon, the earth, and the planets have been signposts of the galaxy for more than 15 billion years!

The mantra is your mind vehicle that takes you from activity to stillness and silence. You wouldn't use sound to take you into silence, so what keeps the mantra powerful is keeping it in a sacred place and not using it casually or out loud, even when you're by yourself. If I gave you a seed for a magnificent flower, you planted it. And then months later, if I bumped into you and asked how your seed was growing, you wouldn't dig into the earth and show me your seed. You'd say, "I planted it; it's growing; and it's blossoming." It's the same with our mantras. We keep them planted in the stillness and the silence to be used as our mind vehicle in the sacred fertile soil of our practice.

By speaking your mantra out loud, you bring it from the silent ether into this physical world. Sharing it with others will also lead to you applying some kind of meaning to it, defeating the purpose of a meaningless vibration.

Of course, sharing your mantra with someone won't trigger some cosmic retribution upon your karma. Yet you can't unring the bell. You can't take it back. For a personal mantra to have its optimal effectiveness, it starts with not sharing it and keeping it in the realm of meaninglessness.

If someone is asking, do they really care? Or are they simply being polite? Keeping it private also effectively disconnects it from meaning and activity.

To keep your mantra in an optimized state, when you find yourself repeating it or using it when doing some activity other than meditation, just let your awareness drift back to your thoughts in the same way that you drift from thought to the mantra during meditation.

Deep attachment to the mantra as a word or incantation will move you deeper into meaning and into activity. Remember that we use the mantra to disconnect us from activity and connect us to stillness & silence, so don't spend time on its meaning or definition. Use it for its timeless, meaningless, effortless, vibrational power.

## Nakshātra Birthstar Mantra Sacred Ceremony

Teaching Your First Nakshatra BirthSTAR Mantra

Welcome to instruction in your Nakshatra birth star mantra.

We know it can take 100 million years for the light of a star to be visible by the naked eye. I will now teach you the name of the light from the star that heralded the moment when you passed from the unmanifest into the manifest – from stardust into birth.

Likely a time when you were your most unconditioned self – pure, whole, and perfect – before all the layers of conditioning blanketed you.

According to the ancient Jyotish calculation of heavenly bodies, this is the star in direct alignment with the earth at the moment you were born – the first star seen by the earth as you passed into this earth realm.

The vibration of this mantra will resonate on the deepest level and guide you to that stillpoint that rests at the very core of your being.

First I will sing a short chant known as the shanti mantra – it is an ancient chant of peace & protection.

Then I will teach you your Nakshatra birth star mantra – then you'll practice it a bit – get comfortable with it – and then meditate using it.

Now close your eyes and take a long slow deep breath in & now let that go. Let's do that one more time. Breathe in... and release that breath. Continue to watch your breath and settle in as I chant the shanti mantra.

(Sing shanti mantra)



Your Nakshatra mantra is XXXXXXX (NOTE: Say it to the new meditator four times)

Now repeat it with me (NOTE: you repeat mantra to them & with them out loud 4 times)

Now keep repeating it (NOTE: listen to them repeat it out loud 4 more times)

> Now whisper it (NOTE: listen to them whisper it 4 times)

Now silently repeat it to yourself over and over (NOTE: Wait two minutes)

You can stop repeating the mantra and when it feels comfortable, gently open your eyes.

Do you feel some settling down? (NOTE: nod & smile)

Remember that repetition of the mantra is gentle and relaxed – there's no need to force or concentrate – repeat it easily and effortlessly – and when you realize you've drifted to thoughts, sounds, or physical sensations, just effortlessly drift back to the mantra. (NOTE: move your hands back and forth)

As you silently repeat the mantra it may change – it may get faster, slower, louder or fainter, it may even become jumbled or go silent – however it changes, don't resist, simply continue to repeat it effortlessly... and as soon as you realize you've drifted away, simply drift back to the mantra.

Let's try it again.

Nakshatra Birthstar Mantra Sacred Ceremony... cont.

Close your eyes and take a deep breath in And gently let it go. Now repeat the mantra with me. xxxxx (NOTE: one time)

Perfect

And now continue to repeat it silently to yourself And keep repeating it (NOTE: Wait two minutes)

When it feels comfortable you can gently open your eyes

Does the meditation feel comfortable? (NOTE: nod & smile)

Congratulations. You are now practicing Nakshatra mantra meditation based on your birth star.

Don't fear that you have to commit this vibration to instant memory. This mantra has been part of you since the moment of your birth – your fluency and comfort will develop as you continue to meditate with the mantra.

l've written your mantra down on this card. But don't worry – by tomorrow morning it will be part of your DNA. Keep it in a safe place & don't share it with anyone. I'll talk more about that later – but essentially we want to keep your mantra at the vibrational level. And keeping it silent ensures that.

Now take a few minutes and meditate using your mantra. And we'll answer all of your questions at our next session.

(NOTE: Meditate with them for 5-10 minutes or instruct them to meditate on their own for 5-10 minutes using it.)

# Nakshātra Birthstar Mantra Sacred Ceremony Process

As you continue practicing your mantra ceremony script, let's now add in some consideration on how to set up for the ceremony and anticipate how your meditation students will respond to this sacred ceremony.

### Preparing for the mantra ceremony

Ceremony helps bring the sacred into our lives, and is often used in combination with ritual to celebrate new beginnings, accomplishments or even endings. An integral part of Indian life, ceremony and sacred rituals are often used before new undertakings. Many of these rituals and ceremonies date back thousands of years. The Vedas themselves are filled with mantras, chants, and rituals.

Once you are a certified Deeper Still teacher, you will be authorized to give Nakshatra Mantras in a sacred mantra ceremony. To prepare for the ceremony, a few special arrangements should be put in place.

STEP ONE: Before your student arrives, prepare a private sacred space where you will "gift" your student with their own personal mantra in the sacred mantra ceremony.

1. Calculate your student's mantra using the davidji mantra calculator which you will receive password protected access to once you have graduated as a certified advanced Deeper Still teacher.

2. Set up a comfortable sitting space for you and your student.

3. Have a candle, a flower, a piece of fruit and a sri yantra ready.

4. Place the lit candle, flower, fruit and sri yantra up in front of the sitting area as a sort of "alter".

The power of ceremony

5. When your student arrives, greet them and direct them to sit with you.

6.When you are both settled, begin the ceremony in a reverent tone, giving you both the opportunity to connect with the universal spirit, nature, and each other till Manual

## Nakshatra Birthstar Mantra Sacred Ceremony Process..cont...

### Tips/Guidelines to consider during the ceremony

7. Invite your student to close his/her eyes just before you chant/sing the shanti mantra. This will help your students connect to the sacredness of the ceremony and fully immerse themselves in the experience. As a new teacher, have the student have their eyes closed will help you focus and make it easier to remember the shanti mantra and the ceremony itself without the distraction of your student closely watching your every move.

8. After you have finished reciting the mantra, you will tell the student what their mantra is. If they happen to open their eyes, gently invite them to close their eyes again as you continue the ceremony.

9. The sections of the mantra ceremony script that are in parenthesis are directions for you as the teacher, not things you should say aloud to your student. For example, note the areas in parenthesis below which are instructions for you, not the student.

#### Your mantra is XXXXXXX

(Say it to the new meditator four times) Now repeat it with me (repeat mantra out loud 4 times with your student) Now keep repeating it (listen to them repeat it out loud 4 more times) Now whisper it (listen to them whisper it 4 times) Now silently repeat it to yourself over and over

(Wait two minutes while they meditate with their new mantra)

You do not want to tell the student to repeat the mantra 4 times, for example. If you do them they are focusing on counting and the mantra, creating an unnecessary complication and distraction. You count four times then ask them to repeat it on their own, etc.

10. Nodding and smiling after you ask them if they felt some settling down ..... DO IT! It may feel uncomfortable at first so practice with your fellow study buddies. Trust us. It makes a difference and is a subtle enticement to ensure your student nods or says yes.

Nakshatra Birthstar Mantra Sacred Ceremony Process... cont...

Tips/Guidelines to consider during the ceremony (cont)

11. (move your hands back and forth).... Again, DO IT as you say the words "effortlessly drift back to the mantra". Practice. It will feel comfortable after the first few times, we promise. It helps reinforce the gentle rhythm of meditation.

Example from the script:

"and when you realize you've drifted to thoughts, sounds, or physical sensations, just effortlessly drift back to the mantra" (move your hands back and forth)

12. Now repeat the mantra with me xxx (one time)

13. When you get to this section :

"Now repeat the mantra with me - xxx" (one time).

The (one time) is only meant for you, not for you to tell them to repeat it one time. Again, because you want them to be focused on learning the mantra, not on counting.

14.As you close, remember to have your student practice on their own for a bit.

15.Throughout the ceremony, some students may interject with questions and sometimes it may be worth responding in the moment but most times, you will want to ask them to just surrender to the ceremony, stay in this sacred space, and hold onto their questions for afterwards so you can preserve the sacredness of the ceremony with them.

## Nakshatra Birthstar Mantra Sacred Ceremony Process... cont...

### COMMON QUESTIONS:

Some of the questions we often receive are noted below. For any of these, I still suggest you simply reinforce how special and sacred their mantra is and that it is has been with them since the time they were born. Assure them that you will cover the answers to their questions during your next session with them, but that for now it is important to recognize that the mantra is most powerful when used for its vibrational NOTHINGness, and that we want to avoid trying to create meaning or intellectualizing it.

What is a Nakshatra?

Does my Nakshatra mean something? If so, what?

How many other people have the same Nakshatra as me?

How did you calculate my Nakshatra?

Why does this feel so special?

Can I record this ceremony?

I already have a mantra; Do I have to use this one?

Nakshatra Birthstar Mantra Setting the Stage...

Suggested Email: This is a sample email we at the davidji Meditation Academy have used to invite students to their online mantra ceremony, if we are doing the ceremony virtually. If the ceremony is in person, you of course do not need to send this level of detail.

#### Dear xxxx,

I am so thrilled to be able to connect with you today about your upcoming sacred mantra ceremony as part of xxxxxxx. As requested, we've scheduled your ceremony for day of week, month day. Here are your details!

day of week, month day, year at time am/pm time zone

Zoom Login Link: hxxxxx Meeting ID: xxx Passcode: xxxxx

To prepare for your ceremony:

- Please arrive and log in a few minutes before your designated time and set aside about 15 minutes for your ceremony.
- When you log in you will placed into a "waiting room" until we are ready to start your ceremony. When we are ready, you'll be added to the main Zoom room.
- If at all possible, we suggest you set up a dedicated space where you have privacy and reliable internet access (a direct Ethernet connection is best, or a strong WiFi signal). Ensure your space is a quiet, comfortable, and nurturing.
- Plan to be fully present with your camera and speaker on and all other electronics off.

And of course bring an open heart, as always.

Feel free to reach out to me directly if you have any questions!

Nakshatra Birthstar Mantra After the Ceremony..

Suggested Email: This is a sample email we at the davidji Meditation Academy have sent students after their online mantra ceremony, with a electronic copy of their mantra card, if we are doing the ceremony virtually. If the ceremony is in person, you of course do not need to send this because you will hand them hand written card as their ceremony memento.

#### Dear xxxx,

I am so thrilled you received your personal mantra this morning. Gifting you and your classmates with your personal mantras is such an honor for me and my fellow advanced teachers. Thank you so much for giving us that opportunity.

I am attaching for you a personal mantra card you can download to use for future reference and as a memento of your sacred ceremony. Nakshatra BirthSTAR Mantra Meditation is a powerful practice for moving into the stillness and silence within. Your own personal BirthSTAR comes from the name of the light from the star that heralded the moment when you passed from the unmanifest into the manifest – from stardust into birth.

It derives from the yogic tradition of India, which focuses on achieving a one-ness . . . unity . . . stillness . . . silence . . . bliss . . . no separation between anything . . . your pure unconditioned self.

Spend some time connecting with this mantra by meditating using your personal Nakshatra BirthSTAR mantra each day. And, davidji will discuss Nakshatras and mantra based meditation more during our upcoming live webinars after everyone has had their ceremony.

Bring any questions that pop up between now and then to that session. And if you have any pressing questions before then or would like to discuss any experiences you have with your meditation practice and your mantra, feel free to reach out to me, or davidji anytime.

## Nakshatra BirthSTARs & Sounds

#### Nakshatra Bija Sound

Arudra Ashwini Ashlesha Anu Radha Bharani Chitra Dhanishtha Hasta Jveshtha Krittika Magha Mrigashira Mool Porvashadha Porva Bhadrapada Porva Phalguni Punarvasu Pooshya Rohini Revati Satabisha Shravana Swathi Uttara Shadha Uttara Bhadrapada Uttara Phalguni Vishakha

Nakshatra Mantra Spelling Om Arudra Ritam Om Ashwini Ritam Om Ashlesha Ritam Om Anu Radha Ritam Om Bharani Ritam Om Chitra Ritam Om Dhanishtha Ritam Om Hasta Ritam Om Jveshtha Ritam Om Krittika Ritam Om Magha Ritam **Om Mrigashira Ritam** Om Mool Ritam Om Porvashadha Ritam Om Porva Bhadrapada Ritam **Om Porva Phalguni Ritam Om Punarvasu Ritam** Om Pooshva Ritam Om Rohini Ritam Om Revati Ritam Om Satabisha Ritam Om Shravana Ritam Om Swathi Ritam Om Uttara Shadha Ritam Om Uttara Bhadrapada Ritam Om Uttara Phalguni Ritam Om Vishakha Ritam

Mantra Pronunciation Om Ah -rood- ra Reetam Om Ashweeni Reetam Om Ash-lavsha- Reetam Om Anu- Radda Reetam Om Bha-rani Reetam Om Chee-tra Reetam Om Dhanish-ta Reetam Om Hasta Reetam Om Jvesh-ta Reetam Om Kree-teeka Reetam Om Ma-gha Reetam Om Mree gah sheera Reetam Om Mool Reetam Om Poorva Shada Reetam Om Poorva Bha dra pada Reetam Om Poorva P'alguni Reetam Om Poonar-vasu Reetam Om Poosh-va Reetam Om Ro -hee nee Reetam Om Rev-ahti Reetam Om Sata-bisha Reetam Om Shra-vana Reetam Om Swa-thi Reetam Om Uttara Sha-dha Reetam Om Uttara Bha-dra pada Reetam Om Uttara P'alguni Reetam Om Vishakha Reetam

The Shanti Mantra from the Aitareya Upanishad

### TRANSLITERATION

aum vān me manasi pratisthitā mano me vāci pratisthitam āvīrāvīrma edhi | vedasya ma āņisthaḥ śrutaṃ me mā prahāsīr anenādhītenāhorātrān saṃdadhāmy rtam vadiṣyāmi satyaṃ vadiṣyāmi tanmāmavatu tadvaktāram avatu avatu mām avatu vaktāram avatu vaktāram | oṃ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ ||

The Shanti Mantra from the Aitareya Upanishad

### PHONETIC

Om vāṅg may man a see pra tiṣh ṭee tā man o may vāa chee pra tiṣh ṭee tam ah veer ah veer ma ay dee.

va das ya ma āņee ish taḥ śhru taṃ may māh pra hā seer ah nay nā dee tay nah hor-ra trān saṃ da dhā me ri tam va diṣ yā me sat yaṃ va diṣ yā me tan mām a va too tad vak tār ram a va too a va too mām a va too vak tā ram a va too vak tā ram

om śhān tee śhān tee śhān tee

The Shanti Mantra from the Aitareya Upanishad

### SANSKRIT WORD TRANSLATION

Vangme vac = speech me = my, mine Manasi man = mind; asi in the Pratishtita prati = against; tisht = standing Mano = mindVaci vac = speech Avir = to reveal Ma = meEdhi = thatVedasva = of the Vedas Anisthah = pillar Srutam = heard or revealed Ma = no (before a verb) Prahasir = fail Anena = by this Nadhitena = study, understanding Ahas = day; ratri = night Samdadhami = established, comprehend Ritam = truth, law Vadisyami = speak Satyam = divine truth Tat = that; mam = me Avatu = protect, nourish, guide Vaktaram = speaker

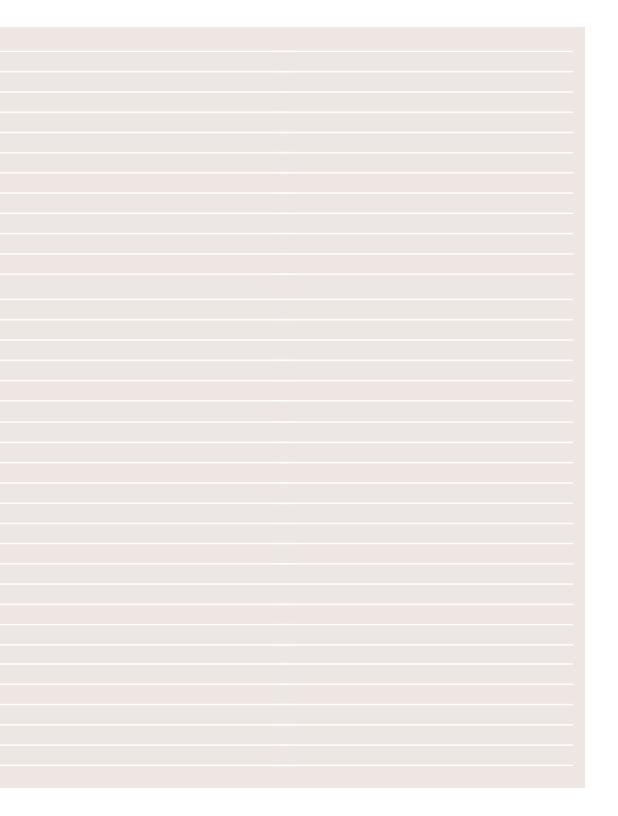
The Shanti Mantra from the Aitareya Upanishad

### **ENGLISH TRANSLATION**

Aum ! May my speech be in accord with the mind; May my mind be based on speech. O Self-effulgent One, reveal Thyself to me. May you both (speech and mind) be the carriers of the Veda to me. May not all that I have heard depart from me. I shall join together (obliterate the difference of) day And night through this study. I shall utter what is verbally true; I shall utter what is mentally true. May Brahman protect me; May That protect the speaker (the teacher), may That protect me; May that protect the speaker – may That protect the speaker. Om ! Peace ! Peace ! Peace



### MY NOTES



## THE YOGA SUTRAS & THE 8 LIMBS OF YOGA

Joga Philosophy

#### THE YOGA SUTRAS OF PATANJALI

The Yoga Sutras contain 196 Sutras, divided between four chapters, discussing the aims and practice of yoga, the development of yogic powers and finally, liberation. Like a gentle guiding hand, the Yoga Sutras warn you of the pitfalls on your spiritual journey and offer the means to overcome them. While there is a teaching in each Sutra, we'll look at a few here and leave the remainder for future exploration. In Vedic texts, it is common to encapsulate the whole teaching early in the discourse.

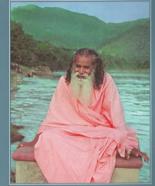
Patanjali does this in the first few sutras, giving you the essence of what's to come: "Yoga is the progressive settling of the mind into silence. When the mind is settled, we are established in our own essential state, which is unbounded consciousness. Our essential nature is usually overshadowed by the activity of the mind."

#### This means: Your spiritual practice should be to look within.

# Your true Self lies hidden in the silence between your thoughts, beyond all limitations. However, the doubts, chaos, and confusion of your thoughts cause you to forget who you really are. The obstacle to spiritual progress is stress, which creates fatigue, leading to doubts and causing laziness, which brings sensory attachments manifesting as delusions, which causes you to forget who you are. By being committed to your practices, you can overcome all of these.

To have a peaceful mind, you should cultivate attitudes of friendliness without jealousy toward those who are joyful; have compassion toward those who are unhappy and less fortunate; delight in and support the acts of the virtuous; and be impartial to and avoid the dramas of the impure. The fruit of wrong action is sorrow, the fruit of right action is joy. You must take responsibility for your thoughts, words, and actions by living consciously. The Yoga Sutras are a path of purification, refinement, and surrender.

#### The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali



Translation and Commentary by Sri Swami Satchidananda

### THE 8 LIMBS OF YOGA

1) YAMA - Enlightened conduct

2) **NIYAMA -** Personal observances or choices

3) **ASANA -** The physical practice to prepare the body

4) **PRANAYAMA** - Expanding your life force with breath

5) **PRATYAHARA** - Turning the senses inward

6) **DHARANA** - Training the mind to concentrate

7) **DHYANA** - Meditation, pure present moment awareness

8) SAMADHI - Unity with the Divine

A universal code of commandments or moral imperatives (essentially the DO-NOTs) that describe evolutionary behavior or how enlightened beings should live. In Sanskrit *yama* means death. The *yamas* are essentially the way we bring about compassionate death to our ego. In the ancient Indian texts, The Upanishads, they have been referred to as the "restraints."

AHIMSA (Non-violence) - Towards others, earth, environment,
animals, self, etc. Gandhi said, "If one does not practice nonviolence in
his personal relationships with others, he is vastly mistaken.
Nonviolence, like charity, must begin at home."

**SATYA (Truthfulness)** - In practice it means being honest in our words and actions with ourselves and those around us.

**ASTEYA (Non-stealing)** - Refraining from taking something that is no yours - physical items, intellectual property, someone's time, etc.

BRAHMACHARYA (Conscious choice making in relationships) -Traditionally associated with celibacy or "thou shalt not have sex"; but I prefer to see it as "let us pay attention to the choices we make in our relationships".

**APARIGRAHA (Non-coveting or non-greed)** - Having gratitude for what we do have and releasing comparison to others.

The prescribed actions and personal observances that reflect the internal dialogue of conscious people. If the yamasare the Universal DO NOTs, the niyamas are the Personal DOs. These observances include practices and teachings for making the most evolutionary personal choices in life.

**SHAUCHA (Cleanliness)** - Cleanliness of body and mind. Eating pure is not only about eating organically or raw, or whatever is trending at the moment. It is about eating to fuel your body. Also keeping your surroundings clean and pure - organizing your desk, doing the dishes, etc.

**SANTOSHA (Contentment)** - Contentment is about accepting all the situations that are occurring in your life. It's about the happiness within you. Contentment comes from within, it will never be found from material items.

**TAPAS (Austerity / Discipline)** - In Sanskrit, *tapas* can also be translated as fire. Discipline and fire are linked to each other and therefore both terms are correct to use when talking about *tapas*. This is about sticking to practices that serve you, daily habits that can keep your fire burning.

**SVADHYAYA (Self-study)** - This relates to the study of the Vedic scriptures to better know the self - diving deeper into your thoughts and patterns. This can be observing your thoughts, patterns, breathing habits, etc. Soon you will have a better understanding of why you do the things you do.

**ISHVARAPRANIDHANA (Surrender to what is)** - Possibly the most challenging *niyama*. This is about letting go of control & surrendering. It can be looking at your thoughts and actually letting go of them if they don't serve you at all. But it can also mean that you are lying in a field of grass, watching the birds and clouds and feel in complete harmony with them.



#### MY NOTES



# THE KLESHAS

Joga

These are mental states that cloud the mind and manifest in unwholesome actions. Kleshas include states of mind such as anxiety, fear, anger, jealousy, desire, depression, etc. Contemporary translators use other English words to translate the term kleshas, such as: afflictions, defilements, destructive emotions, disturbing emotions, negative emotions, mind poisons, etc.



Image sourced from specialyoga.org.uk

#### YOGA - THE PANCHA KLESHAS

The five kleshas - *Kleśa* is a term from Indian philosophy and yoga, meaning a "poison" or "affliction". In Patañjali's Yoga *Sutras* he explicitly identifies the *Pancha Kleshas*, or the five poisons of the mind:

1) ÁDVIYĀ - Ignorance

2) ASMITĀ - Egoism

3) RĀGA - Attachment

4) DVESA - Aversion

5) **ABHINIVEŚĀH-** Fear of death derived from ignorantly clinging to life

# EXERCISE: EXAMINING THE *PANCHA KLESHAS*

**ÁDVIYĀ** (Ignorance) - Who are you underneath your clothes... beneath your body? Without your job? Your family? Your positions and possessions? Your hobbies and habits? Get in touch with your eternal Self by releasing all labels and outer identifications.

**ASMITĀ** (Egoism) - We are human and it is our conditioned nature that pushesus to judge. Can you give yourselfpermission for just a few moments to WITNESS ratherthan JUDGE? And as the first fewjudgments come into your awareness...witness them and write them down. Connectwith your conditioned nature and begin to slowlyunravel it. Can you be born anew in every moment?

**RĀGA** (Attachment) - Practice this exercise to detect your attachments: Observe your mind – what is it drawn to? What does it settle on? -Recognize the desire you feel.

- -Give this feeling a name and a space inside you.
- Now see what happens if you don't automatically followthrough with it. Experience what it's like to create some space between feeling a want/need and acting on it. You can practice writing your desires down to break the cycle of feeling beholden to them.

#### EXERCISE: EXAMINING THE PANCHA KLESHAS

**DVESA** (Aversion) - Uncomfortable as it may be, sometimes a lesson lies in taking that step that takes us to a new ground, out of our comfort zone... to new possibilities. Here is something to think about: If you usually WANT to challenge yourself, what would it feel like to take a step back? If you usually DON'T WANT to challenge yourself, what would happen if you did?

To step out of a state of aversion is to step out of your ego's comfort zone. Being pushed around by the ego (and its YUM-YUK choices) is a vicious, never ending cycle that creates suffering. Here's how to disruptor break the cycle:

Identify one behavior, any behavior – ideally choose a small one – and change it or eliminate it and replace it with something else. Deep within, you will start to recognize that your True identity is not defined by your likes and dislikes. Your most genuine self that rests at the core of your being is beyond your likes and dislikes!

**ABHINIVESAH** (Fear of death derived from ignorantly clinging to life) - Ways to ease the feeling of fear are to:

1) Examine how you prioritize your day. Take care of things that are important for you, complete them so you don't owe people or yourself anything. Start small. With baby steps. The sensation of freedom or moksha will begin to weave into your being.

2) Not having said something, to yourself or someone else.

3) Don't wait to say thank you or I love you... let people know you appreciate them right away. You lose nothing and gain peace of mind.

4) Be gentle to yourself and others! Express your love. You can start the flow by texting someone and beginning a ripple of love.

# THE 4 YOGAS

Joga

#### Add a subheading

**BHAKTI YOGA** (Yoga of Devotion) - The Sanskrit word *bhakti* comes from the root *bhaj*, which means "to adore or worship God." Bhakti yoga has been called "love for love's sake" and "union through love and devotion." Bhakti yoga, like any other form of yoga, is a path to self-realization, to having an experience of oneness with everything. How do you practice *bhakti* yoga?

JNANA YOGA (Yoga of Wisdom) - *Jnana* is Sanskrit for "knowledge or wisdom" and Jnana Yoga is the path of attaining knowledge of the true nature of reality through the practice of meditation, self-inquiry, and contemplation. Jnana Yoga can be defined as the "awareness of absolute consciousness," and is a comprehensive practice of *svadyaya* or self-study (\* see *Niyamas & Mahavakayas*). How do you practice *jnana* yoga?

KARMA YOGA (Yoga of Action or Selfless Service) - The Sanskrit word "*Karma*" is derived from the root word "Kru," which translates as "work, deed or action." Yoga is a set of practices to unite the body, mind, and heart into a state of oneness. Karma yoga is a disciplined and conscious path to attaining this unitive state through unselfish, kind, and generous actions. This yoga of action involves renouncing the future fruits of our efforts as a spiritual offering rather than letting the ego to become attached to the results of our actions. How do you practice *karma* yoga?

**RAJA YOGA** (Yoga of the Royal Path / Oneness through meditation) - The foundation of Raja Yoga is Patanjali's 8 limbs of yoga. Following these eight limbs, the external limbs: Yama, Niyama, Asana, and pranayama. And the internal limbs: Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana, and Samadhi. Everytime you meditate, you are following the path of *raja* yoga. Besides meditation, what elements of the 8 limbs of yoga resonate with you? How do you practice them in your everyday life?

Karma Joga

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

Take time with a pen and paper to go through these questions, or use them as inspiration for your daily meditation practice. These questions will allow you to get more clarity on your karma yoga practice:

What are my innate gifts and talents? What sparks passion when I do it?

What is most needed right now in the world, my community, my home, etc?

When do I have the most free time or feel the most ease to help others?

Who or what do I feel the most compassion towards?

How do my innate gifts and what is needed align? How can I share my talents?

How does my heart feel when I share my innate gifts and talents?

What can I do everyday to share love, my gifts, compassion or respect with others?

## 4 NOBLE TRUTHS & THE EIGHTFOLD PATH

Buddhism

**The nature of Suffering (known as dukkha)**— Suffering is a predominant experience in life. More specifically, dukkha is the unsatisfying nature of our ever-changing life and the short-lived, transient nature of all things.



The root of Suffering (or dukkha samudaya) is our clinging to desires, resisting the reality of an ever- changing existence.

Buddha says that the root of the cause of suffering is found in the mind itself. In particular our tendency to grasp at things (or alternatively to push them away) places us fundamentally at odds with the way life really is. For example, we suffer when we lose something because our mind formed an attachment to it.



**The cessation of Suffering (or dukkha nirodha)** comes about through ceasing to cling — the powerful act of letting go of our attachments to outcomes and no longer trying to keep things the same.

**The path leading to the cessation of Suffering (or dukkha nirodha gaminipatipada magga)** can be attained by practicing the Noble Eightfold Path (ariyo ațțhaṅgiko maggo), which describes eight core characteristics to embrace to end our suffering.



1) **RIGHT VIEW** 

2) **RIGHT THOUGHTS** 

3) **RIGHT SPEECH** 

4) **RIGHT CONDUCT** 

5) **RIGHT LIVELIHOOD** 

6) **RIGHT EFFORT** 

7) **RIGHT MINDFULNESS** 

8) **RIGHT MEDITATION** 

## BUDDHISM - THE EIGHTFOLD PATH

- **Right View** Seeing things how they really are, not how you think they are. For example, keeping yourself free from prejudice.
- **Right Thoughts** Having kind thoughts, for example, not being greedy. In
   other words, to turn away from the evils of this world and direct your mind towards righteousness and positive thoughts.
- **Right Speech** To refrain from harmful speech and to speak kindly to everyone. Avoid lies, gossip and hurtful words.
- **Right Conduct** To make sure that your deeds are peaceful, benevolent
   and compassionate. This includes, saving life (not destroying it), not stealing, being respectful to others.
- **Right Livelihood** To earn your living in such a way as to entail no evil
   consequences. Examples of right livelihood may include making a living as a teacher or doctor jobs that do not involve harming people, animals or the Earth.
- Right Effort To work hard and put effort into understanding the way of
   the world. We should direct our efforts to the overcoming of ignorance and selfish desires.
  - Right Mindfulness To cherish good and pure thoughts for all that we say
    and do arise from our thoughts. We should be aware of our actions, words and thoughts at all times.
    - Right Meditation Spend time in meditation daily. Contemplate the
       teachings and apply them in a meaningful way to your life after spending time in stillness & silence.

8

## BUDDHISM - THE EIGHTFOLD PATH

The Noble Eightfold Path is a practical guideline for an individual's spiritual, moral, and mental development. Buddha instructed if you live each day with these eight characteristics as your guiding principles, you transcend the conditioned attachments, illusions, and delusions that create suffering in your life. Following these guidelines leads to a deeper understanding of all things, which includes the expansion of:

wisdom through:1) right view.2) right intention

moral conduct through:3) right speech,4) right action5) right livelihood

mental development through:6) right effort,7) right mindfulness8) right concentration

According to Buddhism, practicing the guidelines of the Eightfold Path in daily life while having a deep understanding of the Four Noble Truths is how one attains a higher level of existence and ultimately reachesNirvana, a state of union with all things— Buddhism's version of one-ness.

Practicing a Buddhist meditation is simply resonating with the vibrations of the universe through the guidance of one of the most amazing teachers to have ever lived and connecting to his traits of peaceful coexistence and unconditional love, as well as expressing compassion and loving-kindness to others. This would seem to support the tenets of Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Jainism, Sikhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Sufism, even atheism . . . and even the most fundamental or detached expressions of devotion to a higher power.



# THE BHAVANAS



### BUDDHISM - THE BHAVANAS

The primary purpose of Buddhist meditation is to train the mind to slow down and ultimately, be still. The Buddhist term for meditation is *bhavana*, or "mental cultivation," and the three most well-known *bhavanas* are:

#### 1) METTA - LOVING - KINDNESS

2) SAMATHA - TRANQUILITY

3) VIPASSANA - INSIGHT

In **metta bhavana**, you concentrate on sending out metta, translated as unconditional loving-kindness, to all living beings. In metta meditative exercises, my personal technique is to start with directing thoughts of benevolence, love, and compassion inward.

Although self-directed loving-kindness was never specifically instructed by the Buddha,I have found that starting the meditation this way quickly engages and empowers me by providing a very clear object of attention. I have asked Master metta practitioners, Buddhist monks, and even His Holiness, The Dalai Lama, if self- directing metta is acceptable in starting a metta meditation, and they have all assured me that otherBuddhist writings imply that it may be an appropriate start to the practice.

The 13th-century, Sufi poet Hafiz wrote, "I am a hole in the flute through which the Christ breath flows." And if you can see yourself as conduit of metta—not the flute and not the breath— but simply as a hole, a channel, a conduit, an empty pathway, then you can flow unconditional loving-kindness in and flow it back out without becoming attached to it.

We use our breathas the vehicle to transport metta first into our heart and then back out to others, using your heart as point of reference for gradually radiating loving-kindness outward. First, you take a long, slow deep breath in of metta and feel it fill your heart. Then you flow it back out to those you deeply respect, such as your most revered teachers or life guides.

Next, take a long, slow deep breath in of metta and feel it fill your heart, then radiate loving-kindness to your loved ones—those living and those who've left this earthly realm.

Then take a long, slow deep breath in of metta and feel it fill your heart, and then radiate it out to your friends. Then take a long, slow deep breath in of metta and feel it fill your heart, and shower it onto someone you know who may be suffering.

Next, take a long, slow deep breath in of metta and feel it fill your heart, and then send it to someone with whom you have a grievance. (I often do that one twice to expand my capacity for forgiveness, acceptance, and compassion.)

Then take a long, slow deep breath in of metta and feel it fill your heart, and radiate it out to all sentient beings on the planet.

Notice that as you continue to expand your circle of loving-kindness, you direct metta to your most intimate relationships, to your enemies, and finally toward all beings on the planet. At a certain point in the practice, you realize you are simply a conduit of love, that your heart is just bursting with metta, and you've got enough love inside for the whole world!

It's at this point that I take a long, slow deep breath in of metta, feel it fill my heart and then radiate that love out into the universe, sending it to every corner of the galaxy.

I stay in that space, breathing it in from every nook and cranny of the cosmos and then radiating it back out so it has no limits.

I can sit in a space like this for 30 minutes, opening my heart, feeling gratitude in every cell of my body, flowing forgiveness, and feeling self-love...selfcompassion...self-forgiveness...ripple through me.

I have found metta meditation to be a very nourishing practice. Both first-time meditators and seasoned meditators alike appreciate its simple sweetness and its powerful softening ability. If you are holding a grudge, carrying around anger, overwhelmed with sadness, or find yourself pointing fingers, the metta bhavana will transform you to a healing state very quickly.

The ancientBuddhist teachings suggest that one should master metta bhavana before moving on to any other typeof meditation. Interesting, right?

Always start with your heart. I recommend that you take your time cultivating this practice. Start with just five minutes, get comfortable there, and simply slow each phase of the process down until the conduit of your heart flows in and out in slow motion. Over time, see if you can stretch it to 10, then 15 minutes—the perfect amount of time to receive the optimal benefits of a heart-opening practice.

After a few weeks of practicing this teaching, the metta meditation will become the gentle way you start your day. You'll quickly notice that your heart is more open, you are more tolerant of irritations around you, and you have a ripple of a smile flowing through every word, thought, and action. You'll also realize that it is a pure present-moment experience to help you connect to your essence. Samatha bhavana is the practice of bringing about calm to the mind through single-mindedness of concentration. Samatha can be translated as calm, peace, or tranquility.

The meditator focuses on one object or action, such as witnessing your breathing or soft-gazing at a drishti point. Samatha bhavana practitioners believe that by concentrating on just one thing for an extended period of time, the mind will become stilled to the point of calmness and tranquility, hence the name samatha. Samatha bhavana is specifically designed to cultivate your abilities of concentration and thought to prepare the mind for the third type of Buddhist bhavana, vipassana, or insight meditation.

Master Buddhist meditators advise spending years cultivating the mind through samatha bhavana before moving on to vipassana, the more advanced bhavana. The key to any physical practice, fitness exercise, or sport—whether you are lifting weights, running, climbing, swimming, dancing, or cycling—is to strengthen the mindbody. And for Buddhist meditations that exercise is samatha. Yet, as American Buddhism has flourished over the pastforty years, attention on samatha bhavana has withered and vipassana has thrived because the high achieverin us wants to skip ahead to the end result without taking the time to practice and really cultivate our ability of concentration. But this method is revered because this type of meditation technique was first used by the Buddhato cultivate his own concentration.

#### SAMATHA BHAVANA

One of the more common forms of **samatha bhavana** is using a basic visual object of attention known as a kasina. There are ten kasina mentioned in the ancient Buddhist scripture known as the Pali Tipitaka:

1.earth (paṭhavī kasiņa),
2.water (āpo kasiņa),
3.fire (tejo kasiņa),
4.air, wind (vāyo kasiņa),
5.blue, green (nīla kasiņa),
6.yellow (pīta kasiņa),
7.red (lohita kasiņa),
8.white (odāta kasiņa),
9.enclosed space, hole, opening (ākāsa kasiņa),
10.consciousness (viññāṇa kasiņa) or a bright light (āloka kasiņa)

The kasina is typically described as a colored disk, with the particular color, properties, and dimensions based on which kasina is being used as the object of attention. In the beginning stages of kasina meditation, an actual physical object is used as the object of concentration. For example, to meditate using the earth kasina, you'd paint or draw a red-brown circle on a canvas or piece of paper, or find a chunk of earth or clay to gaze at—even the top of a hill or mountain in the distance will work as long as there are no moving objects between you and the kasina. Then you softly gaze at it, similar to a *drishti* meditation.

In time, as you become more advanced in your concentration abilities, after gazing at the image for ten minutes, you would take the training wheels off and close your eyes allowing the mental image snapshot to reproduce itself in your mind's eye. Once you have cultivated samatha kasina meditation, you simply close your eyes as you begin your meditation and recall the image into your awareness – similar to the practice of Sri Yantra. Once you have opened your heart through metta bhavana and calmed your mind and cultivated your ability of concentration through samatha bhavana, it is ready to be trained further through the practice of vipassana bhavana (known as insight meditation), in which you are mindful of all your thoughts and feelings and witness them with detachment until you have the experience of insight into the truth of your life. When you experience thoughts, sounds, or physical sensations, you don't react to them. Rather, you stay present with them as they occur and witness them with no judgment, without defining each moment as good or bad, right or wrong, pleasant or unpleasant. You simply let them be and allow yourself to also JUST BE. In time, as this silent witness who simply watches everything that unfolds within you and around you, you begin to notice that your thoughts actually create sensations in your body and then the sensations create thoughts. You become aware of the vicious cycle that can hijack our consciousness—but you do nothing with it. It is your awareness of the process that brings insight.

*Vipassana* is the root of what our current culture refers to as mindfulness and increasingly more and more Buddhist teachers have shed their robes, edited out the Buddhist connection, changed the languaging, made it more about stress reduction— and in so doing, have made *vipassana* much more understandable and accessible to the mainstream. After attending many lectures and teachings on mindfulness, I've noticed that what also has been edited out is the tenderness of truly being mindful. In its place is a more stress-relief based conversation. I understand that teachers of this teaching are attempting to reach the masses and not scare them away by keeping the languaging more scientific, non-denominational, and distinctly non-"spiritual," but in the process, the true heart of mindfulness has been lost. It's turned into a buzz-word and marketing tool, and has even become trendy, taking on a coolness or a cache of hipsterism. I feel that whatever can get people meditating is great. And I would encourage you that if your orientation to mindfulness was from one of these types of classes or books, that you go deeper and take some time to explore the ancient Buddhist foundations of this magnificent practice.

#### VIPASSANA BHAVANA

Probably, the most prolific teacher of vipassana in the mainstream is Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn who developed the Mindfulness BasedStress Reduction (MBSR)program at theUniversity of Massachusetts Medical Center in 1979. He tactfully kept it sciencebased, secular, and simple, positioning the ancient practice as a tool for physical and emotional

healing and stress reduction—things we all grapple with every day.Over the past30 years, he evolved MBSR into a common form of complementary medicine addressing a variety of health problems where it is now offered in over 200 medical centers, hospitals, and clinics around the world, including some of the leading integrative medical centers such as the Scripps Center for Integrative Medicine, the Duke Center for Integrative Medicine, and the Jefferson-Myrna Brind Center for IntegrativeMedicine.

Dr. Kabat-Zinn has authored many research studies using MBSR. And, in addition to the obvious scientific benefits we attribute to meditation such as lower blood pressure, more restful sleep, less emotional reactivity, and heightened immune function, MBSR is now widely used to lessen chronic pain, increase work-place well-being, decrease drug dependency, increase self-esteem, and ease anxiety.MBSR is a fusion of mindfulness meditation and yoga and is usually taught as an 8-week intensive. And, because it is languaged as a healing lifestyle program and explained more scientifically, it is probably more palatable to corporate decision-makers and hospital administrative committees that approve these types of programs. The brilliance of Jon Kabat-Zinn is that he is so tender and real-world in his content and teaching style. When you learn directly from him, the compassion of the Buddha effortlessly flows through his words and guidance even though he is sharing a very modern translation of the ancient teachings.

### VIPASSANA BHAVANA

Most people first experience vipassana at ten-day (or more) vipassana retreats usually led by a Buddhist teacher or a vipassana devotee. The common thread in all vipassana retreats is that they take place in total silence—you don't speak; you don't read; you don't make eye contact; you don't drink alcohol or indulge in recreational substances; you rise before the sun; you meditate for several hours; you eat one big meal around 11 AM; you meditate for several hours; and you are in bed by 9 PM.

Other than receiving guidance on how to sit, how to witness, and instruction on some basic Buddhist elements such as the FourNoble Truths and the NobleEight-fold Path, there are no lectures or entertainment. The process is very specific and everything is simple. After you have gotten over the shock of giving up your cell phone and the discomfort of being silent, you begin to see life as so simple and your needs and desires in a less complex way. Being in silence for ten days, you realize how much you judge everything, project yourself into other people's minds, and fantasize about what they are thinking or believing. You slowly realize most of what you say doesn't need to be spoken. It's very intense, and it can feel a bit rigid. Each day as you descend more deeply into silence, it is filled chock-full of *aha!* moments. But it's not for everyone.

Vipassana is known as the meditation practice that the Buddha used to attain enlightenment. I find vipassana to be very simple and inclusive. I practiced it for several years just because of its ease and found the practice to be a nurturing and gentle form of meditation. I recommend you experience vipassana at some point in your life, but unless you desire to explore the first two bhavanas in advance, you may find this beautiful practice quite jarring.

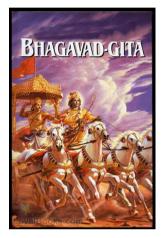
There is something sacred and holy about Buddhist meditations. Not in a religious sense, but in the purity and simplicity of the practice which is so heart-based and self-compassionate. We beat ourselves up so regularly—judging, ruminating, relentlessly second-guessing our choices, woulda-coulda-shoulding ourselves, regretting our words or actions, grieving over past decisions. Yet the practices of metta, samatha, and vipassana have a special power to soften us and to give us permission to be okay with ourselves no matter what is happening in our lives in a given moment.



### THE BHAGAVAD GITA

"Better indeed is knowledge than mechanical practice. Better than knowledge is meditation. But better still is surrender of attachment to results, because there follows immediate peace." – Bhagavad Gita

In the ancient text written around the 5th century, the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna counsels the great warrior Arjuna on the purpose of life. Arjuna is deep in the midst of a profound spiritual dilemma, as he knows his purpose in life is to be a fierce warrior, but he is agonized by fear, grief, uncertainty, sadness, and regret as he readies his troops for a calamitous battle in a huge family feud, pitting friend against friend, cousin against cousin, teacher against student, and patriarch against son.



As he stands with Krishna as his charioteer in the middle of the vast plains of Kurukshetra in northern India, Arjuna gazes intently at the two opposing armies of his relatives that now face each other poised for battle. He is paralyzed by the gravity of the task before him—leading the charge of one army against the other and, in the process, causing the death of hundreds of his friends, esteemed teachers, and relatives. He asks his divine guide how he can possibly live with his decision, and Krishna replies with a spiritual dialogue spanning 18 chapters on yoga, self-realization, dharma (or purpose), devotion to God, the meaning of life, and ultimately, the nature of reality. When Arjuna asks his higher power, "Oh dear Lord, how shall I move forward in life?" Krishna replies in Chapter 2, Verse 48, "Yogastha kuru karmani"— establish yourself in the present moment, and then perform action."

## THE BHAGAVAD GITA

#### What Is the Bhagavad Gita? The First Book of Yoga: The Enduring Influence of the Bhagavad Gita Excerpted from Yoga Journal, October 12, 2018

The Gita is the sixth book of the Mahabharata, one of India's most famous epic poems. It's unclear exactly when the Gita was composed—estimates vary widely, but a number of scholars suggest it was completed around 200 CE and then inserted into the larger work; many see it as the first fully realized yogic scripture. Curious though it may seem that such an ancient text from a foreign culture has been so enthusiastically received by Westerners, the Gita, like all truly great works of literature, can be read on many levels: metaphysical, moral, spiritual, and practical; hence its appeal.

For those who haven't had the pleasure of reading it, the Gita recounts a dialogue between Arjuna, one of five Pandava princes, and the Hindu deity Krishna, who in this epic serves as Arjuna's charioteer. Arjuna and his brothers have been exiled from the kingdom of Kurukshetra for 13 years and cut off from their rightful heritage by another faction of the family; the Gita takes up their struggle to reclaim the throne, which requires that Arjuna wage war against his own kinsmen, bringing his considerable military skills to bear.

The story begins on the dusty plains of Kurukshetra, where Arjuna, a famed archer, is poised to fight. But he hesitates. He sees arrayed against him friends, teachers, and kin, and believes that to fight—and likely kill—these men would be to commit agrievous sin and could bring nothing good even if he were to win the kingdom back. Krishna chides him for his cowardice— Arjuna is from the warrior caste after all, and warriors are meant to fight—but then goes on to present a spiritual rationale for battling his enemies, one that encompasses a discussion of the karma, jnana and bhakti yogas, as well as the nature of divinity, humankind's ultimate destiny, and the purpose of mortal life.

## THE BHAGAVAD GITA

Reprint from Masters of Wisdom & Meditation Teacher Training Manual

The Bhagavad Gita -The Song of the Bhagavan, often referred to as simply the Gita, is a 700verse scripture that is part of the Hindu epic Mahabharata. This scripture contains a conversation between Pandava prince Arjuna and his guide Lord Krishna on a variety of theological and philosophical issues.

Faced with a fratricidal war, a despondent Arjuna turns to his charioteer Krishna for counsel on the battlefield.Krishna, through the course of the Gita, imparts to Arjuna wisdom, the path to devotion, and the doctrine ofselfless action. The Gita upholds the essence and the theological tradition of the Upanishads. However, unlike the rigorous monism of the mukhya, the earlier Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita also integrates dualism and theism.

Numerous commentaries have been written on the Bhagavad Gita with widely differing views on the essentials, beginning with Adi Sankara's commentary on the Gita in the eighth century CE. Commentators see the setting of the Gita in a battlefield as an allegory for the ethical and moral struggles of the human life. The Bhagavad Gita's call for selfless action inspired many leaders of the Indian independence movement including Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, who referred to the Gita as his "spiritual dictionary".

Bhagavad Gita comprises 18 chapters (section 25 to 42) in the Bhishma Parva of the epic Mahabharata and consists of 700 verses. Because of differences in recensions, the verses of the Gita may be numbered in the full text of the Mahabharata as chapters 6.25–42 or as chapters 6.23–40.

According to the recension of the Gita commented on by Adi Shankara, a prominent philosopher of the Vedanta school, the number of verses is 700, but there is evidence to show that old manuscripts had 745 verses. The verses themselves, using the range and style of Sanskrit Anustup meter (chhandas) with similes and metaphors, are written in a poetic form that is traditionally chanted.

Due to its presence in the Mahabharata, Bhagavad Gita is classified as a Smriti text or "that which is remembered". Śruti texts, such as the Upanishads, are believed to be revelations of divine origin, whereas Smritis are authored recollections of tradition and are therefore fallible. As a Smriti, the scriptural authority of the Gita is dependent on the Upanishads (Śruti). However, those branches of Hinduism that give it thestatus of an Upanishad also consider it to be a Śruti or "revealed text". Even though the Bhagavad Gita is in many respects different from the Upanishads in format and content, it is still taken to represent a summary of the Upanishadic teachings and is thus called "the Upanishad of the Upanishads". Advaita Vedanta (monistic conclusion of the Vedas) school of philosophy uses the Bhagavad Gita in conjunction with the Upanishads and Brahma sutras to arrive at its message of non-duality.

#### **Background**

In the epic Mahabharata, Sanjaya, counsellor of the Kuru king Dhritarashtra, after returning

from the battlefield to announce the death of Bhisma begins recounting the details of the Mahabharata war. Bhagavad Gitaforms the content of this recollection. The Gita begins before the start of the climactic Kurukshetra war, wherethe Pandava prince Arjuna is filled with doubt on the battlefield. Realizing that his enemies are his ownrelatives, beloved friends, and revered teachers, he turns to his charioteer and guide, Krishna, for advice. Responding to Arjuna's confusion and moral dilemma, Krishna explains to Arjuna his duties as a warrior and prince, elaborating on a variety of philosophical concepts and universal consciousness is also made clear.

1. **Arjuna–Visada yoga** (The Distress of Arjuna contains 46 verses): Arjuna has requested Krishna to move his chariot between the two armies. His growing dejection is described as he fears losing friends and relatives as a consequence of war.

2. **Sankhya yoga** (The Book of Doctrines contains 72 verses): After asking Krishna for help, Arjuna is instructed into various subjects such as, Karma yoga, Jnana yoga, Sankhya yoga, Buddhi yoga and the immortal nature of the soul. This chapter is often considered the summary of the entire Bhagavad Gita.

# THE BHAGAVAD GITA

3. **Karma yoga** (Virtue in Work contains 43 verses): Krishna explains how performance of prescribed duties, but without attachment to results, is the appropriate course of action for Arjuna.

4. **Jnana-Karma-Sanyasa yoga** (The Religion of Knowledge contains 42 verses): Krishna reveals that he has lived through many births, always teaching yoga for the protection of the pious and the destruction of the impious and stresses the importance of accepting a guru.

5. **Karma-Sanyasa yoga** (Religion by Renouncing Fruits of Works contains 29 verses): Arjunaasks Krishna if it is better to forgo action or to act ("renunciation or discipline of action"). Krishnaanswers that both are ways to the same goal, but that acting in Karma yoga is superior.

6. **Dhyan yoga or Atmasanyam yoga** (Religion by Self-Restraint contains 47 verses): Krishna describes the Ashtanga yoga. He further elucidates the difficulties of the mind and the techniques by which mastery of the mind might be gained.

7. Jnana-Vijnana yoga (Religion by Discernment contains 30 verses): Krishna describes the absolute reality and its illusory energy Maya.

8. **Aksara-Brahma yoga** (Religion by Devotion to the One Supreme God contains 28 verses): This chapter contains eschatology of the Bhagavad Gita. Importance of the last thought before death, differences between material and spiritual worlds, and light and dark paths that a soul takes after death are described.

9. **Raja-Vidya-Raja-Guhya yoga** (Religion by the Kingly Knowledge and the Kingly Mystery contains 34 verses): Krishna explains how His eternal energy pervades, creates, preserves, and destroys the entire universe. According to theologian Christopher Southgate, verses of this chapter of the Gita are panentheistic.

10. Vibhuti-Vistara-yoga (Religion by the Heavenly Perfections contains 42 verses): Krishna is described as the ultimate cause of all material and spiritual existence. Arjuna accepts Krishna asthe Supreme Being, quoting great sages who have also done so. Krishna first displays his Vishvarupa (Universal Form) to Arjuna on the battlefield of Kurukshetra, described in Visvarupa-Darsana yoga, chapter 11

11. **Visvarupa–Darsana yoga** (The Manifesting of the One and Manifold contains 55 verses): On Arjuna's request, Krishna displays his "universal form" (Viśvarūpa), a theophany of a being facing every way and emitting the radiance of a thousand suns, containing all other beings and material in existence.

12. **Bhakti yoga** (The Religion of Faith contains 20 verses): In this chapter Krishna glorifies the path of devotion to God. Krishna describes the process of devotional service (Bhakti yoga). He also explains different forms of spiritual disciplines.

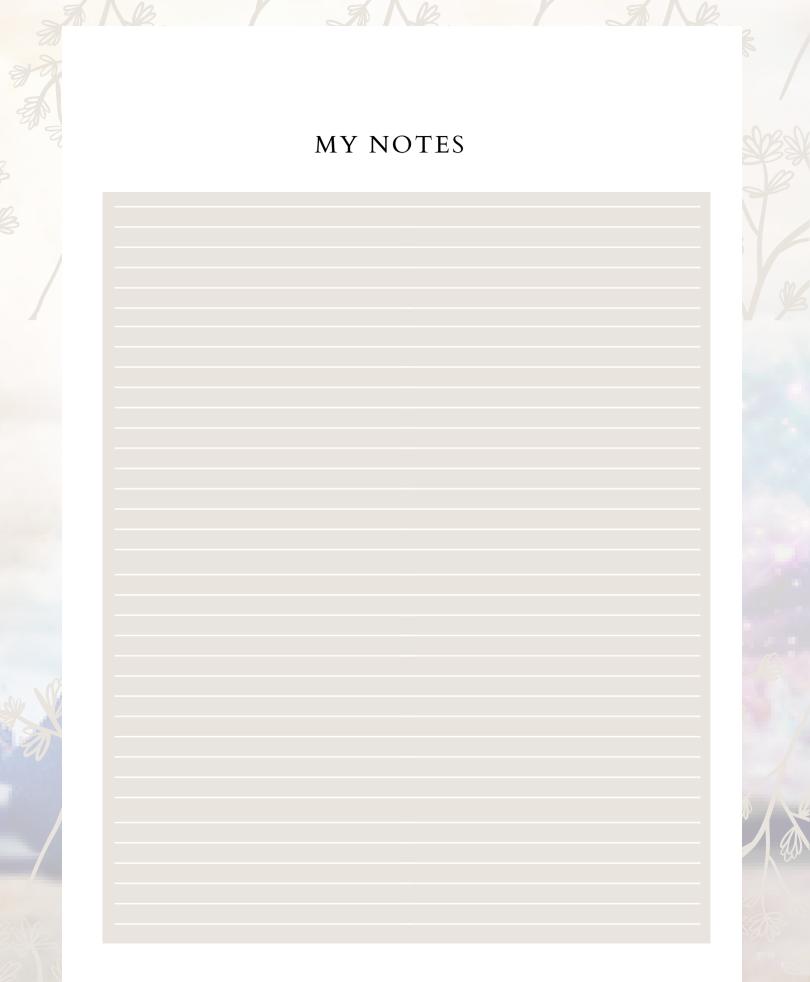
13. **Ksetra-Ksetrajna Vibhaga yoga** (Religion by Separation of Matter and Spirit contains 35 verses): The difference between transient perishable physical body and the immutable eternal soul is described. The difference between individual consciousness

14. **Gunatraya–Vibhaga yoga** (Religion by Separation from the Qualities contains 27 verses): Krishna explains the three modes (gunas) of material nature pertaining to goodness, passion, and nescience. Their causes, characteristics, and influence on a living entity are also described.

15. **Purusottama yoga** (Religion by Attaining the Supreme contains 20 verses): Krishna identifies the transcendental characteristics of God such as, omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence. Krishna also describes a symbolic tree (representing material existence), which has its roots in the heavens and its foliage on earth. Krishna explains that this tree should be felled with the "axe of detachment", after which one can go beyond to his supreme abode. 16 **Daivasura-Sampad-Vibhaga yoga** (The Separateness of the Divine and Undivine contains 24 verses): Krishna identifies the human traits of the divine and the demonic natures. He counsels that to attain the supreme destination one must give up lust, anger, greed, and discern between right and wrong action by discernment through Buddhi and evidence from the scriptures.

17. **Sraddhatraya-Vibhaga yoga** (Religion by the Threefold Kinds of Faith contains 28 verses): Krishna qualifies the three divisions of faith, thoughts, deeds, and even eating habits corresponding to the three modes (gunas).

18. **Moksha–Sanyasa yoga** (Religion by Deliverance and Renunciation contains 78 verses): In this chapter, the conclusions of previous seventeen chapters are summed up. Krishna asks Arjuna to abandon all forms of dharma and simply surrender unto him and describes this as the ultimate perfection of life.

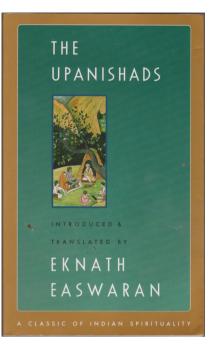


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# THE UPANISHADS

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The Upanishads are an assortment of texts central to Hinduism that are recorded from oral traditions. They contain information regarding the philosophical principles and concepts of Hinduism, including karma (right action), brahman (ultimate reality), the atman (true Self or soul), moksha (liberation from the cycle of reincarnation) and Vedic doctrines that explain Selfrealization through yoga and meditation practices. Upanishad is a Sanskrit word that translates in English to mean "sitting at the feet of" or "sitting down near." This illustrates the position of receiving wisdom and guidance humbly from a teacher or guru.



## THE MAHAVAKYAS

The Sanskrit word "Maha" can be translated as great or mighty, and the word "Vakya" translates as a sentence or saying. The *Mahavakyas* are the most revered and powerful sayings in the ancient Indian scriptures of the Upanishads. The regular contemplation and meditation of the *Mahavakyas* purifies our minds, promotes introspection and insight, and leads to transcendental states of awareness.

There are four main *Mahavakyas* but their contemplation leads one to the same realization. They present different points of view on how to see the indivisible oneness of all things. These four aphorisms also provide the answers to the classic questions of Jnana Yoga - "Who am I?" "What is my purpose?" "What is The nature of this reality?" These can all be answered by meditating on the *Mahavakyas*.

## THE FOUR MAHAVAKYAS

There are four master sayings, but their contemplation leads to the same realization.

1) **PRAJNANAM BRAHMA-BRAHMAN** Ultimate reality, supreme consciousness

2) **AHAM BRAHMASMI** I am Brahman, the supreme self

3) **TAT TVAM ASI** Thou art that, I am that

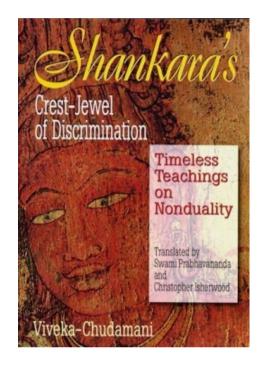
4) **AYAM ATMA BRAHMA-ATMAN** Ultimate reality, my true self is Brahman

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# CREST JEWEL OF DISCRIMINATION

ayers of life

# SHANKARA'S CREST JEWEL OF DISCRIMINATION



# LAYERS OF LIFE

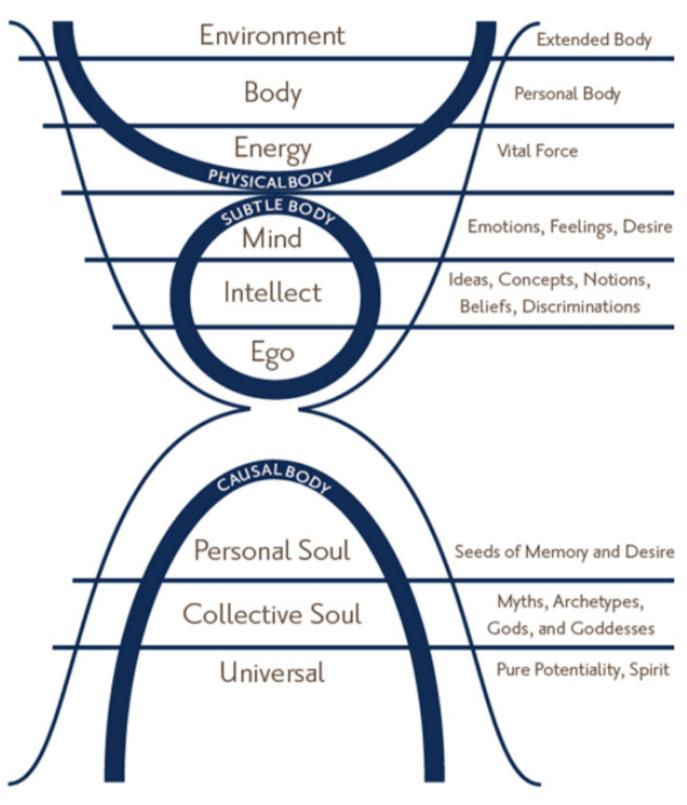


Image sourced from kayrice.com

# THE 7 STATES OF

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### THE SEVEN STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS

1. JAGRAT CHETNA - Waking consciousness

**2. SWAPN CHETNA** - Dreaming consciousness

**3. SUSHUPTI CHETNA** - Dreamless, deep sleep consciousness

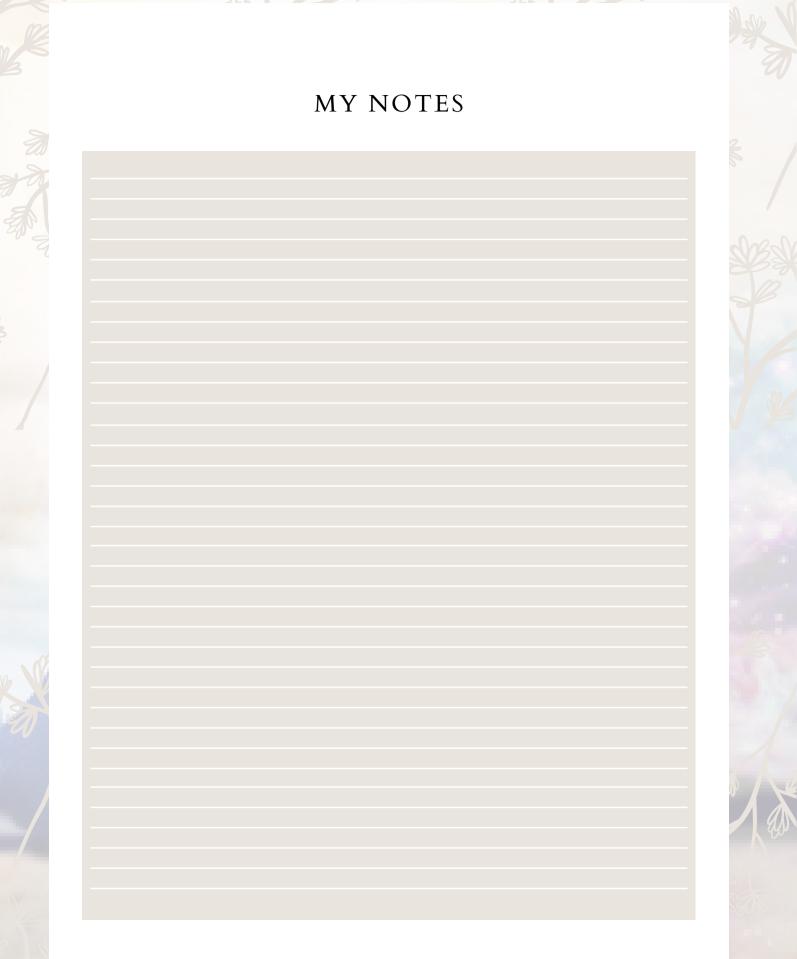
**4. TURIYA CHETNA** - Trancsendent consciousness

**5. TURIYATITA CHETNA** - Cosmic witnessing consciousness

**6. BHAGAVAT CHETNA** - Divine God-like consciousness

7. BRAHMI CHETNA - Unity consciousness

(CHETANA - a state of consciousness)



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The Art of Teaching

The Art of Jeaching

KEY AREAS TO CONSIDER WHEN PREPARING FOR YOUR NEXT CLASS

Ideally, as you prepare for your classes, you want to look getting comfortable with your content and presenting it in a way that engages your students! How you communicate is just as important as what you communicate.

Good teachers have several qualities in common. Here are a few areas to focus on as you plan for your next class:

1) **Be prepared and know your content.** Believe in yourself and show that to your students.

2) Have a plan for each class and adjust as needed based on the cues you get from your students by being observant and flexible. At the same time, do not try to be all things to all people. You are the expert! Trust that and your students will recognize it in you and learn from you!

3) **Be clear**. Organize your thoughts and explain the concepts simply and easily, in a way students new to meditation or the wisdom traditions can understand. Also remember that you will have students whose learning styles vary so explain in ways that are understandable and interesting for Kaphas, Vatas and Pittas!

4) **Engage your students**. Allow them to engage with the material being covered. Through experience they are more likely to absorb the teachings.

5) **Put yourself in their shoes.** Remember what it is like to learn something for the first time. Give students time to process information and answer questions.

6) **Be aware of your own verbal and non-verbal communication cues**. Smile and relax. Be yourself. Connect with your students throughout and lead them to a next step as you wrap up your class!

7) Assess your teaching style on a regular basis, and keep practicing!!! You can find a teaching assessment tool under "Evaluating Your Class."

# LEADING A CLASS

Introductory Meditation Class

# LEADING AN INTRO CLASS

Feel free to use this format as either a free introductory session or as the first class in a multi-class training process.

1) Intro & engage your audience

2) Have the stress conversation

3) **Deeper into fight-flight, the science** of stress

4) Meditation as the anitdote to stress

5) Lead a meditation

6) Have the layers of consciousness talk

7) Wrap up & promote future classes

# LEADING A CLASS

#### 1) Introduction & engagement

Hello my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and welcome to this class on \_\_\_\_\_\_.

• Before we start, let's explore why you are here and what you hope to learn or achieve – poll the audience & write their answers on a whiteboard or flip chart. (Here you are essentially asking the students what they hope to gain from learning to meditate.)

- How many of you have never meditated?
- How many of you have a current practice? And ask what kind of method they are currently using.
- And how many of you are crisis meditators? Explain what that is
- I too was once a crisis meditator (puts them at ease)

• Brief Introduction (your story; your background) – where you were; where you are; how meditation has benefitted you; how it has benefited your students using real-life examples; why you are the one to teach this class.

• Provide an overview of what the class will entail & what they can expect in the end.

Conclude this section with, "for thousands of years, people have meditated to discover the stillness & silence that rests within – to discover who you really are beneath all the layers and constrictions of life. Five thousand years later, we can use it as a tool to deeply connect us to source in a spiritual way – but even more practically to help us move beyond the daily stresses of life so we can experience greater clarity, slow the swirl of overwhelm, make better decisions, step into our power, and live lives of deeper fulfillment."

#### 2) Stress conversation

Begin with a conversation of stress – the body responds to stress by preparing to respond aggressively to or by withdrawing from a perceived threat. This happens 8-15 times a day on average. A build-up of stress inhibits the natural flow of energy & information impacting the clarity & efficiency of our mind and the balance in our life. The deeper rest experienced during meditation helps you regain that equilibrium.

- Anyone here experiencing stress? Make it real.
- Here's how I define stress STRESS is how you respond when your needs are not met. Anyone here not having their needs met? (show of hands).

• What is stress? Explain based on destressifying and the your teacher training lessons. Ask them how their body/mind feels when they experience stress.

#### 3) Deeper into "Fight-Flight" the Biological Stress Response

- Explain physical response increased heart rate, blood pressure, breathing, etc.)
- Explain emotional responses of emotional defensiveness/aggressiveness & emotional withdrawal

#### 4) Meditation - The Antidote to Stress

Explain the basics of meditation as an antidote to stress response (what is meditation & what it's not; reality that we have 60,000 to 80,000 thoughts a day – but we are not our thoughts – we are the space between our thoughts, but having thoughts is normal – the progressive quieting of the fluctuations of the mind; explain yoga citta vritti nirodha) lowered heart rate, blood pressure, breathing, etc.

# Benefits of meditation. Meditation has been scientifically proven to, pick a few and address them in greater detail:

- Reduce stress, anxiety, and depression
- Help regulate mood.
- Reduce panic disorder.
- Increase gray matter in the brain in areas involved in learning and memory, regulating emotions, sense of self, and having perspective.
- Improve your focus, attention, and ability to work under stress.
- Improve information processing and decision-making.
- Relieve pain.
- Relieve symptoms of ADD/ADHD.
- Improve memory.
- Reduce your risk of heart disease and stroke.
- Reduce blood pressure.
- Improve immunity.
- Reduce the risk of premature death.
- Elevate growth hormones.
- Improve injury healing.
- Introduce the signature technique of 16 seconds. & ask them how they feel after 16 seconds.
- Science of meditation (examples of research in Secrets of Meditation & destressifying).
- Detail the differences between restful awareness and fight/flight responses.
- Talk about the concepts of the Pattern Interrupt & The Object of Your Attention.

#### 5) Meditate

Lead a ten minute guided meditation using the breath as the object of your attention or the mantras So-Hum or I AM depending upon your audience. When the meditation is concluded, hold a discussion on what just happened. Ask if they feel some quieting down and host a discussion on what they experienced. Be judgment free and reveal that boredom or restlessness are part of the initial experience because they are not used to being in a state of stillness or silence for ten minutes. Celebrate all and any experiences they are willing to share. Remind them that whatever they experienced is normal and good.

Remind them that the following are all signs of a verified meditation:

**1.Have thoughts:** If you're human, you'll have thoughts during meditation. Don't judge yourself for this. It doesn't mean you aren't meditating correctly. Just let the thought come in and gently return to the object of your attention. Physical sensations, sounds, and smells ... all become thoughts. Again, just experience them and then let them go.

**2.Fall asleep:** This just means you relaxed your body and mind enough to surrender to the stillness and silence that rests within. Don't scold or judge yourself when/if this happens.

**3.Experience stillness and silence:** Most likely during your meditation you'll experience some stillness and silence. It may be for a millisecond or minutes. Even if doesn't happen, remember the purpose of meditation is for you to cultivate your ability to witness. Everything else that happens in meditation is some version of the above.

#### 6) We are multi-dimensional beings

We are multi-dimensional beings. Explain Shankara's Layers of Life & elaborate on the Physical Realm, The Subtle Realm; and the Causal Realm using real-world examples. Use lessons from The Crest Jewel of Discrimination.

When we meditate we move through all the layers of life and see the oneness in all things! Each layer is simply consciousness wearing a different disguise – from the manifest into the unmanifest. When we meditate we are able to move from activity into silence and then we are able to effortlessly access these various layers of life awakening balance & integration in the physical, emotional, and spiritual aspects of our being.

#### 7) The wrap up

- Recap all the components of the class you've just addressed, hitting on the key points and reinforcing them.
- Field questions from your students answering any areas that were unclear and reinforcing the benefits of the practice.
- Encourage them to meditate every day and assure them that details of the daily process will be explained after they have received their mantra and have been practicing for a few days.
- Stress that the benefits of meditation are felt AFTER the meditation in waking state- when our eyes are open and we are interacting with the world. For now they simply need to become comfortable with the practice. Remind them that having thoughts is part of the practice and encourage them to innocently drift back to the mantra or to their breath or the object of their attention, when they find themselves in thought.
- Explain the schedule for your next session
- Give a few suggestions on meditating at home (when to meditate, how to keep time, etc.) and add in any other meditation wisdom that you wish and be sure to include your own experiences and examples. If you don't plan on teaching personal mantras, let them know that they can use the So-Hum mantra.
- Remember to provide your contact information and website show where business cards and flyers are located. Be available after class for any additional questions.



The Follow Up Class

# LEADING A FOLLOW UP CLASS

1) Welcome & check-in

2) Share possible experiences during meditation

3) Share the importance of creating a meditation ritual

4) Lead the class through a series of meditation techniques

5) Share common meditation excuses & myths

6) Share the 6 stages of a present moment experience

7) Wrap up & promote future classes

#### 1) Welcome & check-in

Welcome back!!! How has everyone been since we all gathered together last week. What has your meditation practice been like? (NOTE: allow some time for brief response) Explain what this week's class will cover.

- This week, we will discuss the cultivation of a meditation practice.
- Anything you want to discuss is on the table including "what's supposed to happen when you meditate", "experiences during meditation", "what's normal", "how to create a daily ritual", "where to sit, how to sit, how to time your meditation & how to keep the practice alive."

#### 2) Experiences during meditation

So... let's start by reflecting on our meditation experiences this past week. Host a discussion on what they experienced, including:

- Ask if they felt some quieting down and shifts in their response to stressors over the week.
- Ask them if they fell asleep during any of their meditations, had thoughts, felt body aches or discomfort? Be judgment free and reveal that boredom or restlessness are part of the initial experience because they are not used to being in a state of stillness or silence for 10 or more minutes.
- Celebrate all and any experiences they are willing to share.
- Remind them that whatever they experienced is normal and good.

As you did last week, stress for them that the benefits of meditation are felt AFTER the meditation – in waking state – when our eyes are open and we are interacting with the world. Every time we meditate we create a pattern interrupt. From this state of restful awareness, we will continue to feel the benefits of that stillness and silence all day long.

- You perspire less,
- You take longer and slower deep breaths in,
- You slow your pulse and lower your blood pressure,
- You suppress your stress hormones,
- You elevate your growth and sex hormones and boost your immune system, and,
- Your blood gets thinner and more fluid!!

When we meditate we are elevating all the nourishing aspects of our life and flight/flight gets suppressed!!!

To experience all of this you simply need to become comfortable with the practice. Remind them that having thoughts is part of the practice and encourage them to innocently drift back to the mantra or to their breath (the object of their attention), when they find themselves in thought.

Field questions – answer questions about experiences that your students had throughout the week, any challenges they faced, and any other areas that are unclear. Reinforce that this is a practice.

#### 3) Creating a ritual

When meditation becomes part of your daily routine, no different than brushing your teeth, your life will change forever.

- Discuss the benefits of a daily meditation practice, consistency and starting small and building on that over time.
- To truly experience the benefits of meditation, you must meditate on a regular basis.
- The optimal duration is 30 minutes (but you can start with the 16 seconds technique we practiced together last week and work your way up) and the ideal frequency is twice a day—once in the morning and once in the afternoon or early evening.

Explain that finding a regular place that is their meditation practice space and meditating at the same time each day can also help with creating a ritual and makes it "easier" to keep the practice alive.

- Address "how" to sit.
- Comfort is queen. To begin any practice, we must first find a comfortable place to settle in, which could be a chair, a couch, a car seat, the floor, a toilet seat, or a closet. We find that space and get as comfortable as possible. And then we gently close our eyes. This helps us eliminate as many distractions as possible—those we might see with our eyes and any we might feel with our body. Then we take a long, slow, deep breath in through our nose, and gently let it go.
- Later in this class, we'll discuss how to deal with distractions, falling asleep, forgetting the mantra, getting lost in "thoughts", etc.

#### 4) Meditation Excuses & Myths

To experience the benefits we've discussed, you need to meditate on a regular basis and not succumb to the many excuses and myths around meditation such as:

#### Excuse 1 - I don't have enough time.

When you add a meditation practice into your day, suddenly there is more time! You gain greater clarity and ease. You become more efficient, you'll have more breathing room, and you will start feeling more energized!

#### Excuse 2 - I don't feel the results.

Many people expect immediate, in the moment aha moments, or an overwhelming sense of stillness and calm during every meditation. But, in reality, each meditation will be unique. Some days you will have aha moments. Some days you will experience extreme stillness and calm during the meditation. Some days the meditation will feel like a chaotic swirl of thoughts and emotions. Some days you may fall asleep. Every one of these experiences are perfect.

Over time, you will see that the real benefits happen in the 23 hours a day you're not meditating. Meditating every day – no matter what the 5, 10 or 30 minutes meditation experience "feels" like – gently eases your mind into a sense of well-being, gives you more clarity, and makes you less reactive to stressors over the course of the day, week, month.

#### Myth 1 - You must clear thoughts from your mind.

You have about 75,000 thoughts a day. That's approximately one thought every 1.2 seconds. You can't stop them and shouldn't feel like you need to try to stop them. When they show up, let them drift in and let them drift away. If you realize you're distracted by thoughts, simply drift back to the mantra, or your breath, whatever the object of your attention is during the meditation.

#### Myth 2 - Something transcendent should happen during meditation.

Cool experiences can happen when you meditate – but that is not a requirement. In fact, special aha moments don't have to happen for the experience to have emotional, physical, or spiritual benefits. If interesting or unexpected things happen during your meditation, hang out and enjoy them. But don't judge your meditation as a "bad" if that doesn't happen!

As you immerse more deeply in the experience and drift from the mantra or your breath, you may see yourself move from witnessing the experience to thinking about it. As you begin to apply greater meaning to your experience, that is activity. That's okay. It's all a part of the process. But, when you realize that you have moved into thought in this manner, gently drift back to the mantra or the object of your attention.

#### Myth 3 - I'm not doing it right.

Whenever you ask yourself, "Am I doing it right?" the answer is YES! In meditation, as long as you are doing it, you are doing it right. There's no need to judge your meditation. Don't try to achieve something specific in your meditation. Release. Let go. Surrender to the unknown. Surrender to the fact that you have only one purpose in meditation and that is to innocently repeat the mantra or follow your breath depending upon which meditation practice you choose. As long as you do that, you are doing it right.

Don't think that if you don't experience the Buddha or nirvana, don't see colors, or because you have thousands of thoughts, that it isn't a "proper meditation". Do not "work" or "try" while meditating, just surrender and witness.

#### 5) Meditation Techniques: Breath, Mantra, Guided

As we've discussed, the most common stillness meditation techniques are breath or mantra. Guided meditation or visualizations are a third option. We can explore each of these and then I encourage you to choose a meditation technique and let it settle in. Don't switch mid-meditation.

Remind them that the power of any meditation rests on the consistency and frequency of a daily practice. You can lead them through a breath, mantra and/or guided meditation,.

Refer to the techniques that follow or and the scripts section of your manual for examples.

# THE FOLLOW UP CLASS Breath-based Meditation

Prana is the Sanskrit word for life force – this is the vital energy that flows into you with each breath. Your breath connects you to your body, slows the swirl of your mind, creates union with those around you, and brings you to the sacred, precious, present moment where you're whole, pure, perfect, abundant, and infinite.

Just like blinking your eyes – each breath you take tends to flow by without your knowledge. You breathe between 4 and 24 times every minute, and each inhale triggers a transformation at the cellular level – nourishing your blood with oxygen, fueling your brain and organs, and sparking the metabolism of food, chemicals, information, and thought.

And yet hours often go by when you may not even be aware that you're breathing. You also may not be aware of how often you hold your breath in those stressful moments... denying your body and withholding your mind from the power of your breath.

Just focusing on the breath is a wonderful and easy meditation tool.

Let's try it together now for a few minutes... Close your eyes and focus on the breath for a few moments.

Feel it flowing in and out. Breathe In Breathe Out Breathe In Breathe Out Breathe In Breathe Out

Keep doing that. Let your breath flow naturally and notice it as it flows in and out of you. Let your breath be the object of your attention. When your mind drifts (and it will!) simply go back to focusing on the breath.

Let's keep doing that together for a few moments now with our eyes closed. I'll watch the time. Just continue to watch your breath with your eyes closed.

(NOTE: Wait a few minutes – this can be as short a few minutes or as long as 30 minutes, whatever works for your class. After several minutes... hit a gong, or say a special word like aham brahmasmi to end the meditation)

Take another long, slow deep breath in... let that go... and continue to sit quietly with your eyes closed. (Note – wait a few seconds...) When it feels comfortable, gently open your eyes. How did that feel?

NOTE: Facilitate some discussion on the experience, encouraging the students to identify what it felt like for them, then move teaching a couple of breath based meditation techniques (16 seconds (from class #1), quiet continuous breathing, or any other) or move on to teaching mantra based meditation.

### Mantras

Many of my friends, colleagues, and students had the honor of learning to meditate with a personal mantra in the 1970s under the tutelage of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, the founder of the Transcendental Meditation(TM) movement and technique of meditation. They were taught to use a bija to disconnect them from activity.

When used as a mantra in meditation, seed sounds can connect you directly to source. The value of using a bija is that it's not a word that has meaning; it's simply a vibration a vibration that has existed forever—a primordial sound. The beauty of a primordial sound is that even if we give it meaning, since it was never intended to have meaning, its vibrational quality is what holds our attention, which is then drifted away fromthings that have meaning.

The traditional image of a meditator is someone sitting cross-legged with eyes closed and their handsresting on their knees, with thumbs and index fingers touching to form a circle as they chant the sound Om. That chanting of Om is what's called the chanting of a mantra.

The word "mantra" comes from two Sanskrit words: man, which means "mind," and tra, which means "vehicle" or "instrument." So your mantra is your mind vehicle . . . your mind instrument. It is a tool to transport the mind from a state of activity to one of stillness and silence. We get the words "train," "travel," and "transportation" from the Sanskrit root tra. Most mantras are comprised of the 50 letters of the Sanskrit alphabet. Mantras can consist of a single letter, a syllable or string of syllables, a word, or awhole sentence. Typically, most mantras are sounds, syllables, or vibrations that don't necessarily have ameaning. Their value lies in their vibrational quality, not in any meaning that humans, society, culture, or civilization has placed on them over the last few thousand years. For this reason, they go beyond the stateof human existence on this planet. And they take you deeper, because they are vibrations that have existed since the dawn of creation.

Om, often referred to as the hymn of the universe, is the oldest mantra sacred to Hindus, Buddhists,and Jains. Om is considered the ultimate vibration, because it contains every vibration that has everexisted and every vibration that will ever exist. Just as white light contains all the colors of the spectrum, Om contains every sound in the vibrational spectrum—even those we can't hear with our ears.

## THE FOLLOW UP CLASS Mantras

The Sanskrit symbol for the vibration Om. The large curve on the lower left represents the material world of the waking state; the smaller curve on the upper-left represents the state of deep sleep. The curve on the right that extends to the right from the intersection of the two left curves represents the dream state—thattender line between waking and sleeping. The dot at the very top is akin to the dot (or bindu) in the center of the sri yantra and represents the universe in all its abundance. This state is often referred to as turiya (pronounced tour-yah) a Sanskrit word for "absolute consciousness," "the universe," or "one-ness." And the curved line under the bindu represents maya, the illusion of existence that separates our bodymind fromone-ness and must be transcended for us to return to the whole. Ommmm!

# THE FOLLOW UP CLASS Guided Meditations & Visualizations

Another meditation tool is Guided Meditation. Depending on what you need at a particular moment in time, a guided meditation can move you, open you, ready you, soothe you, or heal you.

Some of the most successful athletes use guided meditation to fine tune the experience they would like to replicate, such as winning a race. Other guided meditations can be used to relieve anxiety, lessen pain, prepare for a difficult conversation, and release old emotions that no longer serve you.

With my favorite guided meditations, we get progressively quieter until we get silent and experience a period of unguided meditation. Many start with background music to help you get settled and then guide you through a particular technique or visualization. But then journey into silence so that you can truly connect to the stillness and silence that rests within. In that space you're no longer listening. You're surrendering to just BEing.

(NOTE: Refer to the "Meditation Scripts" section for inspiration on leading your own guided meditation.)

#### 6) Share the Stages of a Present Moment Experience

Meditation is all about BEing present — it's a present moment experience. We live our lives in the past and the future – rarely spending time to be mindful of what is happening in this very moment. That's not a good thing or a bad thing – it just is how our brain works and how we respond to our senses feeding us experience...and we have conditioned ourselves to fill any gaps in that flow of activity with more activity.

Think about your day-to-day activity: How long does it take after you arrive home to talk, text, pick up a remote control, put on music or the TV, or log on? When you get into your car alone, how long does it take until you put on music, call someone, text someone? We are creatures of habit and we habitually fill our stillness and silence with movement, sound, and activity.

Yet, at our core, we ARE stillness and silence – pure unbounded, unconditioned consciousness. There are many kinds of activity but only one stillness and one silence. Every time we meditate we connect to that space...that nothingness...that NO THING ness. And when we return to our waking state after meditation, we bring back a little bit of that stillness, a little bit of that silence, a piece of your unconditioned self, and over time that becomes you.

So how do we get there?

We're already there... but busyness swirling around us often obscures us from seeing or recognizing it. Through BEing present, we can settle down a bit so we can truly experience quietude and NO thing ness – we can actually experience pure, unbounded consciousness. And then we can respond more thoughtfully where our next thought, our next word, our next deed is magnificent, unconditioned, and full of possibilities.

You'll move through the following six stages whenever you meditate.

#### SIX STAGES OF A PRESENT MOMENT EXPERIENCE (CONTINUED)

#### Stage 1: Settling

Comfort is queen. To begin any practice, we must first find a comfortable place to settle in. Find that space and get as comfortable as possible. And then gently close your eyes. This helps us eliminate as many distractions as possible—those we might see with our eyes and any we might feel with our body. Then we take a long, slow, deep breath in through our nose, and then gently let it go. Let's do it one more time. Feel that release? This is how we settle in.

#### Stage 2: Witnessing

We continue breathing slowly and gently. And as our breathing continues, we begin to watch our breath as it moves in and as it moves out. We simply observe it; witness it flow in and back out. We don't strain or try. We don't squint and focus. We simply stay in the space of observing, witnessing, and watching. Every time you simply witness, you strengthen your ability to stay in that state longer and more easily.

#### Stage 3: Drifting

After holding our attention for an extended period of time on anything, it is natural that we drift toward thoughts, sounds, and physical sensations. We may find ourselves having conversations, replaying past events, making lists, fidgeting, feeling restless, or simply experiencing a flow of random thoughts. This is natural. It means that you are alive, and, your brain is doing what it has been trained to do—processing thoughts.

#### Stage 4: Judging

Somewhere along the way, you likely heard the false notion that a present-moment experience was supposed to be a blissed-out zen experience filled with peace and light. That's why suddenly finding yourself making a shopping list in the middle of your practice has you thinking you're doing it wrong, and you begin to judge your practice. You evaluate and criticize the way you're sitting, the thoughts flowing into you, the way you're breathing, and anything else you might be doing to get in the way of nirvana.

#### SIX STAGES OF A PRESENT MOMENT EXPERIENCE (CONTINUED)

#### Stage 5: Surrendering

When you notice that you are scolding yourself for a less-than-perfect experience, remind yourself to just relax. Humans have about 75,000 thoughts a day—or about one every second. After we've judged ourselves for not "doing it right," it's time to let go, settle down, and drift back to witnessing. Once you accept that drifting and judging are natural aspects of the process, you can fully surrender.

#### Stage 6: Stillness

As you get more comfortable gently drifting back and forth, you'll start to spend a little more time in "witness land" and a little less time in "thought land". You will have cultivated your ability to witness. And every time you visit the land of witnessing, you bring back into your waking world that stillness that gently infuses all of your thoughts, words, and actions.

## THE 6 STAGES OF A PRESENT MOMENT EXPERIENCE

As you drift into any style of meditation mantra, breath, or guided - you will experience these 6 stages of the present moment.

1) Settling in - usually with breath

2) **Witnessing -** the breath, the mantra, or other object of your attention

3) **Drifting -** to thoughts and then back to the object of our attention

4) Judging - your experience

5) **Surrendering -** accept yourself and go back to witnessing

6) Stillness - floating in "the gap"

#### 7) Class Wrap Up

This week, let's recommit to our daily meditation practice. Commit to 5 minutes, 10 minutes, 20 minutes or 30 minutes and DO IT for YOU. First thing each morning when you wake up and start your day, and every afternoon after work to "release" everything you have absorbed over the course of the day so you can show up refreshed for your evening activities and fully present with your loved ones.

#### Tips to Remember this Week

- Commit! Make meditation a priority. Stop making excuses and do it. You can make excuses and stay
  the same. Or you can take a few minutes each day to meditate and become a better version of yourself.
  Whatever your excuse for not showing up, you can weave in a reminder to meditate such as setting a
  timer on your phone.
- Set a timer for 5, 10, 15 or even as much as 30 minutes to meditate every day, morning and night. Make these the bookends of your day. Start your day with a trajectory of stillness and silence that allows you to be more patient, calm, happy and aware throughout the day. Then have something in the afternoon that allows you to just let go.
- Find a place that is your meditation space. Having this designated spot helps reminds you of your intention to practice stillness. It can be any space you are comfortable in and where there aren't too many distractions. Just make it your ritual to start your day with your first meditation there.
- Make friends with your thoughts!

When you meditate, have an object of your attention to come back to. This allows you to witness your thoughts, physical sensations and outside sounds, then come back to your meditation. The object of your attention can be a mantra, your breath, or a guided visualization. We'll discuss these in even more detail in the coming weeks.

- Remember that meditation will make you a better, happier, more resilient version of yourself!!!
- Consider journaling so you can observe how your life starts to shift, and how you shift from reacting to responding!!
- Throughout the day, remind yourself to stop and breathe.

Remember clients to follow you on social media channels, sign up for your email list, or share your website with them. Be sure to inform them of other classes that will be teaching in the near future too.

# LEADING A CLASS

Evaluating Your Class

Evaluating Your Class

ASSESSMENT SHEET

Verbal communication	Rating – on a scale of 1-10
Clear introduction of self-content	_
Knowledge of the Content	
Organization & flow of material	
Progression of each element	
Clear concise take-always	
Connecting with the participant(s)	
Maintaining the attention of the audience	
Clear articulation of next steps	
Non-verbal communication	
Level of Self-confidence	
Level of enthusiasm (engagement)	
Posture (body movement)	
Eye contact	
Facial expressions	
Level of physical relaxation	
Vocal Mastery	
Tone	
Volume	
Pace	
Filled pauses (um, eh, ah)	
Overall experience	
Did you provide a distinct beginning, middle, and end?	
Did you achieve your agenda?	
Do they understand the value of meditation?	
Did you create value?	
Did you collect contact information?	
Are they comfortable with a take-away practice?	
Are their memorable moments?	
Have you made the connection?	
Did you let them know how to reach out to you for follow-up?	
Have you managed their expectations about the practice?	
Are they expecting that you will follow up?	
Ability to answer questions – directly & with comprehension	
You are an expert. Did you come off like an expert?	
Did you guide them to a next step?	





## LEADING MEDITATION

The Power of Mantras

### MANTRAS

Once this space of stillness and silence becomes you, you truly detach from thoughts in the mind, sounds in the environment, and physical sensations in the body. Your heart rate slows . . . your breathing slows . . . the past drifts away . . . the ongoing speculation about the future ceases. There is a subtle awareness ofmoving from activity to stillness; thoughts and sounds pass through you instead of being received andprocessed by you. A lightness of being flows into you. The concept of you expands from a breathing human being to a silent observer to a unified being, seeing the sacred in every face, flower, and object aroundyou. Ultimately, you merge into everything without distinction.

There is one-ness...there is unity...there is stillness...silence...bliss...no separation betweenanything...your pure unconditioned self.

This is "it"—what is commonly referred to as "being in the gap." And the beauty is that you can't knowyou're there; it's beyond space and time. You stay in this higher state of consciousness until your body pullsyou out of it by drifting back into activity as your awareness drifts to a thought, a sound, or a physicalsensation—and you flow out of one-ness and back to duality.

At the moment you begin to drift out of the stillness and silence, you start to apply meaning to the moment. That is when you realize you were in "the gap"; it's always after the fact . . . never while you're there. It is atthat moment you recognize the difference . . . . the separation between that and this, or the duality of our individual local existence and our universal nonlocal one. Meaning comes back into your awareness. You can't recognize the gap while you are in it, because you are not separate from it. It's like a fish swimming through the ocean, unaware that it's in water, fully immersed and integrated into the ocean during its entirelife until it chooses to leap out of its liquid realm into the air—then it truly realizes separation.

It is at this moment—as you become aware of your thoughts again—that you drift back into the realm ofmeaning and activity. As you drift out of the stillness, you become aware of the mantra or perhaps a newthought, a sound, or a physical sensation. This is normal, common, expected; this is part of the meditation. But regardless of where you find yourself, just gently drift back to the effortless repetition of the mantra. Keep drifting back and forth.

### MANTRAS

This is meditation plain and simple ... drifting ever so gently back and forth between the object of attention—the mantra—to activity—thoughts, sounds, and physical sensations ... and then back again to the mantra. Don't torture yourself; don't try to control anything. But as soon as you become aware you areno longer repeating the mantra (which is the most common experience), just gently drift back to it. The repetition of the mantra is effortless, like mist rising off a lake at dawn. Any more effort and you'reworking way too hard.

There are millions of mantras, because they are sounds or myriad combinations of sounds. And they areused for many different purposes—devotional, spiritual, healing, mystical, material—and in many differentways—silently repeated, chanted, whispered, sung in chorus, and read by a

leader and responded to. I believe in the power of the mantra, and almost any mantra used with the right intention in a daily practice can take one from a very personal constricted state of existence to higherstates of consciousness, including more expanded and universal states.

#### Using a Bija

The word bija (pronounced bee-jah) means "seed" in Sanskrit and as such, is a metaphor for the cause ororigin of something. Thousands of years ago, the rishis, or seers, in what is now the Indian subcontinentidentified what they believed to be the original sounds of nature. They called them bija sounds or seed syllables. The oldest of these bija sounds—Om—is first referenced in the ancient Vedic text known as the Upanishads. Since then, these powerful bija sounds have been used as mantras because they areorganic, pure, universal vibrations.

In the late '60s and early '70s, meditation was reintroduced to the masses, creating one of the most powerfulshifts in consciousness on the planet. With legendary Beatle George Harrison leading the way and the other members of Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band following the path, millions around the world, and especially in the United States and Western Europe, tapped into mantra meditation as a way of life.

# LEADING MEDITATION

The Power

of Breath

### THE POWER OF BREATH (PRANAYAMA)

Pranayama can be broken down into two words. '*Prana*' refers to the universal life force and '*ayama*' means to regulate or lengthen. These ancient yogic seers observed the power of the breath to increase one's prana and developed special breathing techniques to increase life energy, maintain health and create a calm, clear state of mind that is conducive for meditation.

**16 SECONDS TO BLISS** - davidji's most renowned breathing technique. Inhale for 4, hold for 4, exhale for 4, hold out for 4. Repeat about 5 times to meditate for 1 minute, repeat about 20 times for a 5 minute practice. In this practice we pay special notice the breath and the space between the breaths.

NADI SHODANA (Alternate nostril breathing) - Use this technique to calm the mind and bring the left and right hemispheres of the brain into harmony. The right nostril represents the *Ida nadi* and is connected with the left brain. The left nostril represents the *Pingala nadi* and is connected with the right hemisphere of the brain. To do this practice, use your thumb and ring finger. Close the one nostril to inhale, switch, exhale and inhale, switch, enhale and inhale, switch, keep going with that sequence.

**BHRAMARI** (Buzzing Bee Breath) - If you can't stop thinking of something and your mind is buzzing with activity, try this pranayama. In this, you inhale deeply and then make the humming sound as you exhale. This breathing technique is especially useful for those with hypertension.

**KAPALBHATI** (Skull shining breath) - Considered the most effective for detoxifying the body and clearing the energy channels. Additionally, it is believed to increase one's intuition. In this, you inhale passively and exhale actively and forcefully pulling your navel in. You can place you hand on your belly in this process.

**BHASTRIKA** (Bellows breath) - If you are feeling low energy or tired, try this breathing technique to quickly and powerfully increase your energy and calm the mind. In this, we continuously inhale and exhale somewhat vigorously.

**UJJAYI** (Victorious breath) - Often referred to as ocean breathing because of the wave like sound you create. In this, we create a constriction in the back of your throat/nose as you inhale and exhale. Many use Ujjayi breathing during their *asana* (physical yoga) practice.

### THE POWER OF BREATH (PRANAYAMA)

**Quiet Continuous Breathing** - Breathing quietly and continuously, gentle and relaxed. This breath can bring you back to the present moment with breath awareness. In this breathing technique you are inhaling long, deep, slow, and quiet. At the top of the inhale, you turn the corner quietly and slowly exhale. Make this process as quiet as possible. This can be an advanced technique for some. The slowness and quietness of the breath can make beginners feel as if they need more breath more quickly.

**The Space Between Your Breaths** - Unlike Quiet Continuous Breathing, creating and paying attention to the space between your breaths. As you come to the top of your breath, notice the space, the pause, the break, the gap before you exhale. And as you come to the bottom of your exhale, notice the space before you inhale again.

# LEADING MEDITATION

Techniques & Scripts

### 16 SECONDS

Of all the pattern-interrupting techniques that davidji has shared throughout the world, the one with the most powerful effect in the shortest amount of time is perhaps the simplest one. It's a game changer, and davidji calls it "16 seconds to bliss or 16 seconds to clarity."

Not only does it have a profound destressifying impact in the moment, but it can also be the foundation for greater clarity of thought, heightened creativity, deeper intuition, and making better choices. Let's try it right now. It's okay to keep reading as you go through this exercise with me.

Think of something that has irritated or bothered you in the past few days ... a difficult conversation, a disappointment, an unmet expectation. Perhaps someone said they would do something and they didn't, or they said they would meet you at a certain time and they were late, or they unexpectedly shared something about you with another person and it got back to you. (Don't go too deep. This isn't therapy.) But right now, feel free to envision that other person's face ... maybe replay the moment in your mind's eye, even notice someplace in your body that feels connected to the irritation. Take a few moments to settle into that space.

Now take a long, slow, deep breath in through your nostrils, and as you do . . . slowly count to four, and observe the air as it moves into your nostrils and to the back of your throat. Watch your breath as it moves down your chest and deep into your lungs. Feel your belly expand.

Observe your belly being filled, and hold that breath in to the count of four. And just witness the breath in your belly as you silently count. One, two, three, four.

Now slowly, to the count of four, release your breath and watch it as it moves up into your chest, into your throat, into your sinuses, and out through your nostrils.

And when the last wisp of air is out of you, hold that breath out to the count of four. And observe it, watch it, witness it . . . as it dissipates into the air.

Now breathe normally, and let's try it with your eyes closed. Remember: in four—hold four out four—hold four. And make sure you follow your breath. Observing it along the way is key to the process. (I'll wait right here . . . it's only 16 seconds.) *Now..... eyes open and breathe normally.* 

Well, our whole experience was 32 seconds: 16 seconds with your eyes open and 16 seconds with your eyes closed. And in that half a minute while you were observing your breath (assuming you were playing along), you were totally present. You were not thinking about the past or any of its grievances or regrets, nor moving into the future with all its predictions and projections. You were not thinking about your irritation. You were totally in the present moment. Your mind is a little calmer; your heartbeat has slowed a bit. You've filled your body with heavily oxygenated blood and nourishing hormones, and in the process, you've released a little bit of stress.

In under a minute, you have taken a powerful step into destressifying. The formal terminology for what's happening in 16seconds is introducing a pattern interrupt. You actually just jammed the brakes on a potential surge of stress hormones and all the negative bodymind reactions you were starting to feel.

You broke the flow of conditioned physical and emotional responses. Just the thought of this irritating situation or person triggered a memory of the stressful circumstances, and in 16 seconds you returned to the present moment. Then in the 17th second, you're clearer—beyond the moment of emotion.

You are a bit calmer ... a bit lighter ... a bit easier.

### MANTRA MEDITATION

Meditation has been scientifically proven to relieve stress and replace it with a dose of inner peace, greater clarity and focus, expanded compassion and empathy, deeper love and more frequent joy, and a viewpoint that is more receptive to other perspectives, which offers me increased possibilities. It's one of the best tools we have to balance our emotions, deal with physical and psychological distress, and promote the peace of the present moment.

*First, let's take a deep breath in through your nostrils and hold it for a moment and then slowly let it out. Do that again.* 

As you breathe in, silently repeat SO; and as you breathe out, silently repeat HUM. So – hum. So – hum. So – hum. Do it for a few moments now with your eyes closed. How does that feel? There's no perfect speed; it's whatever feels right in the moment. As you repeat your mantra meditation, it will change. Even though you are repeating it silently, it may get louder or fainter. It may speed up or slow down. It may become jumbled or distorted. It may even vanish, However it changes, continue to repeat it innocently. Just as following your breath works to connect you to the present moment by disconnecting you from thoughts, silently repeating a mantra over and over and over and over accomplishes the same thing.

If you prefer to use an English mantra meditation, you can use the one popularized by the brilliant author and speaker Dr. Wayne Dyer – I Am. If you took a few minutes and just repeated, "I Am" over and over and over and over, you would experience the same benefits as any other meditation technique.

When you notice that you have drifted away from the mantra to thoughts in your mind, sounds in the environment, or sensations in your physical body, gently drift back to the mantra. It will get louder and fainter, faster and slower; it will even become jumbled, distorted, and inaudible. However the mantra changes, simply keep repeating it, and when you notice you've drifted away just gently drift back. Back and forth and back and forth again. Gently surrender....

Let's try it now for a few minutes...

When it feels comfortable, gently open your eyes ....

How do you feel? As you will have noticed... you will have thoughts ; you will hear sounds, you will have physical sensations, you might experience deep stillness...and you might even fall asleep. But as soon as you realize you have drifted away from the mantra simply drift back to it and begin silently repeating it again.

### MANTRA BASED MEDITATION

You can follow your breath to meditate, as we've already discussed. Or you can use another technique in which you use mantras – which we did in the first class when we practiced using SO HUM as our mantra. When we meditate with a mantra, we place our attention not on our breath, but on a word or phrase.

In Sanskrit, that word or phrase is called a mantra, which comes from two Sanskrit words: man = mind and tra = vehicle. So a mantra is essentially a mind vehicle. No matter where our mind drifts, as long as we have an object of our attention (such as our breath or a mantra) we will stay present.

Most mantras are comprised of the 50 letters of the Sanskrit alphabet. Mantras can consist of a single letter, a syllable or string of syllables, a word, or a whole sentence. Typically, most mantras are sounds, syllables, or vibrations that don't necessarily have a meaning. Their value lies in their vibrational quality, not in any meaning that humans, society, culture, or civilization has placed on them over the last few thousand years. For this reason, they go beyond the state of human existence on this planet. And they take you deeper, because they are vibrations that have existed since the dawn of creation.

There are many mantras to choose from:

- Om, often referred to as the hymn of the universe, is the oldest mantra sacred to Hindus, Buddhists, and Jains. Om is considered the ultimate vibration, because it contains every vibration that has ever existed and every vibration that will ever exist. Just as white light contains all the colors of the spectrum, Om contains every sound in the vibrational spectrum even those we can't hear with our ears.
- Mantras that are another language are a great choice because then they don't spark thought. But choose a word or phrase that resonates most with YOU. You can even use an English phrase, such as I AM.
- When using a mantra, there's no perfect speed; it's whatever feels right in the moment. As you repeat the mantra, it may change. Even though you're repeating it silently, it may get louder or fainter. It may speed up or slow down. It may become jumbled or distorted. It may even vanish. However it changes, continue to repeat it innocently and silently. Just as following your breath works to connect you to the present moment, silently repeating a mantra over and over accomplishes the same thing.

Let's try it together now for a few minutes...

Now close your eyes. Take a long, slow, deep breath in. Now let that go.

### MANTRA BASED MEDITATION

As you breathe in, silently repeat SO; and as you breathe out, silently repeat HUM. So hum. So hum.

Let's do it together for a few moments now with our eyes closed. There's no perfect speed; it's whatever feels right in the moment. As you repeat your mantra, it will change. Even though you are repeating it silently, it may get louder or fainter. It may speed up or slow down. It may become jumbled or distorted. It may even vanish.

However it changes, don't resist. Continue to repeat it silently and innocently.

I'll watch the time. Just continue to repeat the mantra silently and innocently with your eyes closed. And when you hear my voice, stop repeating the mantra and continue to sit quietly with your eyes closed.

(NOTE: Wait a few minutes – this can be as short a few minutes or as long as 30, whatever works for your class and after several minutes... hit a gong, or say a special word like aham brahmasmi to end the meditation )

Gently release the mantra and continue to sit quietly with your eyes closed. (Note – wait a few seconds...) Take a long. slow deep breath in, let that go. And when it feels comfortable, gently open your eyes.

How does that feel?

NOTE: Facilitate some discussion on the experience, encouraging the students to identify what it felt like for them, then move into a summary.

Did one technique resonate more than another?

As you will have noticed... you will have thoughts (...thoughts are okay!); you will hear sounds, you will have physical sensations, you might experience deep stillness...and you might even fall asleep. But as soon as you realize you have drifted away from the mantra or your breath simply drift back to it and begin silently repeating it again.

### METTA MEDITATION

In Metta Meditation, first, you take a long slow deep breath in of metta and feel it fill your heart. Then you flow it back out to those you deeply respect, such as your most revered teachers or life guides. Next, take a long slow deep breath in of metta and feel it fill your heart, then radiate loving-kindness to your loved ones – those living and those who've left this earthly realm.

Then take a long slow deep breath in of metta and feel it fill your heart, and then radiate it out to your friends. Then take a long slow deep breath in of metta and feel it fill your heart, and shower it onto someone you know who may be suffering.

Next, take a long slow deep breath in of metta and feel it fill your heart, and then send it to someone with whom you have a grievance. (I often do that one twice to expand my capacity for forgiveness, acceptance, and compassion.)

Then take a long slow deep breath in of metta and feel it fill your heart, and radiate it out to all sentient beings on the planet. Notice that as you continue to expand your circle of loving-kindness, you direct metta to your most intimate relationships, to your enemies, and finally toward all beings on the planet.

At a certain point in the practice, you realize you are simply a conduit of love, that your heart is just bursting with metta, and you've got enough love inside for the whole world!

Next, take a long slow deep breath in of metta, feel it fill my heart and then radiate that love out into the universe, sending it to every corner of the galaxy. Stay in that space, breathing it in from every nook and cranny of the cosmos and then radiating it back out so it has no limits. You sit in a space like this for as long as you like, opening your heart, feeling gratitude in every cell of your body, flowing forgiveness, and feeling self-love . . . self-compassion . . . self-forgiveness . . . ripple through me.

Metta meditation to be a very nourishing practice. Both first-time meditators and seasoned meditators alike appreciate its simple sweetness and its powerful softening ability. If you are holding a grudge, carrying around anger, overwhelmed with sadness, or find yourself pointing fingers, the metta bhavana will transform you to a healing state very quickly. The ancient Buddhist teachings suggest that one should master metta bhavana before moving on to any other type of meditation.

### METTA MEDITATION

Always start with your heart. Take your time cultivating this practice. Start with just five minutes, get comfortable there, and simply slow each phase of the process down until the conduit of your heart flows in and out in slow motion. Over time, see if you can stretch it to ten, then fifteen minutes—the perfect amount of time to receive the optimal benefits of a heart-opening practice.

After a few weeks of practicing this teaching, metta meditation will become the gentle way you start your day. You'll quickly notice that your heart is more open, you are more tolerant of irritations around you, and you have a ripple of a smile flowing through every word, thought, and action. You'll also realize that it is a pure present-moment experience to help you connect to your essence.

Let's start by taking a few long, slow, deep breaths in and out. Once you feel you have settled down a bit, close your eyes for a moment, and envision the chakras in their special places within your body and glowing the color associated with each energy center. See all seven of them radiating: the root . . . red; the second chakra . . . orange; the solar plexus . . . yellow; the heart chakra . . . green; the throat chakra . . . blue; your third eye . . . purple; the crown chakra . . . ultraviolet . . . an opalescent white light. Now gently bring your awareness to the base or root chakra (Muladhara) chakra. Its color is red and the vibration is LAAM.

As you envision the energetic flow and the color, silently say the sutra I CONNECT . . . and after you have let I CONNECT ripple, chant the vibration out loud.

Laam. Laam. Let's settle in for a few moments and just breathe.

We've just awakened our energy of connection, groundedness, and stability. This foundational energy must be strong to act as the platform for all energetic flow throughout the body. With each beat of your heart, feel the strong, red pulse of the Muladhara, channeling the energy of wholeness, stability, and balance. See yourself as a conduit for the life force. You are a vessel of connection. You are a channel for this flow of chi, qi, or prana. It journeys through your energy centers, strengthening with each pulse as it moves in you, throughout you, through you.

Next, bring your awareness from your tailbone to a place a few inches below your belly button. This is the second or navel (Svadhisthana) chakra. This is your center of creativity, of birthing new healing aspects of your self. This is where your nourishing decisions come from. This is the font of all your creative energy.

Its color is orange, and with each breath, you can feel the orange expansion of your Svadhisthana chakra. The vibration is VAAM. As you envision the energetic flow and the color, silently say the sutra I CREATE ... I CREATE ... I CREATE ... I CREATE ... and after you have let I CREATE ripple through you, chant the vibration out loud.

Say it out loud with me slowly. Vaam. Vaam. Vaam. Let's settle in for a few moments and just breathe. Radiating out and through each cell, this is the energy of awakening, birth, growth, expansion, and nourishment. This energy center acts as the fertile soil for the birth of infinite possibilities and the pure potentiality of creation from nothing. You are a conduit of creativity.

Now bring your awareness to the solar plexus chakra, the center of your torso. In Sanskrit, it's known as the manipura chakra. Its color is yellow, like the sun, and the vibration is RAAM. As you envision the energetic flow and the color, silently repeat the sutra I TRANSFORM ... I TRANSFORM ... I TRANSFORM ... I TRANSFORM ... and after you have let I TRANSFORM ripple through you, chant the vibration out loud.

Say it out loud with me slowly. Raam. Raam. Raam. Let's settle in for a few moments and just breathe. We've just awakened our energy of forward movement, of seeing things through, of getting it done. This is the chakra of our inner fire (Agni). This metabolic energy must be strong to consume all emotional and physical ingestions, cook them, transform them, access what nourishes us, and let go of what no longer serves us. With each beat of your heart, feel the strong, yellow fire of the manipura.

When the inner fire of manipura chakra is weak or blocked, we may feel tired, frustrated, and withdrawn. We're scared to take risks and confront people or issues. We don't have enough energy to plant and nourish the seeds of our intentions and desires, so they are unable to germinate and flourish.

By strengthening the power of our manipura chakra, we nourish the inner fire that burns away whatever is no longer serving us, including limiting beliefs, ideas, and memories. This will allow your life energy to flow freely so that you can experience the joyful energy that fuels all your intentions and helps you realize your deepest dreams and desires. You are a conduit of transformation!

Now move your awareness from your solar plexus to your heart (Anahata) chakra. This is where your ability to be peace, love unconditionally, trust in the divine, and, most important, to forgive reside. This includes not just forgiving others but forgiving yourself as well.

Its color is green, and with each breath, feel a green pulse of pure love wash through your body. The vibration is YAAM. As you envision the energetic flow and the color, silently repeat the sutra I LOVE ... I LOVE ... I LOVE ... I LOVE ... and after you have let I LOVE ripple through you, slowly chant the vibration out loud. Yaam. Yaam. Yaam. Let's settle in for a few moments and just breathe. You are a conduit of love, compassion, forgiveness, and peace. Feel these universal characteristics flow through you. You are a conduit of love.

Next, move your awareness from your throat to the spot right between your eyebrows and an inch up. This is your third eye (Ajna) chakra. It sits in the middle of your forehead and connects you to insight. We have two eyes looking out and one divine eye looking in. The ajna chakra helps you make choices that are aligned with your higher power. This is the chakra of judgment, discernment, and intuition. This is your conscious choice maker.

Its color is purple, and the vibration is SHAAM. Opening this chakra will help you make better decisions. As you envision the energetic flow and the color, silently repeat the sutra I SEE . . . and after you have let I SEE ripple through you, slowly chant the vibration out loud. Shaam. Shaam. Shaam. Let's settle in for a few moments and breathe. We've just awakened our energy that connects us to true sight and insight! You are a conduit of divine vision. The ajna must be open to have unencumbered clarity, to see into the future, and to allow us to trust the universe.

Now shift your awareness from your third eye to the crown of your head. This is known as your crown (Sahaswara) chakra—the thousand-petaled lotus. This is your connection to the universe —to the infinite . . . to Spirit . . . to Source. When this chakra is open, all aspects of your existence become unified and liberated. You truly merge with the Universe.

Its color is pure white, ultraviolet light, and the vibration is OM. As you envision the energetic flow and the color, silently repeat the sutra I TRUST...I TRUST...I TRUST...I TRUST ... and after you have let I TRUST ripple through you, slowly chant the vibration out loud. Om. Om. Om. We've just awakened the energy that connects us to pure, unbounded consciousness. This is where your Soul merges with the universal Spirit. Let's settle in for a few moments, just breathe, and allow the merging.

Once the Sahaswara chakra is wide open, the energy of the universe can freely flow in, out, and through the body from the tailbone to the crown. By chanting all of these vibrations, you have opened and aligned your energy centers. There still may be some congestion and some constriction, so perform this chakra tuning with regularity and your healing will accelerate. Right now, let's activate our body's own natural healing properties by feeling the sacred energy flow through from the root to the second chakra to the solar plexus to the heart to the throat to the third eye to the crown. When the constrictions have been opened, the energy effortlessly flows through you on a journey of reawakening your wholeness.

Just sit and take a few moments to witness your bodymind. Notice what you feel and how you interpret it. You may want to journal or simply let the awakened energy flow continue to reverberate. Whatever you choose to do, always be gentle with yourself after you've meditated or performed a chakra tuning. With your eyes open or closed, sit for a few moments, and let the stillness and silence settle in.

Don't leap up to answer the phone, and don't feel the need to end the meditation until you are ready. For energy meditations or chakra tunings, listen to your bodymind, and don't drive or operate heavy machinery immediately following the practice.

You can perform chakra tuning any time by closing your eyes, putting your attention on each chakra, and bringing an intention to it.

This can be in the form of chanting, speaking, whispering, or silently repeating an affirmation (I am creative, I am worthy of love, I am whole, and so on), a mantra (om mani padme hum, aham brahmasmi, so hum, etc.), sutras (gratitude, trust, love, peace), or the sounds of each chakra (Laam, Vaam, Raam, and so forth).

Just the simple act of combining (1) single-pointed attention on your chakras and (2) the subtle intention to open and receive will bring an expansion into your energetic relationship with the world.

#### How to Use the Five Secrets of the Sweetspot

Practicing any regular meditation ritual that includes sutras will gently infuse you with a subtle awareness of whatever affirmation you choose. And if there are values that you currently find more relevant to you right now, then feel free to use those as your Secrets of the Sweetspot. You'll find over time you want your awareness to be on certain values or characteristics that you want more of or that you wish to enhance. So allow this practice to evolve as you evolve.

#### Start with the Sacred Reflections

To start the process of loosening your grip on the universe (HA! As if you really have a grip on anything), always start your meditation with a few slow, long, deep breaths using your nostrils to carry the air in and out. And then begin to watch your breath as it flows. After about four rounds of this slow, gentle breathing, where you witness your breath move in and out of your body, you'll feel yourself start to settle down. You can then begin your formal practice with any questions or any prayer you feel like starting with. In my classes, we often begin by asking ourselves a series of questions known as The Sacred Reflections: What am I grateful for? Why am I grateful? What does my heart long for? What is the essence that rests at my core? How can I help others doing what I love? Don't worry about coming up with answers. The point is to simply ask each question over and over and then move to the next. Sometimes answers will flow. Other times, there will be no answers. Keep repeating the questions. Even if nothing flows back in the moment, the answers will begin to come to you in your waking state outside of meditation.

By asking these questions, listening to answers, and letting go of outcomes The Sacred Reflections set the table for your meditation practice. There is no need to bring the questions or answers into your mind during the meditation. They are already a part of who you are. As you expand in consciousness, the cosmic dialogue will continue to expand within you. You will gain clarity into who you are and how you flow your essence into the world, your heart will expand exponentially, and you will discover your purpose for being here. (Remember: Don't bring any thoughts, concepts, ideas, plans, or expectations into the meditation. Let it all go before you begin your formal practice.)

These are some of the deepest questions you can ask yourself, which is why we do nothing with the information that comes to us during meditation. That's simply a process for establishing your dialogue with the universe, and making the soil more fertile. It's outside of meditation, when the seeds you've planted are growing, that insights begun to unfold.

#### **Creating Your Ritual**

What are the questions that are important to you? Write them down, explore them before meditating for a solid week, and you will feel them unfold in your life. (Remember: Don't bring these questions or their answers into your meditation.) After you have asked and answered (and sometimes there will be no answers) all these questions, simply release them. You can add emphasis to your letting go of them by physically releasing them. Take a long, slow, deep breath in and as you exhale, release them out into the universe.

Then meditate using whatever technique resonates with you most.

After meditating for your desired time, when you are in the most relaxed state possible, drift your awareness to The Five Secrets of the Sweetspot and effortlessly repeat each sutra for about a minute—patience, acceptance, defenselessness, compassion, abundance. After you've allowed abundance, the last sutra, to ripple into stillness, sit in silence for a few moments. Then seal your meditation by chanting OM, the universal vibration that heralds our one-ness. Let that settle for a few moments, slowly open your eyes, raise your hands to your heart, and bow to all of your fellow meditators around the world who shared this collective consciousness with you. Then simply move into the rest of your day. You'll notice a perspective shift within two meditations!!!

#### Using the Five Secrets of the SweetSpot AS Your Sacred Reflections

Since infinite flexibility with your practice is so important, there's a way to merge your Sacred Reflections question-asking process with the Five Secrets of the SweetSpot sutra practice. The beauty of using a sutra format is that it is simple, straightforward, and easy to remember. The advanced version of this teaching is moving from a one-word sutra to a more formal question directed at yourself. Using the question format will invite you to go even deeper into the sutras and be even more introspective regarding your internal levels of patience, acceptance, defenselessness, compassion, and abundance. This in turn will begin to manifest in your waking state! I encourage you to try it both ways. (Whatever works!) Whichever method you decide to do, always settle in first for a few minutes. Ever so gently witness your breath as it moves in and out of you. Then, instead of asking the Sacred Reflections, use the sutras of the Five Secrets of the SweetSpot in the form of questions.

#### Here's the process:

#### 1.) Patience

First I ask myself "How I can infuse myself with greater patience?" Then I walk through a few situations and relationships in my mind in which I could be a bit more patient. This is where the stillness and silence that happens in my meditation integrates into my real life. Patience is a virtue, and when I am out of balance or overheated physically or emotionally, that virtue is usually in short supply.

Next, I walk through a few situations and relationships in my mind in which I could be a bit more patient—conversations or interactions where I was curt or short or bored or not fully present. Situations in which I left behind emotional toxicity rather than nurturing nectar because I was impatient. Then I see how I could change that—not go into the past but rather create the future!

We all have the ability to witness more and react less. By bringing your awareness to the concept of patience before and after meditation, you will be able to see yourself being patient (or not) as it's happening in the middle of a word, a thought, or an action. This is one of the keys to emotional intelligence—being able to receive information and process it without emotional charge. This will allow you to flow more easily with incoming information and respond with spontaneous right thought, word, or action.

#### 2.) Acceptance

Next, I ask, "How I can accept more?" And I'll envision a situation in my life where I am resisting accepting something—maybe a material thing, maybe a potential experience, maybe a point of view. Perhaps I am in denial about my personal interpretation of that situation and I am refusing, repressing, or resisting seeing it in another light. Then I open myself to the other point of view and remind myself of the sutra tat tvam asi—I am that. Whether THAT is someone or something I adore or I detest, I am that! Everything I point at is a reflection of all my physical and emotional energy. Everyone is my mirror. Everything is what I love, hate, embrace, and resist. I must own them all. Things I resist are more manifested in my life because of the attention I place on resisting rather than accepting. How can I not accept that? How can I not accept me? How can I not allow acceptance to wash over me.

### SECRETS OF THE SWEETSPOT

If it is a situation that I have been resisting, I ask if I am procrastinating or stalling. Am I putting off taking responsibility for issues that disturb my consciousness—unresolved issues of life, love, health, fulfillment, money, purpose? Am I ready to accept that everything in my life is exactly as it should be? I have the present moment to make amends and write the next chapter of my life. But to do that, I need to turn the page and know that the ink is dry. I must own my past. I must own the impact I have had. I must accept that this moment is perfect because every moment and every choice and every breath that has led us to this very moment is perfect.

#### 3.) Defenselessness

The next question I ask is, "Is there something I am defending right now? What is it I am defending? And why?" Exploring the ego and examining the things you defend as one of the first things you reflect on in the morning can be very illuminating. After you've meditated, you will move into the day in a less defensive and more expansive space. Asking questions about what you defend will open you to aspects of yourself that others see but you are otherwise blind to—subtle defenses that only bubble up in the quiet moment they are questioned.

Why are we defending? What are we defending, really? Isn't this just a way for us to publicly or privately display our strength or power? Or to disguise our fear, our weaknesses, or our insecurities? When we defend, it's our chance to exhibit our knowledge of things we think we know or show our grasp of some information. And in most cases, it makes us even more rigid in our opinion. Yet, as the Buddhist nun Pema Chodron teaches, "The truth you believe and cling to makes you unavailable to hear anything new."

Are you trying to hold onto something that perhaps no longer serves you? Maybe once it did, but now it doesn't. Or perhaps you're trying to put your mark on something that doesn't inherently bear your name. Like a dog marking its territory, you defend a piece of real or virtual turf. Maybe it was something you once prized, but now you don't see the value or thrill or importance of it anymore, yet you still defend it to protect your past decisions, your ego, your sense of self. Don't worry, being defenseless is not about being weak. It's about being passive. Water is never weak; it is divinely passive. That is when we are at our best—when we are like water, surrendered, flowing effortlessly, passive, not weak ... defenseless.

### SECRETS OF THE SWEETSPOT

And throughout the day, let defenselessness ripple through your every thought, every word, every deed. Even when you become frustrated, angry, or aggravated in some way or you're struggling to get your point across, realize that through being defenseless, you can learn more about your universal self, your cosmic being, your relationship with those in your life, and your soul, your atman. Others are more likely to listen to what you have to say when you don't feel the need to defend.

#### 4.) Compassion

Next, I ask, "How can I be more compassionate?" "Who do I have compassion for?" "Who do I not have compassion for?" "Why don't I have compassion for them?" The world could be a very different place if people—all people—practiced just a bit more compassion, which I define as a deep awareness of and empathy for another's suffering coupled with the wish to relieve it. A compassionate person cultivates awareness for spotting the unique gifts and qualities that make each person special. A compassionate person sees the divine in every set of eyes it gazes into. By seeing people in their most godlike state regardless of what else is going on, whether they are feeling full or at their lowest ebb, it is possible to help them restore their self-belief by keeping a firm, clear vision of their goodness and special talents.

Osho has often said that on the scale of love, sex is at the very bottom and compassion is at the very top. Thich Nhat Hanh, the Vietnamese Buddhist monk, teacher, and philosopher has said that, "We practice compassion until we see clearly that our love is not contingent upon the other person being lovable." And Albert Einstein is known to have said, "Our task must be to free ourselves... by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature and its beauty."

Compassion is the doorway to freeing ourselves from our own suffering. When we can see ourselves in everyone else, we are able to see god within ourselves and the divine in others. This is a one-ness that can permeate every moment.

#### 5.) Abundance

The last questions I ask myself before going into meditation are, "How much can I expand myself beyond my self-imposed limitations?" "How wide can I open my heart?" "How vast is the realm of spirit that flows through me?" "How can I grow beyond my limiting beliefs?" If my goal is to be the best version of myself, better than last year, better than yesterday, better than five minutes ago, I can only get there by dying to the past and growing into the future regardless of how painful I imagine the process to be.

#### 5.) Abundance

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### NO HANDS NADI

Breathe in through your left nostril, breathe out through your right nostril, back in through your right, out through your left, back in through your left, out through your right. Slow, Slow. Slow. Now just do a couple of rounds on your own.

Now take a long, slow deep breath in, hold it, gently let that go.

# LEADING MEDITATION





















# TEACHING

Sacred Powers

### SACRED POWERS

Together, we can help people get out of their ruts, to allow them to truly step into their power, and live their dream lives. By studying and practicing the Divine Principles outlined in Sacred Powers, our students can make meaningful shifts and start to live their lives with greater balance, inner strength, able to make more conscious choices, and ready to live what really makes them happy!

The divine principles of the Universe never change... They existed from the very beginning of time. They are invisibly woven into every aspect of your existence.

The Principles of each Divine Path progressively builds on the wisdom of the previous path – like spiritual building blocks. This way, by the time you and your students have journeyed through all five paths, you will be living your life through the Five Divine Principles that uphold the Universe.

This progression creates a framework, each principle and their exercises can be looked at separately depending on what you or your students need right now.

It is my wish that you – my soon to be ADVANCED teachers – will be inspired to weave the teachings of the Divine Principles along with their Sacred Powers into your lives and your classes with students. In addition to the summary below, during Week's 13 and 14's Wisdom Lessons I further summarized the key teachings, exercises and meditations that help reinforce each of the First Three Divine Principles so you can choose what to include in your classes. I encourage you to revisit those lessons and use those tools to develop your own classes as you feel inspired.

#### The Divine Principle of One

Within each Divine Principle there are three Sacred Powers. The Divine Principle of One is about the union of all things. Its key teachings are:

- The entire Universe flows through you.
- "You are not in the Universe ... the Universe is within you."
- The entirety of all existence rests at the very core of who you are.

### SACRED POWERS

- Guides, inspires, and teaches us about life in every moment
- Illuminates our path, points the way, and helps us navigate each step of our journey
- Expands our understanding of the pure, unbounded infinity of the Universe
- Provides us with profound insights into the true nature of the sacred essence that rests at our very core

By awakening the Sacred Powers associated with the Divine Principle of One – Presence, Your Ripple, and Spirit in your life – you will live each moment in alignment with something much bigger than you—something sacred and divine. Awakening these Sacred Powers connects you to the one-ness that rests inside, the one-ness that unites you with everything else on the planet, and the eternal union of your soul and the divine Spirit.

Awakening our Sacred Power of Presence will allow us to flow through the world with greater grace and greater ease. Once our ability to seize the present moment has been cultivated, the Sacred Power of Your Ripple will awaken a more profound connection to all beings, creating deeper meaning in your life. Through the Sacred Power of Spirit, the essence of who you are—your very Soul—awakens, sparking miracles in every moment, infusing your dreams and desires with higher purpose.

The Five Sacred Questions To Awaken Presence or Oneness

- Do I agree I cannot step into the past and change it?
- Do I agree I cannot step into the future to force it?
- Do I have the patience to wait until my mud settles and the water is clear?
- Do I give myself permission to show up right now as my best, most brilliant, most creative expression of myself?
- Am I willing to breathe deeply into this moment and awaken my best version?

#### The Divine Principle of Awareness

The second divine principle – the Divine Principle of Awareness – is about the intersection of dream and possibility. Its key teachings are:

- Every moment in our existence begins with awareness. If we are not aware of something, it doesn't exist in our consciousness. But when we place our attention on that thing . . . It becomes "real.". The Divine Principle of Awareness is the evolutionary starting point for transforming the world around you as you transform yourself!
- It's the cornerstone for every step you take to move your life from where it is to where you'd like to be.

Awareness is the key to living life with our eyes wide-open.

Awakening the Sacred Powers of this second divine principle – Attention, Intention, and Action– will settle your thoughts and calm your mind; clarify your intentions; and accelerate your ability to manifest your dreams and desires – turning your good intentions into magnificent choices.

Activating these three Sacred Powers is critical for an evolutionary shift to occur in your life. It's pretty simple. And, it starts by engraining these three self-reflections into your awareness: Where is my attention in a given moment? | What is the intention I'm bringing to that moment? | What action will flow from my intention?

Attention is the activator of intention, intention is the spark of transformation, and action converts the energy flow into your tangible reality!!!

#### The Three Sacred Questions of Awareness

What is my deepest desire? Where can I place my attention today? What commitment do I make?

#### TThe Divine Principle of REbirth

The third divine principle – the Divine Principle of REbirth – is about the intersection of dream and possibility. Its key teachings are that:

- Your ability to be REborn rests at the very core of your existence—the initial seed of stardust that first breathed life into you.
- New beginnings are possible if we give ourselves permission to gently, lovingly, openly, and tenderly peel away the layers of our bodies, our minds, and our Souls to reveal that sweet, pure perfection that is at the center of our being.
- It may be resting dormant in the quietest recesses of your soul, cloaked in darkness by a lifetime of conditioning, waiting to be awakened.
- REbirth doesn't mean you have to blow something up completely, or even start from scratch. You simply need to stop whatever you were doing which was not aligned with the Universe—and start leaning in a new direction where you are divinely supported.
- Like any birth, the process of REbirth can include some prickly discomfort as you hold the mirror up. It requires total self-honesty. AND, the end result is a magnificent liberation.

The Sacred Powers of the third divine principle – Acceptance, Release, and New Beginnings – enable you to make peace with your past; let go of what no longer serves you; and step into your power, and unapologetically own your impact. Once you are no longer weighted down by a lifetime of baggage, you can take your first steps on the fourth path and open the door to the fourth eternal secret on the spiritual journey.

"You always have the power within to shift your life from where you are to where you'd like to be."

"Change is different from transformation. Change is finite; transformation is evolution."

"The Winning Formula of your life has gotten you to this point; your new Winning Formula will take you to the next level."

"We can REbirth any moment by: accepting what is; releasing what no longer serves us; and stepping into a new beginning!!!"

#### The Four Sacred Questions of REbirth

Who am I when I'm at my best? What can I let go of that no longer serves me? Do I give myself permission right now to step into my power of new beginnings? What step can I take today to awaken my best version?

#### The Divine Principle of Infinite Flow

The fourth divine principle – the Divine Principle of Infinite Flow – is about letting the universe in.

Its key teaching is that the most fundamental law of nature is that energy cannot be created or destroyed. In every millisecond, you, me, and the whole planet, are simply continuing a flow of cosmic energy that began billions of years ago. Our entire existence in this lifetime is built on the premise of a never-ending energy exchange, which has been known for millennia as the Divine Principle of Infinite Flow. It ripples through everything, in every moment, without beginning or end. It ripples through me and through you. It's rippling right now. It was never born and has never died. It is pure unbounded circulation.

The Sacred Powers of the fourth divine principle – Trust, Abundance, and Shakti– move you past fear; open your life to infinite possibilities; and accelerate your ability to easily channel the Universe. With the Universe at your back, as trust is flowing through every fiber of your being, we will step onto the fifth path and open the door to the fifth eternal secret.

Trust is believing that the Universe that has powered you through every challenging moment of your life and will deliver you to exactly where you need to be. The Universe is abundant only constricted thinking makes you play small. In any moment, you can awaken the Shakti energy that is resting inside and align yourself with the cosmic flow.

#### The Four Sacred Questions of Infinite Flow

Where do I see the Universe in me? Where in my life can I trust more? What are the ways I can open myself to the abundance of the Universe? How can I surrender right now to the Sacred Power of Shakti?

#### The Divine Principle of Inner Fire

The fifth divine principle – the Divine Principle of Inner Fire – is about the fire of transformation!

Its key teaching is that the eternal flame that first ignited the entire Universe burns inside of you. This inner fire is the source of your passion, your clarity, your creativity, your courage, your compassion, your forgiveness, your purpose, your love, and your sense of personal power. It is the catalyst of life that ignites our will to act and transform the raw materials of our intentions, dreams, and desires into tangible form.

The Sacred Powers of the fifth divine principle – Your Awakened Heart, Passion, and Purpose– fills each moment with unconditional love; stokes the fire of your deepest desires; and crystallizes the deeper meaning of your life. How you see the world will change, and how the world sees you will shift. You will begin living a life of your own design, making bold, fearless choices and having them validated by the Universe.

As you become more familiar with and truly live the Five Divine Principles and their Sacred Powers, the inner whispers of your soul will naturally become your outer voice. You don't have to "try" or "do" anything... the transformation will be effortless. Simply understanding the Divine Principles and awakening each Sacred Power as part of who you are will transform the physical, emotional, material, relationship, and spiritual realms of your life.

#### The Five Sacred Questions of Inner Fire

Will I let love in today?Who am I grateful for?What does my heart long for?What holds my stars apart and my Universe together?What step can I take right now to help others and make a difference?

#### Living the Divine Principles

Observe your life through the lens of The Divine Principles. Start with the First Principle sniffmove through them over the course of a week or a month or a year.

Start your morning meditation each day asking yourself the Sacred Questions for the Divine Principle of the Day, reflect on each question, then let them go as you sink into the stillness of your meditation. And, as you go through your day, really observe your life from this perspective.

For example,

On Monday, focus on the Divine Principle of One and reflect on its Sacred Questions during your meditation and again throughout the day.

On Tuesday, focus on the Divine Principle of Awareness and reflect on its Sacred Questions during your meditation and again throughout the day.

On Wednesday, focus on the Divine Principle of ReBirth and reflect on its Sacred Questions during your meditation and again throughout the day.

On Thursday, focus on the Divine Principle of Infinite Flow and reflect on its Sacred Questions during your meditation and again throughout the day.

On Friday, focus on the Divine Principle of Inner Fire and reflect on its Sacred Questions during your meditation and again throughout the day.

See where this takes you. Listen to your insights. Feel it in your body and soul, Live it. Learn from this and continue to transform! And.... get ready to teach these Divine Principles to your students!!!

#### The Four Sacred Questions of REbirth

Who am I when I'm at my best? What can I let go of that no longer serves me? Do I give myself permission right now to step into my power of new beginnings? What step can I take today to awaken my best version?

The Divine Principle of Infinite Flow

The fourth divine principle – the Divine Principle of Infinite Flow – is about letting the universe in.

Its key teaching is that the most fundamental law of nature is that energy cannot be created or destroyed. In every millisecond, you, me, and the whole planet, are simply continuing a flow of cosmic energy that began billions of years ago. Our entire existence in this lifetime is built on the premise of a never-ending energy exchange, which has been known for millennia as the Divine Principle of Infinite Flow. It ripples through everything, in every moment, without beginning or end. It ripples through me and through you. It's rippling right now. It was never born and has never died. It is pure unbounded circulation.

The Sacred Powers of the fourth divine principle – Trust, Abundance, and Shakti– move you past fear; open your life to infinite possibilities; and accelerate your ability to easily channel the Universe. With the Universe at your back, as trust is flowing through every fiber of your being, we will step onto the fifth path and open the door to the fifth eternal secret.

Trust is believing that the Universe that has powered you through every challenging moment of your life

and will deliver you to exactly where you need to be. The Universe is abundant—only constricted thinking makes you play small. In any moment, you can awaken the Shakti energy that is resting inside and align yourself with the cosmic flow.

#### The Four Sacred Questions of Infinite Flow

Where do I see the Universe in me? Where in my life can I trust more? What are the ways I can open myself to the abundance of the Universe? How can I surrender right now to the Sacred Power of Shakti?

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## TEACHING

Destressifying

I've been working a lot with cops over the last eight years. I'm working with D.C. Metro and the San Francisco Police Department. I've been working with San Francisco Police Department now for two solid years. And that started with the Academy level. And then with the top Captains, Chiefs, Lieutenants, and for the last year, really filtering it down through Blue Courage who have now also connected me with San Diego Corrections.

Let me just walk you through what I feel is a good progression for an eight-hour course with a secular audience, using what I did with a certain group at San Francisco Police Department as an example. It was a 9 am to 5 pm class. And it was just me for eight hours!

So, imagine.... 9 am - 5 pm. That's a long time. So.... could I just talk about meditation for eight hours with cops? Not really. I have to talk about a lot of other content, and then just pop meditation in and out to keep them from zoning out.

Introduction. Setting the Table. Open to Questions. (30 minutes)

So.... We started at nine o'clock talking about biomarkers where I got them to take their pulse and write it down. Then I led them in counting their breaths for a minute and they wrote that down. How many breaths they took in a minute, and noting what they believed their stress level was as they started the day as well.

I know when I ask them at the end of the day to rate their stress level (no matter what else is going on in their life), they will have breathed and meditated up to 30 different times over the course of eight hours. So, at the end of the day, when I say, "Let's count our breaths", and "Let's take your pulse", and "Let's rate your stress level", everyone's stress level will be lower!

So, I feel it's always a good idea to check the biomarkers at the start, especially with a secular group right.

And then ask: "Who has never meditated?"

That gives an understanding of who's in the room? And if a bunch of people raise their hand, then I explore that a little more deeply because this is my opportunity to find out ...

Who am I talking to? Who was my target market right here in the room? How deep do I go? How secular do I go? How "woo woo"? How "kooky"? How engaged are they going to be?

If I can't always get 40 of my teachers to talk in in a session where we know and love each other, you can imagine what it's like when I'm sitting in a room full of cops with their arms crossed. When I ask "Does anyone have any questions?" they are often just quietly sitting there unresponsive... waiting. There are very few questions and not necessarily a lot of interaction. So I need to work at building their interest.

So, then I ask them:

"Why are you here?" "What are your current challenges?"

I get them to write those out. They do not have to share, but this helps everyone to start to get a little more introspective. Some people may just be doodling, but most people are playing along

And then I ask the question:

"What do you hope to achieve by this?"

They must answer out loud.... Not everyone, but if I can get 10 people to speak, I consider that success. And I write their responses on a whiteboard for everyone to see. On zoom, I could just as easily type and share my screen or I could just pop it into the chat window.

Also, in some instances, I create a poll and I come up with the answers. But with a first-time group, I don't want to guess what their answers are.

If it's a non-secular group, I could put out a poll, with answer choices like "hoping to achieve enlightenment" and "to learn to meditate", or "to become a better person", etc. But I wouldn't put that in a poll for a secular group. So, I just ask the question and have them post their answers in the chat. And in my most recent session with about 45 people, I got about 27 people answering what they hoped to accomplish. Most of it was all focused around stress...."less stress, less stress, less stress"... from virtually everyone.

Then I give my introduction. Such as....

"I start meditating in college, etc......" And then I tell my story. I do not use Sanskrit but my story has its crystallizing moment while I'm Iying in a hammock at a cashew forest reading the Bhagavad Gita so that is a bit woo woo for them.

"Twelve years ago I traveled throughout India in search of the guru. I began my journey in the north – near the city of Varanasi- in the town of Sarnath where Buddha taught his first lesson after achieving enlightenment. Months later, my aha! moment occurred while reading The Bhagavad Gita – Chapter 2, Verse 48 as I lay in a hammock in a cashew forest in Kerala. As I read Krishna's guidance to Arjuna, it all made sense to me: "Yogastha kuru karmani" – establish yourself in one-ness and then perform action."

So I do explain that in language they can hear and then I move into What Meditation Is - Yoga Chitta Vritti Nirodha. With this focus I am setting the table for them to see that I had an awakening.

My story is essentially that I spent a lot of time in the real world - in the corporate world - before I started hanging out in hammocks in India.

And then I tell them why I'm there - what have I done with my life. From that moment in India, I've dedicated myself to teaching people how to connect to stillness and silence so they can make better choices. That's what I've dedicated my life to. Everything in my life is about that. Helping people make better choices.

So who's going to argue with that? And, of course, I explain "I'm here to help you make better choices."

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So who's going to argue with that? And, of course, I explain "I'm here to help you make better choices."

And then if they're disengaged, I'll ask questions that help them relate to the content such as:

"Did anybody make a really crappy choice in the last week, today?" Anyone say something you wish you hadn't? That you wish you could take back?" "Anyone do anything that they regret?"

Alright, well.... we'll do this thing today and you'll learn to have that happen less often. You'll make better choices in your life!

And then I guide them back into their breath. Remember, they had their eyes closed for a minute and were watching their breath earlier. They didn't know then it was a form of meditation. They just did it.

And so, then I say let's close their eyes and just continue to watch your breath and let's just notice it. I do that for another minute.

And then, I'll guide them through Sacred Questions.

Who I am when I am my best version? What am I grateful for?

And then I'll try to bring them back to their noble purpose.

Why did I became a cop?

Why does someone do anything? In corporate it might be, "Why did you become a technologist? Why did you join a technology company? Why do you work in hospice? Why do you work selling clothing? Why do we do anything ...?

So, when I encourage them to ask the question...

How can I help others? How can I heal others? How can I serve others?....using my unique gifts and my special talents?

Through this people are brought back into thinking, "What are my special talents?", "What is it that I do really well?" Of course, we can all have a voice in our head telling us we suck at everything and then nothing happens when we are asked to think of what our special talents are. But if you encourage them to go to that space, they can.

Next, we set an intention; just for the day. That makes it accessible for them.

Usually my next meditation technique is to simply introduce watching our breath and just notice the space between breaths. So I will say "Ok. Now watch your breath and just notice the space between your breaths."

This may seem like so basic to us – as my teachers you have so much experience with so many styles of meditation. But this is this is radical to 99 per cent of the people that we're going to be hanging out with or teaching - watch your breath and watch the space between your breath. No one's doing that! No one's meditating, and certainly no one's watching the space between the breaths.

It gives them a little "object of attention" if they were drifting away.

That's the first half hour. Next I move into Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.

#### Maslow's Hierarchy of Need (30 Minutes)

I start this section of the day off with:

"A lot of you mentioned stress. I define stress as how you respond when your needs are not met. So let's dive into talking about needs."

Then I talk about physiological, biological, safety and security, love and belongingness, social esteem needs, and peak experiences - which is self-actualization. Those five categories.

If you're talking to a group that works together, when you get to love and belongingness, it's not just attention, affection, appreciation, acceptance, (which of course I go deep into as part of that half hour). But it's also about camaraderie, friendship, connection. This could be five people in a department, a division of a company, a family, or people who work together and do the same thing.

Then I talk about Fight Flight, giving an example of us responding when our needs are not met.

"Let's just go straight to that first one - biological, physiological needs. Ten thousand years ago, we were hardwired with the self-preservation mechanism known as fight flight. You are walking through the jungle, you hear the hiss of a saber tooth tiger, and instantly your autonomic nervous system triggers all these hormones and chemicals."

I'll walk them through that process. Everyone recognizes that.

Then I will move from "fight flight; physiological, biological" into our emotional response - reactive response, ego response. Sort of like "emotional fight flight". And that helps set the table.

I have not gone deep into science at this point. But I've explained that we're hardwired to sometimes make bad decisions because of chemicals and hormones and conditioning or because we're sensing a threat to our physiology. Or we're sensing a threat to our ego.

Then, for another half hour, I teach "the antidote to stress - meditation!!

The Antidote to Stress - Meditation (30 minutes)

So, as you can see, this is a very progressive process. It goes from INTRODUCTION, into STRESS, into NEEDS, and then, "what's meditation?", THE ANTIDOTE TO STRESS?

You can teach this any way you want. But there's a very logical progression as people are seeing this.

So, next I teach 16 seconds. And then from 16 seconds I speak to...

"What was that? That was a pattern interrupt."

"What did we just learn?"

We learn that we can have an object of attention in any moment. We can always direct our attention to where we want to be in any given moment. We don't have to have sad thoughts, bad thoughts, depressing thoughts, scattered thoughts. You can always drift your attention. How do we know? I just proved it. For 16 second you were fully present watching your breath. As you were breathing in and out for 16 seconds, you weren't thinking about anything else."

I always start the 16 seconds meditation exercise with: "Think about something that's bothering you, irritating you, disturbing you. Don't go too deep. This isn't therap. Just think of some type of irritation that's been going on in your life for the last couple of days. Now close your eyes and then do the 16 seconds exercise."

So, when it's over, I'll say "So... If you were playing along, you weren't thinking about that thing." And then I'll say, "Raise your hand if you weren't thinking about that thing for those 16 seconds." And of course, everybody raises their hand. And I can also tell from that who's engaged.

And I'll say "Of course, because if you were playing along, you weren't thinking about that thing I just asked you to think about it because you were focused on your breath."

Then I'll go into three minutes of mindful flow ....

"Close your eyes. Watch your breath. Where do you feel your breath right now? Move your fingertips to that space? And just stay in that space. And if the space moves, move your fingertip to that place"?

We just do that for no more than three minutes.

And then I say:

"What you just experienced was restful awareness; restful alertness. This is the starting point for mindful performance. This is the starting point for us being our best version. If you get still just for a little bit before you act, before you speak, before you "do", you're going to be a little more reflective, a little more thoughtful, a little more mindful.

"In this state, your heartbeat slowed. In this state, your breathing slowed. We're always going to make better decisions when our heart is beating slower. Our fine motor skills are at their peak when we have a slow heartbeat; as our heartbeat accelerates, we lose our fine motor skills. That's why when you are really nervous or hurried, and you reach into your bag to pull out your keys, and you're fumbling and fumbling, and you try to get your key into the lock, you can't do it... Just because your heart rate's up.

But there are those times when our heart rate's down, we like swoop into the bag, pull out the key, slide in the lock, turn the knob.... usually that is when your heartbeat is slower!"

So we know it works. With every aspect. Our words come out the same way when a heartbeat is slower.

We're just better versions when our heart's beating slower. And there's a feedback loop – slower heart slows the mind; slower mind slows the breath; slower breath, slows the heart. It just creates that feedback loop.

Who doesn't want to want to do that?

Then I start moving into the stats that we have 60,000 to 80,000 thoughts a day. That's a thought every 1.2 seconds. They're coming, so this is never about stopping thoughts.

Then I go back to "Yoga Chitta Vritti Nirodha" ... just quieting all those disturbances. Slowing them down just a little bit. Progressively quieting the fluctuations of the mind.

"The Science (30 minutes)

For the next half hour, I dive into science.

I talk about that meditation study at the University of Massachusetts, in concert with Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) and Harvard Medical School, where they tracked changes to the physical structure of the brain using MRI scans over 56 days. All 16 test subjects meditated on their breath for 30 minutes a day and experienced structural shifts:

• An increase in the size of the hippocampus, the part of the brain responsible for learning, memory, and spatial orientation

• A decrease in the size of the amygdala, the part of the brain responsible for fear, anger, and stress I also talk about Richard J. Davidson a little bit and pick one of his studies to highlight. If I'm going to keep focusing on the stress conversation, I go to the study in destressifying.

Under the guidance of Dr. Richard J. Davidson, researchers at the University of Wisconsin–Madison performed an eight-year study on perception of stress and its impact on mortality. More than 25,000 participants were asked to rate their stress levels over the past year and rank how much they believed this stress influenced their health. Over the next eight years, public records were used to record the death of any subjects. The test subjects who (1) self-reported high levels of stress and (2) believed stress had a large impact on their health had a 43 percent increased risk of death. However, the test subjects who self-reported a lot of stress but did not interpret its effects as negative hadthe fewest deaths over the eight years.

And... I actually gave my audience this poll before I spoke about this. And the questions were:

"Do you have a lot of stress or a little stress?"

- and -

"Do you think stress is harmful or do you think stress is not harmful?"

And so I share with that that the results of the poll in the study - following death records - said that the people who said "Yes, stress is harmful, and I have a lot of it" have a 43 per cent higher mortality rate.

So, this is the big teaching. Stress is in the eye of the beholder! The people who felt they have a lot of stress but didn't find it harmful to them had the lowest mortality rate. So, if you think you have a lot of stress, and you think it's going to kill you, it will.

That's what the study shows. So this is all about a perspective shift. If you think stress will kill you, it will. At a 43 per cent higher rate. And if you don't think that it's going to kill you, then you can move through life - even having a lot of stress - but not necessarily have it take you down.

Then I'll talk about Dr. Elizabeth Blackburn and her research https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3057175/. Talk a little bit about telomeres or telomerase and that she won the Nobel Prize in medicine in 2009.

I love Elizabeth Blackburn's response when she was asked "tell us where telomerase is made in the body", "tell us why it would be made in the body." She essentially replied, "I don't know where it's made, but I know how it's made. It's made when we introduce a pattern interrupt in our default mechanism."

Telomerase is made, apparently, when we introduce a pattern interrupt into our default mechanism. What's our default mechanism? Activity. So anytime we put a break in the action, we're creating telomerase.

At this point I've made the case pretty heavily of all the physiological and emotional benefits. And then I'm talking about living and dying. And then about how telomeres are a good six month predictor that you're either going to live or die, just based on taking a blood sample and looking at it under a microscope.

So, I'll talk about these studies. If I feel they're still engaged and interested, I'll add another study. If I feel they're glazing over, I'll move away from the studies and go a bit lighter.

Now, for cops, I next into police science, such as from the book Emotional Survival for Law Enforcement, or others by Bruce Siddall, Lieutenant Dave Grossman, Lauren Christianson. These guys are the experts on stress in combat and the impact it has on the body and stress and in policing. Sharpening the Warriors Edge is another great book all about cops. It really goes deep into the nuances. How when our pulse goes from like 75 to 85 beats, suddenly there's a whole different way we show up and respond to the world,

And then I'll reinforce what happens during fight flight - increase in blood pressure, stress on the heart, stress hormones, blood sugar, glucagon, decrease in circulation, decrease in digestion, thickening of the blood, suppression of the immune system .... every time we feel like a pump of stress in our lives.

Then I'll guide them into Infinity Breath - "Closing your eyes, watch your breath and now paint a ribbon of breath in the shape of an infinity sign."

After that I dive deep into mantras. And I say to them, a beautiful thing about mantras .... it can be whatever you're comfortable with. "The Lord is My Shepherd", the Serenity Prayer, "Shalom", "I am", "I trust", "peace". Anywhere you want to go.

According to Dr. Herbert Benson, 70 years ago, when he created the relaxation response dialog, he said, pick a thing that you're comfortable with. So, my approach is if you find comfort in something, go there for your mantra.

Then I talk a little bit about the practice - that bookends of the day are really helpful. By now I've guided them into about four or five different meditations. They probably have about 10 minutes of meditation under their breath. They have certainly been breathing consciously more than they have ever breathed in their lives.

And then I guide them in a gratitude practice for about five minutes.

And then when that's over, I talk about the science of gratitude. That it improves general well-being, that it increases resilience, that it strengthens social relationships, that it reduces stress and depression. And I explain that there's actually a school – the University of California, Berkeley, - that does all research on gratitude.

And then I explain that when the brain feels gratitude, the ventral and medial prefrontal cortex is activated. So even if they thought it was "woo woo", I snapped them out of that thought and into the science.

And then I will follow that up explaining these are the areas of the brain involved in the feelings of reward: morality, bonding, emotional intelligence, and positive social actions. Who doesn't want that?

And the science says just 20 seconds a day on one thing that you're grateful for or 20 minutes one time a week – for example, writing a gratitude letter to someone (that you don't have to even mail) – suddenly starts to shift your brain.

And that's the first three hours going deep on this content. All the meditations have been introduced, but they are never more than three minutes each. With this audience, it's better to do five different "let's close your eyes and watch your breath for a minute" exercises than to do one for five minutes.

Because this is the first time for them, so be gentle. Be really slow leading in. And then, of course, it's time to talk about practical application.

#### PRACTICAL APPLICATION

So I'll talk about the six stages of the present moment experience. Settling, witnessing, drifting, judging, surrender, acceptance, and then stillness.

I'll go into that and talk about experiences during meditation: you can fall asleep, you can have thoughts, you can experience stillness. I again talk about the importance of the first 30 minutes of the day. I talk about Michelle Gielen and her gratitude study in Broadcasting Happiness.

Then I remind them about 16 seconds. We do it again. Then give them a tool like "nourishment or distraction". Such as "When something comes in and you're feeling overwhelmed, why don't you put it through this filter. Is that a nourishment or a distraction? Distraction? Let it go. Nourishment? Lean in harder."

Talk about Ojas and Ama. And at this point, I might be using Sanskrit. Or you can just say "What did I just leave behind? Sweet vital nectar or toxic residue? In every moment, it is going to be one of those things."

I also teach reaching for SODA (Stop Observe Detach Awaken) when faced with a stressful or triggering situation, because I've already taught them about 16 seconds. And we spend some time on their "Emotional Tell" :

Where do you feel it when you're about to snap at somebody or scorch the Village? When you may not respond as your best version; not necessarily be impeccable with your work.

From there, I usually teach Doorknob Breathing. So, applying reaching for a SODA or 16 Seconds, to opening the fridge and not going deep on the ice cream because you can now make clearer decisions! Or coming into a room, and having new energy as you enter the room.

And then I'll talk about CFL as a tool to help them manage expectations and reduce trauma: Challenge Versus Threat; Finite Versus Infinite. And how they will learn and grow from the process.

When talking to cops, their first fear is that "this is definitely going to slow me down in a critical situation".

And this is where I'll proactively lean in and says, this is not going to make you ignorant to danger. If we meditate and have a gratitude practice, we will appreciate the good in life, become less cynical and respond versus react.

Most people have been doing their job for a long time. This could be anyone in anyone doing anything - they can get jaded or cynical.

You can talk about that practical application in so many different ways.

How you start your day with meditation? What's a good way to start?

- You can talk about apps, you can talk about sitting, you can talk about R.P.M., you can talk about beditation. You can talk about the second meditation of the day that helps us let go of everything we've absorbed over the course of the day.

So just in that, you can have four plus hours of content. And if you prefer you could pluck individual sections out and just talk about a specific topic.

You could also turn this into a 5-week course. Or, you could turn that into a four-hour deep immersion. You could turn that into ten videos. There are so many options!



# TEACHING The 5 Keys to Thriving

Deeper Still Manual

#### DAVIDJI'S FIVE KEYS FOR THRIVING IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

Hello, my name is davidji. I'm so thrilled that you're here, so excited to have you on today's masterclass, where I'm pretty much going to share with you some of the most powerful and transformational meditation tips so you can fall in love with meditation again, thrive during these often challenging days, months, years, and take your life to the next level.

We'll journey together for about half an hour as I share the power of meditation through what I call the five keys for thriving in uncertain times. These would certainly be uncertain times. It's probably always been uncertain, but these are distinctly these are certainly uncertain times.

So let's explore the five keys for thriving in uncertain times. The universe is shaking us to our core right now. You can feel it. Social awakening, political intensity, a global health crisis, jobs, money, relationships, racial inequity bubbling up and becoming so visible and evident.

I believe our expectation for pretty much how life is supposed to be is being challenged on a minute by minute -definitely daily - basis, and I believe we have super powers resting deep inside us - sacred powers.

That's why I wrote this book - Sacred Powers. To truly help us awaken those sacred powers deep inside of us. To help us gain balance. To help us begin our journey of healing. And to help us truly transform. This is a moment in time where we could truly - if we lean in - better understand why we're here and what we should be doing. And, how we can help those in our life get stronger and transform as well. The highest vibration always wins, and by embracing these five keys that I'm going to share with you right now, we can level up.

We can take those around us with us. So, let me begin.

Number one. It's the power of the present moment - the Power of Presence. So let's dive deep into that right now, think about something that's been bothering you or disturbing you or irritating you over the past few days. Don't go too deep. This isn't therapy, but just an irritation, a bother. Something that was supposed to happen, it didn't. Someone said they were going to do something, it didn't work out that way. And get clear on that. Maybe you even see their face in your mind's eye.

And now close your eyes and through your nose, take a long, slow, deep breath in and watch that breath till it gets down to your belly, and keep watching it.... when it gets there, hold it. Keep holding it. And watching it. And witnessing it.

And now let it go and observe it as it moves up your chest, through your throat, out through your nose or mouth.... And keep exhaling... keep watching it... Keep witnessing that breath as it dissipates into the ether.

And now breathe normally and open your eyes.

And that was 16 seconds. A mere 16 seconds. And in 16 seconds, and I can't see right now, but I can feel your energy. In those 16 seconds, if you were playing along, you were fully present. You weren't in the past, you weren't in the future. For those 16 seconds, you weren't thinking about that thing I just asked you to think about. I didn't tell you to stop. I just said close your eyes and watch your breath.

Imagine. just by closing your eyes and connecting to the present moment, whatever those irritations were, whatever that challenge or problem was, poof - it was gone. So you've learned a couple of powerful things right here right now. Number 1, you can control where you direct your attention even if you have negative thoughts coming into you. You can introduce a break in the action, a pattern interrupt from what was.... right in between.... What will be?

We are the space between our thoughts, we have sixty thousand to eighty thousand thoughts a day, we are the space between them.

We're the space between the breath. We are the space between our words. We are the space between the notes. That's how music is made, by there being a space between the notes. Otherwise there would just be one note but there is space between and that space allows the next moment to unfold with infinite possibilities.

There's an ancient teaching,...Perhaps you've read it before, in the yoga sutras.

And we explore the yoga sutras in the Masters of Wisdom and Meditation Teacher Training. It's the second sutra of 196 of them... Where Patanjali says Yoga Chitta Vritti Nirodha. Yoga union, oneness - is the progressive quieting of the fluctuations of the mind.

And that's what we do when we meditate. We don't stop our thoughts. This isn't a thought repellant. You're not going to ever stop our thoughts, but we sort of have the ability to place our brain on silent, just like my phone is always on. Silent, I know disturbs a lot of people. But we can turn that thought machine on silent. Yoga Chitta Vritti Nirodha - and progressively quiet the fluctuations.

Now you have this tool, 16 seconds, so you can bust that out anytime. And there are people who put it into their alarm on their phone and it alerts them every couple of hours. 10 am, 12 noon. 2 pm. 4 pm. Just to take a breath. Just to close your eyes. Just suddenly to connect to the present moment. So you can come back into the next moment with greater grace, greater purpose, greater ease.

Number two - the second key. Gratitude. There's an actual science behind gratitude. The science says that just 20 seconds of us putting our attention on one thing that we are grateful for etches itself into the brain. When the brain feels gratitude, the ventral and medial prefrontal cortex get activated.

I know it sounds like a lot of gibberish, but that's the area involving feelings of reward, morality, bonding, emotional intelligence, and positive social actions. It cultivates a stronger immune system. Just even having a gratitude practice on a daily basis. It lowers our blood pressure, gives us better sleep or the option to have better sleep and we become more alert. So that we can better meet our needs of serenity and connectedness.

It actually reduces stress and depression. So 20 seconds on a particular person, situation, or circumstance that you're grateful for. Additionally, twenty minutes just once a week - writing a letter, a gratitude letter to someone you don't have the mail it ...or you could. Or you can just journal it and never send it to anyone. But the science proving that 20 seconds on a gratitude related to a particular object on a daily basis etches itself into the brain. And 20 minutes just once a week.

So why don't we do it right now? Why don't you close your eyes. I will time us.

Let me see if I can pop open our stopwatch. So I will time us and just close your eyes and invite into your awareness one thing for which you're grateful for. And you may try to drift away. If you do, come back, but I'll show you what 20 seconds feels like. Ready. Go.

And to help you go deeper, you might ask, why do I feel grateful about this thing? And explore that.

(wait 20 seconds)

OK, that was 20 seconds. Imagine that, a lot of times we're grateful when we create gratitude lists. But we don't actually spend 20 seconds on one thing. And that's the science, just 20 seconds. So you can do that a couple of times a day, obviously. Having gratitude is just such a powerful, scientifically proven benefit to us. It also has these amazing gifts of allowing us to appreciate life at a higher level.

People who have a gratitude practice are actually more fulfilled. And what's even deeper, they're more generous. So imagine flowing through the world with greater fulfillment and greater generosity, all because you can connect.

Gratitude.

So #1 power of the present moment. # 2, gratitude #3 LOVE.

The antidote to fear is love. It's impossible for you to feel anxiety inside of you at the same time that you're feeling love.

So a couple of you mentioned that you were feeling unsettled or anxious right now. You can just elevate your love quotient a little bit because when you're filled with love, you can't fear. When you're filled with love, you can't hold a grudge. When you're filled with love, you don't harp on a grievance.

The 12th century Sufi Poet Hafiz also said. I'm a hole in the flute through which the Christ breath flows". I am not Christ. I am not the breath I am not the flute. I'm just the hole. You are just the hole. And the hole can't hold on to anything, It can't hold on to a grudge or a grievance.

So let's practice a little metta meditation, unconditional loving kindness.

Close your eyes, settle in, and together with me...

take a long, slow, deep breath and feel your heart filled with. Breathe it in, feel your heart expand. And as you exhale, flow it right out to your loved ones. Those near those far. And those in the beyond. You are just a hole in the flute. Again, long, slow, deep breath and feel your heart expand, filled with Metta, unconditional, loving kindness. And as you exhale, radiate it out to all of your friends.

Those near. Those far. And those in the beyond. Feel your heart expand. You've got so much love to give. You are just a love machine here. Again, long, slow, deep breath and feel your heart expand,...Crack wide open....

And as you exhale, send it out to all your acquaintances. All those people who you interact with, whose names you don't even know. You're just a conduit of love here.

You are just the conduit of energy. Conduit of healing. Conduit of light.

One more time. Long, slow, deep breath into your heart.... It's overflowing with love.....

And now as you exhale, just radiate that love out to one person with whom you have a grievance. This isn't about forgiveness. It's just cultivating you being the hole in the flute. You just a channel of energy. Of healing energy.

Again, long, slow, deep breath in, feel your heart wider than it's ever been and as you exhale, send it out to every sentient being on the planet. Every bird, every fish. Every animal. Every blade of grass. See yourself wrap the entire planet in a bubble of love. Let's do that one more time.

Long, slow, deep breath and feel your heart expand. And as you exhale, wrap the planet in a bubble of love. You're just a love machine here. You are just a hole in the flute. Just a conduit of healing.

One more time, take a long, slow, deep breath and pull that metta, that unconditional love from every nook and cranny of the cosmos. Feel it come into your heart. It comes in infinitely. It expands your heart infinitely. And as you exhale, send it back out into the world. Into the galaxies... into every corner of the galaxies. Past solar systems.

And now take a long, slow, deep breath in. Feel that healing light come into your heart.

And now draw a thread from your heart to someone else's heart, who is suffering, struggling, or in pain.

And just breathe that healing light. That healing love into your heart and then flow it out on that thread that connects your heart to theirs - someone who is suffering, struggling, or in pain.

And now take a long, slow, deep breath in. Feel your heart expand and then ripple it through every single cell in your body with gratitude. You breathe in love and it expresses itself to every cell in your body. With gratitude.

.....Pause.....

And one more time. Long, slow, deep breath in. And feel your heart expand.

And send it out to everyone who is here and feel those hundreds of love bombs just landing on you. That shower of love. You send it out once and it multiplies and multiplies and multiplies and pours back onto you.

And now take a long, slow deep breath in. Ever so gently open your eyes. How did that feel?

Feels pretty good, right?

So #1 is the power of the present moment. #2 is gratitude. #3 is love. #4 is COMPASSION

Compassion is in many, many components. It starts as sympathy. But sympathy puts us in an unequal position with the person that we sympathize for. We sort of pity them. We look down on them.

Empathy puts us on the same plane where we are equals. And that's a much higher level of compassion.

You know, you pass someone on the street who is living in a cardboard box and you can feel bad for them and give them some money.

But when you empathize with them, it suddenly elevates. To a level of equals. Where we're neither above nor below anyone. And that's true connection. Take compassion even a little bit further... just a little bit further. And it's rooting for someone's suffering to end.

One of the challenges that we have is that we're not always rooting for our own suffering to end. We have compassion for other people. We shall kindness for other people. We show empathy for other people.

But are we doing that to ourselves? It's just so important. Think about it.

The ancient teachings tell us that you can't have compassion for another if you don't have compassion for yourself. That you can't truly forgive another if you are not working on forgiving yourself.

But if we're acting kind to another, but not being kind to ourselves, we're just acting. And how long can you hold that one up. But we can thrive in these uncertain times by being self-compassionate, practicing self-care, and then extending that to others around us.

Now, in Sanskrit, the ancient Indian language, the Sanskrit word for compassion is "karuna". And so what's the antidote for Corona, it's karuna, and so if we could allow the "karuna-virus" to ripple through this entire planet, then fear will dissipate. And healing can begin at a much higher level.

So we think about it. How can we thrive in these uncertain times?

Power of the present moment. Gratitude. Love. Compassion.

#5 - TRUST.

The ancient Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu wrote thousands of years ago.

.....Do you have the patience to wait until your mud settles and the water is clear? Can you be unmoving til the right action arises by itself.

Why do you fear because you do not trust? But you are innately trusting. Think about this. You're trusting right now - your heart to beat another beat. You are not questioning that. You're not fearing the next beat will not come right now. You're trusting the next breath that your lungs will take.

To keep prana - vital energy - flowing through you.

So why not widen the circle a little bit and trust the universe to deliver you to exactly where you need to be.

....Since the universe has been delivering to exactly where you needed to be and you've made it to this moment.

Remember, self-care is not selfish.

And if we can practice on a consistent basis. Presence. Gratitude. Love. Karuna - Compassion. And Trust. We can elevate ourselves. We can elevate the planet. Remember, the highest vibration always wins.

And we're all doing our best from our own level of consciousness in the moment. And sometimes our consciousness is not so high. Maybe we're sick. Maybe we're lazy. Maybe we are just not feeling well. Maybe we are tired. Maybe we're not nourishing ourselves.

Maybe we are not taking the time to meditate. But if we can structure that meditation into our lives. If we can introduce pattern interrupts throughout the course of the day, then we can get to that space of self-care.

And we can raise our vibration. And in that process, the vibration of others around us - no matter who they are- will elevate. It's called entrainment. It's a real thing and we have the power to do that.

Creating My Own "5 Keys" Class

We covered this content on Friday morning during our Virtual Certification week. If you want to revisit our class, log in to the dashboard and re-watch that session.

More importantly.... right now, spend some time journaling about what you would like to teach!!! Start developing your own class on the 5 keys or any varioation thereof. Here are some questions to get your thinking....

What is my superpower?

What topic am I most comfortable teaching?

What do I want the world to know?!

What is the experience that I want to guide people through?

Who is my audience and what is my real-world action step for starting to deliver this content?

# THE SCIENCE BEHIND THE PRACTICE



## THE SCIENCE ON STRESS, MEDITATION & GRATITUDE

The most recent scientific research now points to the fact that stress is not necessarily bad for us. It may even add value to our life. Stress has now been proven to enhance performance by focusing us and pushing us forward in the direction of our goals; and with this stress-driven motivation comes increased productivity and greater satisfaction. Severe stress -in the aftermath of a trauma- has even been credited with birthing many of our aha! moments, reinforcing our relationships, elevating our journey of personal development. It's even been confirmed that stress has restorative properties that can increase health and rejuvenate cells after the initial ordeal.

But the long-term implications of stress are all based on our perception of it. Under the guidance of Dr. Richard J. Davidson, researchers at the University of Wisconsin-Madison performed an eight-year study on perception of stress and its impact on mortality. More than 25,000 participants were asked to rate their stress level over the past year and rank how much they believed this stress influenced their health. Over the next eight years, public death records were used to record the death of any subjects. The test subjects who 1) self-reported high levels of stress AND 2) believed stress had a large impact on their health- had a 43% increased risk of death. The test subjects that self-reported a lot of stress in their life BUT did not interpret its effects as negative had the fewest amount of deaths over the eight years.

#### There are five keys to living a destressifying life:

Mastering your needs
 Mastering your emotions
 Mastering your communication
 Mastering your purpose in life, and
 Mastering your awareness

Destressifying transcends the conversation of whether stress is good or bad for you by transporting you to a new and empowered state of consciousness that places you back in control of your emotions, your perception of the world around you, and your interpretation of a stressful moment. Stress is always in the eyes of the beholder! And by adopting a destressifying game plan to life, EVERYTHING changes – from the very seeds of thought that trickle into our awareness to the chemical and hormonal pulses that drive our emotions to the steps we take with our words and actions.

## THE SCIENCE ON STRESS, MEDITATION & GRATITUDE

Stress can help you focus, take action, identify your needs which are not being met, enhance your performance, improve your memory, and manage a crisis more effectively. Stress can also push us over the deep end, filling us with anxiety, sadness, overwhelm, testing our relationships, constricting our emotions, distracting us, and confusing us. This is called the "stress paradox".

We now know that the same biological response that prepares us for battle when we sense a threat can have positive consequences –in addition to the obvious negative physiological and health-related effects. According to the research paper Rethinking Stress: The Role of Mindsets in Determining theStress Response byAlia J. Crumand Peter Salovey of Yale University & Shawn Achor of GoodThink published in November of 2012, "the experience of stress elicits anabolic hormones that rebuild cells, synthesize proteins, and enhance immunity, leaving the body stronger and healthier than it was prior to the stressful experience."

This continuing game-changing research is taking us into uncharted territory regarding our perception of stress – and sparking an entirely new dialog regarding the paradoxical –sometimes counter-intuitive impact it has on our lives. This was my inspiration to share destressifying with you as the newest studies have opened a door to understanding stress as multi-dimensional – a destroyer of health AND a life-affirming and healing force. In fact, new terminology is taking shape as stress-related growth is now being referred to in some scientific circles as post-traumatic growth(PTG). Science is now finding that weathering the storm of extreme stress can cultivate our inner resilience (what doesn't kill us...) making us mentally stronger after the fact and leading us to forge deeper relationships as we recover and connect with others. In the aftermath, we, see the world with new eyes, empowering us, and bringing us to a place of deeper understanding of gratitude & purpose.

This doesn't mean that stress is all good or that it doesn't damage, debilitate, and wound us; but that there is a fine line of interpretation during AND after the stressful moment where we actually get to choose whether stress is harming us or helping us.

Modern science has termed stress as any type of change that causes physical, emotional or psychological strain. But even that places a bit of a negative slant on stress. So let's be more evenhanded and use this definition, "Stress is how you respond when your needs are not met." All animals have a stress response, and it can be life-saving. But repetitive or consistent stress can cause both physical and mental harm.

## THE SCIENCE ON STRESS, MEDITATION & GRATITUDE

#### There are five basic types of stress:

1) **Good stress** – (known as eustress – pronounced "you – stress") a form of short-term stress that occurs when we perceive a stressor as a positive challenge instead of as a negative threat, for example, striving to meet an attainable but challenging goal.. Playing sports, working towards the completion of a project, following through on an intention, or pursuing a life-long dream. Eustress occurs when we interpretstress as life enhancing rather than life debilitating.

2) **Routine stress** – the pressures we experience every day at home, at work, at meals, and in between - from our restless sleep through our morning rituals & routines into whatever regularly fills our day to dinner time through wind-down and back into bed related to the pressures of work, family, and other daily responsibilities – ideally, the stress from these abates moments after the event – if not it becomes chronic stress (see below)

3) Acute (short-term) stress – an experience that delivers an unfavorable surprise that requires a quick response – getting a flat tire, spilling coffee on your new shirt, missing your connection at the airport. But it can also be triggered by one of life's major challenges such as when we lose something dear to us – a job, a loved one, a marriage or an important relationship, and even our health upon receiving a negative medical diagnosis. How we receive the information and what we do with it in the short term is our acute stress response. Sometimes news can throw us for such a loop that we remain frozen – in a state of shock as the surge ofthoughts, feelings, chemicals, and hormones simply overwhelms us.

4) **Chronic (long-term) stress** - the type of stress that seems relentless, never-ending, and unavoidable. The longer-term realities of -and the attempts at coping with- the life challenges of loss, death, career, and love that I mentioned above. The day-to-day-to-day realities of having been diagnosed with an illness, losing our job, harboring a deep secret for an extended period of time, feeling trapped in a non-nourishing relationship, working in a relentless, high-demand position are just a few scenarios where you might feel imprisoned in the land of chronic stress.

5) **Traumatic stress** – the result of an accident, assault, attack, or devastating event that embeds itself so deeply within, that even after the threat has subsided, all the physiological pain and emotional damage continue to live on within us. Sometimes numbing us so deeply and other times resting dormantly within us waiting for a trigger, traumatic stress can impact a person in a non-stop fashion expressing itself as chronic stress or be randomly triggered by sensory reminders such as sound, aroma, images, and even touch. The newest scientific findings point to the victim's ability to recover and grow from stress-related trauma as another outcome (PTG) – but only if the right support systems are in place after the fact.

We all feel stress in different ways. Some of us get headaches, experience sleeplessness, bark at othersin anger, bite ournails, run to the bathroom, cultivate addictions, or torture ourselvesby directing our frustration inward. Some of us become depressed, remote, irritable, impatient, overwhelmed, or frozen. In chronic stresssituations, we can feel like we are just treading water -desperately trying to stay afloat- as life's waves relentlessly pound us until our will gives way to exhaustion. In the process, our health becomescompromised as we succumb to high bloodpressure, extreme weight changes, restless sleep, sugarcravings, bouts of sadness, hardening of the arteries, nervous behaviors, and a weakened immune system.

But with all these symptoms and non-nourishing biological reactions to unmetneeds, stress getsa bad rap. In fact, not all types of stress are harmful or even negative. Some are actually good for you.Yes, that's right...there's good stress and bad stress. Yet, we rarely hear people say,"I'm loving this stress!!" But some stresses actually helpus feel alive, motivated, satisfied, and fulfilled.

There really is something called Good Stress

Good stress is the thrillthat we experience when we feel excited but not really threatened – taking on a challengethat is a bit beyond our reach but attainable if wegive it our all. In a classiceustress scenario, your goal is in sight;but to achieve it requires a commitment of time, energy, and will. In the process, we dig deep to summon perseverance, courage, determination, or motivation. And in these core moments of deep immersion into the experience, we are fully present in the taskor mission. Oftendescribed as beingin the zone,the eustress experience creates a scenario where we have no sense of time. In those moments of what modern science refersto as flow, we become the fusion of focus, chemical rushes, and feelings of accomplishment.

We've all been there – performing some challenging task with such deep absorption, that we feel we are one with whatever we are doing. All the times you've said the perfect wordsat the perfect moment; run the perfectrace; held the room captive as you've told the most entertaining story;played tennis like Federer; gardenedas if you were one with the earth; cookedas if you were MarioBattaglia or Ina Garten... Thereare so manyarchetypal superstars we have admired and drawn inspiration from over the course of our life that have publicly exhibited that state of flow in the extreme. Some of them may also have had their demons,but in their peak performance moments, they tappedinto a brilliant, dynamic, creative flow that impacted the world and set them apart from their peers. In basketball it was Michael Jordan; in media influence it was Oprah; in hockey, WayneGretzky; in dance,Baryshnikov; in comedy,Robin Williams & RichardPryor; in technology, Steve Jobs; in the worldof inventions Elon Musk; in social change,Martin Luther King, Jr. The list goes on and on. But those are only a few of the more famouspeople who have thrived in the moment of their eustress. There are billionswho do it every day.

The triggers for eustress canbe simple activities such as workingon a crossword puzzle, ridinga roller coaster, writing a letter, or planting a garden; tryinganything new wherethe outcome is unknown such as knittinga scarf or assembling a do-it-yourself piece of furniture; more technical activities such as competing in a tournament, participating in a spelling bee, or performing surgery; work-related projects such as developing a proposal, pitching a new idea, or engaging in a project; athletictraining, racing a motorcycle, surfinga wave, or playing sports; and at the most extreme level piloting a plane or climbinga mountain.

We can even re-interpret what we feared as a threat but then re-interpreted to be a challenge and shifted our mindset from "oh no!" to "bring it on!" Ideally when the goal has been reached we feel deep satisfaction, which rewards the effort.But the three key aspects of eustress are that we:

- Interpret the stressor as a positive experience (this is critical)
- Consider it a worthy endeavor, and
- Believe the activity will increase our skill level

#### The Eureka! Moment

During and after the stressful period, we are physically and emotionally rewarded with a surge of one of our feel-good chemicals, the success hormone– dopamine, whichcreates the feeling we have succeeded at something. I refer to it as the EUREKA! Hormone, from the famous exclamation "eureka!" (which translated into English means"I've found it!"), attributed to the ancientGreek scholar Archimedes.

The legendgoes that as Archimedes sat in his bathtub pondering how to determine the density of objects – in this case, the King's gold crown –he watched water splash over the edge of the tub brimmingfrom the densityof his own body. In a flash, the answer came to him. We now know it as the Archimedes Principle, which states that when a body is immersed in water, it experiences a kind of force we call buoyancy. This force is equal to the weight of the water displaced by the body. The story continues that in that moment, he leapt from his tub and ran through the streets naked shouting"Eureka!" (I have found it!)". Hisbrain must have been surgingwith dopamine!

For eustressto retain its positive impact, the activity must be relatively short-lived and perceived primarily as a good experience. If the stress periodgoes on too long or happens too frequently, it will devolve into chronic stress, which is never good. You've probably experienced eustress in the last week- meeting someonewho makes yourheart race, rushing to get to a party or a concert and feeling giddy when you get there, making the big presentation and basking in the afterglow, playing some competitive sport and feeling like an Olympic athlete, or finishing a project or a chore you've been delaying, and feeling the tingling of relief and reward simultaneously. Our pulse quickens, our breath becomes short and shallow; all these hormones surge into us – we can even get a bit lightheaded at times as the chemicals in our body shift around. We may feel a bit scared about some aspect of the activity, but the surge of excitement is short-lived and, in these moments, we are challenged, but never feel an actualthreat to our lives.

In fact, the newest brainscience has revealed that short-term acutes tress actually nourishes and readies thebrain for improved performance. In their landmark study at UC Berkeley's HelenWillis Neuroscience Institute, Daniela Kaufer, associate professor of integrative biologyat the University of California, and UC Berkeleypost-doctoral fellow at the time, Elizabeth Kirbywere able to demonstrate that significant -but brief- stressful events causedstem cells in rat's brains to multiply and mature into new nervecells that improved their mental performance. It takes about two weeks for a stem cell to grow into a new nerve cell; and through the process of micro-labeling the stem cells, the researchers were evenable to determine that the nerve cells involved in learning new tasks were the exact same neurons triggered by the acute stress two weeks earlier.

Whether you are a rat or a human, that surge of eustress must be short-lived or else it turns into chronic stress, which

elevates glucocorticoid stress hormones, which then suppress growth, impair memory – and actually stunt us!!!

This may sound like gobbledygook to you, but bear with me for a moment because I want to share somethingwith you that's truly amazing. Upon experiencing acute stress, a burst of the stress hormone corticosterone stimulates astrocytes(the cells comprising most of yourbrain), which then release fibroblast growth factor2 (FGF2), which then nourishes your stem cells turning them into new neurons increasing the gray matterin your hippocampus leading to faster learning, better retention, and expanded awareness.

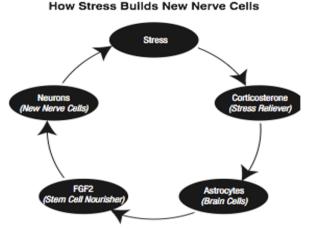
We now know that this magical growth factor contributes to wound healing by kick-starting the development of new blood vessels, and even morepowerfully, has an impact on lessening depression. So yes, a little stress(and I emphasize the word little) can brighten up your gloominess.

In the wild, where animals experience acute stress on a constant basis, this processhelps them becomemore attuned to the environment where they can more easily determine the nature of a threat. That's how even a dog quickly learns that a bunny can't hurt it, but a coyote can.

### BENEFITS OF GOOD STRESS

#### The Life Affirming Benefits of Good Stress

In our daily lives, we experience moments of short term stress with activities that havea hint or aspect of danger such as riding a roller coaster, racing a motorcycle, surfing, bungee jumping, cliff diving, hang gliding, rock climbing, scuba diving, and even jumping out of a plane wearing a parachute. At some deep level, we know all the twists, turns, and rapid descent scan be life-threatening, but in our heart of hearts, we are not sensing that death or injury will be part of the experience.



In fact, many thrill-seekers have described their euphoria as being so close to death, that they feel totally alive. We can have flickers of a threat to the body as we sidle right up to the edge of a death-defying activity – but in most scenarios, these experiences can be life affirming.

So how can a death-defying act be life-affirming? Whenever we push the limits of what we think we can do – and this can be in a conference room surrounded by your work colleagues or having a difficult discussion at home – the process expands our boundaries and the breadth of our experience. *Eustress* keeps life fun, vital, exciting, and chockfull of meaning. It coaxes us to stay motivated – to wake up and do it all over again.

Both our body and our mind are impacted by stress; yet, when the experience itself is clearly defined, is relatively short term, and has a beginning and an end, we recover quickly. Once it has ended, your mind body signals the "all clear" alert, and all the chemicals and hormones triggered by the stressful moment, ease backdown – leaving you in the afterglow of a feel-good, dopamine orgasm – fist pumping your hands in the air, telling everyone you know about your success, and celebrating your win.

## GOOD STRESS VS. BAD STRESS

#### How Good Stress Can Become Bad Stress

We've all heard the expression, "Too much of a good thing." And too much good stress can quickly devolve into bad stress. There was a period in my life where I really craved jumping out of planes, strapping on a scuba tank and diving deep, and pushing my motorcycle to the limit. I guess you could call it my adrenaline junkie phase. I was in my twenties and looking for a little bit of added juice to spice up my life – I was looking to trigger acute stress to spark the chemical flow in my body.

Modern science says these forms of stress are actually beneficial in keeping us motivated and engaged. But for most people, watching an edge-of-your-seat thriller, riding a rollercoaster, or making the "big" presentation can readily take the place of climbing Everest, or placing yourself in harm's way.

the most cutting edge research in the last several months is revealing new ways to look at stress through the diagnosis of Post Traumatic Growth (PTG) which states that after the specific trauma or adversity, victims report finding a new gear comprising inner strength and enhanced abilities; rejuvenation and renewednourishment in the relationships in their life; deeper spiritual and purposeful connections; and a re-ordering of their life priorities.

Groundbreaking research and contributions to the fieldof PTG havebeen pioneered by many. But, it is most notably the recentwritings of LawrenceG. Calhoun and Richard G. Tedeschi in their Handbook of Post-traumatic Growth; Stephen Joseph and P. Alex Linley's Trauma, Recovery and Growth; and the cutting edge work by the brilliant researcher, happiness expert, Tedtalk sensation, and author of The Happiness Advantage Shawn Achor thathave advanced the conversation to its currentstatus. In factin his 2012article in The Psychologist, Stephen Joseph wrote the following:

" After experiencing a traumatic event, people often report three ways in which their psychological functioning increases:

1.Relationships are enhanced in some way.For example, people describe that they come to value their friends and family more, feel an increased sense of compassion for others and a longing for more intimate relationships.

2. People change their views of themselves. For example, developing in wisdom, personal strength and gratitude, perhaps coupled with a greater acceptance of their vulnerabilities and limitations.

3.People describe changes in their life philosophy. For example, finding a fresh appreciation for each new day and re- evaluating their understanding of what really matters in life, becoming less materialistic and more able to live in the present."

You can find the most recent research on the Teacher's Portal.

# RELEVANT RESEARCH STUDIES

Can meditation slow rate of cellular aging? Cognitive stress, mindfulness, and telomeres (Elizabeth Blackburn) Download here >> <u>https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3057175/pdf/nihms-221333.pdf</u>

The Compulsion to Repeat Trauma. Re-enactment, Re-victimization, and Masochism (Bessel van der Kolk) Download here >> <u>https://davidji.com/wp-content/uploads/uploads-</u> <u>old/2020/09/TheCompulsiontoRepeatTrauma.pdf</u>

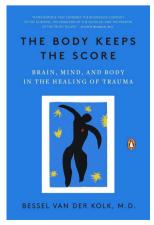
Purpose in Life Predicts Better Emotional Recovery from Negative Stimuli (Department of Psychology, University of Wisconsin) Download here >> <u>https://davidji.com/wp-content/uploads/uploads-old/2020/09/Purpose-in-Life-Predicts-Better-Emotional-Recovery-from-Negative-Stimuli.pdf</u>

Rethinking Stress: The Role of Mindset in Determining the Stress Response (Shawn Achor) Download here >> <u>https://davidji.com/wp-</u> <u>content/uploads/2020/11/crum\_rethinkingstress\_jpsp\_2013.pdf</u>

Mindfulness meditation training changes brain structure in eight weeks (Massachusetts General Hospital)-Download here >> <u>https://davidji.com/wp-content/uploads/uploads-old/2020/09/MGH-</u> Meditation-changes-brain-structure-in-8-weeks-.pdf

Behavioral Responses to Stress in Females: Tend-and-Befriend, Not Fight-or-Flight (University of California, Los Angeles) Download here >> <u>https://davidji.com/wp-content/uploads/uploads-old/2020/09/Stress-Response-in-Females.pdf</u>

Further Reading: The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma by Bessel van der Kolk



# ADVANCED TECHNIQUES



### SUTRAS

Sutras are mantras with meaning and we often refer to them as affirmations. Sutra is the Sanskrit word for "stitch" or "suture" and is similar to a stitch binding two pieces of skin or cloth. In the realm of meditation, affirmations act as sutras to connect your world of space and time to the world beyond space and time . . . from your physical realm to the ethereal, astral realm . . . from the local domain to the nonlocal domain . . . from the manifest realm to the unmanifest. Back and forth and back again.

In my album Journey into Healing, davidji created a soothing Heart Sutra meditation called Shanti: Peace and Protection

You can also practice this powerful meditation anytime. Here's how it works: After you have meditated for anywhere from five to thirty minutes, gently drift your awareness to your heart, envision a green color, and silently repeat, "Gratitude, trust, love, peace."

In your mind's eye, envision dropping the sutra into your heart as if you were dropping a pebble into a still pond. The ripple will start to fade out at the five-second mark and turn back to stillness at about ten seconds. Let the sutra slowly ripple until it stops (about 10 seconds). For example, silently repeat gratitude (let it ripple for 10 seconds), then trust (10 seconds), then love (10 seconds), then peace (10 seconds). And do that four times. The slow rippling acts as a timer, readying you for dropping the next sutra. Doing the complete set of four sutras four times takes less than three minutes.

### SUTRAS

When you do it, bring your awareness to your heart. Envision a green color in that area. And now, very slowly, silently repeat with your eyes closed: gratitude, trust, love, peace; gratitude, trust, love, peace; gratitude, trust, love, peace; gratitude, trust, love, peace. Then just sit for a few moments, and let that settle in. When you notice that you've drifted away to thoughts, sounds, or physical sensations, very gently drift back to gratitude, trust, love, peace.

If you can tack this ritual onto the beginning or end of your morning meditation, within days your heart will begin to open a little bit more. You will feel a greater sense of compassion, be more forgiving, and flow with a lighter sense of being. And you will actually experience greater gratitude, trust, love, and peace throughout your day!

You can perform the heart sutras as part of your daily practice, and your life will begin to become happier and more loving. What you think, you become. And the heart sutras are powerful affirmations to evolving you to a life of greater love and compassion. Simply go into meditation, and after you have been in stillness and silence for 20–30 minutes, stop repeating your mantra or following your breath. Then just float for a bit. And when your heart and soul are as defenseless and vulnerable as they can be, silently repeat gratitude, trust, love, peace. Gently drop each sutra like a pebble into a still pond, and allow the ripple to be effortless. Gratitude ... trust ... love ... peace ... And do that four times.

The effectiveness of the sutras is most powerfully activated when they are dropped into stillness and silence. That is the most fertile soil for intentions to sprout in. For the full impact of the sutras, lappend this heart sutra practice to the end of your daily meditation practice.

# FIVE SECRETS OF THE SWEETSPOT

The Five Secrets of theSweetpot are a powerful set of tools that davidji uses right after meditation to provide an evolving foundation for reflection, growth, and deeper understanding.

In Secrets of Meditation, he explains:

"Essentially, I have crafted my own set of personal sutras from the myriad translations of the teachings of the Old Testament, the New Testament, the Buddhist treatise of the Dhammapada, and the ancient Vedic texts known as the Upanishads. I use these sutras every morning in a process that is akin to planting intentions like seeds in the fertile soil that rests within. By implementing this post-meditation ritual over the past few years, I have had a transformational shift at my core and learned to make more conscious, nourishing choices in my life."

Here's how it works. After sitting in meditation for about 30 minutes, drift your awareness to these five personal expressions of the universe. davidji's are:

- Patience,
- Acceptance,
- Defenselessness,
- Compassion, and
- Abundance.

You can use these or develop your own - whatever you want to focus on.

Repeat each like a sutra-over and over and over for about a minute and then drift to the next. If your find yourself in thought, gently drift back to the sutra and begin repeating it again. If you get lost among the sutras, that's okay. When that happens, smile and start again with whichever sutra appears in your awareness first.

Silently repeating these sutras after coming out of stillness and silence is a gentle process that eases the transition from a state of restful awareness into more active awareness. One powerful, tangible result is that these affirmations ripple through your awareness all day long and before, during, and after every interaction with the world outside of you—especially in all interactions with humans and animals.

Placing attention on five principles that matter to you will help you grow and will lead to a better life. Whatever happens, it's five minutes of connection to principles that you honor as core to a life of happiness.

Each of these "Secrets" also provides the perfect closure to your morning meditation practice and can help you evolve your transition into waking state. And at the deepest level, they connect you to more universal aspects of yourself so that you can more fully experience life outside of meditation. In their most essential way, the Five Secrets of the SweetSpot express the qualities davidji would like more of in his life. You can choose these of whichever ones matter most to you.

Patience. The ability to be physically, emotionally, and mentally restful yet alert while your senses ingest, your mind absorbs, and your intellect digests; and then to intuitively act from a space of stillness. Patience is not about being dogged in any sense of the word; hence it is not about patiently persevering. It is about surrendering to see what will unfold in a detached way... orienting yourself away from the self filled with expectations to the Self who is the witness of the magnificent unfolding of life. Repeating this sutra has allowed me to become a better listener.

Acceptance. The state of being open and receptive at the intellectual and heart level so that whatever arises is welcomed and appreciated. Acceptance is truly welcoming something into your being as a friend would invite another friend into his heart, with arms wide open, owning every moment of the experience. Accepting is different from tolerating, which is more like allowing something to enter your space rather than inviting it in. Do you see the subtle difference? Repeating this sutra has allowed me to be more open-minded to others' points of view and receive love without resistance.

Defenselessness. The state of universality when there is no need or urge to defend or promote yourself. When you are defenseless, nothing can be taken personally because there is no person or ego to defend. Being defenseless is not about being weak, and it's not a state that can only be experienced in meditation. It's about not feeling the need to impose your will, your personality, your persona, or your point of view on something. It's trusting so completely that you realize tat tvam asi—"you are that"—every face you see is a reflection of yours and ever thing you see is an expression of you. You have no sense of I. You are simply the pure witness. Repeating this sutra has allowed me to be more vulnerable and more secure.

Compassion. True compassion is the ability to be sympathetic and empathetic, as well as have the desire to alleviate another's pain and suffering. Beyond living life at the level of "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you," compassion looks to heal others even in instances when you would not heal yourself. There are many people we like, even love, yet the depth of our compassion for them is shallow. Perhaps fear, jealousy, resentment, guilt, or anger color our perspective and each carries with it a certain attachment that prevents true compassion.

There are many people and things we think we love, but often it is because of our current relationship to them. Most likely, if the relationship changed, so would your feelings about those people or things. For example, let's say you "love" your boss and he treats you really well. But, if your boss fires you today, your feelings about him or her would change.

You might not be as forgiving of previous actions you blessed because of your "attachment" to him. You might even say that you don't like him anymore since you were fired. If your partner, fiancé, lover, or spouse came home today and told you they were leaving the relationship, you might not look upon them with the same level of forgiveness, support, and sweetness as you did previously. Most likely, that's because you have more attachment to them rather than compassion for them. Or perhaps you are confusing loving-kindness with a more attached definition of love. How can we know if we are feeling compassion about something and are not simply attached? In the examples above, the moment the relationship changed between you and your boss or you and your partner, most likely so did the level of rooting for that person. You stopped feeling the way you had. True compassion is independent of attachment. Imagine if our compassion could transcend our relationships and the attachment we have to them—pure sympathy, pure empathy, and pure desire to help others heal.

Abundance. The perspective in which you realize that you are an expression of the expansiveness of the universe. When we look to our most genuine selves—beneath all of life's drama, and the moment-to-moment conditioning we have self-imposed—we see that that we are rich in every way. We are open to wealth consciousness. We are unconstricted, ever evolving, and pregnant with possibilities. When we look really deep, we see that the fear, lack, and poverty consciousness we embrace are indeed self-imposed or projected upon us by what we read, what we hear, and what we see, but that's not who we are. We are open conduits for the magnificent flow of the abundant cosmos. We are designed to experience our most expanded universal aspects of Self.

Acknowledging these five characteristics as part of who you are right after you have quieted your mind for 30 minutes allows the seeds of these affirmations to settle into the stillness of your heart and flow through your day with greater grace and ease.

It's one thing to plant a seed in turbulent soil; the results are somewhat predictable. But planting seeds in fertile, rich, still soil provides an entirely different experience.

As the remnants of the vibrations of those words continues to ripple through your being at the most subtle level, they flow into every fiber of who you—your words, your thoughts, your deeds, your beliefs, your stillness, your silence, your pure unbounded consciousness... your essential being. And they become more of you as you open my eyes after each meditation.

The Sweetspot Sutra Meditation

For this meditation, we'll practice the Five Secrets of the SweetSpot by asking a few sacred questions, letting answers flow, and then releasing all the questions and answers out into the cosmos, letting the universe work out all the details. Then begin repeating our mantra. The silent mantra we will use is I AM, which comes from the root of the verb to be. I AM is a state—you aren't actually doing; you are simply being.

We'll spend about five minutes total on this pre-meditation process.

It goes like this: say the word patience, first out loud, then whispered, then repeat it once silently to yourself. Then we'll ask the question "Where could I use more patience?" etc.), close our eyes, wait a bit in silence for answers (or no answers), take a deep breath in, release whatever answers have come, and then move to acceptance and perform the same process, and so on. When we have asked, answered, breathed, and released for each of the Five Secrets of the SweetSpot, we take a deep breath in, release all the questions, answers, thoughts . . . whatever came . . . and let it all go.

It does not matter whether answers flow or not. All that matters is that you place your attention on these aspects of yourself. After about five minutes of this sutra practice, let go of all that you were thinking.

At that point with all the thoughts and intentions released into the ether, we close our eyes and begin silently repeating I AM over and over. When you notice you've drifted away from I AM to thoughts, sounds, or physical sensations, just gently drift back to I AM. Your meditation will be a gentle drifting back and forth between thoughts, sounds, sensations and I AM.

So let's begin by saying each Secret, first out loud, then whispered, then silently. Next, read the corresponding questions and close your eyes for a minute or two and let answers flow. Then open your eyes, move to the next set of questions, close your eyes, wait for answers, and so on. Let's begin by first taking a deep breath in, holding it, and letting it go. Now breathe normally and begin:

# THE SWEETSPOT SUTRA MEDITATION

Patience: How can I be more patient? Is there something happening in my life in which I could use more patience? Is there an issue in which I could benefit from another's patience? (Ask and wait for answers for about one minute.)

Acceptance: How can I be more accepting? Is there something happening in my life in which I could use more acceptance? Is there an issue in which I could benefit from another's acceptance? (Ask and wait for answers for about one minute.)

Defenselessness: How can I be more defenseless? Is there something happening in my life in which I could use more defenselessness? Is there an issue in which I could benefit from another's defenselessness? (Ask and wait for answers for about one minute) Compassion: How can I be more compassionate? Is there something happening in my life in which I could use more compassion? Is there an issue in which I could benefit from another's compassion? (Ask and wait for answers for about one minute.)

Abundance: How can I be more abundant? Is there something happening in my life in which I could use a deeper sense of abundance? Is there a constriction that is limiting me? Is there an issue in which I could benefit from another's sense of expansion? (Ask and wait for answers for about one minute.)

Now make sure you have let go of all those questions and all those answers or no answers (remember: it's about your attention and your intention, not about any answers that arrive or don't arrive) and begin repeating the mantra I AM. Slowly, repeat it out loud five times, then whisper it five times. And then begin repeating it silently to yourself without moving your lips or tongue. It's just a faint idea; it's not a clear pronunciation. You are not enunciating, you are passively listening to it.

As you continue to repeat it with less and less effort each time, surrender to the mantra. Don't try to pronounce it perfectly. Don't even say it . . . simply listen to it. It will change and get fast or slow, loud or faint, or become jumbled, distorted, or invisible. However it changes, be unconcerned and keep following it. Don't try to control it. Very shortly, sensations will drift away.

This is just about the point in the process where the control freak in us may start to give up or try to make the experience happen. Hang in there. Continue to repeat the mantra and feel the comfort of drifting back to it when you find yourself in thoughts, sounds, or physical sensations. I AM. I AM.

(Dp this with your students for about 10 minutes)

After 10 minutes..

Now you can stop repeating the mantra..... And, when it feels comfortable, gently open your eyes....

# ADVANCED TECHNIQUES

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### CHAKRAS & HEALING

The traditional Indian healing system known as Ayurveda teaches that the chakras are the energetic junctionpoints connecting our local domain world of form and phenomena with the nonlocal realm of theunmanifest. The ancient Vedic texts of the later Upanishads, a core philosophical scripture of Hinduism, state that there are 108 chakras in and outside of the body. There are seven main chakras within the body that are said to be the energy centers. They radiate like wheels of light outward from a point on the physical body and through the layers of the subtle body (mind) and causal body (spirit) in an ever-increasing, fan-shaped or heart-shaped formation. These points are thought to be the focal points for the reception and transmission of our vital life force energy, known as prana in Sanskrit.



The seven main chakras are aligned in a column that begins at the base of your spine and extends to the top of your head. They're located symmetrically up your body, each of them spaced a distance of approximately seven fingers from eachother, which is one hand and then two additional fingers from the tailbone to a bit below the navel, to the center of your chest (called the solar plexus), to your heart, to your throat, to the third eye (an inch or so above your eyebrows), and then to the crown of your head.

In addition to the Vedas, other wisdom traditions from Asia, the Middle East, and even North America haveintegrated the chakras into theircultures. For example, the heartexpanding philosophy of Sufism rooted in ancient Turkey and Persia refers to four of these chakras ashaving powerful personalities.

Accordingly, in these traditions, the navel chakra is called the "Self"; the heart chakra – "secret"; the throat chakra – "mysterious"; and the crown chakra – "the Teacher". The Hopi Indians of North America also speak of thesesame four chakras and describe them as being located on the crown of the head and in the regions of thethroat, heart, and navel.

### CHAKRAS & HEALING

#### The Colors and Vibrations of Chakras

Each chakra has a specific color associated with it, as well as a vibrational mantra that opens or tunes the energy flow in each of our energy centers. This tuning is similar to opening up additional lanes on a highway.When the traffic has broader bandwidth, it can flow more easily and quickly. Master chakra scholars such as Anodea Judith and Karla Refoxo have explored the origins of the ancient chakra practice and have eloquently explained the deeper meanings, expanded characteristics, and personal affirmations of each chakra. Anodea has created DVDs, books, and even workshops on the subject. Karla has lived in the holy enclave of Nepal, crafting spiritually charged chakra amulets to connect people more deeply to their most divine selves.

Chakra meditation is extremely powerful, because it opens you up to a more universal flow at the level of your personal physiology, your emotional state, and your spiritual awareness. Let's explore each of the seven main chakras in a little more detail to set the foundation for the meditation. In the Vedic tradition, they start with the most earthbound and weighty and move upward to the more subtle, getting lighter and lighter until they reach the state of pure ether.

#### **First Chakra**

The first chakra, also called the root or base chakra, is known in Sanskrit as the muladhara (pronounced moola-dara). This is your personal connection to groundedness, stability, and connection, and it is the heaviest of chakras. It is located at the tip of the tailbone and is essentially your contact point to the earth when you sit on the floor or ground. This is the site of your physical connection to the world. Traditionally, the muladhara is associated with the color red. During a chakra tuning, this root is where the foundational flow of all of the universe's energy enters you. So the flow of anything from the unmanifest, the unseen, the unbirthed, or the infinite enters here.

The vibration or mantra for the first chakra is Laam.

#### Second Chakra

The second chakra, also called the sacral or sex chakra, is known in Sanskrit as the svadhisthana (pronounced svah-dee-shtana) chakra. This is your personal connection to creativity—your own and that of the universe. It is located three fingers below your navel. Traditionally it is associated with the color orange. The most powerful energy on the planet is creative energy. It is the energy of birth that transforms the unmanifest into the manifest, thought into action, concept into product, idea into utterance, and desire into fulfillment.

When the second chakra is balanced, you are full, abundant, and pregnant with possibilities. You move in the direction of your dreams, and you know that you are deserving of them. The vibration or mantra for the second chakra is Vaam.

#### **Third Chakra**

The third chakra, also called the solar plexus chakra, is known in Sanskrit as the manipura (pronouncedmonny-poora). This is your moving forward and following through chakra that takes

you in the direction of the seeds you've planted in the fertile ground of your second chakra. The manipura is located in the center of your chest at your solar plexus, a few inches below the joining of your ribcage. This is essentially the center of your body, where your emotional and physical digestive fires burn most brightly. This radiating power plant moves you toward your target and awakens your personal, internal strength to achieve your intentions and desires. Traditionally it is associated with the color yellow. This chakra has also been referred to as the sun or surya chakra (surya means "sun" in Sanskrit), because the golden yellow sun that radiates from the solar plexus is ever evolving, metabolizing, and transforming us in every moment.

When we harness the energy of the solar plexus chakra, we find empowerment and transformation. The vibration or mantra for the third chakra is Raam.

#### Fourth Chakra

The fourth chakra, also called the heart chakra, is known in Sanskrit as the anahata (pronounced anna-hatta) chakra. This is your personal connection to love (self-love and love for others), compassion, empathy, forgiveness, and peace. It is located in the area of your physical heart, a bit to the right of your left breast. You can place your hands on your heart right now and breathe in and feel the love you can shower the world with. That's your anahata—your true Buddha nature. Traditionally, it is associated with the color green.

The world could always use a bit more love; just like we could always use a bit more love. We never can have enough. If we feel we're being smothered by someone, most likely it is our resistance to his or her love that is constricting us and not the person's love itself. If we could open our hearts even a little each day, we would be happier, and those around us would feel that shift and share that energy. You actually can make a difference in the world each day by simply loving a bit more than you do right now. When we tap into our heart chakra, love radiates around us and out into the world.

Of course, to get the love flowing, you need to love yourself first, which is challenging for many of us.What's the challenge? We have built many barriers to receiving love. We tell ourselves, "I'm not worthy," "I don't deserve it," or, "Others deserve it more than me." Or sometimes we simply feel "less than."

If we are going to continue to share our gifts with the world, we need to fill ourselves first, so there's plenty of love to go around. It's similar to when you board a plane and the flight attendant says something along the lines of, "If the cabin decompresses, oxygen masks will drop down. If you're traveling with a child, please make sure you put the mask on yourself first before you place it on the child." This basic tenet of Buddhism, and apparently of most airlines, essentially says, "Fill yourself first, so you can serve the world. Be the river; be full; be abundant; fill yourself with love so it will overflow to others." Take a few minutes right now and practice the heart sutra meditation on page 00. You will absolutely feel a shift.

The vibration or mantra for the fourth chakra is Yaam. David Simon and several other Sanskrit scholars have also said the vibration can be pronounced as Yum

#### Fifth Chakra

The fifth chakra, also called the throat chakra, is known in Sanskrit as the vishuddha (pronounced vi-shoo-da) chakra. This is your personal connection to expression, expressing both your personal Self and your most universal Self. It is located at the center of your neck in the middle of your throat. Traditionally it is associated with the color blue.

The throat chakra is where we communicate, emote, and give ourselves permission to express. Congestion in the throat chakra is often a sign that you are repressing some aspect of yourself, not willing to admit something to yourself, or that you are withholding permission from yourself to do something. This is the chakra that is the last doorway to the lighter, higher chakras and the more ethereal nature of self.Before there can be a growth breakthrough or a step into the next chapter of your life, you must give yourself permission to move forward in some way—something you have long denied or repressed.

When this chakra opens, you have truly given yourself permission to let the universe work through you. The vibration or mantra for the fifth chakra is Haam. Some people also pronounce this mantra as Hum. Either is considered correct.

#### Sixth Chakra

The sixth chakra, also called the third-eye chakra, is known in Sanskrit as the ajna (pronounced ahjj- na)chakra. This is your personal connection to source, to insight, intuition, essentially the doorway to what the ninth-century sage Adi Shankara referred to as the "causal realm." It is located in the middle of the lower forehead, between your eyes and up a bit.

Traditionally, the sixth chakra is associated with the color purple. Throughout time, in many different cultures, there has been a distinct relationship between the third eye and mystical or spiritual properties. It is considered the connecting point between your personal soul and the universal spirit—essentially where all your discernment and intuition rests. The vibration or mantra for the sixth chakra is Shaam.

#### Seventh Chakra

The seventh chakra, or crown chakra, is known in Sanskrit as the sahasrara (pronounced sah-ha- swa-rah) or thousand-petaled-lotus chakra. This is your connection to the unbounded, infinite, expanding flow of the universe. It is located at the crown of your head and is often depicted in art as the Hindu deity Shiva, spouting the Ganges River from the top of his head. Traditionally, it is associated with the color white or ultraviolet.

This is the chakra in which everything that has just flowed through you flows back out into the universe.When one has limiting beliefs, opening up the crown chakra allows you access to the entire universe of possibilities. This is you in your most universal state, surrendering your individuality and ego for cosmic consciousness and moving from multiplicity into one-ness. The vibration or mantra for the seventh chakra is Om. There are some schools of chakra practice that use the vibration Om for the sixth chakra and teach that the vibration of the seventh chakra is beyond sound.

#### **Chakra Tuning**

To activate, open, release, or expand your chakras, you "tune" them by bringing your awareness to them, envisioning the color of the chakra, connecting to its particular intention, and then repeating the vibration or mantra associated with the chakra. We typically practice starting from the root and working your way up through the chakras. In other traditions, such as Reiki energetic healing, practitioners are known to perform their tuning starting at the crown chakra and moving downward.

### CHAKRAS & HEALING

#### **Lightness and Then Integration**

The process of chakra practice is to move from the root to the crown —the most dense to the most subtle manifestations of your being opening your energy pathways first in your heaviest, most physical, and most deeply grounded aspects of your existence and then moving upward to ever- lighter expressions of your being. In many practices, you then weave your way back down from the crown to the root to integrate thelightest parts of you back into your more dense chakras.

Yogastha kuru karmani. Established in one-ness perform action. This attunement will open all your energy centers as wide as possible and then flow this energy at every level back through your energeticessence.

The result? An openness, coherence, and lightness of being that floats through your physical body, your emotional, psychological, intellectual beings, and your soul.

### CHAKRAS SUMMARY

The First chakra – known in Sanskrit as the Muladhara Meaning: root, foundation or support Location: tip of your tailbone Color: red Characteristics: groundedness, stability, security Vibration: LAAM Affirmation: We are connected

When this chakra is open, we are strongly rooted in our work, home, & intimate relationships; connected to our loved ones; grounded; centered; empowered; and feeling safe.

The Second chakra – known in Sanskrit as the Svadhisthana Meaning: Sacral chakra Location: three fingers below your navel Color:Orange Characteristics: creativity—your own and that of the universe Vibration: VAAM Affirmation: I am creative and expansive

When the second chakra is balanced, you are full, abundant, and pregnant with possibilities. You move in the direction of your dreams, and you know that you are deserving of them.

The Third chakra – known in Sanskrit as the Manipura Meaning: Solar Plexis Chakra your moving forward and following through chakra that takes you in the direction of the seeds you've planted in the fertile ground of your second chakra. Location: center of your chest at your solar plexus, a few inches below the joining of your ribcage Color:Yellow Characteristics: Vibration: RAAM Affirmation: I transform, I am powerful

When we harness the energy of the solar plexus chakra, we find empowerment and transformation.

### CHAKRAS SUMMARY

The Fourth chakra – known in Sanskrit as the Anahata Meaning: heart chakra. your personal connection to love (self-love and love for others) Location: located in the area of your physical heart, a bit to the right of your left breast. Color:Green Characteristics: Love, compassion, empathy, forgiveness, and peace Vibration: YAAM Affirmation: I love. I am loved

When we tap into our heart chakra, love radiates around us and out into the world.

The Fifth chakra – known in Sanskrit as the Vishuddha Meaning: throat chakra, your personal connection to expression, expressing both your personal Self and your most universal Self Location: center of your neck in the middle of your throat Color:blue Characteristics: The throat chakra is where we communicate, emote, and give ourselves permission to express Vibration: HAAM Affirmation: I fearlessly express my truth and hear the sound of the Universe.

Congestion in the throat chakra is often a sign that you are repressing some aspect of yourself, not willing to admit something to yourself, or that you are withholding permission from yourself to do something. This is the chakra that is the last doorway to the lighter, higher chakras and the more ethereal nature of self.Before there can be a growth breakthrough or a step into the next chapter of your life, you must give yourself permission to move forward in some way—something you have long denied or repressed.

When this chakra opens, you have truly given yourself permission to let the universe work through you.

### CHAKRAS SUMMARY

The Sixth chakra – known in Sanskrit as the Ajna Meaning: Third-eye chakra; our center of intuition Location: the middle of the lower forehead, between your eyes and up a bit. Color:purple Characteristics: your personal connection to source, to insight, & intuition. Vibration:SHAAM Affirmation: I see. Light informs my awareness. I live my life with illuminated clarity.

Throughout time, in many different cultures, there has been a distinct relationship between the third eye and mystical or spiritual properties. It is considered the connecting point between your personal soul and the universal spirit—essentially where all your discernment and intuition rests.

The Seventh chakra – known in Sanskrit as the Sahasrara Meaning:Crown chakra, or the "thousand petaled lotus" chakra Location: crown of the head Color: white or ultraviolet Characteristics: connection to the unbounded, infinite, expanding flow of the universe. Vibration: OM Affirmation: I AM. I tune into and surrender to Divine Consciousness.

This is the chakra in which everything that has just flowed through you flows back out into the universe.When one has limiting beliefs, opening up the crown chakra allows you access to the entire universe of possibilities. This is you in your most universal state, surrendering your individuality and ego for cosmic consciousness and moving from multiplicity into one-ness.

### MY NOTES

# ADVANCED TECHNIQUES

chemony

## THE POWER OF CEREMONY

Ceremony brings the Sacred into our lives. Ceremony is a symbolic practice having a spiritual meaning, with a potential for healing and also a calming effect on our "thinking" brain. This gives us the opportunity to connect with Spirit, nature, and each other.

- Connect to, and in the Sacred
- Speaks to & is Understood by the Heart/Soul
- Connects Us to our creative Self
- Puts Us in Touch with the Soul's Longing
- Is Transformative
- Outside of Time
- Mythic, Energetic
- Brings harmony and right relationship
- Can bring us Honoring, Releasing, Stepping Forward
- Can Help Us Experience
- Can give the sense of Coming Home
- Can Bring us to Peace, Acceptance, Truth and Completion
- Can create New Habits

#### **Ritual + Meaning = Transformation**

The ritual of initiation—either by fire or in a body of water—is essentially a REbirth, a letting go of what nolonger serves, combined with the awakening of an inward grace. Cleansing. Releasing.

Awakening.

These practices have been around in some form or another for more than 5,000 years and had their first startin the earliest cradles of civilization in Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and the Americas.

They've been practiced throughout time by the Vikings of Scandinavia, the Mayans of Mexico, Native and First Nation cultures in the Americas, and in the more formalized religions of Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Christianity, Judaism, and Islam.

#### Water Is the Cleanse

Water has often been used in these ceremonies as a vehicle of cleansing to reconnect the initiate to theUniversal journey each of us experiences. By stepping out of the sacred waters of our mother's nourishing womb and then washing away the blood, placenta, and amniotic fluid of our past, our divine purity, untainted heart, and unstained soul resting within are revealed.

#### Fire Is the Release

The unrelenting, all-consuming nature of fire has always signified the personal transformation we experience as we step from one chapter of our life and into the next. The ritualized burning away of the past in a bonfire and the steaming away of limiting beliefs in a native sweat lodge or Mayan Temazcal are1,000-year-old initiations based on the capacity of fire to incinerate, obliterate, and transform everything it touches. These rituals indelibly imprint themselves on our subconscious with the force to eradicate a conditioned, patterned behavior. Because once a possibility has been turned to dust, the seeds of a new possibility are then free to plant themselves in fertile soil. This is the opportunity for the phoenix to rise up from the ashes.

#### The Sacred Fire Ritual of Release and REbirth

Integrating water and fire ceremonies into retreats and trainings ritualizes the letting go of what no longer serves us and celebrate the transformational initiation of REbirth into more expanded horizons. Ritualizing any practice gives it energy, and adding meaning to that ritual takes it to an evolutionary place of pure potential. Ritual + meaning = transformation.

A sacred fire release ritual will have immediate effects. You can do this in a sacred private ceremony all by yourself, invite others to participate, or use it in your own classes, amplifying the impact by feeding off the collective energy. If there will be others, feel free to guide them all through the process.

First, you'll need to find or build a fire. If you have access to the outdoors, build a small bonfire, turn on afire pit, or simply light the barbecue. If you have a fireplace, get it cooking. Otherwise, find a fireproof receptacle that can serve as your mini-fire pit, such as an ashtray or a Pyrex bowl. Don't use your sink or tub, anything made of plastic, or anything flammable. And, just in case, fill a pot or a bucket with water, so you can quickly douse it if the flames get out of hand.

Next, get a pen or marker and a piece of paper, and write down three things you would like to let go of in your life. Don't type it; write them down using ink or marker. They can be big things or tiny things. It could be the big dream that is just not going to happen but is preventing you from dreaming a new dream. Maybe it's a habit or non-nourishing behavior; maybe it's a perspective or a way you see the world; maybe it's a physical object like clothes that don't fit or a box you've been clinging to; maybe it's a relationship or the way you feel about a person. Simply write down whatever it is and be specific. Then crumple up the piece of paper, hold it tightly in your hand, and rest your hand against your heart. As you hold the paper to your chest, allow any constriction, emotional charge, toxicity, or turbulence you feel inside to move around.

Connect to the sadness, frustration, irritation, anger, grievance, resentment, outrage, or disappointment you feel right now in this moment and allow those emotions to stir. Once they are mobilized, watch them move from inside your heart outward toward your hand and into the crumpled paper. Witness the emotions as they leave your heart and flow into the paper. Feel the sensation of your heart emptying these destructive emotions. Feel them moving past your fingertips into that crumpled paper in your hand. And now stay in this space for five minutes with your eyes closed, letting all the negative energy in your cells leave your body and move into the paper.

Next, move to the second part—the fire part. Your paper is fully charged; your heart is a bit lighter.

Now say a prayer of release or letting go such as:

"There was a time when I thought you were important to me. That time has come and gone. Right now, I ask for the courage and the strength to let you go from my life. With the support of the Universe, I release you."

And now, toss your piece of paper into the bonfire, fire pit, barbecue, or fireplace, or if you're indoors, light the paper and place it into the receptacle you've chosen. This is the important part: Make sure to watch the flames entirely consume your piece of paper charged with all that negative energy. Then place your hands on your tender heart, and with your eyes closed, just softly breathe, as you witness the last pieces of negative energy leave your body. Throughout the process, feel free to chant, hum, sing, whisper, or speak whatever comes to mind. Stay in this sacred space until the paper has turned to ash and until all the flames have been reduced to embers. If you've done this indoors, feel free to add to the ritual by flushing the ashes down the toilet.

As the paper is burning, if you like you can repeat the first three words of the Rig Veda, the oldest book in existence: Agni meele purohitam (pronounced ahg-nee mee-lay pooroh- heetam), which means "I surrender to the fire of transformation!" Chanting this over and over helps us connect to the 5,000-year-old cosmic stream of ancient ritual and release.

### **Full Release**

There's another ritual that can amplify release and really increase the cathartic aspects of the process. If you live near the ocean or have access to any body of water, you can take this ritual to the next level. First, find a rock that you can hold comfortably in your hand. Just like with the piece of paper, use a Sharpie and write down on that rock the thing you most want to let go of. Once you've defined that rock, hold it close to your heart and let all that darkness leave your body and flow right into the rock. Holding them tightly to your heart, continue to charge both the rock and the paper with your emotional pain, Let all your anger, sadness, regret, rage, and bitterness to leave your body and move into the rock and thepiece of paper.

Maintaining silence the whole time, make your way to the body of water. At the edge of the water, wind up and hurl your rock into the water. As you let go, scream a deep release howl, yelling anything that will ritualize the process, such as, "I'm done with you!" "I release you!" "You don't own me anymore!" "AAAAHHHH!" "I set you free!" "F\*#@ you!" or any expression that feels right in the moment. It's also very healthy to say a person's name who is attached to your pain or suffering. It helps release them from yourheart. Spend a few minutes feeling the release after that part of the ritual. Then proceed to the place of your sacred fire ceremony and fully surrender to the fire of transformation, where you will watch the paperburn and its contents turn to ash.

#### Nature Abhors a Vacuum

The hours, days, and weeks following this ritual will have a special flavor to them. There will be a lightness of being that follows you everywhere. You will breathe more easily and your heart will feel a bit more relaxed. But most important, you will have created some space inside. This will spark the energetic movement that will invite new, fresh, expansiveness into your life.

The ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle taught that nature abhors a vacuum, meaning that the Universe allows of science and physics require every space be filled with something. Now that the emotional charge that once filled your heart has been released and the energetic toxicity in each of your cells has dissipated, there is room for something new, unconditioned, undefined, and limitless. If darkness has left, there is room for light; if suffering has left, there is room for relief. If sadness has left, there is room for joy. If pain has left, there is room for soothing.

This is the truest expression of the Sacred Power of Release, a divine magnetism that pulls newness into emptiness!



## ADVANCED TECHNIQUES

Mudrag

### MUDRAS

Yoga is a practice of physical, mental and spiritual well-being, which includes a set of poses and meditation. It also includes important mudras or positions done during meditation. Mudras also meangestures adopted during pranayama and meditation that direct the flow of energy into our body. According to yogic tantras, these mudras are said to stimulate different parts of the brain. Described below are the yoga mudras:

#### Gyan Mudra

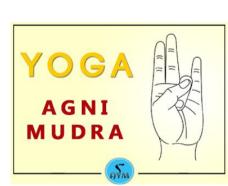
Also known as mudra of knowledge, Gyan Mudra is done during meditation in the early morning, when the mind is fresh and hungry for knowledge. You must touch the tip of your index finger with the tip of your thumb while in a sitting position. You must keep the other 3 fingers free or straight, resting on your folded knees. This mudra increases brain power, memory, and concentration.

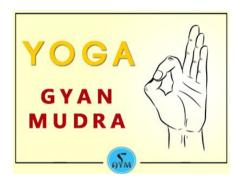
#### Vayu Mudra

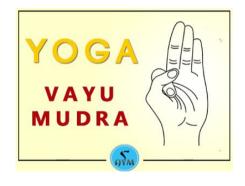
Also known as mudra of air, it is done to balance air in your body. This mudra can be done while sitting, standing or lying down. You must fold your index finger and press the second bone with the base of your thumb. The rest of your three fingers should be kept extended. Try doing this mudra on an empty stomach though you can also eat something and do it later. This mudra helps release extra air from the stomach and provides relief from chest pain.

### Agni Mudra

This mudra is also known as the mudra of fire. In this, you must fold your ring finger and press the second finger against the base of your thumb. Keep the other fingers straight. You must practice this mudra on early morning only, and that too on an empty stomach. Do this every day for 15 minutes. Agni mudra helps dissolve extra fat, thus controlling obesity. It also reduces tension and stress and brings down cholesterol levels.

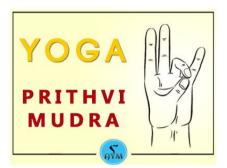






### Prithvi Mudra

The mudra of earth, Prithvi mudra is preferred to be done in the morning. People can also do this mudra at any time of the day. Todo this, you must sit in padmasana, resting the palms of your hands on your knees with straight elbows. Do this mudra when you feel stressed and drained out of energy. Padmasana along with this mudra will immediately reenergize you. This mudra helps improve blood circulation in your body. It also improves your tolerance ability and strengthens weak bones. It is immensely helpful in gaining weight for people suffering from the low weight.

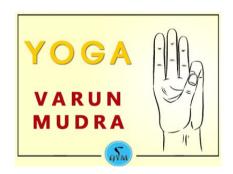


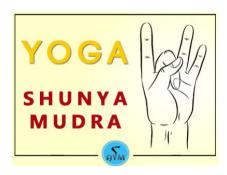
#### Varun Mudra

Varun mudra or mudra of water is the best mudra to increase your external beauty. In simple words, it is best suited to improve your looks, especially your skin. It brings a glow to your skin and protects it from all kinds of skin problems. To do this mudra, touch the tip of your thumb with the tip of your little finger. Keep the rest of the fingers straight while you sit cross-legged, with your back in straight position. This mudra balances water in your body and keeps the body moisturized through fluid circulation. It also adds a glow to your face and relieves you of any muscle pains.

#### Shunya Mudra

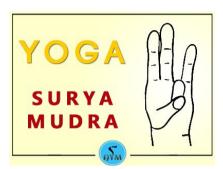
This is the mudra of emptiness which is done by pressing the upper phalanx of your middle finger with your thumb. It works on the basic element of ether (cosmic element) that is present in space and within each one of us. This mudra helps you feel the emptiness within you, free from thinking about anything else, and just experiencing the never-ending space. Regular practice of this Mudra for maximum 5 minutes can cure an earache or any hearing problem. Once your hearing problem is solved, stop practicing this mudra.





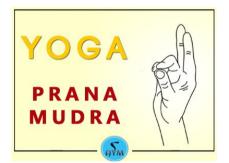
### Surya Mudra

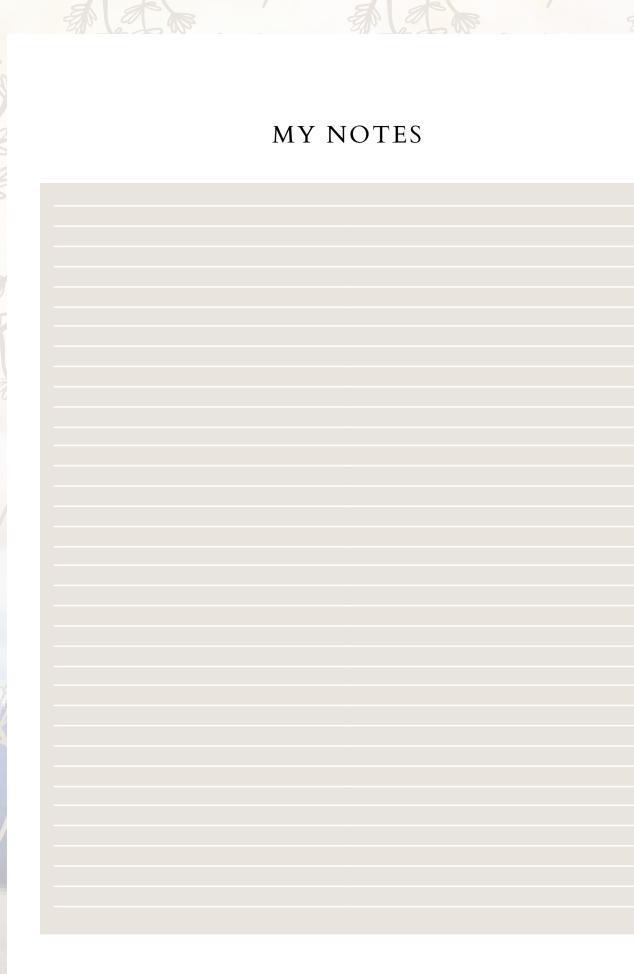
Also known as mudra of the sun, it balances the element of fire in your body. To do this, sit in padmasana pose with yourback straight and the thumbs of your hands pressing your ring fingers on its upper phalanx. This mudra is quitebeneficial for reducing bad cholesterol. It also gives amazing results for those who want to lose weight. Surya mudra also reduces anxiety and also helps improve digestion.



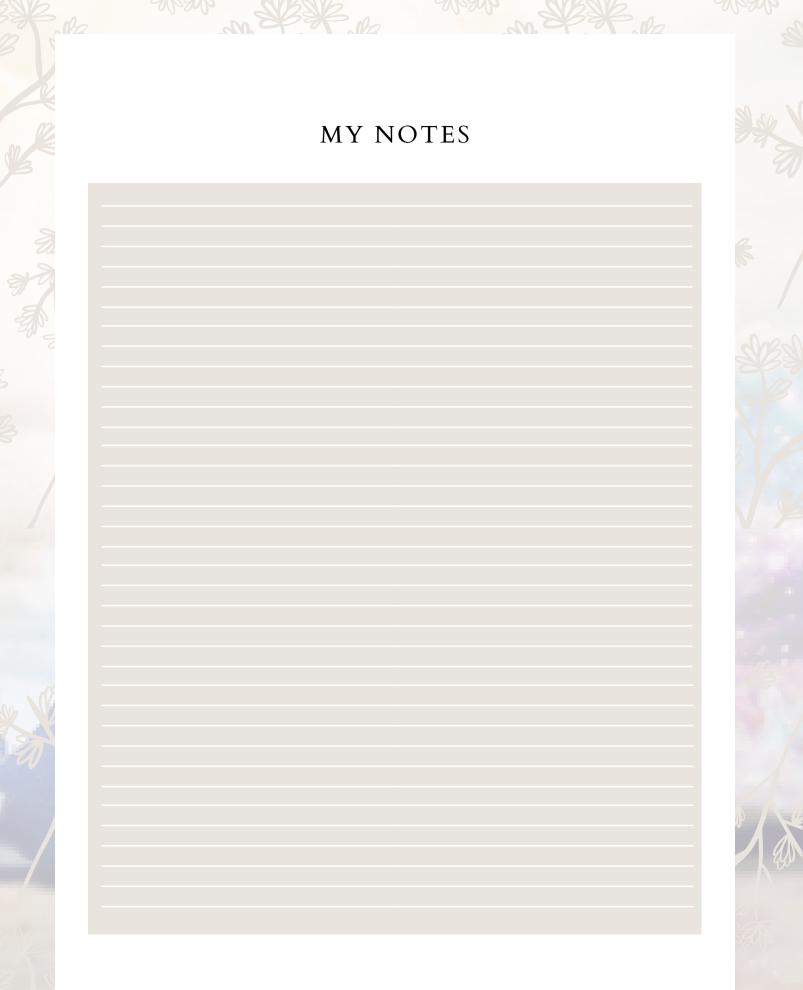
#### Prana Mudra

The Prana mudra means the energy or spirit of life. Prana is of utmost importance among all energies necessary for maintaining the balance of nature. This mudra should be practiced in a quiet room to awaken the senses. You caneither sit down in a meditative position or stand straight to perform this. Just keep your eyes closed while you focus on your breath. Bring your hands to the sides and touch the tips of your thumb with the tips of your little finger and ring finger. Feel the force of life as it runs through your body. This mudra should be practiced from 15 to 30 minutes. This mudra energizes your whole body and helps improve your immunity system. It is also considered good for eyes as it keeps them lively and active.











The Business of Teaching

**GETTING CLEAR JOURNAL EXERCISE** 

What's the offer that I would bring to the world?

Who is my target market? Who is interested in what I have to offer?

What's the vision I have for my spiritual business for 1 month?

6 months?

1 year?

2 years?



### MY NOTES

## MY SPIRITUAL BUSINESS

Getting Clear ..... My Spiritual Brand

My Spiritual Brand

**GETTING CLEAR JOURNAL EXERCISE** 

What's the name of my business?

What's my brand? Colors, fonts, vibe, etc?

What's my voice? What persona will you present as the leader of your brand?

What's my offer? What am I selling, where, through what channels, how often, etc? Online or in person? Live or recorded?

Who is my target market? Who is interested in what I have to offer? Get really specific here: age, gender, sexual orientation, marriage status, class, etc.

What is your mission & strategy? What are you action steps to start executing this brand vision today?



## MY NEW VISION

Intention Setting

# Intention Setting

### Setting Intentions For After Graduation

Do you want to know who you are? Don't ask. Act! Action will delineate and define you. ~ THOMAS JEFFERSON

PHYSICAL REALM - (Every aspect of your physical body: your body, diet, health, exercise, nature, sleep, sex, digestion, even your looks)

EMOTIONAL REALM - (How we react to certain people, situations, and circumstances – the words, conversations, and interactions that push our buttons and trigger us; and how we respond to them)

MATERIAL REALM - (Money, wealth consciousness, career, house, car, possessions... essentially the "stuff" we have, desire, covet, or are working towards bringing into our lives)

RELATIONSHIP REALM - (The relationships we have with our self, our front row, our family, colleagues, friends, those with whom you have a grievance, etc. and we want to either birth, re- pair, shift, or end them)

SPIRITUAL REALM - (Your connection to something bigger than yourself- God, the divine creator, your understanding of spirit, your relationship with Source, etc.)

MY NEW VISION Activating My Vision

Without taking action, none of our good intentions will manifest.

We need to lean in the direction of our dream - and lean hard.

We do this by simply taking a step today, tomorrow, and the next day. Once we have taken action for three consecutive days, the fourth day is easy, and then the fifth. And before you know it, you have started to manifest your vision!!

And as you see the incremental results, you will realize that bean by bean, your life is slowly transforming and your priorities are getting clearer and clearer, as you activate your intentions.

Action is how we turn concept into reality - to move the physical Universe in the direction of your dream.

So, with all the inner work you have done and everything you've learned as you've walked the journey of Deeper Still, write down the Action Step you will take today, tomorrow, and the day after.

Follow this blueprint for the next three days, and the next week, the next months and so on! You'll feel and see your transformation starting to take hold and your spiritual business will thrive!

### I COMMIT TO.....

ACTION STEP FOR TODAY

ACTION STEP FOR THE REST OF THIS WEEK

ACTION STEP FOR THIS MONTH

### THREE MONTH ACTION STEP

SIX MONTH ACTION STEP