Welcome To The Inner Traveler

One of the best things that can be done is the sharing of methods that can help people realize and experience greater freedom from illusion and suffering. We intend to do exactly that with this and every issue of The Inner Traveler. We hope you will enjoy and benefit from this effort.

Peace and blessings,
Bob Rose, President
Meditation Society of America

Sri Ramana Maharshi on Self-Inquiry

People came to Sri Ramana with the standard seekers' question: 'What do I have to do to get enlightened?' One of his standard replies was the Tamil phrase 'Summa iru'. 'Summa' means 'quiet' or 'still' and 'iru' is the imperative of both the verb to be and the verb to stay. So, you can translate this as 'Be quiet,' 'Be still,' 'Stay quiet,' 'Remain still,' and so on. This was his primary advice.

However, he knew that most people couldn't naturally stay quiet. If such people asked for a method, a technique, he would often...

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recommend a practice known as self-inquiry. This is probably what he is most famous for. To understand what it is, how it works, and how it is to be practiced, I need to digress a little into Sri Ramana's views on the nature of the mind.

Sri Ramana taught that the individual self is an unreal, imaginary entity that persists because we never properly investigate its true nature. The sense of 'I', the feeling of being a particular person who inhabits a particular body, only persists because we continuously identify ourselves with thoughts, beliefs, emotions, objects, and so on. The 'I' never stands alone by itself; it always exists in association: 'I am John,' 'I am angry,' 'I am a lawyer,' 'I am a woman,' etc. These identifications are automatic and unconscious. We don't make them through volition on a moment-to-moment basis. They are just the unchallenged assumptions that lie behind all our experiences and habits. Sri Ramana asks us to disentangle ourselves from all these associations by putting full attention on the subject 'I', and in doing so, prevent it from attaching itself to any ideas, beliefs, thoughts and emotions that come its way.

The classic way of doing this is to start with some experienced feeling or thought. I may be thinking about what I am going to eat for dinner, for example. So, I ask myself, 'Who is anticipating dinner?' and the answer, whether you express it or not, is 'I am'. Then you ask yourself, 'Who am I? Who or what is this "I" that is waiting for its next meal?' This is not an invitation to undertake an intellectual analysis of what is going on in the mind; it is instead a device for transferring attention from the object of thought - the forthcoming dinner - to the subject, the person who is having that particular thought. In that moment simply abide as the 'I' itself and try to experience subjectively what it is when it is shorn of all identifications and associations with things and thoughts. It will be a fleeting moment for most people because it is the nature of the mind to keep itself busy. You will soon find yourself in a new train of thought, a new series of associations. Each time this happens, ask yourself, 'Who is daydreaming?' 'Who is worried about her doctor's bill?' 'Who is thinking about the weather?' and so on. The answer in each case will be 'I'. Hold onto that experience of the unassociated 'I' for as long as you can. Watch how it arises, and, more importantly, watch where it subsides to when there are no thoughts to engage with.

This is the next stage of the inquiry. If you can isolate the feeling of 'I' from all the things that it habitually attaches itself to, you will discover that it starts to disappear. As it subsides and becomes more and more attenuated, one begins to experience the emanations of peace and joy that are, in reality, your own natural state. You don't normally experience these because your busy mind keeps them covered up, but they are there all the time, and when you begin to switch the mind off, that's what you experience.

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It's a kind of mental archaeology. The gold, the treasure, the inherent happiness of your own true state, is in there, waiting for you, but you don't look for it. You are not even aware of it, because all you see, all you know, are the layers that have accumulated on top of it. Your digging tool is this continuous awareness of 'I'. It takes you away from the thoughts, and back to your real Self, which is peace and happiness. Sri Ramana once compared this process to a dog that holds onto the scent of its master in order to track him down. Following the unattached 'I' will take you home, back to the place where no individual 'I' has ever existed.

This is self-inquiry, and this is the method by which it should be practiced. Hold on to the sense of 'I', and whenever you get distracted by other things revert to it again. I should mention that this was not something that Sri Ramana said should be done as a meditation practice. It is something that should be going on inside you all the time, irrespective of what the body is doing.

Though Sri Ramana said that this was the most effective tool for realizing the Self, it must be said that very few people actually achieved this goal. For most of us the mind is just too stubborn to be overcome by this or any other technique. However, the effort put into self-inquiry is never wasted. In fact, it's a win-win situation for most people; either you get enlightened, or you just get peaceful and happy.

David is acknowledged by many to be the premier author of books about Ramana Maharshi and his teachings. His book *Be As You Are* is pointed to as the standard introduction to Ramana’s wisdom. This article is an excerpt from an interview that can be found on David’s wisdom-filled web site: [http://www.davidgodman.org](http://www.davidgodman.org)

"Deer Spirit" artwork is by Luke Brown. More of Luke’s visionary art can be found at: [www.shambhala.cc](http://www.shambhala.cc) and he can be contacted at rabbit2012@hotmail.com
The big Samurai had won many battles for his Lord in lots of wars during the years. However, now he lost his first battle. Discouraged, full of anger with himself and the rest of the world, he wanted to take his own life, of which he felt it was worth nothing. He rode along the dusty roads, thinking about how he could leave for the hereafter in the most cruel and striking way. Suddenly there was a little sparrow lying on his back, stretching both his feet into the air. The Samurai, being interrupted in his thinking, stopped and yelled at the sparrow: "Make way, you unworthy piece of bird"

The sparrow replied in a smart way: "No I won't. I have a very big task to fulfill".

The Samurai, very surprised and astonished about the sparrow's self assured answer, dismounted his horse, bent forward to the sparrow and said: "Tell me; what is so important, that you won't get out of my way?"

"Oh", the sparrow answered, "they told me that today The Heaven will fall on The Earth and here I lie to catch it with my feet"

When the Samurai heard this, he started to laugh and could hardly stop it. He yelled exploding with laughter: "What? You little featherball, you want to catch The Heaven with your skinny legs?"

The little sparrow repeated quietly and clearly: "Well one does what one can!"

Thanks to Karlheinz Schudt of Vlotho Germany for this teaching tale. His web site is: http://www.maerchen-zentrum.de (which means: "center of fairy tales")
The practice of mindfulness/awareness meditation is common to all Buddhist traditions. Beyond that, it is common to, inherent in, all human beings.

In meditation we are continuously discovering who and what we are. That could be quite frightening or quite boring, but after a while, all that slips away. We get into some kind of natural rhythm and begin to discover our basic mind and heart.

Often we think about meditation as some kind of unusual, holy or spiritual activity. As we practice that is one of the basic beliefs we try to overcome. The point is that meditation is completely normal: it is the mindful quality present in everything we do.

The main thing the Buddha discovered was that he could be himself—one hundred percent, completely. He did not invent meditation; there was nothing particularly to invent. The Buddha, "the awakened one," woke up and realized that he did not have to try to be something other than what he was. So the complete teaching of Buddhism is how to rediscover who we are.

That is a straightforward principle, but we are continuously distracted from coming to our natural state, our natural being. Throughout our day everything pulls us away from natural mindfulness, from being on the spot. We're either too scared or too embarrassed or too proud, or just too crazy, to be who we are.

This is what we call the journey or the path: continuously trying to recognize that we can actually relax and be who we are. So practicing meditation begins by simplifying everything. We sit on the cushion, follow our breath and watch our thoughts. We simplify our whole situation.

see Mindfulness pg. 6
Mindfulness/awareness meditation, sitting meditation, is the foundation of this particular journey. Unless we are able to deal with our mind and body in a very simple way, it is impossible to think about doing high-level practices. How the Buddha himself, having done all kinds of practices, became the Buddha, was simply to sit. He sat under a tree and he did not move. He practiced exactly as we are practicing.

What we're doing is taming our mind. We're trying to overcome all sorts of anxieties and agitation, all sorts of habitual thought patterns, so we are able to sit with ourselves. Life is difficult, we may have tremendous responsibilities, but the odd thing, the twisted logic, is that the way we relate to the basic flow of our life is to sit completely still. It might seem more logical to speed up, but here we are reducing everything to a very basic level.

How we tame the mind is by using the technique of mindfulness. Quite simply, mindfulness is complete attention to detail. We are completely absorbed in the fabric of life, the fabric of the moment. We realize that our life is made of these moments and that we cannot deal with more than one moment at a time. Even though we have memories of the past and ideas about the future, it is the present situation that we are experiencing.

Thus we are able to experience our life fully. We might feel that thinking about the past or the future makes our life richer, but by not paying attention to the immediate situation we are actually missing our life. There's nothing we can do about the past, we can only go over it again and again, and the future is completely unknown.

So the practice of mindfulness is the practice of being alive. When we talk about the techniques of meditation, we're talking about techniques of life. We're not talking about something that is separate from us. When we're talking about being mindful and living in a mindful way, we're talking about the practice of spontaneity.

It's important to understand that we're not talking about trying to get into some kind of higher level or higher state of mind. We are not saying that our immediate situation is unworthy. What we're saying is that the present situation is completely available and unbiased, and that we can see it that way through the practice of mindfulness.

At this point we can go through the actual form of the practice. First, it is important how we relate with the room and the cushion where we will practice. One should relate with where one is sitting as the center of the world, the center of the universe. It is where we are proclaiming our sanity, and when we sit down the cushion should be like a throne. When we sit, we sit with some kind of pride and dignity. Our legs are crossed, shoulders relaxed. We have a sense of what is above, a sense that something is pulling us up the same time we have a sense of ground. The arms should rest comfortably on the thighs. Those who cannot sit down on a cushion can sit in a chair. The main point is to be somewhat comfortable.

The chin is tucked slightly in, the gaze is softly focusing downward about four to six feet in front, and the mouth should be open a little. The basic feeling is one of comfort, dignity and

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confidence. If you feel you need to move, you should just move, just change your posture a little bit. So that is how we relate with the body.

And then the next part—actually the simple part—is relating with the mind. The basic technique is that we begin to notice our breath, we have a sense of our breath. The breath is what we're using as the basis of our mindfulness technique; it brings us back to the moment, back to the present situation. The breath is something that is constant—otherwise it's too late.

We put the emphasis on the outbreath. We don't accentuate or alter the breath at all, just notice it. So we notice our breath going out, and when we breathe in there is just a momentary gap, a space. There are all kinds of meditation techniques and this is actually a more advanced one. We're learning how to focus on our breath, while at the same time giving some kind of space to the technique.

Then we realize that, even though what we're doing is quite simple, we have a tremendous number of ideas, thoughts and concepts—about life and about the practice itself. And the way we deal with all these thoughts is simply by labeling them. We just note to ourselves that we're thinking, and return to following the breath.

So if we wonder what we're going to do for the rest of our life, we simply label it thinking. If we wonder what we're going to have for lunch, simply label it thinking. Anything that comes up, we gently acknowledge it and let it go.

There are no exceptions to this technique; there are no good thoughts and no bad thoughts. If you're thinking how wonderful meditation is, then that is still thinking. How great the Buddha was, that's still thinking. If you feel like killing the person next to you, just label it thinking. No matter what extreme you go to, it's just thinking, and come back to the breath. In the face of all these thoughts it is difficult to be in the moment and not be swayed. Our life has created a barrage of different storms, elements and emotions that are trying to unseat us, destabilize us. All sorts of things come up, but they are labeled thoughts, and we are not drawn away. That is known as holding our seat, just dealing with ourselves.

**see Mindfulness pg. 8**
The idea of holding our seat continues when we leave the meditation room and go about our lives. We maintain our dignity and humor and the same lightness of touch we use in dealing with our thoughts. Holding our seat doesn't mean we are stiff and trying to become like rocks; the whole idea is learning how to be flexible. The way that we deal with ourselves and our thoughts is the same way that we deal with the world.

When we begin to meditate, the first thing we realize is how wild things are—how wild our mind is, how wild our life is. But once we begin to have the quality of being tamed, when we can sit with ourselves, we realize there's a vast wealth of possibility that lies in front of us. Meditation is looking at our own back yard, you could say, looking at what we really have and discovering the richness that already exists. Discovering that richness is a moment to moment process, and as we continue to practice our awareness becomes sharper and sharper.

This mindfulness actually envelops our whole life. It is the best way to appreciate our world, to appreciate the sacredness of everything. We add mindfulness and all of a sudden the whole situation becomes alive. This practice soaks into everything that we do; there's nothing left out. Mindfulness pervades sound and space. It is a complete experience.

*Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche is the spiritual director of Shambhala, a worldwide network of meditation and retreat centers. He is the author of a book about meditation, Turning the Mind into an Ally (Riverhead Books, 2003). For more insight: www.shambhala.org and www.mipham.com
Unedited transcript c 2003 by Mipham J. Mukpo.
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“Buddhism” (Pg.7) and “Girl 3rd Eye” artwork are by Reinhard Ponty. Much more of his brilliant art can be found at: http://fraktali.849pm.com/
What To Do
By Bob Rose

Practice concentration on an object, sensation, or concept for 20 minutes twice a day. Merge and emerge into meditation. In the other 23:20, be in a meditative mode. Practice mindfulness and being empty of mind. Enquire into “Who am I”. Discriminate between the real, eternal and infinite, and the illusionary and temporary. Be dispassionate as you witness your ever changing thoughts, physical sensations, and emotions. Control the breath with pranayama. Chant a mantra/OM. Do affirmations. Eat, sleep and drink as your body needs, not as your tongue, habits, ego or desires dictate. Recognize and break free from compulsive behaviors. Be selfless, humble, and compassionate. Be generous, charitable and quick to forgive others and yourself. Get over being upset ASAP. Don’t carry anger or revenge or anything else that disturbs your peace. Don’t rehash the past or fantasize about the future. Do yoga, martial arts or some physical activity. Appreciate the freedom that “Thy will be done” brings to you. Detach yourself from the people, places, and things that take your peace away. Spend time in nature. Be kind to all, and helpful to animals, children and our elders. Study scriptures and books of wisdom. Have a sincere burning desire for liberation. Be patient. Dedicate your actions to your divinity. Flow with visions and powers as they come and let them go as they go. Witness the Witness in silence. If a teacher comes to you, learn. Limitless in the eternal, finite in the body, don’t squander energy or time. Have fun, enjoy, laugh. Love.

“Ascension” is one of many spiritual treasures by WillowArlenea at [http://www.designsbywillow.com](http://www.designsbywillow.com)
Hatha Highlights

By Bette Rose

A vital part of Hatha Yoga and meditation is the positioning of various body parts, particularly the fingers and hands. A mudra is a hand position that moves and/or seals in prana, or energy, at specific points within the body. In practicing Hatha Yoga, this mudra or “seal” functions as a holding pattern that prevents the pranic energy from escaping the body. Think of it as the stopper in a bathtub which contains all the water, until released, when it floods the water down the drain and into the earth. When we achieve mudra, we are containing and channeling the flow of prana within the body and then releasing it to all cellular crevices and into the universe. The energy becomes impervious to outside forces and stresses, and serves to circulate throughout the entire nervous system, specifically wherever most needed.

A good example of mudra is the Chin Mudra, during which we create the seal by joining the thumb and forefinger of each hand together creating a circle. This traditional meditative hand position circulates the God energy (thumb) with the higher Self (forefinger), allowing a spiritual hook-up of all beings with the eternal and infinite unknown, while turning downward and excluding the other three fingers, which symbolize negativity…A simple, physical action, that can be practiced mostly anywhere and anytime.

see Mudra Pg. 11
Another popular mudra is known simply as “Yoga Mudra”. In this asana, it would be best to start out sitting in half or full lotus position, but if you can’t, it’s perfectly alright to keep the legs outstretched long and relaxed. Now cross the arms in front of you and gently place the hands on the opposite elbows, creating the seal. Sitting with your spine as straight as possible, raise the sealed arms up to chest height as you inhale. On the exhale, slowly begin bending the upper body toward the floor, keeping the seal intact, and the buttocks on the ground. Allow the head to be inside the arms, but not touching or leaning on them. Lower to the ground in this position, and then breathe deeply and rhythmically while maintaining the posture of extreme. Notice and realize the energy being contained in the body, without any “escape route”, while simultaneously circulating throughout.

Most Hatha Yoga asanas contain mudra in one form or another. This ancient method of channeling pranic energy connects us to the divine source of all energy.

Spread peace through Yoga and Meditation
Shanti, Shanti, OM

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“Mudrama” (Pg 10) artwork is another example of the mastery of Luke Brown.

“Transformation: Awakening” artwork is by Atmara Rebecca Cloe.
More of Atmara’s beauty-full art can be found at: http://www.nwcreations.com
Ahimsa: The Basis for Meditation

By Bob Rose

No matter what technique you are doing while sitting in "formal" meditation, or are applying to the rest of your life (perhaps like mindfulness, or breath awareness, or mantra, or whatever), the first step in the traditional path of Raja Yoga, the Yoga of Meditation, is recommended to be Ahimsa. Ahimsa is usually defined as non-violence. But this goes far deeper than the usual implied characteristics of non-violence, like not fighting physically, or taking another's life. It deals with not causing any harm whatsoever to anyone or anything in any way. This means no actions that cause verbal or emotional pain, anguish, suffering, or even slight discomfort to any living thing is what is called for. Since the failure to help ease pain is pain causing, inaction can also be against this common to all religions direction. So, we are pointed to not causing suffering and to eliminate it when we see it. This puts us in a very win-win situation karma-wise. The things that distract us from our meditation the most are the would-of, should-of thoughts that fill our mind with guilt and anger. Actually living our life in an Ahimsa way never feeds the fire of inner gut-feeling pain that knowing we have done wrong causes and eliminates the mental poison called "Regret" that drowns us in a tidal wave of suffering.

The Ahimsa Meditation Technique

A way to live your life seems more than just a technique, but meditation can be considered a time of attention and awareness, and that is certainly advantageous at all times, not just for 20 minutes in the morning and 20 minutes at night. Ahimsa is based on a few basic meditation principles:

1) We have an inner Witness that has been present since birth and is here now, as you are reading these words. The Witness is the awareness that can see if you have any tension in your body, what your emotions are feeling, and what your mind is thinking.

2) There are only 3 types of actions (called Gunas in Sanskrit): Tamas (actions that are ignorant, habitual, dark, characterized by inertia, and generally negative), Rajas (also ignorant and negative, but usually are selfishness-desire based, and active actions), and Sattva (pure, righteous, light, holy selfless actions).

3) By Witnessing what is inappropriate (Tamas and Rajas actions), we can eliminate those actions that cause suffering and flow infinitely better with life. It works this way...

Before every action, there are words. Before words, there are thoughts. Before thoughts, the Witness IS. At one with the Witness, the meditator is aware of the actions, words, and thoughts. If they are of an unrighteous or other negative label nature, both of passive and active characteristic (Tamas/Rajas), which is known by a "gut feeling", intuitively, the meditator changes them spontaneously, effortlessly, into righteous events (Sattva). This is Self-control. How to do this? By witnessing your life as it takes place. Your breath is always present while there is life. By placing your attention on your breath, you are here, now, present, and can Witness your life as it takes place. Several times during the day, remind your self to Witness your breath. Do this in as many ways as you can. When you first get up, give
yourself a mental direction to stop every hour on the hour and refocus on your breath, and on your silent inner Witness. If you see yourself doing anything that is contrary to Ahimsa, redirect your actions to Sattvic ones. So, if you see yourself mentally cursing out your boss, for instance, change that into a prayer for the well being of all who live. This is just an example. You can also remind yourself by leaving post-it notes to yourself around your house or job site that just say "Witness" or "Breathe" on them. While you're at work, call yourself on your home phone and leave a message on your answering machine that will serve as a reminder when you get home from work and check your messages. Be creative, devise a game plan. Find ways that you can remind yourself more and more often to be aware of your breath, Witnessing, and the principle of Ahimsa. Eventually, you will Witness your life as it takes place, and the replacing of negative actions with righteous ones will become an automatic part of your life, and you will never again have to even ponder what Ahimsa is about. You will be living it. Then, a state of transcendence of all Gunas (Tamasic, Rajasic, and Sattvic actions) occurs. The meditator then abides in life without reference or reaction to the illusion of singular identification, and the unity with the ever present, infinite underlying essence of all creation, and all activity is realized. This event of all events can only be known experientially, not emotionally, physically, or intellectually. It is a gift of Grace only, and not as a result of meditation, or by going through your pain, or by bliss-full visions, and so on. Meditation clears the pathway of all that obstructs the vision of the Witness.

So... breathe, Witness, and when you witness Tamas or Rajas in your actions, or the actions going on around you, change them into Sattva by acting or refraining from action...whatever is appropriate. But, be sure to apply the kindness that is one and the same in Ahimsa to yourself, as well as to others. Be gentle when you see something negative in your actions, words, or thoughts. Just say "Oh well" to yourself and go on with the process of changing negativity to loving positivity. And this will be true Ahimsa, and that will be when you start living happily ever after.

This is one of the dozens of concepts and techniques shared on Meditation Station, the web site of the Meditation Society of America http://www.meditationsociety.com

“Meditation will help you to find your bonds, loosen them, untie them and cast your moorings. When you are no longer attached to anything, you have done your share. The rest will be done for you.” -- Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj
Thanks and Praise

Sri Swami Satchidananda, or Sri Gurudev as his disciples call him, dedicated his life to the service of humanity. He was one of the most influential people responsible for spreading the teachings of Yoga and meditation in America and all over the world. What characterized his actions were an attitude of compassion, humility, and selfless service. And for this he has been recognized and warmly praised by world leaders and religious leaders of every persuasion. As we look around and see the people in our own lives, we see that there are some who quietly have been of great service to their friends and community in their own way. Two such people are Nancy Ochse and Diane Worrell who not only are sweet, kind, and considerate of every person they meet, but also demonstrate their love of animals daily, and help in every way they can to better their lives. Their actions are great teachings and greatly appreciated.

Sri Gurudev founded the Integral Yoga Organization which has branches worldwide. They are capably and righteously carrying on his work. http://www.yogaville.org

Nancy’s work can be appreciated by visiting http://www.newfies.com

One of the ways Diane helps animals is by supporting the Best Friends Animal Society http://www.bestfriends.org
**Question:** How does one develop faith in God and counteract cynicism until one gains certainty from direct experience with one’s True Self?

**Sri Gurudev:** Why do you want to develop faith in God? Question yourself. Then you will know that it is God who is providing you with everything you need. God is keeping you alive, making you breathe. Air is forced in, even if you don’t want to breathe. What does it mean? God says that you should live.

God takes care of everything and has done so even before you were born. When you were in the womb, God knew that as soon as you came out, you would need milk. That was made for you by God. And it is all perfect – just what you need. For two or three days, it’s light milk, more watery; then, as the baby grows, the milk gets thicker.

That’s what. There has been some great power taking care of you from birth. If you think about this, you will develop faith. Think of all the benefits you’ve received during your life. Then, you gradually develop a feeling for God’s hand in everything.

When you analyze your own life, you will see that an invisible hand is taking care of every second. When you realize that, you will have faith. Faith is the most important item in life. Because you believe you are living, you are living. That is why religions are called faiths. In fact, each of us has our own religion. Something is unique to each individual. That means, as many people, so may religions. But it’s the same goal – to experience God and find real faith and joy.

*This article is an excerpt from the always excellent Integral Yoga Magazine.*

[http://www.iymagazine.org](http://www.iymagazine.org) or email: info@iymagazine.org

Photos of Sri Gurudev courtesy of Rev. Prem Anjali, Ph.D
Why I Stopped Practicing Zen
By John Horgan

In 1999, a flier appeared in my mailbox announcing that a class in Zen was about to begin in my hometown. If I believed in synchronicity, coincidences too eerily meaningful to be mere coincidences, this flier’s arrival would have seemed a clear case of it. I had just begun researching a book on science and mysticism, and I had decided that for the book’s purposes --- and for my own well-being --- I needed a spiritual practice. Zen was my first choice. With its metaphysical minimalism, it seemed quite compatible with the skeptical outlook I’d acquired after two decades as a science journalist.

A dozen students showed up for the first class, which convened in the basement of my town’s library. The teacher, whom I’ll call Sumi, was a middle-aged Japanese-American woman with short dark hair and a paradoxical expression: When she smiled, her eyes crinkled, but the corners of her mouth, down turned even in repose, sagged even more sharply. She looked as though she was being tickled and jabbed with a needle at the same time.

After we settled onto our mats and cushions, Sumi picked up a little bronze bell, walked up to a woman in the front row, and asked, “What is this?” The woman, smiling uneasily, said nothing. Sumi asked someone else the same question with the same grimace-grin: “What is this?” I knew the answer: The bell is a bell but it is also Ultimate Reality, Nothing, Everything. But I didn’t want to show off, not on the first night, so I remained smugly silent.

Pete, a rock-jawed karate enthusiast with a mane of heavy-metal-style hair, brayed out, “Are you asking, like, what’s the metaphorical meaning of the bell?” Sumi’s upper body jerked backward, as if buffeted by Pete’s words. Collecting herself, she spoke haltingly about how we attach words and concepts to everything, and these words and concepts prevent us from seeing things as they really are. Zen helps us to see “this”—she held up the bell—for what it really is. Scanning our puzzled faces, she added sorrowfully, “It’s very difficult to talk about these things.”

True knowledge comes through meditation, Sumi said, before giving us some basic instruction. She told us to find a comfortable posture, relaxed but not too relaxed, back straight. Keep the eyes slightly open, focused on a spot a few feet in front of you. Pay attention to your breath going in and out. As thoughts, sensations, emotions arise, watch them come and go without reacting.

Sitting back on my heels, I felt itches on my face and scalp, a tickle in my throat. I wanted to cough, to scratch my head, but I remained silent and still, like Sumi. As other students squirmed and coughed, I felt a pleasant twinge of superiority. After 10 minutes or so, the air seemed to glow and hum with electrical energy, and faint auras appeared around Sumi and other objects in my field of vision. Cool, I thought. Satori, next stop.

At Sumi’s command we rose, eyes downcast, hands together, and walked around the room, once, twice. A muscle knotted in my lower left back. I trudged along, listing slightly to the right, wondering if the man behind me noticed. I watched the short, sturdy legs of the woman in front of me go back and forth, back and forth.

see Zen pg. 17
In subsequent classes, I found myself becoming increasingly critical of Sumi’s teachings. She told us about retreats during which she meditated for up to 14 hours a day and didn’t speak to or make eye contact with anyone else. After two weeks or more, these retreats sometimes left her wobbly-legged from all her sitting and averse to any human contact. As Sumi made this admission, she scowled and pushed her palms outwards, as if fending off a repugnant suitor. Where is the spiritual benefit here? I wondered.

Some of the Zen tales that Sumi told us were even more alarming. In one, the great Zen patriarch Bodhidharma went into a cave and stared at a wall for days and weeks on end, waiting for enlightenment. He became so enraged with himself for falling asleep that he tore his eyelids off; this was the origin of the Zen technique of open-eyed meditation. Bodhidharma used to keep would-be students waiting outside the monastery before admitting them, so that only the truly serious were admitted. One supplicant, to demonstrate his seriousness, chopped off his own arm. He went on to become a great master in his own right. These men sounded like masochists and sadists to me, but Sumi seemed to think we should admire them.

The goal of Zen, she said, is to restore us to a state of child-like innocence. She showed us a photograph of Ho Chi Minh sitting on a beach surrounded by a bunch of kids, one of whom was pulling the despot’s beard. This child was acting with complete spontaneity, with no self-consciousness or anxiety, Sumi said. “Just do it,” she summed up, smile-frowning. Is this the goal of Zen? I wondered. To regress to the mindless hyperkineticism celebrated in sneaker ads? And anyway who said childhood is so great? My young son and daughter certainly had plenty of anxious, miserable moments.

One night Sumi told us about a master who asked a monk “What is dharma mind?” and whacked him whenever he tried to answer. Why, Sumi asked us with a mischievous glint in her eye, did the teacher hit the student? I started to speak, but Sumi cut me off with a loud

*see Zen* pg. 18
“Ahh!” Someone else spoke and again Sumi interrupted: “Ahh!” Her expression was
tremulous, triumphant. Eventually she explained the master’s point: language prevents
us from seeing the world as it truly is. I thought how tired I was of this Zen cliché. How
many millions of words have Zen masters spouted telling us to get beyond words?

Some of my fellow koan-heads were also distracting. The worst was Cell-phone Man, so-
called because the first time he came to Sumi’s class his cell-phone beeper kept going off.
During Zazen he also infuriated me by yawning, sighing, and twisting his head with a
crunching noise. When Sumi at the end of our sessions asked if anyone had any questions or
comments, Cell-phone Man invariably piped up, loudly, as if he were hard of hearing.

Once he told us that something amazing had happened to him the previous weekend. All the
thoughts in his head began spontaneously turning into songs, and he realized that creation is
nothing more than God turning silence into song, which is really just vibrations. As he
related his epiphany, I watched him coolly, thinking how foolish and loathsome he was.
Then I realized how loathsome I was to loathe him, and I loathed him even more.

The voice in my head kept carping when I tried to practice mindfulness outside of class, too.
Waking one winter morning to freshly fallen snow, I strapped on my cross-country skis and
pushed off into the woods behind our house. The sky was a flat, featureless, sunless grey. It
was oddly depthless, like the phony sound-studio skies in old black and white movies. The
light was directionless, omnipresent; it seemed a quality of the air rather than an emanation
from above. Every tree and bush was finely etched, drained of color. The leaves of the
mountain laurel looked not green but black, like wet stones.

Sliding through the trees, my face pushing through my own exhalations, I thought about
falling stock prices, about a local real-estate development my wife was fighting, about our
daughter’s cold, about my Zen class. Abruptly I realized I wasn’t being mindful. My monkey
mind was running wild, swinging through the trees, hooting and chattering, and I scarcely
noticed where I was, what I was doing, where I was going. When I did focus on what I was
doing, my thoughts tended to be exhortatory, goal-directed: Push harder. Not getting
enough exercise. Watch out for that buried branch.

Stop! I chided myself. Pay attention! Be here now! So I stood in the middle of the path,
leaning on my poles, expelling great plumes of mist. I gazed around me at the still, snow-
dusted trees, the gnarled mountain laurel, the animal tracks criss-crossing the trail. What are
those? That’s deer. That’s rabbit. That’s...what, raccoon? Stop! I told myself again. You’re
not being here now!

Then I rebelled against this drill sergeant in my head and told myself that this exercise in
self-discipline is absurd. Every time I order myself to be here now I’m not being here now.
I’m thinking about being here now. It’s self-defeating from the start, like trying to remember
to forget. In heeding the command, I violate it.

My rebellion spread to other spiritual truisms, to Sumi’s injunction to be child-like.
Childrens’ spontaneity and joy spring from their self-absorption and ignorance. What do

see Zen pg. 19
they know of death, suffering, the woes of the world? A spirituality that denies these realities is shallow, escapist. And what’s so great about being in the moment, anyway? We should revel in our minds’ ability to range freely through space and time rather than being trapped like animals in the here and now.

Wait, another voice countered. Am I just rationalizing, justifying my habits of mind to myself, out of laziness, or timidity? So that I can stay sealed inside my cozy intellectual perspective and avoid a deeper confrontation with reality?

As this argument raged in my head, my body stood silently. Blood pulsed in my temples, beads of sweat inched down my forehead. A tree creaked, and the chill, colorless air hissed into my lungs and out again, in and out.

Soon after this episode, I stopped attending Sumi’s class. I no longer have a spiritual practice.


“Tao” artwork (Pg.17) is another demonstration of the brilliance of Reinhard Ponty

“Ascension” is by Scott Cranmer. More of Scott’s unique art can be found at: http://www.scottcranmer.com
The Why Method

By Jerry Katz

Throughout my life I have asked myself, "Why?" Not so much in regard to the big questions of existence, suffering and death, but to lesser questions on the order of, "Why am I doing this or that?" or "Why am I thinking or feeling this or that?" My answers were never satisfactory, but I never had anyone to guide me through them. My sense, though, was that I could not take seriously any experience, feeling or thought unless I knew - - as deeply as possible -- why I was experiencing, feeling, thinking this or that. As a young person hearing a caring adult talk of my life in terms of my graduation from here and there, my career, marriage, my children, their education, and so on, I was stuck at the point of asking, "Why am I standing here listening to you?" Spiritual glazing-over I would call it, because I really wanted to know why I was standing there listening. Its not that I wanted to do something else, but I really wanted to understand to the ultimate depth of what was going on here. I intuited early-on that all those things -- education, career, marriage, children -- would have been, for me, ways to avoid asking, very simply, "Why am I doing this or that? Why am I feeling this or that?"

The objective of the Why Method is to leverage the spiritual life, search, or quest. It could carry a person directly to The Deepest Question, which is the Why Question that cannot be answered. For the one who is inclined to ask "Why?", engaging the Why Method and discovering The Deepest Question becomes a process of creating a kind of koan, a question to be meditated upon, a question to be allowed a presence within one's being. You can practice the Why Method alone or with a questioner who understands the purpose of the process.

Find a quiet place. Think about something very important: your health, family, friends, career, your spiritual life. Pick one.

Let's say you have chosen your health as a very important topic.

Ask yourself, "Why is my health important to me?"

Your answer may be something like, "So that I can effectively do what I have to do and what I want to do."

Then ask yourself, "Why do I have to effectively do things?"

Your answer may be, "So that I can keep my commitments, be productive and grow."

Then ask: "Why do I have to keep my commitments, be productive and grow?"

An answer: "Because there are others dependent on me and I am motivated to care for them and look after my own personal growth as well."

A question: "Why am I motivated to care for others and myself?"

An answer: "That's just an impulse as a result of being alive. I'm responding to that impulse. It is natural to want myself and people close to me, all people for that matter, to thrive in all ways, physical, emotional, mental and spiritual. I'm driven to do these things because I am alive. Maybe its survival."

see Why pg. 21
Question: "Why am I driven?"

Answer: "Like I said, survival. To keep us all alive. To keep us going. To fulfill our destiny. To carry on the work of those who preceded us. To look after the planet. To do my very tiny share of work involved in keeping our civilization evolving so that future generations might partake in an enlightened human culture."

Question: "Why do future generations have to partake in an enlightened culture? Why do we have to keep going?"

Answer: "Because we're here, so we might as well work our hardest at staying here and trying to learn and understand as much as we can."

Question: "Why are we here?"

Answer: "Maybe that's what we'll learn if we stick around long enough and keep evolving."

"Why do we have to find out why we are here?"

"Just out of extreme curiosity."

"Why be extremely curious about that?"

"It is the ultimate question."

"Why is that the ultimate question?"

see Why pg. 22
"Well, I suppose if it were answered there would be a heck of a lot of other questions, so maybe it's not the ultimate question."

"So why be extremely curious about why we are here?"

"Because it is a very challenging question, why we are here."

"Why is that a challenging question?"

"Because we have no final answer. Nobody really knows."

"Why does nobody know?"

"It's unknowable. Any answer would beg thousands more questions."

"Why ask the thousands more questions?"

"We'd just want to know."

"Why?"

"It's our nature, that's all."

"Why is that our nature?"

"It's probably just genetic."

"Why is it genetic?"

"That's how we're made."

"Why are we made that way?"


"Why evolution, chemistry and physical laws?"

"That's our universe!"

"Why is that our universe?"

"It goes back to the ultimate mystery. I don't know why our universe has physical laws. It's just the way it is."

"Why?"

"I don't know."

"Why don't you know?"

"How could I know that? I don't have the brain power."

see *Why* pg. 23
"Why not?"

"I don't know."

This type of questioning reveals that the deepest question relates to the existence of the universe and it may be posed as, "Why does the universe exist?" or "Why is the universe the way it is?" It could be pointed out that a leap has been made from interest in an 'I' to a focus upon 'everything'. Comparing the initial Why question to the final Deepest Question might usually show evidence of such a leap.

Attention could also be brought to 'I don't know' as the ultimate response. This kind of attention looks at the 'I', or the one who does not know and is closer to the inquiry, Who am I? than consideration of the Deepest Question.

The Why Method should be applied to other questions of life. The same Deepest Question might emerge in each case, though the method hasn't been tested enough to support that hypothesis. An array of Deepest Questions (Deeper Questions) could emerge. The purpose of the Why Method is to bring people who are inclined to ask "Why?" to a place where the most fundamental Why questions could be experienced, known, tasted, seen, addressed and finally resolved. The Why Method could be considered an alternative inquiry. Ultimately there will be no answer to the Deepest Question. Ultimately there is for that one, life and expression from the space where scriptural verses are dropped:

"I always feel nothing was ever created, nothing was ever supported, nothing ever destroyed. I am knowledge of immortality, I am essence of equanimity, I am like the sky."
--Avadhuta Gita

Jerry is one of the world's leading disseminators of Nondual concepts. His website is [http://www.nonduality.com](http://www.nonduality.com) and his discussion group is [http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NondualitySalon/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NondualitySalon/)

"Budhistic Dreams" (Pg.21) artwork is by Leonard Rubins. More of his awakening art can be found at: [http://www.leonard-rubins.com/](http://www.leonard-rubins.com/)
My mind packed its bags today and told me that it was going away. I reminded it of that old routine...

"I'm going away."
"What? Going away?"
"Yes. Going away. But before I go I have something to say to you."
"What?"
"I'm going away....."

My mind thumbed its nose at me and put a stick with a knotted-up bandanna on its shoulder and told me that it was really leaving this time. No ifs, ands or buts. It was going away.

"Great," I said. "Then I will be self-realized. No more mind, no more endarkenment. You can call me Mamaji."

A curious expression flitted across my mind's surface. Was it curiosity?

"I do have one more question before I go," said my little ole vagabond mind. "If I leave you and you get enlightened because of it, won't that make me enlightened, too?"

"Don't be silly," I said, opening my mail and pretending to be casual. "How can a bodiless mind be enlightened? You will leave no traces."

My mind cleared its throat. Obviously it had no idea what to say next. I waited, knowing that the next thought was just around the corner. It was just a matter of time. I put the tea kettle on and sat down. I heard a blood-curdling scream. It was my mind. I had sat on it.

I removed the stick and kerchief before I tenderly picked my mind up off the chair and told it to go take a nap. When it fell asleep, I started to make the weekly menu, but for some reason I was quite blank. I sat with paper in front of me and pen poised. Nothing came. I guess we'll have to eat out next week.

More of Vicki's compassionate wisdom is shared at http://www.bobwoodyard.com
Wordless Understanding
By Vicki Woodyard

There is an energy available to each of us as we sit in the silence. It is unified and undefined.

It is just as you are.

Amazingly, you can be filled with anger and pain, but if you will sit with it, wordless understanding arises of itself. It is a miraculous mirror.

This silent acceptance is what leads you beside the still waters of yourself. It has the power to purify all wrong thoughts and emotions, but in only one way--The Way of Acceptance.

So I would make a suggestion. Sit down with your inner noise and inner pain and accept that they will continue to go on. The mirror is just held up to them and you look.

The looking is unhooking you from them. Pure seeing is freeing you from reactivity, which is a form of resistance.

The silence is beginning to heal you, as you do nothing but look into the mirror.

What is this wordless understanding but non-resistance?

Non-resistance does not contain a single word and that is why it can heal you in the wink of an eye.

It isn’t peace at any price. It is peace beyond price....and it is yours now.

Be wordless and you will be worldless and filled with inner wisdom and silence.

“Revealing Self” (Pg.25) and “The Providence” (Pg.26) artworks are by Fredoon Rassouli.
Much more of his brilliant mystic art can be found at http://www.rassouli.com/
Note. The following is a compilation of various fragments of instruction hinting at several methods of attainment. Probably they originated as student notes requiring the input of a competent teacher to fully realize. They may be taken as exercises. Petros has rearranged the fragments into a more coherent order.

The Shining One, the knowledge of Truth, dawns for the meditator between the inspiration and the expiration, at the place of the Third Eye, the Gate of Godhood. Between the breaths, going in going out going out going in: Realize what Is! Then touch that unmoving infinite Center of thyself, Center of All! At the end of one expiration, hold the breath for a moment, and feel one's nonexistence as separate individual.

Know yourself as pure Light shooting up the spine to the crown of the head; this is your life current, the force of the universe
Like Lightning it flashes up through the spinal column, this power of God.

Focus between the brows, the place of the Third Eye, prior to thoughts, and breathe, seeing the breath energy filling this spot; energy fills to the top of the skull and showers out as a fountain of Light.

Lightly hold closed the orifices of the head (ears, nostrils, mouth, eyes) and feel the center inside without senses. Feel attention going inward, down into the heart center. Hear the source of sounds in the center of the ears. AUM, the sound of sounds, the sound of the ocean and the blood, the sound of you!

see Vigyan Bhairav Tantra Pg. 27
Listening to musical instruments, hear the bass tone that guides them, uniform, unregarded yet essential to the melody. Hum at ordinary loudness, gradually diminishing as a distant sound leaving you, following the diminishment to deepness.

Postulate a spirit both within and without oneself; all is spirit is it not?

Enter into the subtle presence pervading all, above, below, within, without.

Focus attention above, below, inside.

Postulate any specific region of the flesh form as infinitely large.

Feel the flesh form totally saturated with infinity.

Feel the flesh form as an empty shell.

Focusing all senses in the heart center, the heart of the lotus is reached.

Unfocus from the mind, abide in the heart center.

Imagine the all-consuming fire of cremation burning the flesh form up gradually, totally; yet there is that that remains. Imagine the same happening to your world.

Feel deeply the subtle, precious sensations of creation and fructification filling your heart space, flowering into vibrant life

Focusing the movement of breath at the third eye, bring the feeling down into the heart as you enter into sleep or meditation; thus one acquires lucidity in dreaming and beyond.

Meditate in vast, empty, solitary and flat spaces, freeing the conditioned mind of its fetters. What are the myriad universes but empty shells in which one's thoughts wander endlessly? Sense the Universe as only eternal presence here. Know the Cosmos unbounded to be nothing different from your Self body and thought.

Meditate on knowing; on not knowing; on existence and on nonexistence; now abandon all dualities.

Observe a simple object with total acceptance and nondesire. Beyond the form and the function: grace universal.

At the onset of sexual communion, focus on the internal fire and continue this focus until the end.

see Vigyan Bhairav Tantra Pg. 28
So interlocked, feeling senses shaking, focus on the stillpoint in the center of the shaking.

And communion without fleshly embrace, meditated upon, is also transformative.

Enter the center of any joyful occasion.

Eating and drinking, focus on the very essence of 'taste' itself.

In singing, seeing, tasting, or anything else, focus on the doer your very Self.

Where satisfaction of desire is believed to be found, in any activity, know the enjoyer thereof.

At the margins of sleep, in the twilight state, being may oft be uncovered.

Enter clarity like the clarity of the summer sky.

Wrathful? Remain in it, but unmoving, without blinking. Know stillness.
Play the stopping game: When you feel the impulse to "do," simply stop!

Lie prone as a corpse. Literally see the vastness of all space already absorbed in your point of view.

Awake, asleep, in dreaming, in dreamless sleep, in death: Know yourself as only Light.

Focus on AUM without the beginning or the closure; merely the expansive center.
Feel yourself pervading all the directions and in every distance.
Every seemingly similar object is but an instance of the phenomenon "many-suns-in-one-tumultuous-pool." When the mind is stilled, these seeming objects become like the phenomenon "one-sun-appears-in-a-still-pool."
Seemingly individual forms are not separate in Truth. All is inseparable Being, and that is your Self. Attention exists merely as every seeming individual thing; there is naught else.
The phenomenal world is all change-change-change. Go through change and consume it leaving only the Unchanging Real. Enter the vastness of what Is, without support, eternal, still-selfmoving.
Freedom and nonFreedom are relative terms, concepts of the mind only, held to only by the as-yet-unknowing, who think their concepts real.

Things are perceived by "knowing," But truth is not by "knowing," but by the unity of the knower and the known. Just allow mind, seeming knowing, breath, and form be undifferentiated.

Petros is a vastly experienced spiritual light whose realizations are shared at his eWakenings.net website at: http://home.earthlink.net/~xristos/ He can be reached at: xristos@earthlink.net

“The Magus” artwork is by Scott Cranmer
How well do we meditate?  How much do we want to improve our meditation?  What do the sages say about gaining inner focus?

Since 1978 I have looked to Patanjali and "Yoga Sutra", as the authority for seeking new knowledge about my inner life. As most know, "Yoga Sutra" is four small books in one and has been translated by many different people in the last two thousand years.

The effort one spends in meditation is never lost.  One only gets better at it and the reward is always the act itself.  But besides meditating more, what are some of the things we can do as peripheral effort to support the meditation itself?  Fasting is well known as a support, as is celibacy. And it is fairly well known that there are the eight limbs of yoga or "eightfold Yoga", that provides a compact formula for effort.

But there is more. Kriya Yoga as explained by Patanjali actually incorporates "eightfold Yoga" as a sub-category of a larger, more complete technique, thus providing a very comprehensive, systematic approach to the art of meditation.

The Path of Yoga or Sadhana Pada is the second book of Yoga Sutra. Kriya Yoga is outlined at the beginning of Book II as: Self Study, Self Castigation, and Devotion to the Lord. To understand these categories we can look back at Book I.

In Sutra I.2 Yoga is defined:
Yoga is the restriction of the fluctuations of consciousness.

see Everything at Once pg. 30
The fluctuations are described in Sutras I.6 through I.11 as valid-cognition, misconception, conceptualization, sleep, and memory. The restriction of the fluctuations of consciousness is achieved through Practice and Dispassion (I.12) where Dispassion is non-thirsting.

In Book I.2, restricting the fluctuations is yoga. In I.12, Yoga can be accomplished with practice and dispassion. Practice is defined in Book II.1, as self castigation, self study, and devotion to the Lord. However dispassion is not a practice but is concordant with knowing, or is simply a matter of grace. So even though kriya means 'to do', and dispassion is not a matter of doing, Patanjali's Kriya Yoga can be considered to have two main categories, Practice and Dispassion.

So when we look at Book II again we see that the three categories of effort (Self Study, Self Castigation, and Devotion to the Lord) in Kriya Yoga are all under the major heading of Practice. The other heading of "Dispassion" is known to be of two categories, incomplete renunciation and complete.

Under the heading of Practice we now study the Eightfold Yoga (II.28-50). It should be remembered that non-thirsting after these practices is just as important as the practice of them.

Restraint-II.30-31  Non-harming, truthfulness, non-stealing, chastity, and greedlessness are the restraints (Yama).


Breath Control-II.49-53.

Sense Withdrawl-II.54-55.

Concentration-III.1.

Meditative Absorption-III.2-10.

Samadhi-III.11.

It can be seen that the last six are stages describing a progression. The completeness with which Patanjali describes the obstacles and signposts for each is not overly apparent but subtle and succinct. The first two limbs of "Eightfold Yoga" prepare the mind for the necessary absorption of the progression toward Samadhi.

It can be seen that Eightfold Yoga has some aspects of self castigation (tapas), and some elements of self study. It is said that all worthwhile practices that are not self study or devotion to the Lord are tapas.

In addition to giving all the fruits of your labors to the lord, Devotion to the Lord is devotion to the truth. If I don't know something because I am hiding it, unwilling to look it in the face, then my devotion is faulty. In order to know, I must not be afraid, so I learn to

see *Everything at Once* pg. 31
instill habits which eliminate not-knowing. This is the instilling of subliminal activators or tendencies which restrict the consciousness from habitually turning outward and reinforce the turning inward. (III.10.)

If any of these practices are left out as unimportant, the devotional aspect is lost. The hardest for some is non-harming (ahimsa). Even a mosquito or spider deserves and receives respect from the Yogi.

This is not rocket science. It is much more difficult, because the only guide is inner. Again we see non-thirsting dispassion as crucial, lest we form conceit for each achievement. In an effort to meditate better we are also faced with the trial of thirsting after some ultimate and wonderful state we will reside in for all time.

Each element of Kriya Yoga as propounded by Patanjali may be practiced as a virtue or ability or way of understanding for many years before its use is effortless. At the point where all practices are effortless, all may be practiced simultaneously.

If this teaching is followed with sleep limited to around four hours a night, and restriction of the diet, a period of three months should produce profound results. Growing more sensitive to the meditative state that progresses into Samadhi produces body reactions to food out of the norm. Stimulants or spicy foods should be restricted. This will quiet reproductive hormones as well as reactions to stimuli. Foods like grains, fruits and nuts, milk, and a few vegetables will do very well to sustain the body and keep the mind strong.

Instead of practicing one element at a time, the recommendation is "Practice everything at once!"

Bob Graham is an artist and frequent contributor to several internet groups dealing with consciousness. His self portrait “Before and After” (pg.), and “Otis the Good Father”(pg.) are examples of the awesome art you will find at his site http://www.mentaltree.com/. He can be reached at:bigbobgraham@aol.com
The Need To Win Drains You Of Power
By Loretta Siani, Ph.D.

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

Attracting what you desire into your life requires surrendering your attachment to receiving it. Being overly invested in a particular outcome produces desperation. Desperation robs you of your inner peace. It sends a message to your unconscious mind that you are somehow incomplete without the object of your desire. It denies your innate, inner worthiness. This is another message of fear created by the ego. You are complete as you are. You lack nothing. In the words of A Course In Miracles You are altogether irreplaceable in the mind of God. To think otherwise is arrogant because it means you believe your evaluation of yourself is truer than God’s. When you are attached to results you completely negate your Self-confidence and your true source of power.

Anyone who has ever been stalked to any degree knows how unattractive desperation is. Desperation produces fanaticism, possessiveness, unhealthy competitiveness, and having to “prove” something. All of these states of mind rob you of your inner peace. They also upset the body’s equilibrium and disable its ability to perform. For example, if you’re playing in a tennis tournament and you’re desperate to win, in order to prove that you are a great player, your equilibrium will be upset, you’ll loose your poise and your game will suffer. You’ll start worrying about each shot and your overall ability to play. Believing that the power is in the winning you’ll become disconnected from your real source of power and all your Self-confidence. A poem by the Chinese poet Chuang Tzu perhaps best expresses what happens to those who are overly invested in winning.

THE NEED TO WIN
When an archer is shooting for nothing
He has all his skill.
If he shoots for a brass buckle
He is already nervous.
If he shoots for a prize of gold
He goes blind
Or sees two targets-
He is out of his mind!

His skill has not changed. But the prize
Divides him. He cares.
He thinks more of winning
Than of shooting-
And the need to win
Drains him of power.
Attachment to the end result drains you of power and works against you. Remember, as you think so shall you be. When you come from a desperate need to win, if you’re in business, you’ll be pushy and you’ll end up attracting clients who will be suspect of your “worthiness.” They won’t want to invest in you until you “prove” yourself. In your personal life you’ll attract partners who will dominate you or compete with you because they’ll sense your lack of confidence.

The antidote to being attached to results is putting your attention in the moment. You exude peace and confidence and wait with infinite patience for things to unfold naturally. Then like the bee is attracted to honey you attract what you want into your life effortlessly. In Course terminology your infinite patience produces instant results.

You don’t worry about how things will turn out. You aren’t desperate for results or rewards. You’re connected to your own power. Because of this you don’t attract suspicious customers or dominating partners. You become completely immersed in the present moment, thereby creating a state of flow in your life and your work. You become the tennis ball, the book that you are writing, the sale that you’re making. You fall in love with whatever you’re doing. You do it for the sheer joy of doing it. You do it unselfconsciously and unselfishly. You give all that you have and all that you are to the present moment with loving attention. You have an inner knowing that you are doing what you’re meant to do in life. You’re connected with your own inner power. You become more and more productive, more and more creative, more and more successful, without being the least bit concerned about the outcome. Your lover comes to you. He or she is magnetized to you. Things begin to fall into place like ripe fruit falling from a tree because you are no longer striving. There’s a natural, effortless about you. There’s harmony in your mind and body and in your life, because you come from loving what you’re doing, giving of yourself and having a quiet assurance that all things come together for good in your life. This creates the miracle of prosperity, creativity, artistic performance, great lovemaking or whatever else you’re engaged in. You become your own miracle worker by surrendering your attachment to results and feeling immediate peace enter into your life.

Loretta Siani is a clinical hypnotherapist, author of The Magic of Excellence, and the motivational seminar and audio book Everyday Miracles, Nine Spiritual Steps to Becoming Your Own Miracle Worker, based on A Course In Miracles. For more information www.lorettasiani.com.
Can you become so much at peace that, if you stopped right now and took no further action whatsoever, your entire life would still be perfectly whole and complete?

In other words, can you get to a place in your heart where there’s no more forward momentum?

A place where you don’t need to move away from in order to feel “satisfied” or “improved?”

A peaceful place where each and every moment...no matter what is happening...is a separate and unique destination in and of itself and, as such, is completely worthy of joyous celebration?

True peace has no inner momentum.

True peace is not “going” anywhere.

True peace forms the context in which both happiness and unhappiness show up in.

True peace is always at peace...even when it’s unhappy.

In fact, it’s at peace even when it’s at war.

Chuck is the author of several excellent books including the classic Enlightenment for Beginners. This article is from his newest book, Seeds for the Soul. For more information: http://www.blackdotpubs.com

“Rocking Chair at City Park” art is by Bob Graham.
Asking "Who am I" fills your mind and diminishes ego games and desires.

Watching your breath empties your mind and diminishes ego games and desires.

Being mindful of the now fills and empties your mind and diminishes ego games and desires.

Similarly, saying the name of God over and over gives ego thoughts and desires no room to grow. And so do many other practices.

When One has no practices, ego games and desires cause the One to become two, and that causes four, and so on and so on.

Meditate. Witness your life as it takes place. If you seek, seek humility and compassion. They will bring all you seek and the end of seeking.

Persevere. By Grace alone effort is effortless. The farmer makes an effort while planting his crop. By Grace, the crop grows effortlessly. The farmer then reaps the harvest and distributes it, and many are nurtured.

“Illumination” artwork is by Scott Cranmer
I believe that every person, probably many times in their lives, reflects upon themselves and their impact on the world. We test our faith, contemplate the choices we've made, and decide where we are going. Chains act as both anchors and burdens; it is only when we come to terms that we can be set free.

“Contemplation” Art and words by Lone Wolf (Brian T. Hitney) [http://lonewolf.tierranet.com/home.html](http://lonewolf.tierranet.com/home.html)

Membership Information

Membership in the Meditation Society of America is $29.95 and includes a Meditation Is Infinite Love T-shirt (usually $14.95), a copy of the Guided Meditation CD (usually $13.95), a subscription to The Inner Traveler, 6 issues/one year (usually $9.95), and a CD of the first 10 issues of The Inner Traveler (usually $9.95). For more information about the T-shirt, the URL is [http://www.meditationsociety.com/tshirt.html](http://www.meditationsociety.com/tshirt.html) For more information about the Guided Meditation CD, the URL is [http://www.meditationsociety.com/cd.html](http://www.meditationsociety.com/cd.html) To become a member of the Society, [http://www.meditationsociety.com/merch.html](http://www.meditationsociety.com/merch.html) We also invite you to join our Yahoo Group and interact with meditators from all over the world. The URL is [http://groups.yahoo.com/group/meditationsocietyofamerica](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/meditationsocietyofamerica)

It is our aim to help you experience inner peace, self-control, wisdom, and bliss. If our projects lead to this, we will have achieved our goal.
Elevating Art

There is an old saying that tells us that a picture is worth a thousand words. We have been blessed with being able to share art in The Inner Traveler that says more than a thousand libraries. Our artists’ presentations are doors of perception to the reality of our eternal and infinite divine nature. They are valuable meditation tools, and we encourage you to arrange to have our contributing artists’ offerings become part of your life by visiting their sites and adding samples of their work to your home.

“Harmonious Convergence” artwork is by Petrus Boots. More of his graphic mastery can be found at: http://www.petrusboots.com/

Words of Wisdom

The manifestations of the soul through the channels of the human personality are seen in the ecstatic enthusiasms of art, particularly the fine arts, such as elevating music and the satisfaction derived through the appreciation of high genius in literature. In such appreciation one forgets oneself and becomes one with the object of appreciation. This is why art is capable of drawing the attention of man so powerfully and making him forget everything else for the time being. -- Sri Swami Krishnananda

Thanks to our authors for sharing their wisdom so eloquently and clearly. We know our readers will benefit greatly from reading their books, articles and commentaries.
Suggested Reading

The Inspired Heart (An artist's journey of transformation)
Author Jerry Wennstrom
Sentient Publications [http://www.sentientpublications.com/]

Reviewed by Swami Ganga-Puri Kaliuttamananda-Giri

This book is excellent if you want to follow the events of someone’s life that is totally surrendered to the universe. For 15 years the author lived and wrote down his experiences as he surrendered bit by bit.

When he saw that his identity was wrapped up in the art work he was doing he destroyed them all and then began his journey of self discovery. His center was love and surrender. Eventually art came back into his life as well as the world, which continues to unfold in new and unique ways. His is the path of duality of celebration of life. A sincere rendering of his own inner and external journey, which is now still on the road of a shamanistic bent. Going from celibacy to tantric and shamanistic leanings, growing and expanding to include sharing what has been gained. He has led an interesting journey which is still in motion. For any on this type of road, it is well worth reading.

Swami Ganga-Puri Kaliuttamananda-Giri is the moderator of several internet groups and the author of the book Kundalini From Hell to Heaven (Pathways Through Consciousness)
For more information: [http://www.kundalinisupport.org/]

May we generate more Awareness of what is NOW, rather than harboring past fears - hates - or even joys. For that only takes away This Moment which is precious to itself....... for Its Self NOW. You and you alone choose in every moment either Love - fear - hate - or simply Witnessing the moment for what it IS. We choose to either color it with past or allow it the breath of New Life without judgments. The choice is yours. The freedom is yours....... it has always been yours alone.

Swami Ganga-Puri Kaliuttamananda-Giri
Some speakers have the habit of speaking here in the anteroom, as though they are beyond the door.

Those of us in the anteroom who have been thru the door, know that there is no speaking beyond the door. We may speak here in the anteroom, of anything, but to speak as tho we are beyond while we are here, reveals a serious schism in the speaker.

Those of us who talk back to those who speak as tho they are beyond the door, are typically answered in words that the speaker imagines are from beyond the door.

Wake up, you are in the anteroom; here you may speak. You may describe immense infinite vistas, you may bawl endless tears of gratitude, you may rant on and on about what concerns you.

Wake up, speaker. If you speak, this is where you are; here you may speak.

Realize that you need not formulate your speech into cosmic diatribe, to prove you are not here. If you speak, this is where you are.

*Gene is a moderator of and contributor to several consciousness elevating internet groups.*

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*The Calling is another of Rassouli’s transcendent artworks.*
The Anteroom
By Gene Poole

Welcome to the anteroom...where you already are.
Beyond that door is the realm we all speak of.
Some of us speak as tho we are beyond that door.
But if we speak, this is where speaking is done.
Beyond the door there is no speaking,
Beyond the door there is no-one to speak.
Beyond the door there is no-one to speak to.
Here in the anteroom we may speak to each other.

If any of us speaks with pretense of being beyond the door, everyone but the speaker understands that fantasy is being woven with words.

Everyone knows that those who speak, in the anteroom, are in the anteroom.

Yes, some of us in the anteroom have been beyond the door.
Some of us spend considerable time beyond the door.

Some of us come into the anteroom to speak of what we see and know, what we have, what we have lost, when we have gone thru the door.

But anyone who speaks here, is in the anteroom. Anyone who speaks here, is not beyond the door. Anyone who speaks here, stating that they speak from behind the door, is mistaken, and the mistake will be pointed out.

This is the anteroom, and we may speak here, of anything.

We speak of and point to the door. We discuss what lies beyond the door. Now perhaps we can understand, that if speaking is being done, that the speaker is in the anteroom.

To be in the anteroom does not imply in any way, an inability to go thru the door.
To speak in the anteroom does not in any way, qualify or accurately describe or explain what is beyond the door.

Those of us who speak here, who know we are in the anteroom, know that our words do not emanate from beyond the door.

see The Anteroom pg. 39