



NATURE OF MIND - PRINCIPLES OF PRACTICE & GUIDE

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In Nature of Mind Training, Dr. Vago's expertise in contemplative science and philosophy of mind brings you a meditation program that respects the complexity of the mind while celebrating the simplicity of awareness. Join this journey to unlock a profound, science-backed connection to the self and to the world. The key factors contributing to radical self-transformation and profound awakening comes from embodying principles of practice

Vago, David R., Ph.D.



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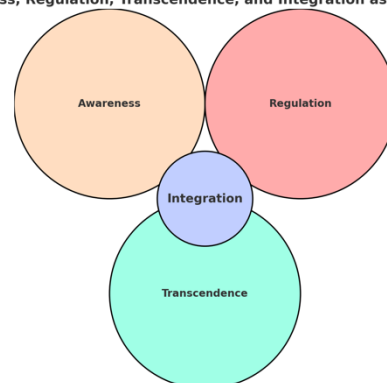


Nature of Mind Training

Nature of Mind Training: A Personalized Meditation Journey with Dr. Vago

Discover the transformative power of meditation with a program designed to elevate awareness, resilience, and connection in ways that resonate deeply with both science and spirit. Rooted in both ancient wisdom and cutting-edge neuroscience, this training offers a profound, science-backed approach to exploring the nature of the mind for self-transformation. This training program guides each practitioner through a structured, yet deeply personal journey to cultivate self-awareness, self-regulation, self-transcendence, and self-integration.

Awareness, Regulation, Transcendence, and Integration as Connection



Presentation link: <https://prezi.com/view/sflpDcw8x54Gn7CvNwH/>

Packages: <https://contemplativeneurosciences.com/lineage-backed-training-and-science-backed-meditation-training/>

What You Can Expect

In Nature of Mind Training, each session is tailored to your personal journey. Dr. Vago combines guided meditations, reflective discussions, and practical insights from neuroscience, clinical sciences, philosophy, and religious studies to create a program that's not only transformative but deeply relevant to your life. Whether your goal is to build resilience, cultivate emotional intelligence, or explore the vast potentials of the human mind, you'll gain the tools to transform meditation into a lifelong practice of growth and fulfillment.

Who This Program Is For

Nature of Mind Training is ideal for those ready to explore meditation in a comprehensive, personalized way. It's suitable for individuals seeking deeper self-awareness, emotional resilience, and a path to purpose. This program offers a supportive and scientifically grounded journey that aligns with those pursuing well-being, contemplative practice, or a deeper understanding of the mind.

Lineage – (and why Lineage Matters)

Lineage refers to an ability to trace the transmission—ancestry of a particular meditation tradition or meditation teacher back to an individual that was seemingly endowed with at least a modest degree of authentic spiritual realization. In respect of secular meditation and mindfulness modalities or other Mind and Body practice, rather than an historic spiritual or religious figure per se, some mindfulness practitioners trace their lineage back to the founder of a particular approach. Either way, lineage is essentially concerned with authenticity and preserving the spiritual potency or effectiveness of a particular line of teachings. In the Canki Sutta, the Buddha explained that in terms of **authenticity**, the only thing that really matters is that a teacher's behaviors are not in any way influenced by greed, hatred or delusion. In order to consider oneself a lineage holder, they typically need to spend a certain amount of time receiving oral teachings directly from a lineage teacher. However, although oral transmission is probably the most obvious means by which lineage can be acquired, it is by no means the only one. For example, according to the twelfth century Tibetan Buddhist teacher, Gampopa, if the 'right student' at the 'right time' reads the 'right text' that was written by the 'right teacher', then this is the same as meeting the author of the text in person. In addition to transmission by oral or written means, a further but perhaps less obvious form of lineage transmission that is referred to in the traditional meditation literature is that of mind-to-mind transmission. Transmissions of this nature are arguably less common than the abovementioned oral and written transmission formats, and mind-to-mind transmission requires a highly realized teacher and a student that is spiritually and karmically 'ripe'. Another form of lineage transmission that does not require a teacher to be physically present is that of 'terma' transmissions. Terma transmissions refer to spiritual practitioners finding—sometimes in their own minds—teachings that were hidden by previous enlightened teachers. There is



limited value in going to great efforts to establish how many titles or endorsements a particular teacher has, how many meditation books they have read, how many teachers they have trained with, or how many students practice with them. Put simply, if a teacher has genuine spiritual presence or embodiment of the practice, this means that they are a lineage holder of the true Dharma. Being a Dharma lineage holder means that a person has realized and dwells within the truth of emptiness, unconditional compassion and steadfast awareness. As such, they are 100 % authorized to transmit the Dharma teachings. In fact, the presence of inner spiritual realization is the only credential that counts.

Lineage of origin

Contemporary

- [Unified mindfulness system](#)
- [Insight](#)
 - [Ajahn Chah](#) from Northern Thailand (Thai Forest)
 - [Ajahn Buddhadasa](#) in South Thailand near Phuket
 - [Mahasi Sayadaw](#) (Theravada Burmese)
 - Sayadaw [U Pandita](#) (Theravada Vipassana)
 - [Nyanaponika Thera](#)
 - [Sharon Salzberg](#)
 - [Joseph Goldstein](#)
 - [Jack Kornfield](#)

Vipassana (Theravada)

- [S.N. Goenka](#) -
 - [Dan Ingram \(Stages of Insight\)](#)

Dzogchen/Mahamudra

(Mahayana/Vajrayana/Tantrayana)

- [Tulku Urgyen](#) (Kagyü/Nyingma) – [Legacy podcast](#)
 - [Chogyi Nyima](#)
 - [Mingyur Rinpoche](#)
 - [Tsoknyi Rinpoche \(Nyingma\)](#)
 - [Alan Wallace \(Shamatha\)](#)
 - [Jon Kabat-Zinn](#)
- [Dilgo Khyentse \(Gelug\)](#)
 - [His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama](#)



Japanese Zen

- Eihei Dogen Zenji (Soto)
- Kyozan Joshu Sasaki Roshi (Rinzai-ji)
- Taizan Maezumi Roshi (Soto and Rinzai)
 - Genpo Roshi (Dennis Paul Merzel)
 - Bernard Glassman
 - Roshi Joan Halifax

Hindu

- Swami Sivananda Saraswati (**Advaita Vedanta**) (Ashtanga/Asana/Pranayama) (Samkhya philosophy, Hatha tradition) [2nd century BCE - 4th century CE]
 - **Karma Yoga (Path of Action):** Selfless service without attachment to results.
 - **Bhakti Yoga (Path of Devotion):** Loving devotion to a personal deity.
 - **Raja Yoga (Path of Meditation):** Discipline of mind and body through meditation.
 - **Jnana Yoga (Path of Knowledge):** Pursuit of wisdom and self-inquiry. Yogi Patanjali



- K. Pattabhi Jois
- Yogi Bajan (Kundalini)
- Jiddu Krishnamurti (1895–1986) (Order of the Star in the East: Theosophist)
- Swami Vishnudevananda
 - Baron/Dana Baptiste
 - Cyndi Lee
- Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev (Inner Engineering)

Principles for Practice. - 8 Foundational Principles

Nature of Mind Training integrates eight foundational principles designed to set a lasting foundation for practice:

1. **Intentionality and Purpose** – Each session begins with a focus on your unique intentions and goals, deepening your commitment to self-growth, resilience, or transcendence. Through guided intention-setting, you'll learn how purposeful practice drives clarity, equanimity, and self-empowerment in daily life.
 - **Application:** Each session begins with a shared intention, allowing the practitioner to articulate their goals. We explore how intention shapes not only their meditation experience but also their daily thoughts, emotions, and actions.
 - **Insight from Inquiry:** Reflections on what it means to pursue a life with purpose and how this pursuit might elevate a capacity for compassion and presence. Learning how to set intention leads to empowerment, and purpose-driven development.
2. **Embodied Awareness and Self-Regulation** – Connect deeply and ground awareness with your body and breath to foster emotional stability and clarity. Using techniques informed by neuroscience, you'll explore how self-regulation strengthens your response to stress and cultivates calm focus.
 - **Application:** Practices build embodied awareness, such as mindful breathing, progressive relaxation, and body scanning, using a neuroscience-based approach to explain how these practices impact brain regions involved in self-regulation. This is tied to your Whole-Person Wellbeing Index (WPWI) and work on emotional resilience.
 - **Neuroscience Insight:** Understand neural pathways that support or inhibit self-regulation, providing insight into how meditation helps foster new connections in areas like the prefrontal cortex and limbic system.
3. **Compassionate Self-Inquiry** – Engage in compassionate self-reflection as a tool for emotional resilience and self-acceptance. Exercises in mindful awareness and loving kindness help you observe thoughts and emotions without judgment, allowing you to build a more profound, empathetic relationship with yourself and others.
 - **Application:** Guided self-inquiry exercises, such as reflective questions allow one to observe thoughts and feelings with kindness and curiosity, enhancing emotional resilience and reducing self-criticism. This complements one's training in self-compassion and empathy. Benefactor practice will help with visualization techniques.
 - **Philosophical Insight:** Reflect on the nature of self-acceptance as a pathway to embracing one's humanity, redefining what success in meditation and life truly means. Nothing to achieve!
4. **Adaptive Mindset and Growth** – Embrace meditation as a flexible practice, allowing room for change, adaptation, and resilience. Drawing on fundamental principles of neuroplasticity and modulatory power of thoughts, sensory stimuli, and undomesticated raw natural energy, Dr. Vago will guide you through exercises that expand your capacity for growth and open new pathways in your thinking and being.
 - **Application:** A variety of meditation practices can prevent rigidity and encourage flexibility in response to internal and external change. Reflect on the brain's neuroplasticity and how mindfulness can drive adaptive shifts in thought patterns, a principle that aligns with Growth Mindset, Improved Focus & Creativity.
 - **Neuroscience Insight:** Reflect on the impact of neuroplasticity on developing new behavioral patterns, emphasizing how meditation strengthens resilience, adaptability, and emotional intelligence.



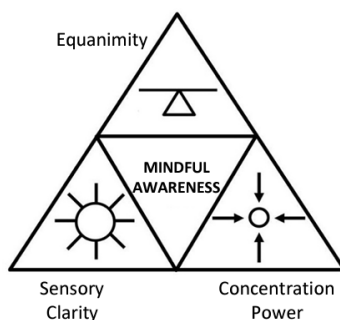
5. **Curiosity-Driven Exploration** – Cultivate a sense of awe and curiosity as you explore the mind’s intricate workings. Dr. Vago encourages you to approach each session like a scientist, using curiosity to unlock insights into your consciousness and develop a deeper connection to the present moment. All practices will have scientific evidence to support its use and effectiveness. Those practices that may not have sufficient evidence supporting its impact on mind-brain-body will be investigated with a scientific lens and any methods with pseudoscience claims will be investigated rigorously.
 - **Application:** Observe thoughts, emotions, and sensations as a scientific experiment. This process invites exploration into the complexities of consciousness.
 - **Philosophical Insight:** Reflect on the value of curiosity as a tool for personal growth and the philosophy of the mind, bridging experience to broader questions about consciousness and existence.
6. **Relational Awareness and Connection** – Meditation isn’t just an internal journey; it fosters relationships and compassion for others. Practices like loving-kindness and mindful listening enhance relational awareness, helping you form more meaningful connections and deepen empathy and altruistic motives.
 - **Application:** Neuroscience-based insights into meditation practices, demystifying the process and empowering oneself with a clearer understanding of how meditation affects the brain. For instance, functional connectivity shifts between networks like the salience and default mode networks could enrich meditation experience. Science and Evidence provide the foundation for Practicing with Credibility and Integrity
 - **Neuroscience Insight:** Examine the role of meditation in neuroplastic changes that foster resilience and well-being, linking practice to both scientific insights and contemplative traditions.
7. **Dynamic Integration of Knowledge and Practice** – Integrating knowledge about the mind and brain with your meditation practice. Dr. Vago offers scientific insights into how specific meditation practices impact neural pathways and functional connectivity, demystifying the meditation process and empowering you with scientific knowledge.
 - **Application:** Neuroscience-based insights into meditation practices, demystifying the process and empowering oneself with a clearer understanding of how meditation affects the brain. For instance, functional connectivity shifts between networks like the salience and default mode networks could enrich meditation experience. Science and Evidence provide the foundation for Practicing with Credibility and Integrity
 - **Neuroscience Insight:** Examine the role of meditation in neuroplastic changes that foster resilience and well-being, linking practice to both scientific insights and contemplative traditions.
8. **Journey Toward Self-Transcendence** - Meditation can be a path to self-transcendence, expanding awareness beyond the self and cultivating a sense of interconnectedness with humanity and beyond. Nature of Mind Training goes beyond the self, expanding awareness to a place of unity and purpose. Practices focused on gratitude, awe, and collective well-being help you experience meditation as a path to self-transcendence, expanding awareness beyond oneself and strengthening your sense of connection to humanity. Non-duality and deep formless absorption practices (arūpa-jhānas) will be explored.
 - **Application:** Contemplative practices that go beyond self-oriented goals, facilitating moments of awe, gratitude, unity, and dissolution of the I, Me, Mine complex. See S-ART model.
 - **Philosophical Insight:** Delve into the nature of self-transcendence as a transformative shift in consciousness, exploring how individuals can move beyond ego-driven concerns to contribute to collective well-being.



Unified Mindfulness, Shinzen Young

[5 ways to know yourself](#) [Science of enlightenment](#)

- Within the Unified Mindfulness System, mindful awareness is defined as:
- “three attentional skills working together:
 - Concentration Power, Sensory Clarity, and Equanimity.



	<p>Concentration Power Staying with what is relevant.</p>
	<p>Sensory Clarity Brightness, high resolution, untangling.</p>
	<p>Equanimity A kind of inner balance; A third possibility between pushing the senses down (suppressing) and being pulled away by the senses (grasping).</p>

FIVE WAYS TO KNOW YOURSELF

Noting & Labeling Method for 3 Modalities: See/Hear/Feel (SHF)

12 Basic States (+2 restful analogues)

g/Gone – Vanishing/Passing of Sensory Stimuli/all time & space
See-in, See-out, See-flow, see-rest
Hear-in, Hear-out, Hear-flow, Hear-rest

Feel-in, Feel-out, Feel-flow, feel rest

Do Nothing - Technique of no technique that involves little or no effort. You don't even have to intentionally

note restful states. It is totally passive and easy going:

- Choiceless Awareness (term used by Krishnamurti and others);
- Open Presence
- Just Sitting
- Dzogchen/Mahamudra - Rigpa
- Passive Contemplation (in Christianity)
- Non-dual Awareness

Thoughts and Emotions

Physical Senses

Rest States

Flow States

<i>Thoughts and Emotions</i>	<i>Physical Senses</i>	<i>Rest States</i>	<i>Flow States</i>
See In: Explore your mental images	See Out: Anchor yourself in external sights	See Rest: Enjoy visual rest	See Flow: Enjoy visual flow
Hear In: Explore your mental talk	Hear Out: Anchor yourself in external sounds	Hear Rest: Enjoy auditory rest	Hear Flow: Enjoy auditory flow
Feel In: Explore your emotional body sensations	Feel Out: Explore your physical body sensations	Feel Rest: Enjoy body rest	Feel Flow: Enjoy body flow

Focus on See: Explore all visual states	The Path of Visual Experience	
Focus on Hear: Explore all auditory states		The Path of Auditory Experience
Focus on Feel: Explore all somatic states		

Focus In:
Explore all inward activity

Focus Out:
Explore all outward activity

Focus on Rest:
Enjoy all types of rest

Focus on Flow (Sense Flow version)
Focus on Flow (Expansion-Contraction version)

Focus on Everything
Just Note Gone

The Path of All Experience
The Path of Goneness

1. THE WAY OF THOUGHTS AND EMOTIONS

SHF – IN

See – mental images

Hear – mental chatter

Feel – emotional body sensations

2. THE WAY OF THE PHYSICAL SENSES

See – physical sight

Hear – sound

Feel – body sensation

Focus Out – all objective arisings



3. THE WAY OF TRANQUILITY

- See Rest – darkness/mottled light behind eye lids
- Hear rest – no mental chatter
- Feel rest – calm and relaxation in the body
- All rest – no sensory experience pulling at awareness

4. THE WAY OF FLOW

Focusing on Flow is a way of working with what might be called the dynamic or energetic aspect of sensory experience. The word dynamic refers to change and the forces that can create change. In classical physics, there is a strong link between the concept of force and the concept of change. You may not be able to see the wind itself, but you can track it in real time and in great detail by watching how the loosely articulated leaves of a Cottonwood tree shimmer. (This is no doubt why plains Indians consider that tree sacred and make it central in their highest ceremony, the Sundance.) Flow refers to any change in a sensory experience other than abrupt vanishing. Vanishing (“Gone”) is a very special case of dynamic behavior that is given its own category.

Flow can occur in any of nine types of experience:

Mental Image	Physical Sight	Visual Rest
Mental Talk	Physical Sound	Auditory Rest
Emotional Body Sensation	Physical Body Sensation	Somatic Rest

5. THE WAY OF HUMAN GOODNESS

5 fundamental dimensions of flourishing - Loving kindness (actively create) – cognitive in nature

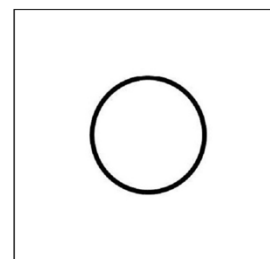
1. Decreased suffering – with less dissatisfaction
2. Elevation of fulfillment – more satisfaction
3. Self-understanding
4. Improve Behavior
5. Altruistic motivation

Nurture Positive



Main Themes	Secondary Themes	Modality Choices
Positive Affect	Positive Ideal	Mental Image
Positive Behavior	Positive Situation	Mental Talk
Positive Cognition	Other Positives	Emotional Body Sensation

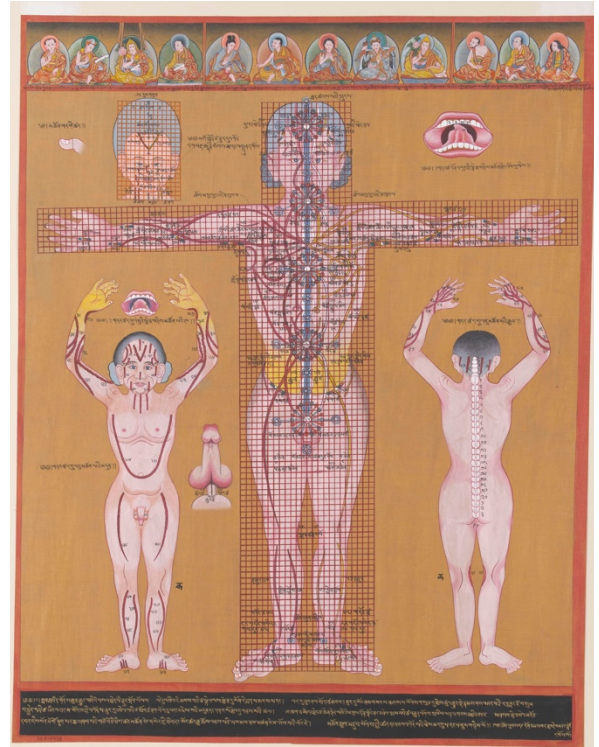
Do Nothing





Energy Channels (from manuscript with Tawni Tidwell, Ph.D)

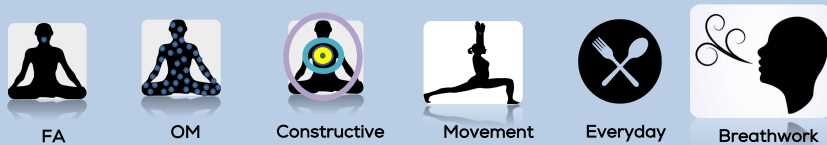
- Based on the 13th century classical text *Gyūzhi* (Four Medical Treatises) and key meditation manuals
- Key Psychophysiological Systems (*nyépa*) – physiological pathways (*rgyu lam*) and activities (*bya ba*; *byed las*) that, in their default mode, link bodily constituents (specific tissues and cells), organs, fluids, and energetic signaling dynamics to provide systemic functions related to the properties of the elemental dynamics:
 - **Lūng** (rlung; akin to (neural) impulse): responsible for motility, animation and all neuroendocrine signaling;
 - Lūng pathways control respiration, swallowing, and articulation; physical, verbal and cognitive-affective movement; exertion; sensory organ perceptual acuity; metabolic separation of nutrient and waste products and digestive waste elimination as well as similar downward-voiding activities of the uterus, urinary system, and colorectal region. Also encompasses many other functions related to motility and signal-response in the body. The bodily constituents, organs, and sensory organs related to lūng pathways include bone, heart, colon, hearing and tactile sensory organs, colon, and the pathways supporting life (*srog*).
 - **Tripa** (mkhris pa; akin to (metabolic) function): metabolic heat, blood production, and thermoregulation
 - Tripa pathways relate to the heat-producing functions in the body. Responsible for hormonal function, thermoregulation, metabolic power and heat in digestion, cardiovascular functions, heart and blood constituents and activities, hunger and thirst, liver and gallbladder function, complexion and skin maintenance, and sharpness of cognitive and intellectual processing. Its pathways relate to the blood, liver, gallbladder, small intestine, visual sensory organs, and perspiration.
 - **Béken** (bad kan; akin to (physical) structure): fluid-nutrient cycling, filtration, joint lubrication, and solidity/cohesion
 - Béken is related to solidity and cohesion in the body, namely, providing the physical supports (literally, cells, tissues, and fluids) for the body and mind; promoting physical and mental patience, tolerance and imperturbability; facilitating sleep; producing connectivity in the joints; and smoothing and oiling functions of all organs, constituents, and fluids in the body. Its pathways relate to the nutritional essence, muscle, fat, bone marrow, regenerative fluid, feces, urine, olfactory and gustatory sensory organs, lungs, spleen, stomach, kidneys, and urinary bladder, as well as many of the other fluids and oils in the body.
- **Key Coarse Channel Systems:**
 - **rtsa dkar** (White Channels): Described as correlating with the nervous system, responsible for sensory input and motor output.
 - **rtsa nag** (Black Channels): Associated with the blood vasculature, concerned with circulation and nourishment of the body.
 - **rmen bu'i rtsa/rgyu lam** (Lymphatic Channels): Described as purifying the body, resembling the function of the lymphatic and immune systems.
- **Key Subtle Channels** (*phra ba'i rtsa*) as pathways for subtle *rlung* (Energy Pathways): Channels that regulate subtle activity in the body, including neuroendocrine and biochemical regulatory systems.



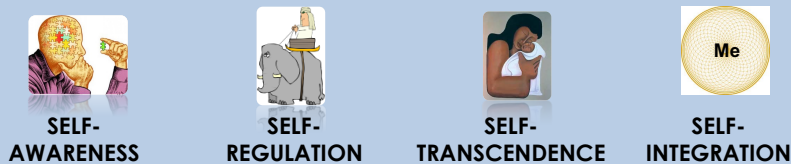


Mechanisms for Self-Transformation

6 Core Mindfulness-based Meditation Practices:



4 Primary Mechanisms of Mindfulness



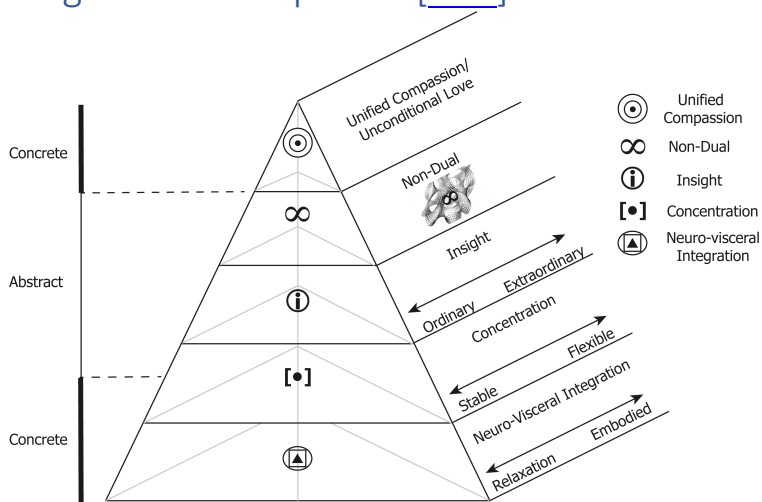
Vago & Silbersweig, Frontiers in Neuro 2012

Self-Awareness	Self-Regulation	Self-Transcendence	Self-Integration
Intention/Motivation	Inhibitory control	Non-dual Awareness	Reappraisal
Meta-awareness	Extinction memory	Ego-dissolution (self de-reification)	Assimilation
Interoception (accuracy, awareness, sensitivity)	Attention (regulation, stability, flexibility, bias)	Prosociality (empathy, theory of mind, connection, altruism)	Purpose/Meaning
Exteroception (accuracy, clarity)	Equanimity	Unity	
De-centering		Time/space Boundlessness	
Embodiment (cognition, enaction)		Non-referential compassion	

- **1) Intention & Motivation**
 - Effortful to Effortless
 - Self-focused to Other-focused
- **2) Attention Regulation**
 - Stability, Inhibition & Control (flexible engagement).
 - Meta-awareness (de-centering & executive monitoring)
- **3) Emotion Regulation**
 - Equanimity,
 - Inhibitory control
- **4) Extinction and Reconsolidation**
 - Mental habits & biases shifted toward adaptive trajectories
- **5) Prosociality**
 - Empathy, Theory of Mind, & Altruistic Behavior
- **6) Sensory Clarity**
 - Embodied cognition



Stages of Development [\[Link\]](#)

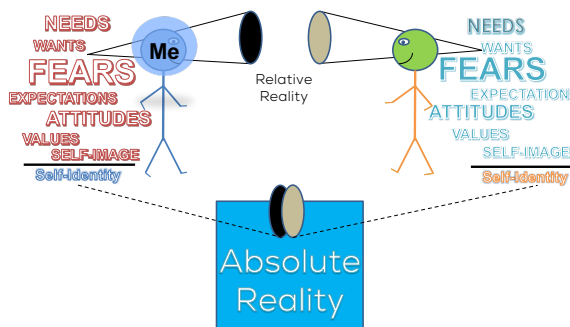
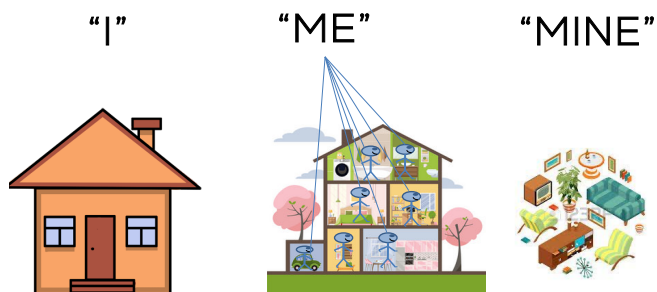


At neuro-visceral integrative and concentration tiers, experience is largely concrete in nature, body-centric and associated with strengthening of attentional stability, inhibitory control via increased vagal tone and activation of feedback and feed-forward circuits that re-condition autonomic reactivity across everyday life

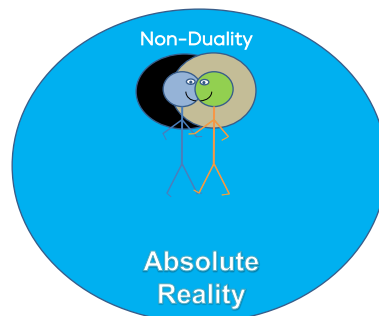
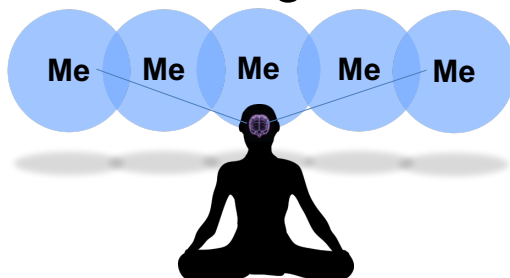
Advanced concentration, insight, and non-dual stages, shift into abstract planes of experience that are not usual from the everyday body-centric experience of external/internal reality,

Self-Transformation

Self-Regulation

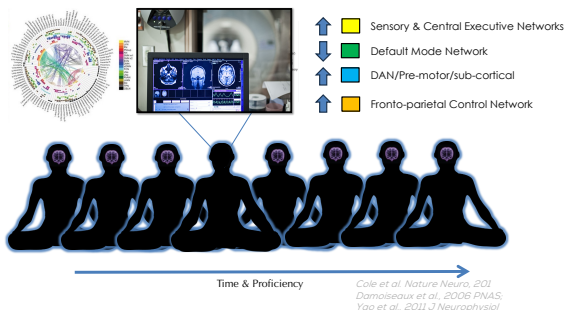


Self-Integration

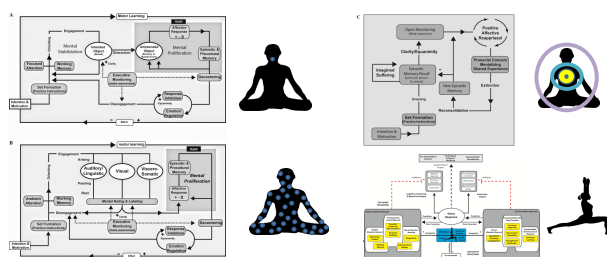
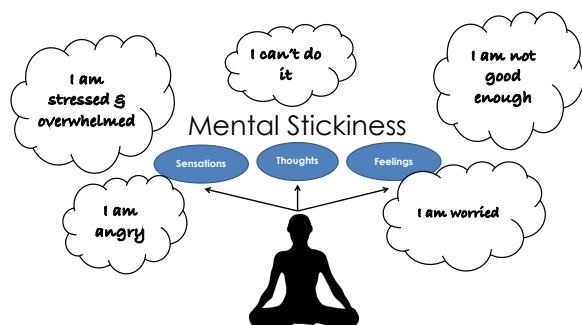
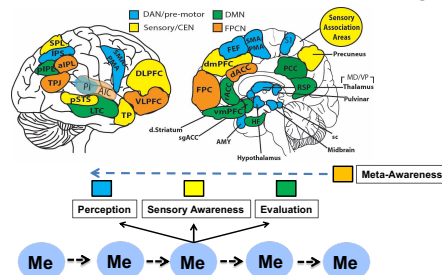




Neuroscience

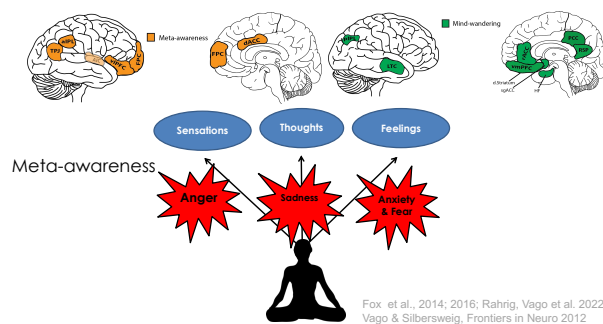
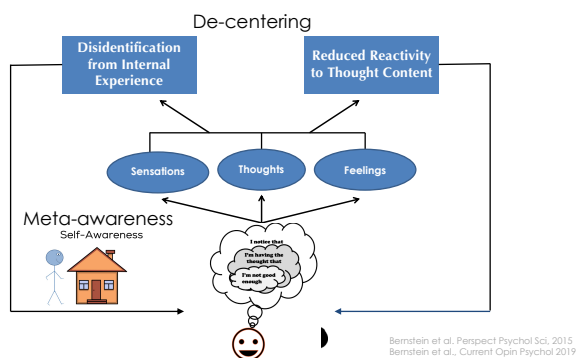


4 Neural Networks relevant to "Selfing"



PROCESS MODELS OF CORE MINDFULNESS-BASED MEDITATION PRACTICES

Vago & Silbersweig, Frontiers in Neuro 2012





ROUNDGLASS APP



Kids and Teens Meditation & Breathwork		
Mantra for releasing fears	The Flashlight	Relax at the Beach
Pizza Meditation	The Mindful Sound Detective	Wiggle Worm Meditation
Gratitude Boost	Strong Like a Tree	Breathe Like a Lion
Magic Eyes	Tasty Thoughts	Future Me: Time Machine Meditation
Nurture Love & Kindness	My Body Scanner	Dream for Peace
Rainbow Feelings	Buzzing Bee Breath	Animal Power
Calm the Monkey Mind	Train Your Super Senses	Mindful Conversations

Meditation and Breathwork for Adults		
Breathwork for Inner Heat	Power Breathing to Boost Immunity	Body Scan for Anxiety
Soothing Alternate Nostril Breathing	Box Breathing for Maximum Calm	Invigorating Mindful Walk
Breathwork for Instant Relaxation	Breathwork for a Better Mood	Easy Breath Meditation for Stress
Energizing Breath of Fire	Pause Before Overreacting – Noting & Labeling	Gain Clarity & Perspective Open Monitoring
4-7-8 Breath to Fall Asleep Quickly	Cover Yourself in Love, Kindness, & Joy	Increase Focus & Concentration



FOR CONTEMPLATION



Vedana-samyutta: Sallatha Sutta: The Dart

"When the uninstructed run-of-the-mill person is touched by a painful (bodily) feeling, he worries and grieves, laments, weeps and is distraught.

It is as if the man were pierced by two darts, a physical and mental dart."

"But in the case of a well-taught disciple, when he is touched by a painful feeling, he will not be distraught. It is one kind of feeling he experiences, a bodily one, but not a mental feeling. It is as if a man were pierced by the first but not second dart."



GLOSSARY

Embodiment: Refers to the tangible or visible expression of an idea, quality, or feeling through a physical form. In psychological and philosophical contexts, it emphasizes the integral role of the body in shaping the mind and consciousness. This perspective suggests that cognitive processes are deeply rooted in the body's interactions with the world, challenging the traditional mind-body dualism.

Equanimity: Upekha (Sanskrit): Maintaining mental calmness and impartiality, especially in difficult situations. In meditation, it refers to maintaining a balanced mind amidst emotional fluctuations. (see [Equanimity paper](#))

Compassion: (1) deep awareness of and (2) desire to alleviate the suffering of others. In meditation, cultivating compassion involves practices like loving-kindness meditation.

What compassion is not:

Sympathy - feelings of pity and sorrow for someone else's misfortune.

Pity - a sentiment considered the "near enemy" - here too one wants to remove suffering, but for a partly selfish reason

Empathic Overarousal: When emotional arousal is not regulated and self/other differentiation is deficient, it can lead to "empathic over-arousal". If the arousal is perceived as negative, focus shifts to relieving personal distress rather than the distress of the other. (Eisenberg & Fabes, 1992)

Dakini: In Tibetan Buddhism, a female embodiment of enlightened energy, often depicted as a celestial being who acts as a muse or guide for practitioners.

Dorje (Vajra): A ritual object symbolizing indestructibility and irresistible force, representing the male principle in Tibetan Buddhism.

Spiritual Materialism: The misuse of spiritual practices to enhance one's ego or status, rather than for genuine personal growth. **Avoiding spiritual materialism** - the belief that a certain temporary state of mind is a refuge from suffering. An example would be using meditation practices to create a peaceful state of mind, or using drugs or alcohol to remain in a numbed out or a euphoric state.

Spiritual Bypassing: The tendency to use spiritual beliefs or practices to avoid dealing with unresolved emotional issues or psychological wounds. **Avoiding spiritual bypassing** - a "tendency to use **spiritual** ideas and practices to sidestep or avoid facing unresolved emotional issues, psychological wounds, and unfinished developmental tasks". The term was introduced in the early 1980s by John Welwood, a Buddhist teacher and psychotherapist.

Meditation: Dhyāna (Sanskrit); sgoms (Tibetan); Bhavana (Sanskrit); (~6th century BCE). "Causing to become."; Cultivation; mental development; Development of Familiarity.

Hāgā (Old Testament); Melete (Grk); Meditatio (Latin); Associated with thought, reflection, study, & *contemplation*; Classical period (5th-8th CE): a general technique of focusing attention in a sustained fashion with the aim of deepening states of concentration, tranquility, and insight. **Indus Valley Civilization [3200 - 1300 BCE];** One of the three earliest civilizations on this planet was the Indus Valley Civilization. City of Mohenjo-daro = earliest evidence of a seal with a man sitting in a meditation posture.

Bhavana: A Pali term meaning 'development' or 'cultivation,' often referring to the practice of mental development through meditation.

Jhana (Dhyana): Deep meditative states of absorption achieved through concentration practices, leading to profound stillness and insight.

Mindfulness: (Pali: sati; Sanskrit: smriti). Act of recollection, remembering; Reflecting the continual act of maintaining [meta-] awareness & discernment without forgetfulness of the relation to all things; "Focusing attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally." (JKZ)





Anapanasati: Mindfulness of breathing; a foundational meditation practice focusing on the breath to develop concentration and insight.

Samadhi: A state of intense concentration achieved through meditation, leading to a profound union with the object of focus.

Mantra: A word or phrase repeated during meditation to aid concentration and focus the mind.

Chakra: In yogic traditions, energy centers within the body that correspond to different physical, emotional, and spiritual aspects.

Pranayama: The practice of breath control in yoga, used to regulate energy flow and prepare the mind for meditation.

Vipassana (Pali): A form of meditation focusing on insight into the true nature of reality, emphasizing mindfulness and awareness. Vi is a prefix that implies both “separate” and “through”, and passana means to see, i.e., to perceive. So the first step in vipassana is to see in a way that separates (i.e., untangles) the strands of sensory experience. But at a deeper level, vipassana means “to see through” or “remove the veil of ignorance” to an underlying universal oneness.

Metta (Loving-Kindness): A meditation practice aimed at developing unconditional love and benevolence toward oneself and others. Vipassana

Kundalini: In yogic philosophy, a form of primal energy believed to reside at the base of the spine, which can be awakened through specific meditation practices.

Zazen: A form of seated meditation central to Zen Buddhism, focusing on just sitting and observing thoughts without attachment.

Mudra: Symbolic hand gestures used in meditation and yoga to channel energy flow within the body.

Sangha: The community of practitioners who support each other in their spiritual journey, often referring to a Buddhist monastic community.

Dharma: In Buddhism, the teachings of the Buddha; in Hinduism, the principle of cosmic order and duty.

Karma: The law of cause and effect, where one's actions influence future experiences.

Nirvāṇa: The ultimate goal in Buddhism, representing liberation from the cycle of birth and death (samsara) and the cessation of suffering. Literally, “extinguishing” of desires and attachments. See article on enlightenment.

Bodhi: A Sanskrit and Pāli term meaning "awakening" or "enlightenment." In Buddhism, it refers to the profound understanding that leads to the cessation of the cycle of rebirth and suffering, culminating in Nirvāṇa.

Kenshō: A Japanese Zen term meaning "seeing one's true nature." It denotes an initial insight or awakening experience, often considered a glimpse into one's inherent Buddha-nature.

Satori: Also a Japanese Zen term, often used interchangeably with Kenshō. It signifies a deep or sudden enlightenment experience, marking a profound shift in perception and understanding.

Awakening: A general term referring to the realization or recognition of the true nature of reality. In various spiritual traditions, it involves a profound shift in consciousness, leading to enlightenment or liberation.

Moksha: A concept in Hinduism and Jainism, Moksha denotes liberation from the cycle of death and rebirth (samsara). It is the attainment of a state of eternal bliss and union with the divine.

Rigpa: In Tibetan Buddhism, Rigpa refers to the intrinsic, pure awareness that is the fundamental nature of the mind. Recognizing Rigpa is central to Dzogchen practice, leading to enlightenment.

Turiyatita Chetana: In Hindu philosophy, particularly in Advaita Vedanta, Turiyatita (beyond the fourth) refers to a state beyond the three common states of consciousness (waking, dreaming, and deep sleep) and the fourth state (Turiya). Chetana means consciousness. Thus, Turiyatita Chetana denotes a transcendental state of consciousness beyond even Turiya, representing the ultimate realization of the self.

Non-duality: The philosophical concept that all distinctions and separations are ultimately illusory, emphasizing the fundamental unity of all existence. It posits that the apparent dualities—such as self and other, subject and object, or mind



and body—are interconnected and inseparable. In spiritual practices, realizing non-duality is often associated with enlightenment or awakening, where one experiences the oneness of all things. In meditation, it involves transcending the perception of separateness.

Non-conceptuality: Denotes a state of awareness that transcends ordinary conceptual thinking. It involves direct, immediate experience without the mediation of labels, categories, or judgments. In meditation and certain philosophical traditions, cultivating non-conceptual awareness is seen as a means to perceive reality more authentically, free from the distortions of preconceived notions.

Nirodha Samāpatti: In Theravāda Buddhism, Nirodha Samāpatti, or the "attainment of cessation," is a meditative state where all mental activities, including perception and feeling, cease. It is considered a profound state of equanimity and is typically accessible only to advanced practitioners. "the path moment doesn't have any thinking or feeling in it...While the meditative absorptions bring with them a feeling of oneness, of unity, the path moment does not even contain that. The moment of fruition, subsequent to the path moment, is the understood experience and results in a turned-around vision of existence... The new understanding recognizes every thought, every feeling as stress(dukkha)"

Samsara: The cycle of birth, death, and rebirth in Hinduism and Buddhism, characterized by suffering and impermanence.

Bodhisattva: In Mahayana Buddhism, an enlightened being who chooses to remain in the cycle of samsara to help all sentient beings achieve enlightenment.

Burnout (BO): an emotional and behavioral impairment that results from the exposure to high levels of occupational stress, has been described as a combination of three factors: emotional exhaustion, Depersonalization (psychological withdrawal from relationships/development of a negative, cynical, and callous attitude); personal accomplishment/high level of perfectionism.

Compassion fatigue (CF): state of physical or psychological distress in caregivers (empathic overarousal), which occurs as a consequence of an ongoing and snowballing process in a demanding relationship with needy individuals

Koan: A paradoxical statement or question used in Zen practice to transcend rational thought and provoke enlightenment.

Upaya (Skillful Means): The practice of adapting teachings and methods to fit the needs and capacities of individuals, emphasizing flexibility in spiritual instruction.

Shunyata (Emptiness): A central concept in Buddhism denoting the absence of inherent existence in all phenomena, highlighting the interdependent nature of reality.

Tathata (Suchness): The true nature of reality, as it is, beyond conceptualization and dualistic distinctions.

Mudita (Sympathetic Joy): The practice of rejoicing in the happiness and success of others, cultivating an unselfish and joyful heart.

Yamas: Yogic term for moral observances.

Niyamas: Yogic term for self-disciplines.

Samskara: Mental impressions or habitual tendencies formed by past actions, influencing present behavior and experiences.

Pratyahara: The practice of withdrawing the senses from external objects to direct attention inward, a preparatory step in meditation.

Table 1 | Components of classical yoga (the eight limbs of Patanjali's Raja yoga).

ETHICS		MEDITATION	
Yamas	Moral observances	Pratyahara	Sensory withdrawal
Ahimsa	Non-violence		Relaxation techniques
Satya	Truthfulness		Inward-mindedness
Asteya	Non-stealing (not taking from others)		Minimizing sensory input
Brahmacharya	Moderation of senses		
Aparigraha	Non-greedy (not keeping from others)	Dharana	Concentration
			Single-pointed, focused attention
Niyamas	Self-disciplines		Object-based
Saucha	Cleanliness and purification		Effortful
Santosa	Contentment	Dhyana	Meditation
Tapas	Literally 'heat' - austerity		Unbroken flow of attention
Svadhya	Self-reflection and study		Object-based or not
Ishvara Pranidhana	Surrender		Open monitoring
			Effortless
		Samadhi	Integration
			Merging of subject & object
			Transcendental consciousness
			Self-realization
POSTURES		Legend of Modern Usage	
Asana	Postures		Typical modern entry points
	Standing poses		
	Balancing poses		
	Forward bends		
	Backbends		
	Twists		
	Inversions		
	Restorative poses		
Vinyasa	Breath-linked movement of poses		Also in traditional practices
		(no brackets)	Advanced traditional practices
BREATH REGULATION			
Pranayama	Breath regulation		
Nostril breathing	Slow, deep diaphragmatic		
	Epiglottal constriction		
	Altered rate or depth		
	Uninostril		
Mouth breathing	Through curled/flat tongue or teeth		
Breath with sound	Sighing		
	Humming or bee breath		
Retentions	Holding breath in or out		
	Ratios of in, out & retentions		

These components are described by their modern usage, and grouped into four operational categories that are used to conceptualize how yoga may influence self-regulatory processes.



Dharana: Concentration; the practice of focusing the mind on a single point or object, preceding deeper meditation states.

Dhyana: Meditation; the practice of sustained attention and contemplation, leading to profound inner stillness and insight.

Sadhana: A disciplined spiritual practice or path undertaken to achieve a specific goal, such as enlightenment or self-realization.

Seva: Selfless service performed without any expectation of reward, considered a spiritual practice in many traditions.

Tantra: A spiritual tradition that seeks to integrate and transcend the physical and spiritual, often involving rituals, meditation, and esoteric practices.

Yantra: A geometric diagram used as a tool for meditation, representing the universe and aiding in concentration.

Laya Yoga: A form of yoga focusing on the dissolution of the mind and merging with higher consciousness through meditation and sound.

Nada Yoga: The yoga of sound; a practice that uses sound vibrations, both external and internal, to connect with deeper states of consciousness.

Ajna: The 'third eye' chakra, located between the eyebrows

Re-integration: (not rejecting vital ego functions) involves acknowledging and harmonizing essential aspects of the ego—such as self-identity, personal boundaries, and self-esteem—within one's overall psychological framework. Instead of dismissing these functions as obstacles to spiritual or personal growth, re-integration recognizes their importance in maintaining mental health and facilitating a balanced self-concept.

Expansion: Any increase in intensity, frequency or size within a sensory experience counts as “Expansion.” Also any outward pressure or any scattering force counts as Expansion. An experience of pure space effortlessly spreading

Contraction: Any decrease in intensity, frequency, or size counts as “Contraction.” Also, any inward pressure or gripping force counts as Contraction. Within ordinary contraction, there may be an experience of pure space effortlessly collapsing. If this deeper level of Expansion and Contraction presents itself, focus on it.

Gone: Just Note Gone: Work with vanishings. In the Unified Mindfulness System, “Gone” refers to the moment when all or part of what you’re aware of drops away or drops off and you detect it. To clarify exactly what that means, let’s first consider what “Gone” implies in ordinary speech. Something may disappear without you noticing the moment when that happens. You were focusing on x, then your attention went elsewhere, and when you came back, x was no longer there. That does not count as Gone because you did not detect the moment of it vanishing.

Noting/Labeling: A mindfulness meditation technique that involves mentally identifying and naming experiences as they arise. This practice enhances awareness by encouraging practitioners to observe thoughts, emotions, and sensations without attachment or judgment. By assigning simple labels such as "thinking," "feeling," or "hearing," individuals can recognize their experiences, fostering a non-reactive and present-centered awareness.

The origins of noting and labeling are deeply rooted in Buddhist meditation traditions, particularly within the Vipassana (insight) practice. This method was notably systematized by Burmese meditation master Mahasi Sayadaw in the mid-20th century. Mahasi Sayadaw emphasized the importance of mental noting to cultivate continuous mindfulness, aiding practitioners in developing insight into the nature of their experiences.

In practice, noting and labeling serve several functions:

- **Anchoring Attention:** By consistently labeling experiences, practitioners maintain focus on the present moment, reducing the tendency for the mind to wander.
- **Enhancing Awareness:** This technique helps in recognizing habitual patterns of thought and emotion, promoting a deeper understanding of one's mental processes.
- **Fostering Non-Reactivity:** By observing and labeling experiences without immediate reaction, individuals can develop equanimity, allowing them to respond to situations with greater clarity and calmness.

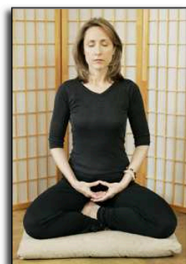


Posture

Meditation often uses posture to create optimal energy flow through channels from the pelvic floor up through the top of the head. We often regard this style of formal sitting as “dignified” posture and also maintains arousal. Stephanie Nash has a nice video on Good Posture (see below) and WhatMeditationReallyIs (see below). It is suggested that you attempt to experience these meditations in a comfortable, upright, seated position (at your desk or on the floor), but not in the supine position (because then you will simply fall asleep).

MEDITATION POSITIONS (SITTING & LYING DOWN)

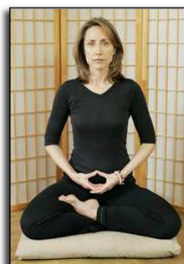
- a) **Quarter Lotus**
- b) **Half Lotus**
- c) **Full Lotus**
- d) **Burmese Position**
- e) **Seiza (bench or zafu)**
- f) **Chair (regular or ergonomic)**
- g) **Lying down**



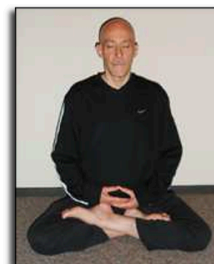
Quarter-Lotus



side view



Half-Lotus



Full-Lotus

Seven point posture is often encouraged.

1. Sit cross-legged.
2. Hands in lap or on knees.
3. Have a straight back.
4. Widen the shoulders to open the heart center.
5. Lower the chin.
6. Open mouth slightly with the tongue resting on the roof of the mouth.
7. Eyes open, gazing about four finger widths past the tip of nose.

For more in depth information, check out her free PDF article, “[POSTURE-PEDIA](#)“, which covers many positions, solutions to issues, and helpful insights.

Here’s a simple guide to the basic posture. Feel free to visit their website for more info: whatmeditationreallyis.com



APPENDIX

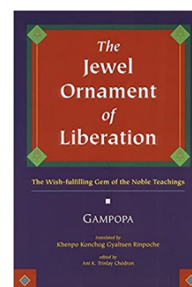
Links:

[Meditation Experience Assessment](#)

Reading List

1. Visuddhimagga – [Path of Purification](#) -
2. [Access to insight](#)
3. Analayo. (2003). Satipatthana: The direct path to awakening. Windhorse Publications.
4. Nyanaponika Thera: (2014). The Heart of Buddhist Meditation. Weiser Books. [ISBN 978-1578635580](#).
5. The Attention Revolution – Alan Wallace
6. The Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment (Volume 1)
7. The Jewel Ornament of Liberation: The Wish-Fulfilling Gem of the Noble Teachings

8. [Tsongkhapa](#)
9. On Emptiness - Emptiness: A Practical Guide for Meditators, By Guy Armstrong
10. Kabat-Zinn, J. (1995). Wherever You Go There You Are. Hyperion.
11. Krishnamurti, J. (1992). Choiceless Awareness: A Study Book on the Teachings of J. Krishnamurti (A. W. Patterson, Ed.). Krishnamurti foundation of America.
12. [The Heart of Dogen's Shobogenzo: The Dialectics of Subjectivity](#)
13. Lama XIV, D. (2005). The Universe in a Single Atom. Morgan Road Books.
14. [Secular Buddhism: Imagining the Dharma in an Uncertain World](#), by Stephen Batchelor
15. The Making of Buddhist Modernism by David McMahan
16. Inner Engineering, Sadhguru
17. The Miracle of Mindfulness, Thich Nhat Hanh



Podcasts for Developing Mind

Intentions – foundations for practice

1. Aspirations for practice
 - Chokyi Nyima Rinpoche: Prioritizing Aspirations Along the Path – [\[Link\]](#)
 - The Science of Intention – Juliet Adams [\[Link\]](#)

Shamatha – Attention Stabilization

1. Alan Wallace on the basics of Shamatha [\[Link\]](#)
2. The Way of Shamatha with Alan Wallace [\[Link\]](#)
3. Benefits and potential pitfalls [\[Link\]](#)

Central practice in shamatha, mindfulness of breathing. Despite being so simple, mindfulness of breathing has its profundity validated, for instance, by being the practice the Buddha did both on the night of his awakening, and also at the time he entered his parinirvana. Alan emphasizes the importance of relaxation, namely in the body, with some comments about the key role that exploring, and developing the capacity to practice in shavasana, can have on the shamatha path. He then proceeded to explore the relationship, and feedback loop, existing between the key qualities developed in shamatha: relaxation, stability and vividness.



The importance of Compassion

1. 4 immeasurables – Alan Wallace on immeasurables [\[Link\]](#)

The Self

1. Do you really have a self? A conversation with Jay Garfield. Sam Harris Waking Up podcast [\[Link\]](#)

Nature of Mind

1. Erik Pema Kunsang: Timeless Teachings with Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche [\[Link\]](#)

Science

“Self-transformation through Contemplation”. Contemplation by Design Summit, Stanford University [\[Online\]](#).

Self-Transformation through Mindfulness. Invited presentation. [Ted-X, Nashville](#), Nashville, TN.

Flow states and Meta-awareness. The Contemplative Science Podcast [\[Online\]](#).

How to Use Your Mind to Heal with Contemplative Neuroscience. State of MedTech Podcast [\[Link\]](#)

Mental Health and Well-Being Global Summit 2024 [\[Online\]](#)

Contemplative Neurosciences. Mind and Life Podcast [\[Link\]](#)

Self-Transcendence: How to Experience Personal Growth and Awakening Through Meditation and Meta-awareness. Passion Struck Podcast with John Miles. [\[Online\]](#).

Tibetan Medicine [\[Link\]](#)

Dr. Vago’s Select Research

1. Vago, D. R., & Silbersweig, D. A. (2012). Self-Awareness, Self-Regulation, and Self-Transcendence (S-ART): A Framework for Understanding the Neurobiological Mechanisms of Mindfulness [Review]. *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience*, 6, 1-30. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fnhum.2012.00296>
2. Holzel, B., Lazar, S., Gard, T., Schuman-Olivier, Z., Vago, D., & Ott, U. (2011). How does mindfulness meditation work? Proposing mechanisms of action from a conceptual and neural perspective. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 6(6), 537-559.
3. Gard, T., Noggle, J. J., Park, C. L., Vago, D. R., & Wilson, A. (2014). Potential self-regulatory mechanisms of yoga for psychological health. *Front Hum Neurosci*, 8, 770. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fnhum.2014.00770>
4. Van Dam, N. T., van Vugt, M. K., Vago, D. R., Schmalzl, L., Saron, C. D., Olendzki, A., Meissner, T., Lazar, S. W., Kerr, C. E., Gorchov, J., Fox, K. C. R., Field, B. A., Britton, W. B., Brefczynski-Lewis, J. A., & Meyer, D. E. (2017). Mind the Hype: A Critical Evaluation and Prescriptive Agenda for Research on Mindfulness and Meditation. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 13(1), 36-61. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691617709589>
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12. Vago, D. R. (2022). How meditation changes the brain: A neurophilosophical and pragmatic account. In R. Repetti (Ed.), *Routledge Handbook on the Philosophy of Meditation* (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003127253>