

An Eclectic Program of Meditation and Self-Inquiry

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The discussion of this program is organized around different states of the “self.”

1. The starting point will be with the *identity-self*, which is the state in which one is fully identified with the body/mind. The “I” that thinks that it is the operative component of the body/mind is generally known as the ego or, as I call it in some of my writing, the fictive-self (see Automatic Programs in Part I) or personal narrative (the “me” story). This is where most people undertaking a meditation program for the first time are coming from. Ego is the subject and everything else is perceived as a separate object. This is the dualistic perspective.

a. Initial meditation techniques usually have one sit quietly and erect, breathing deeply and slowly from the diaphragm. Let's just call it “sitting meditation.” If the eyes are open, they will be oriented either toward the floor, a blank wall or possibly a mandala. If the eyes are shut, one may be instructed to imagine having the eyes focused on the area between the eyes, or no attention is given to the eyes at all when closed. Some instructions might suggest focusing on an object, e.g., candle, and some may suggest use of a mantra or chant, e.g., AUM. The technique used is less important than its “goodness of fit” for you.

b. This is the point where many meditators experience what is called “monkey mind.” The goal during this phase of sitting meditation is to simply learn to relax and observe the activity of the mind without getting seduced by it. As one gains some experience, the frenetic activity experienced by most new meditators will slow down. This more subdued stage might be called the “hummingbird mind.” The mind still flits about but not as energetically as in the beginning.

2. After things have settled down, one will recognize something of a perceptual shift developing that establishes a division. This shift is the identity-self morphing into an *observer* and an *ego*.

a. During this phase, one should “side” with the observer and allow some distancing

from the ego to develop. One should be a somewhat disinterested observer of the activities of the ego. The goal is to begin identifying with the observer rather than with the ego and its body/mind.

b. As one establishes identification with the observer rather than the ego, it will become apparent that the observer is not to be found in the story that comprises the ego nor can it be found anywhere in the body. Many aspects of “the fictive-self” will come under observation. Some of these may have been buried and outside of conscious awareness. I have discussed these elsewhere as *automatic programs* or APs (see Automatic Programs in Part I). Some of these APs you may recognize as being the basis for dysfunctional beliefs, emotions and behaviors. This is usually a good time to deconstruct such APs. Often just observing these arise and dissipate will lead to their undoing. However, if you think a more direct approach is needed, I have discussed such methods in Part One. Carl Jung said, “Whatever does not emerge as consciousness returns as Destiny.” That is, you are likely to keep repeating unconscious patterns until they become conscious, are examined and neutralized.

3. Let's now think of the observer as the *mindful-self*. At this time, it is useful to begin what is called “mindful meditation.” Mindful meditation can of course be done as part of sitting meditation, but it is most effective when used to carry meditation into one's daily life. Mindful meditation is simply paying attention, which most of us think is easy enough to do until we consciously begin observing our efforts to do so. Your attention will, by default, slip when it isn't held captive by an engaging task. This is the way your brain is “wired” and is discussed elsewhere (see Brain and Meditation on Brink Page at davidcenter.com) as the *default mode network* or *relaxed attention network* (RAN).

a. The objective here is to have the observer closely monitor what the body/mind is doing as it goes about its daily activities. In short, your meditation is literally on what you're doing moment to moment. What you will observe is that many of the body's routines are run by APs, and the default mode will try to kick in and begin to generate

unrelated mental content whose purpose is to reinforce the fictive-self. If the mindful-self isn't careful, it will get seduced by this content and lose focus on current activity.

b. Losing focus during mindfulness is especially likely when one isn't engaged in doing something. During such times, the best tactic is to become present with anything that is available in the moment. Be present with or mindful of the sound of a breeze blowing through leaves, your dog, a ticking clock, sunlight streaming in through a window, a flower, a ceramic cup, the rise and fall of your abdomen as you breathe or whatever is available. Presence is the focus of Leonard Jacobson's* and Richard Moss's* teachings.

c. When one becomes well established in mindfulness meditation and can maintain focus on what one is doing from moment to moment or simply being present with something manifest in the moment, you are ready for the emergence of the *inquiring-self*. The inquiring-self is named for the activity that establishes it, which is called "self-inquiry." This method is often associated with the teachings of the Indian sage Sri Ramana Maharishi and is discussed under Self-Inquiry in Part Two of Creative Self-Agency on innerego.com.

4. The purpose of self-inquiry is similar to mindfulness except that it is not focused specifically on what one is doing or something that is present but on being aware of being aware from moment to moment or being present in the moment. A psychiatrist, Bessel van der Kolk, identifies the medial prefrontal cortex as the part of the brain responsible for experiencing the present moment. This is located behind the area of the face called the brow. No doubt, this is why Kriya Yoga emphasizes keeping attention gently focused on this area during meditation.

a. The basic idea in self-inquiry is to establish a conscious sense of being a field of awareness. Rupert Spira* teaches a simple and direct method of finding that sense. He suggests that one ask oneself the question, "Am I aware?" To answer the question, one must note that one is aware of being aware. That is where you want to be. Once you are there, you should try to relax into that state of being and remain there. There is an

exercise at the end of this discussion that will help you experience a state of pristine awareness.

b. As the establishment of this state progresses, there will be a perceptual shift. When this happens, you will identify yourself with conscious awareness. You will experience yourself simply as a field of awareness that includes the body/mind. However, you will not identify yourself as being the body/mind.

5. With the shift described above, you have become an *aware-self* or what I have described as having a *natural mind*** . This is a refined state of duality in which you are clear of most, if not all, dysfunctional APs and are free of making or, at least, taking seriously judgments, beliefs, opinions and expectations. It is a state that allows one to hold a dispassionate view of the world and its events. It is not, however, what some call *Enlightenment* or *Self-realization*, which is a non-dual state. Arriving here, you have done about all you can do. The rest depends on *Grace* and what I've referred to as being *Taken*** .

6. According to some teachers, Enlightenment has several progressive states. There appear to be at least three states once the condition referred to as Enlightenment or Self-realization is entered. The first of these is accompanied by experiences of what some call *Void Consciousness*, a state described as Pure Being. It is suggested that many think this is the end state, and thinking this constrains any further progress. This may be followed by experiences of what is called *God (or Christ) Consciousness*, a state described as Divine-Love. Finally, there may be experiences of what is called *Unity Consciousness*, a state described as Love-Bliss.

a. This third state is one in which it is said that one comes to the full recognition that one is an integral aspect of an indivisible whole. There is a direct understanding that this whole is *Source Consciousness* – the ground of all being and unconditional love.

* See Links page at <http://innerego.com>

**See Brink page at <http://davidcenter.com>