Practices, Witnessing, and Internal Dialogue

Summary of Practices

1. Practice self-observation in daily life

- Watch the mind's functioning through actions and speech, beginning with observation of gestures and body language.
- Observe the thinking process within, including the interaction of the four functions of mind, the ten senses, emotions, desires or expectations, and the four primitive fountains.

2. Dialogue with your mind as a friend

- Use internal dialogue for contemplation, self-counseling, and friendship.
- Dialogue before meditation—if you don't want to meditate, then dialogue.

3. Meditate in silence

Preparation

- Prepare the body physically—bathe or wash your face, hands, and feet.
- You will feel most comfortable if you empty the bowels and bladder.
- Have a regular time and place, and a good environment for meditation.

Stretches

- Simple stretches
- Joints and glands exercises
- Hatha postures (A comprehensive daily routine is in *Choosing a Path*, pp. 131-132)

Relaxation (*Meditation and Its Practice, Path of Fire and Light, Vol. II*)

- Tension/release relaxation
- Complete relaxation in corpse posture
- 61-points

Breathing (*Meditation and Its Practice, Path of Fire and Light, Vols. I & II, Science of Breath*)

- Breath awareness—removal of irregularities
- Diaphragmatic breathing, even breathing
- Two-to-one breathing
- Complete breath
- Kapalabhati
- Bhastrika
- Nadi Shodhana

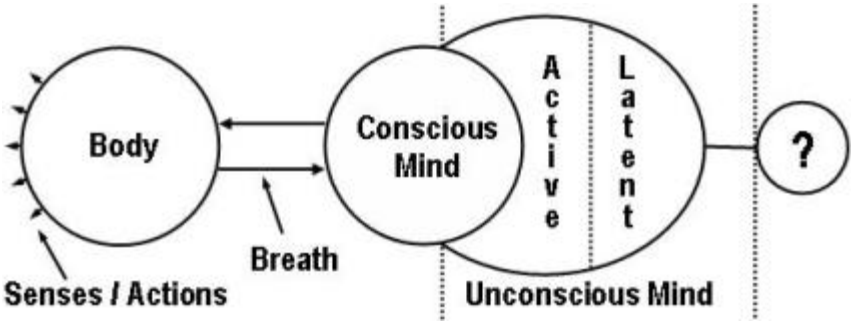
Meditation

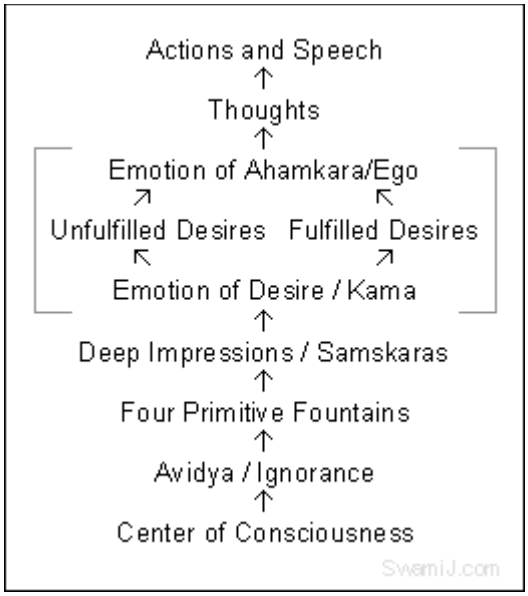
- Breath along the spine
- Sushumna awakening—bridge of the nostrils
- Listen to mantra or *So Hum* mantra
- Space between breasts or eyebrows
- Go to the silence

4. Complementary daily practices

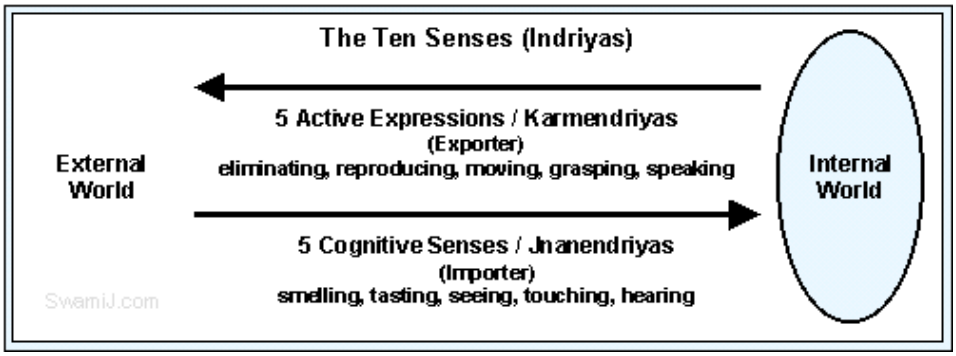
- Agnisara (*Path of Fire and Light, Vol. II*, Chapter 11)
- Yoga nidra (*Path of Fire and Light, Vol. II*, Chapter 11)
- Memory exercise (*The Art of Joyful Living*, Chapter 7)

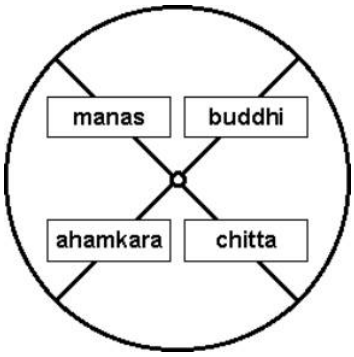
Visuals

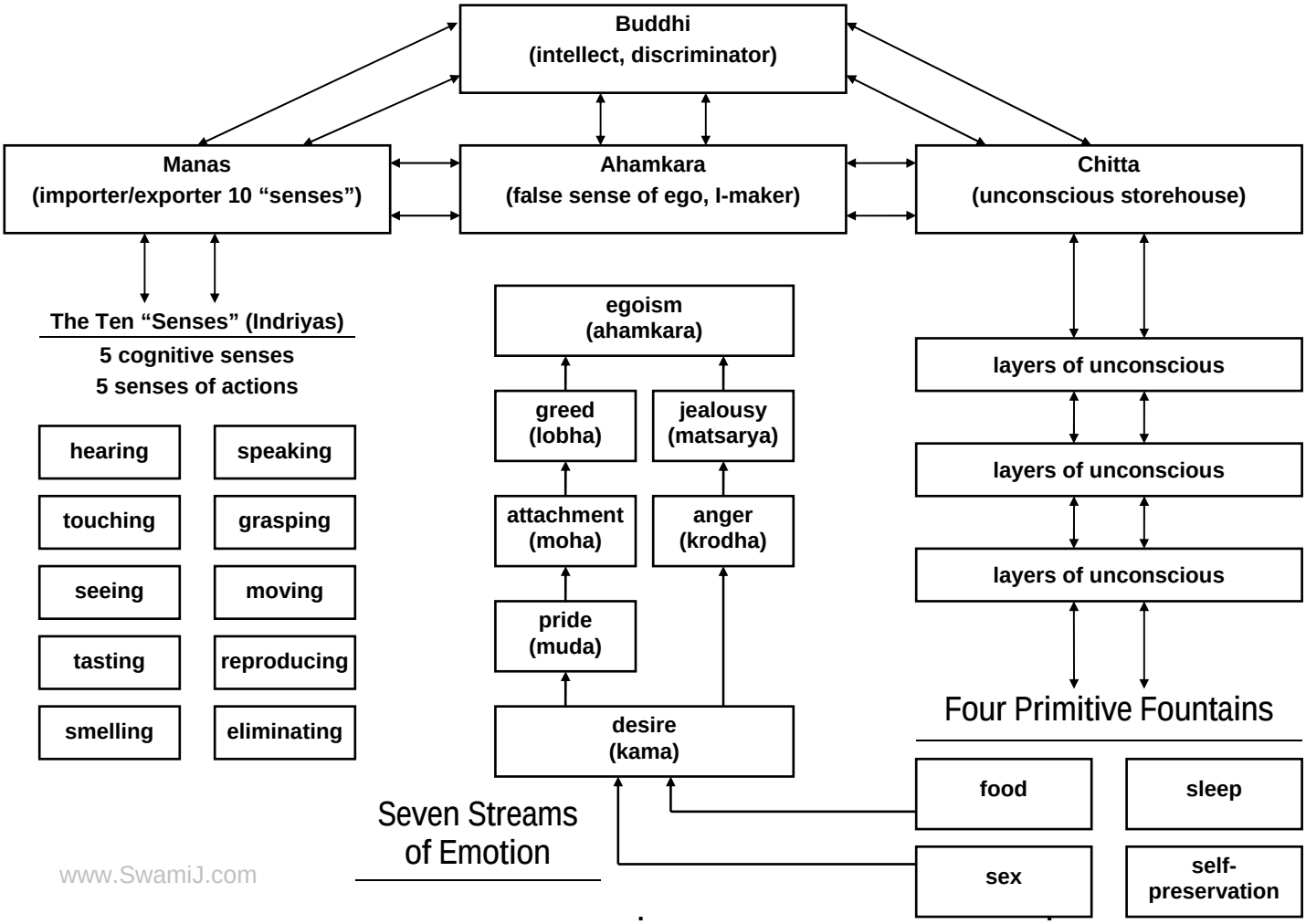




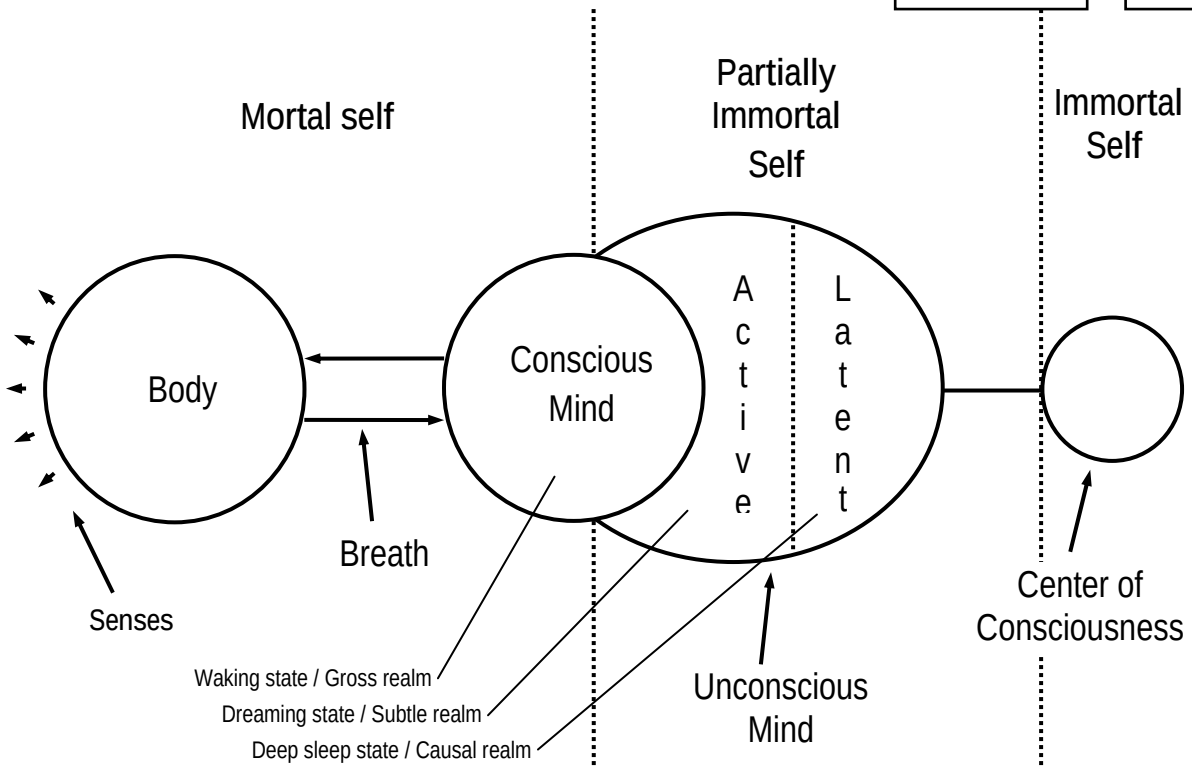
OM / AUM and the Seven Levels of Consciousness
1. Waking / Conscious / Vaishvaanara / Gross / "A" of AUM
2. Transition / Unmani
3. Dreaming / Unconscious / Taijasa / Subtle / "U" of AUM
4. Transition / Aladani
5. Deep Sleep / Subconscious / Prajna / Causal / "M" of AUM
6. Samadhi
7. Turiya / Consciousness / Absolute / Silence after AUM







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Observing yourself

"Meditation" means to "attend." It means attention to the whole of life. It should not be a strenuous act; it should not be forced. Your whole life can be one of meditation. Instead of making dramatic resolutions, simply make yourself open to observing yourself and decide to experiment in observing yourself. Once purity of mind is attained, then one is fully prepared for the inner voyage. To achieve this state of purity of mind, one should cultivate constant awareness by being mindful all the time. To purify the buddhi, the faculty of discrimination, is the most important task.

Attention is the key point that leads you to concentration, then to meditation, and then to samadhi. Mindfulness means paying attention. You have to pay attention to the thing you are doing, and you have to learn to train your mind. This is a very preliminary step and you have to learn that first.

In doing practices of mindfulness, internal dialogue, and meditation, including introspection and witnessing, it is extremely useful to have a road-map. Otherwise, the mind can just toss and turn in a confused sort of "dialogue" while one is struggling to be "mindful."

The concepts listed below are important working tools for your practice—they are not just background information. As you come to understand these concepts, you will enjoy knowing and using them, as you also come to know and be friends with your own mind.

You may want to photocopy this sheet and keep it with you in a pocket until you have learned the concepts. Use the principles often each day to observe your thoughts, words, and actions, as well as your gestures and body language. After you have learned them, mentally scan all of the items from time to time during the day as a means of cultivating mindfulness.

Choose one of the 40 items, and for a day (or a week) observe it in all aspects in the external and internal world. Notice how actions, speech, and thoughts are related, and how that one item also affects the others. Pay particular attention to how the four functions of mind are affected. Check off that item, and on the following day (or week), select another item from a different group and then observe that one item.

Yamas & niyamas

Yamas:

- Non-violence (ahimsa)
- Truthfulness (satya)
- Non-stealing (asteya)
- Continence (brahmacharya)
- Non-materialism (aparigraha)

Niyamas:

- Purity (saucha)
- Contentment (santosha)
- Training senses (tapas)
- Study (svadhyaya)
- Surrender (ishvara pranidhana)

Five elements

- Earth/solidity/form (prithivi)
- Water/flow/fluidity (apas)
- Fire/energy/power (agni, tejas)
- Air/lightness/airiness (vayu)
- Space/ether/existence/beingness (akasha)

Ten Senses

Five Cognitive:

- Hearing
- Touching
- Seeing
- Tasting
- Smelling

Five Active:

- Speaking
- Grasping
- Moving
- Reproducing
- Eliminating

Four functions of mind

- Manas
- Chitta
- Ahamkara
- Buddhi

Streams of emotion

The prime emotion:

- Desire/expectation (kama)

If desire is fulfilled:

- Pride (muda)
- Attachment (moha)
- Greed (lobha)

If desire is not fulfilled:

- Anger (krodha)
- Jealousy (matsarya)

If desire is or is not fulfilled:

- Egoism (ahamkara)

Four primitive fountains

- Food
- Sleep
- Sex
- Self-preservation

Daily Goals

In *The Art of Joyful Living* (pp. 128-129), Swami Rama suggests that one develop thirty goals for thirty days, and pick one for each day. These should be small points, but things you work on steadily. For example, you may decide that today you are not going to lie. That does not mean that you will redouble your lies tomorrow, but rather, that today your whole thinking process is about this: that you are not going to lie. You never claim that you will be able to speak the total Truth, but simply decide that you are not going to consciously lie.

If you adopt thirty points to work on for thirty days, you can just watch what you have accomplished in thirty days' time. The point is not, for instance, whether you have lied or not lied: it is that you have built your willpower. This is the real process of building willpower. After thirty days you will conclude, "Yes, I have done what I wanted to do." But do not choose big principles that you cannot fulfill—that is destructive. Instead, select little things.

Later, you may want to do this experiment of "thirty goals for thirty days" using a separate list of goals which you make up yourself, but for now, you will find the following to be a useful practice. You might want to write a few words or sentences each day about what you have observed. Start by using the number on the list which matches today's date. Check-off the goal at the end of the day.

1. Lovingly serve others today.
2. Observe *one* of the yamas (non-violence, truthfulness, non-stealing, continence or Brahmacharya, non-materialism), directing your actions and speech, while observing your thoughts.
3. Allow your actions to come from conscious choice rather than as a result of habit.
4. Observe *one* of the niyamas (purity, contentment, training senses, self-study, surrender)
5. Observe all of your actions and ask yourself, "why am I doing this action?"
6. Observe *one* of the five elements (earth, water, fire, air, space), externally and internally.
7. Witness everything, external and internal.
8. Observe *one* of the five cognitive senses (hearing, touching, seeing, tasting, smelling).
9. Be aware of your breath today, noticing its qualities and how it relates to thoughts and emotions.
10. Observe *one* of the five active senses (speaking, grasping, moving, reproducing, eliminating).
11. Notice how fears can control you, and how fears are related to imagination.
12. Observe *one* of the four functions of mind (manas, chitta, ahamkara, buddhi).
13. Speak very little today—only what is accurate, purposeful, and non-hurting.
14. Observe your reactions when a desire, expectation, want, or need *is* or is *not* fulfilled.
15. Observe your gestures and body language, noticing how they reflect thoughts and emotions.
16. Observe *one* of the yamas (non-violence, truthfulness, non-stealing, continence or Brahmacharya, non-materialism), directing your actions and speech, while observing your thoughts.
17. Practice one-pointedness, paying attention to whatever you are doing today.
18. Observe *one* of the niyamas (purity, contentment, training senses, self-study, surrender)
19. Resolve that today "I will love everyone and not hate anyone today."
20. Observe *one* of the five elements (earth, water, fire, air, space), externally and internally.
21. Observe whether your "first thoughts" or "second thoughts" are good or bad, clear or clouded.
22. Observe *one* of the five cognitive senses (hearing, touching, seeing, tasting, smelling).
23. Be aware of the principle of meditation in action.
24. Observe *one* of the five active senses (speaking, grasping, moving, reproducing, eliminating).
25. Be aware of how you adjust to changing circumstances around you.
26. Observe *one* of the four functions of mind (manas, chitta, ahamkara, buddhi).
27. Observe how you relate to other people.
28. Observe your reactions when a desire, expectation, want, or need *is* or is *not* fulfilled.
29. Notice which thoughts coming into your mind are "useful" or "not useful."
30. Choose one of the primitive fountains (food, sleep, sex, self-preservation) and observe how it affects your other desires, emotions, thoughts, speech, and actions.
31. Witness everything, external and internal (in months which have 31 days).

Daily Internal Dialogues

Internal dialogue step is a very important step, but is one that few students understand. To succeed in meditation you have to develop this important step. You do not begin with meditation itself. First you learn to set a regular meditation time, and then to have a dialogue with yourself. In this process you are coming in contact with your inner, internal states. You are learning about the subtle aspects of your mind, your own conscience, and at the same time you are also training yourself.

As you develop the practice of internal dialogue, you will dialogue about many subjects. You will not just have a single dialogue on a single topic—internal dialogue will become a normal way of relating to your own mind. However, to help you get started in this practice, you may find it useful to have a specific topic with which to start the dialogue. Start by using the number on the list which matches today's date. Remember, you are having a "dialogue" with your mind, a two-way communication, not just a "monologue," merely talking in the presence of your mind—rather, the conscious, waking state "you" is having a "conversation" with your vast unconscious. Use the suggestions below to start the dialogue and then allow the "conversation" to expand naturally. Check-off the dialogue practice at the end of the day.

The subject of internal dialogue is well described in *Path of Fire and Light, Vol. II*, pp. 102-110.

1. Dialogue with yourself about mistakes you have made. Don't condemn yourself or be judgmental.
2. When sitting for meditation, *ask* your mind to go to, and to heal aching parts. When you attempt sushumna application, *ask* your mind to focus on the nose bridge.
3. *Ask* yourself, "what do I want?" Raise questions about the purpose of life.
4. Explain to your mind that it is too worldly and materialistic.
5. Train the senses by using dialogue; actually dialogue with the individual ten senses.
6. *Ask* yourself if you want to meditate, to explore, to know yourself, and to choose your habits.
7. *Ask* how you think, why you are emotional, and what the problems are with your mind.
8. Establish a relationship, a friendship with your mind; learn to love by being gentle with yourself.
9. *Ask* yourself, "what do I want?" This may relate to small things or to the purpose of life.
10. Tell the mind that it has become dissipated, and should tread the path of light, love, and devotion.
11. Self-counsel about negative emotions. When upset, *ask*, "why am I thinking like this?"
12. *Ask* your mind to open a blocked nostril for you. *Ask* your mind to flow with the breath.
13. Consider some problem and *ask* your mind "what are some solutions? what should I do?".
14. Dialogue with that whatever is being observed, including mental objects and thoughts.
15. *Ask* yourself, "what do I want?" Remind yourself of your real identity.
16. *Ask* yourself why you are doing certain actions. How do the actions reflect thoughts and emotions?
17. Say to your mind, "please be my friend." How does your mind respond?
18. *Ask* your mind what you have to do. *Ask* why you sometimes do not do what you want to do.
19. When distracting thoughts come, remind yourself of your purpose; tell yourself that this thought or desire is distracting and will lead you to a fantasy.
20. *Ask* "does my ego get in my way or not?" Spend a few minutes simply being honest with yourself.
21. *Ask* yourself, "what do I want?" This may relate to small things or to the purpose of life.
22. *Ask* why you become emotionally disorganized, forget things, and do not attend to things properly.
23. When sitting for meditation, say to your mind, "mind, please go beyond the senses."
24. While doing breathing practices *ask* your mind to "please flow with the breath."
25. Make a contract with the mind to let the mind whisper those inner secrets to you, and put all things in front of your mind. Discuss this "contract" with your mind.
26. *Ask* the mind why it disturbs you in meditation. How can meditation be improved?
27. *Ask* yourself, "what do I want?" You will learn many things when you dialogue.
28. Consider some choices you face in life and *ask* buddhi, "should I do it or not?"
29. *Ask* "is my first thought good or bad—is it clear or clouded?" Your second or third thoughts?
30. *Ask* your mind what your fears are and what to do with them.
31. Say to your mind "please be my friend." (in months with have 31 days)