

Spirituality and TCM: Deep Meditation and Enlightenment

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Course Overview

- **What is Enlightenment?**
- **A review of the world's great spiritual traditions**
- **Advaita Vedanta**
- **Buddhism**
- **Classical Taoism**
- **Meditative Christianity**
- **Techniques of meditation**
- **How to meditate**
- **Questions & Answers**

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What is Enlightenment?

Enlightenment or self-realization is the overwhelming, clear, dramatic, and irreversible realization that there is nothing to get enlightened about and there is no one who gets enlightened. In fact, you already are what you are looking for.

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**You are the eternal self, or Tao,
and not the thoughts, feelings,
or body sensations that you have
always taken yourself to be.**

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**The feeling of individuality is just a
thought, called the 'I thought'
and you have mistakenly made
this thought the entire center of your
sense of being.**

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**Enlightenment is the dissolution of the
'I thought', or ego, and the complete
absorption into what you have always
been: overwhelming inner peace and
silence, devoid of any fear, needs, or
concerns. A state of complete,
unshakeable inner peace, joy, and
love - One with the Tao.**

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How do we get there?

It is necessary to have a clear intellectual understanding of what we are and what the goal is.

It is necessary to have a keen insight into what makes up our subjective apparatus and where the mistake is in our concept of self.

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Who am I?

First of all we have to understand the answer to the question:

Who am I?

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If we analyze ourselves objectively, we will see that we have two aspects to ourselves. The first is awareness and the second are objects of awareness.

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What are objects of Awareness?

**From subtle to gross they are feelings,
thoughts, and sensory data.**

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What is Awareness?

**It is that which notices feelings,
thoughts and sensory data?**

**Can Awareness be known as an
object of perception?**

Emphatically: NO!

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What can be known about Awareness?

- Was it born?
- Is it individual or universal?
- Is each persons Awareness different from others or is it the same Awareness for everyone?

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Who am I?
The Awareness or the objects of Awareness?

Obviously our innermost self is Awareness and this awareness cannot be observed. It is the innermost core of our being and it is unknowable. It cannot be objectified.

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If I am the Awareness and this Awareness can never be known as an object of experience, then how can we know who we are?

The answer is obvious: We cannot.

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The deepest subjective sense of self cannot know itself as an object of experience. It cannot be examined as an object. The knower knows his or herself because they already are the knower. This is why the search for Enlightenment is such an odd statement.

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The thing within us that is searching for happiness is the 'I thought' and what it is looking for, we already are.

It gets worse: it is impossible for the 'I thought' to get enlightened, since it is this 'I feeling' which is the actual cause of all the suffering. For enlightenment the feeling of the small 'I' has to dissolve.

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Enlightenment cannot be defined by terms involving perception. Most teachers of self realization or enlightenment would have you believe it is something to be acquired. The question that arises is who acquired the enlightenment?

Something that is acquired can most definitely be lost. For enlightenment to be permanent it cannot be based on a sensory experience or some point of view. It has to be irreversible.

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What is Enlightenment?

- The complete loss of all sense of all "doership"
 - It is the sense of doing or volition which is the cause of suffering
 - Enlightenment is actually the annihilation of the "one" who "wants" enlightenment

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The “One” who so desperately wants enlightenment has been annihilated, so no “One” can achieve enlightenment, and no “One” can enjoy enlightenment.

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With this in mind, the most potent form of practice is to question the belief in one’s sense of “doership”.

One has to see clearly that free will is an illusion.

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- We do not have control over our thoughts
 - We do not have control over our actions
 - We do not have control over the outcome or effect of our actions
 - Therefore, we have no control over anything

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The so-called “doer” or “decider” within us is just a thought that is actually being produced by the body’s physiology milliseconds before we actually experience the thought.

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We are not thinking our thoughts. There is no entity or self thinking our thoughts. They are being generated spontaneously by the body/brain.

The content and the quality of the thoughts are determined by the conditioning of the body and the overall functioning of the physiology.

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Certain bodies are conditioned to think certain kinds of thoughts and other bodies are conditioned to think other kinds of thoughts.

Buddha said: Everything is just happening, deeds are being done, but no “individual” is doing them.

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Most religious people would affirm that God knows everything and God knows the future.

Everything happens according to the will of God.

If this is true, then free will is obviously an illusion.

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No matter what spiritual technique or practice one has, it is important to understand that everything is just happening and there is, "in fact", no one doing anything.

Yes, body/minds are doing all kinds of things, but there is no individual self willing the action.

This is the meaning of the religious statement "Let thy will be done", since in fact, that is all that is happening at all times, everywhere.

Unfortunately, the phrase "Let thy will be done" gives the impression that there is "someone" letting God's will be done. The truth is there is only God's will. No "one" can "let" God's will be done.

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Enlightenment is the complete shedding of the doer concept.
The thinking mind becomes quiet and only the working mind remains.

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- There are 2 minds:
 - Thinking mind
 - Working mind

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The thinking mind asks questions, provides answers, asks further questions of the answers and goes on and on.

That is the Monkey Mind, or the Thinking Mind.

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The thinking mind is always guilty about the past, worried about the future, and constantly spreading stress in the environment.

The thinking mind is the sense of individual doership always concerned with what is going to happen to "me".

The thinking mind generates the "ego" concept through a thought called the "I thought".

The "I thought" has given us the impression and belief that we are a doer of events, a willful agent inside the head causing things to happen. That "I thought" is the ringleader of the thinking mind.

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The ego is just a collection of thoughts,
held in the brain in the form of memory.
It gives the illusion of making decisions,
fretting over outcomes, and causing fear
of events both real, and imaginary.

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The working mind is quite different.
This is the mind that is used to live our lives.
The working mind is only focused on doing
what needs to be done at the moment,
in the circumstances at hand.

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The working mind is not even
concerned whether the work being
done is necessary or not, nor is it
concerned with consequences.
It is not concerned with the “who” that is
doing the work.

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Enlightenment is the complete vanishing of the thinking mind and the keeping of the working mind.

Why is the working mind not concerned with the future? Because the "one" who is concerned with the future is the thinking mind, or the ego.

With the working mind there is no individual doer, or ego, doing the work.

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This is why the Enlightened go about their work like anyone else, but what is happening inside them is quite different.

There is literally no individual sense of doership left. It has vanished.

There is an indescribable peace associated with this event.

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However, this peace is not owned by an individual or held on to by an individual.

It is the net result of a complete loss of sense of doership.

The eternal moment is left without a manipulator, a worrier, a controller, a sinner, or a saint. There is no guilt, no fear, no pride and no hatred.

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The working mind takes care of life.
The source is functioning through the
body/mind, just as it was before.
However, now there is no ego to usurp the
power of the almighty source.

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Are there people who, for lack of a better
word, are at this level of evolving?
Yes. In my life I have met several.

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A review of the world's great spiritual traditions

This seminar will investigate this
concept of self-realization or
enlightenment and try and trace its
truthfulness through the various
world spiritual traditions.

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Advaita Vedanta

- Advaita Vedanta is the most widely studied system of Indian Philosophy in the world today.
- It has a founder; his name is Adi Shankara and he lived around the 8th century A.D.

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Adi Shankara

- According to Adi Shankara, God, the Supreme Cosmic Spirit or *Brahman* is the One, the whole and the only reality.
- Other than *Brahman*, everything else, including the universe, material objects and individuals, are false.
- *Brahman* is at best described as that infinite, omnipresent, omnipotent, incorporeal, impersonal, transcendent reality that is the divine ground of all Being.

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- *Brahman* is beyond the senses.
- *Brahman* is said to be the purest knowledge itself, and is illuminant like a source of infinite light

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- Due to ignorance (*avidyā*), the *Brahman* is visible as the material world and its objects.
- The actual *Brahman* has no attributes and is formless.

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- It is the Self-existent, the Absolute and the Imperishable.
- *Brahman* is actually indescribable. It is at best *Satchidananda* (merging "Sat" + "Chit" + "Ananda", i.e., Infinite Truth, Infinite Consciousness and Infinite Bliss).

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- Also, *Brahman* is free from any kind of differences or differentiation.
- It does not have any differentiation because there is no second *Brahman*.

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- Therefore, nobody or nothing exists other than *Brahman*.
- The material world is said to be neither real or unreal. It is like seeing the image of a pen in a mirror. The image is there but it is not there.
- The entire physical universe, including all sentient beings, are nothing other than *Brahman*.

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There are said to be 4 statements
of ultimate truth.

These come from the 4 Vedas
of Indian scriptures.

1. I am that	Yajur Veda
2. Thou art that	Sama Veda
3. This self is <i>Brahman</i>	Atharva Veda
4. Consciousness is <i>Brahman</i>	Rig Veda

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According to Advaita Vedanta, enlightenment
is the realization that ourselves and the
entire universe are nothing other than
Consciousness.

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- Advaitins believe that suffering is due to Maya, and only knowledge (called *Jnana*) of *Brahman* can destroy Maya.
- When Maya is removed, there exists ultimately no difference between the Jiva-Atman (the sense of individuality) and the *Brahman*.
- Such a state of bliss when achieved while living is called *Jivanmukta*.

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Sri Ramana Maharshi

- The most famous Advaitic saint of the 20th century was Sri Ramana Maharshi.
- He died in 1950 in the small village of Tiruvannamalai in Madras.
- He spent most of his life in silence. He attracted the attention of many famous people both in India, Europe, and America.

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Sri Ramana Maharshi

His teaching was simple.

“Know yourself and all suffering will subside. The world exists through thought. Know the source of thought and all thought will subside revealing the ultimate truth. You are *Brahman*. In fact *Brahman* alone is and your belief that you are an individual is a complete illusion and the source of your suffering.”

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Sri Ramana Maharshi

- Ramana inspired many people on the spiritual path, including the British author Paul Brunton, U.G. Krishnamurti, and the famous Indian Yogi, Yogananda.
- There are many books and films about this saint. In his presence many were transformed and some of them became saints themselves. One of them is Lakshmana Swami who now lives in the area around Tiruvannamalai.

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Lakshmana Swami

Lakshmana's teaching is similar to Ramanas.

He states:

"The Self (*Brahman*) is ever-present; there is no question of realizing it. You can neither reach it nor attain it because you are the Self even now. It is said that the mind prevents one from being aware of the Self, but the mind is non-existent. The Self alone exists, and one who knows this knows that there is no birth, no death, no mind, no time and no question of enlightenment. This is the final truth."

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- Notice there is no mention here of psychic abilities, super-normal powers, or spiritual healings.
- Trying to achieve such abilities is considered by the Advaitic teachings to be a mistake in the spiritual quest.
- The entire teaching is based on finding the answer to three fundamental questions:
 1. What is suffering?
 2. Who is suffering?
 3. Who am I?

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Buddhism, specifically Zen Buddhism

Zen Buddhism, pronounced *chán* in Chinese or *zen* in Japanese (derived from the Sanskrit term *dhyāna*, meaning "meditation") is a form of Buddhism that became popular in China, Korea and Japan and that lays special emphasis on meditation.

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Buddhism, specifically Zen Buddhism

Zen places less emphasis on scriptures than some other forms of Buddhism and prefers to focus on direct spiritual breakthroughs to truth.

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Buddhism, specifically Zen Buddhism

Zen Buddhism is divided into two main schools: Rinzai and Sōtō, the former favors using a koan in meditation (a meditative riddle or puzzle) as a device for spiritual break-through, and the latter focuses more on just sitting.

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Buddhism, specifically Zen Buddhism

According to Zen master, Kosho Uchiyama, when thoughts and fixation on the little 'I' are transcended, an Awakening to a universal, non-dual Self occurs:

' When we let go of thoughts and wake up to the reality of life that is working beyond them, we discover the Self that is living universal non-dual life (before the separation into two) that pervades all living creatures and all existence.'

Thinking and thought must therefore not be allowed to confine and bind one.

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Buddhism, specifically Zen Buddhism

In Buddhism, the purpose of life is to realize the non-dual reality of life and to discover our true self as that non-dual reality.

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Taoism

Taoism cannot be separated from its source, which are the writings of Lao Tzu, the great master. Lao Tzu's life is dated somewhere around the 6th century B.C. He is purported to have written the Tao Te Ching, which translates as "The Classic/Canon of the Way/Path and the Power/Virtue."

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Taoism

The Tao Te Ching describes the state of enlightenment and the behavior of someone living that state. Every translation I have read are from academics who seem to have no inner feeling or experience of what Lao Tzu is talking about.

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Taoism

Consequently, there are many varied translations, all struggling to analyze what is being said in psychological terms. Approaching the Tao Te Ching in this manner will reveal very little.

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Taoism

The Tao Te Ching is full of descriptions of the behavior of the enlightened.

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Here is a quote from chapter 33:

Knowing others is wisdom;
Knowing the self is enlightenment.
Mastering others requires force;
Mastering the self requires strength;
He who knows he has enough is rich.
Perseverance is a sign of will power.
He who stays where he is endures.

To die but not to perish is to be eternally present.

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From chapter 17:

So a wise leader may say:
I practice inaction, and the people look after themselves.
But from the Sage it is so hard at any price to get a single word
That when his task is accomplished, his work done,
Throughout the country every one says:
"It happened of its own accord".

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From chapter 63:

Act without acting
Serve without serving
Taste without tasting
The Sage desires no desires
Prizes no Prizes
Studies no Studies
And returns
To what others pass by.
The Sage
Helps all beings find their nature,
But does not presume to act.

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From Chapter 70:

My words are very easy to understand,
Very easy to practice.
No one under heaven can understand them,
No one can practice them.
Few understand me,
And that is my value
Therefore the Sage wears rough clothing
And carries jade inside.

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From Chapter 57:

I do nothing
And people transform themselves.
I enjoy serenity
And people govern themselves.
I cultivate emptiness
And people become prosperous.
I have no desires
And people simplify themselves.

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Meditative Christianity

There is a tradition in Christianity, which I refer to as meditative Christianity. It is exemplified by the writings of the Desert Fathers in the Philokalia. The Philokalia was compiled from writings of meditative monks between the 4th and 15th centuries. These Christian monks wrote down their meditative experiences using a meditation or prayer method known as the 'Jesus Prayer'.

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Meditative Christianity

The Philokalia is considered by many to be the most influential spiritual text other than the Bible in current Eastern Orthodox Christianity.

Philokalia means love of the beautiful and it is replete with wonderful descriptions of what we could call the enlightenment experience.

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Meditative Christianity

According to the desert fathers, the purpose of life is to live in union with God. The way to do this is by praying continuously.

The prayer that most of them used was the Jesus Prayer, which I will explain to you later in the seminar.

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Meditative Christianity

The Jesus Prayer was also the subject of a 19th century manuscript written by an anonymous Russian monk.

It is the story of a simple poor man who was given a copy of the Philokalia and began to practice the Jesus Prayer continuously.

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Meditative Christianity

The book is called the Way of the Pilgrim. I would recommend reading it. It will inspire you to practice what I am going to teach later on today.

The Way of the Pilgrim is a beautiful spiritual primer on the power of meditation and prayer.

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Meditative Christianity

The descriptions of ecstasy and utter peace through constant meditation and prayer in the Philokalia and the Way of the Pilgrim will be very inspiring for the devout Christians in this audience.

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Meditative Christianity

The Greek Orthodox religion believes deeply in the possibility in living in union with God and provides techniques to achieve that goal.

The Philokalia makes it very clear that thoughts are the enemy and union with God is a thought free state.

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Meditative Christianity

I want to make all of you aware also of a wonderful place called Mount Athos.

Mount Athos is a peninsula in Macedonia and is the home of twenty monasteries. It is called the Holy Mountain by the Greeks and is the home of approximately 2000 monks.

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Meditative Christianity

What is unique about Mount Athos is that it has been functioning as a spiritual center since the 3rd century. There are only monks on Athos and they are all engaged in continuous prayer. 60 minutes was allowed to film there last year and you can watch the one-hour special in 2 parts on the internet.

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Meditative Christianity

I have spent a lot of time in silence and in silent meditation. I can assure you that all the so-called disagreements between various religions or philosophies become mute in the meditative state. I have meditated at length with Christian monks, Buddhist, Hindu, and Taoist monks and from the state of silence there is no disagreement about what is buried behind all of those thoughts.

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Meditative Christianity

The state of inner peace is the same across all traditions and the arguing is occurring from the mouths of those who, for whatever reason, are not familiar with the divine inner Self.

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Techniques of Meditation

Meditation techniques can be divided into 3 major categories:

1. Contemplation
2. Concentration
3. Deep meditation

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Contemplation

Contemplation is basically thinking about something on the level of its meaning.

Guided meditation falls into this category.

Thinking a nice thought or concept and then trying to have greater insight into that concept through contemplating about it.

This type of meditation utilizes more of the surface of the mind or thinking process.

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Concentration

Concentration is taking the conscious mind and then focusing on something with effort.

The object of concentration can be a visual object, a sound, a thought or a feeling.

The purpose of this type of meditation is to not let go of the object of concentration.

This type of meditation also keeps one on the surface of the mind and does not lower the metabolic rate.

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Deep Meditation

Deep meditation are methods which are neither concentrative nor contemplative.

The conscious awareness is allowed to be with an object of meditation but without trying to hold on to it as the concentrative techniques do.

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Deep Meditation

Transcendental Meditation falls into this category, advaitic methods are in this category, and the Jesus Prayer falls into this category.

The object of meditation is allowed to become quieter and quieter in the awareness until it disappears.

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Deep Meditation

On discovering that the object of meditation is no longer there, the meditator then gently begins to think the object again.

This almost effortless method allows the thinking mind to slow way down.

It allows the breathing to slow down and the meditator can easily slip into a more expanded state of awareness, which simply means thoughts are less and the background of awareness is more.

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Deep Meditation

In this method the Awareness is not expanded, it is simply coming out of the shadows to assume its rightful place.

Thoughts move to the background and Awareness moves to the foreground. This is the exact opposite of how most of us experience our lives.

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How to Meditate

I am going to spend the rest of the seminar explaining how to meditate and then I will answer questions.

The most effective methods of meditation fall into the deep meditation category. The purpose of meditation is to slow down the thinking process, calm the body, and dramatically loosen the grip of the 'I thought' or 'I feeling' from running our lives and usurping our true identity.

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How To Meditate

Having spent 45 years in long meditations, I have come to the realization that setting aside an hour or two a day to meditate is not enough.

Our lives are so busy that we must find a way to basically meditate all of the time, especially in activity.

The best way is through continuous meditation, which I am going to teach.

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How To Meditate

If one spends time watching thoughts, at some point it becomes obvious that almost all thought is a complete waste of time.

All the brain does is regurgitate old impressions. It conjures up imaginary and unrealized fears about the past and future. It constantly entertains senseless musings about unimportant issues and a whole host of opinions, which are usually wrong.

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How To Meditate

Once you have this realization then it becomes easy to see the value of meditating all the time.

Why waste time in useless musings when you can do something truly helpful for yourself, your patients, and your surroundings?

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How To Meditate

If one is very clear and watches their thoughts and feelings they will see that most thoughts are really a composition of two thoughts.

The first is the thought itself and the second is the subliminal feeling (thought) of 'I'. That is 'I' am thinking this thought or 'I' am having this feeling.

Even if one is deep in meditation with a mantra there will be the sense that you are thinking the mantra.

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How To Meditate

This is the underlying problem with Transcendental Meditation. The deeper the meditator goes there is still the feeling that they are meditating. Even in moments of no thought at all the meditator comes out of these serene states convinced that the 'you' or the 'I feeling' had just experienced something wonderful.

In other words no emphasis is made to break the attachment to the 'I feeling'.

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How To Meditate

In fact, in the Transcendental Meditation movement, enlightenment is defined as the 'I thought' being elevated to the state of enlightenment. In other words, Little You will become Big You if you just keep meditating.

You will become the center of the universe.

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How To Meditate

Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's entire teaching is egocentric because it is based on experiences.

For that matter so is Muktananda's and Yogananda's.

This is why yoga philosophy and yoga meditations are constantly trying to improve the individual and elevate the individual to the status of saint or guru.

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How To Meditate

Unfortunately it doesn't work.

So-called siddhis or supernormal abilities can be developed but not the final egoless goal of Zen, Taoism or Advaita Vedanta.

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How To Meditate

Sri Ramana Maharshi recommends a meditation which falls into the deep meditation category, but solves the 'I am meditating' problem.

This is the method I have been practicing for years and feel competent to teach it.

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The Technique

I want everyone to just sit in their chairs comfortably. Once comfortable then just close your eyes.

I will guide you on what you need to do next. Twenty minutes will be set aside to practice the meditation and then we will clear up any questions you might have.

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How to practice during activity:

The method you were just taught with your eyes closed can now be practiced with your eyes open.

You will start out by thinking the 'I' sound, but it will very quickly become a feeling. Just as you would in sitting meditation, gently dwell on that sound or feeling while you are going about your daily activity. When you realize that you are no longer doing it then gently begin to do it again.

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Just a little of this method will give you a great sense of peace.

That peace is Awareness itself and is what you really are fundamentally.

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By practicing continually during the day,
the stubborn 'I thought' becomes
detached from other thoughts, or more
specifically loses its grip.
The egoic state that we normally dwell
in is weakened.
One feels more open, more loving, more
relaxed, and definitely healthier.

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What you will find is that you will have a much
more profound effect on your patients.

They will respond to you better. They will feel
happy in your presence and will trust you more.
Your relationship with others will improve and
your whole outlook on life will change. The key is
to do it continuously from morning to evening.

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You can do it when you are listening
to someone or when you are watching
anything. You will find you can do it
even when you are talking or doing
something yourself.

Eventually the meditation goes on
continuously on its own. If this happens
your life will never be the same!

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This might sound excessive, but in actual fact thinking mostly useless thoughts all day long is what is really pathological.

The Desert Fathers say that the devil exists and it is our thoughts. Thoughts are the enemy and they can be subdued by gently detaching the 'I feeling' from them.

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Is Enlightenment Possible?

Yes, it is.
However, it is rare!

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The consolation is a little of this practice brings great relief from the ravages of life.
Let's use our remaining years doing something really productive with our minds.
Let's practice silence continuously, even in activity.

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Questions & Answers

At this time, I welcome any questions that you may have.

Thank you!

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- More information on the classic formulas can be found in the ***Chinese Herbal Formulas and Applications***
- Collection formulas can be found in the Lotus ***Clinical Manual of Oriental Medicine***
- All the above texts are available through www.elotus.org

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