

Monitoring the Action of Your Attention

In our webinar today, we will discuss how you can gain greater control over your attention and enhance your meditation.

We will also discuss the movement of attention and how it “locks in” on the object of meditation. This process of “locking in” or fixation is a key process of moving from one stratum of the mind to another.

Attentional Processing

When you notice the action of your attention from moment to moment, you may find it is engaged with different objects.

- (1) Wandering from one sensory stimulus to another
- (2) Wandering from memory to memory (reverie)
- (3) Wandering from thought to thought, based on association (free association or stream of consciousness)
- (4) Actively processing information through reading, listening, or watching and encoding it to memory (learning)
- (5) Actively operating on sets of information using problem-solving strategies of the intellect (problem solving)
- (6) Checking in on an aspect of personality as a “felt sense” or a “voice” (personal intuition)
- (7) Actively setting goals for action (goal setting) or carrying out actions for goals previously set (volition)
- (8) Bare awareness – floating of attention in the void
- (9) Focusing attention on nodal points and “locking them in” (Dharana)

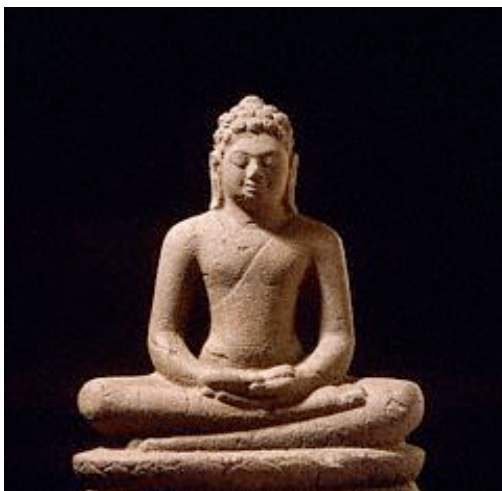
- (10) Focusing attention on the essences of consciousness—attentional principle, spirit, nucleus of identity, or ensouling entity

These ten states of mind occupy the attention during the waking hours.

- States one to three comprise the distracted state of mind.
- States four to seven comprise the active state of mind.
- States eight to ten comprise the meditative state of mind.

A Moment for Reflection...

- What is the state your mind is in right now?
- How do you shift from the distracted state of mind to the active state of mind?
- How do you shift from the active state of mind to the meditative state of mind?
- How do you shift back into the active state of mind from the meditative state?



Moving from Distracted to Active States of Mind

There are a variety of methods that people use to move their attention out of the states of mind wandering:

External threat or alarm – an incident that requires your active processing such as a child doing something dangerous, a telephone call when a relative is ill, or a call from your child’s teacher

Use of stimulants – people commonly use stimulants such as coffee, tea, chocolate, or cigarettes to kick start active processing [note: we do not advocate the use of tobacco products in any form—they are a health-destroying poison; we recommend that aspirants gradually wean themselves from the other stimulants, as well]

Remembering an assignment or project – having a looming deadline when failure to complete the project has negative consequences will move active processing into gear. Examples of negative consequences include getting a bad grade in class if you don’t finish an assignment on time, or potentially getting a write up or even risking termination for not completing a work project.

Getting mad at yourself – sometimes giving yourself a “kick in the seat of the pants” will rouse you to focus, as when you get mad at yourself and demand that you “get to work.”

Carefully controlling diet and lifestyle – some people find that by regulating their diet and exercise regimen, and by using vitamin or herbal supplements, they can keep their attention at higher states of energy, alertness and focus

Spiritual influences – those that have a strong spiritual aspiration and devotion will not allow their attention to remain distracted, but will rouse themselves and practice constant remembrance of their Divine Beloved

Encounter with the mysterious – Objects that pique your curiosity, your sense of awe and wonder, or that fascinate or captivate you, engage your mind with a desire to learn, to find out more, and to investigate what you are experiencing

Moving from Active to Meditative States of Mind

This step can be difficult for some people. They have been trained to function in the active state of mental processing through education and employment, but may have rarely encountered the states of meditative awareness.

There are a variety of methods that you can use to move your attention out of the states of active processing into the state of meditation:

Tratakam – this method, which means steady gaze, occurs when the attentional principle “pulls” the attention upward by intention or strong suggestion. In some spiritual traditions that place their primary attentional focus on the spirit, the spirit may give the suggestion to draw the attention up to its station in the Nadamic current.

Breathing methods – Breath has a powerful influence on concentration. Classical Pranayama, watching the breath, using mantras in coordination with the breath [like the hansa breath that you have practiced in this webinar] can help you make the shift into altered states of awareness.

Inquiry or reflection – At certain times, you will be engaged in an inner questioning or dialogue, that will lead your attention to move into deeper states of awareness. These methods typically utilize the seven chords of Jnana Yoga.

Mindfulness methods – In mindfulness, you pay attention to the present-time content arising in your awareness, and allow each one to rise and pass away. As you do this at the waking state of awareness for some time, you break through into a new state of awareness.

Remembrance or process methods – In remembrance methods, you remember inner states and place your attention upon them. In process meditation, you ask a repetitive question, through which you sink deeper into the unconscious mind; in affirmation, you drop down to deeper levels of the unconscious as you repeat and anchor your affirmation.

Sense withdrawal methods – These methods absorb the attention in an inner current of sensation (Pratyahara) or energy (Laya).

In Pratyahara, you can absorb your attention and move it inward on currents of vision, sound, combined taste-smell (nectar), or the energy of life (prana).

In Laya, your attention can be absorbed into the current of the Kundalini Shakti (during the practice of Kundalini Yoga), or the powerful vortex that is created through transformational meditation (like transformational mantra or Kriya Yoga), or your attention can be drawn inward through the directed beam of an Initiate.

Movement methods – Through techniques of Hatha Yoga, martial arts, sacred dance, or movement meditation, your attention can be powerfully focused within.

Your task is to be able to quickly assess in what state of mind your attention dwells, and apply an effective technique—one that works for you—to bring it up to the meditative state where you can begin to work on yourself.

Locking in Your Attention During Meditation

When you move your attention “inward and upward” during meditation, you will discover that as you move onto each new level within you, your attention will seem to momentarily fix or lock on a point within you. We call this place a *focal point*.

When you follow the thread of Light during meditation into this inner form within you, you typically will focus on the seed atom of that vehicle of consciousness. This seed atom dwells at the edge of the unconscious part of your mind; it represents the degree that you have opened or awakened that form and the abilities within it, and is the resonant vortex through which your will stirs that vehicle into activity.

When you encounter a conscious essence within you—your attentional principle, your spirit, or your ensouling entity, as you contemplate that essence, your attention will blend into it. We call this state of blending with this essence, *union*. After remaining in union for some time with this essence, you will undergo a mental shift that will bring about the state of *identification*.

In union, you are noting, “this is my attentional principle,” “this is my spirit,” or “this is my Soul.” You contact it, you recognize it, and your attention becomes absorbed into its presence.

In identification, you become one with the object of your meditation. In identification, your attentional principle declares, “I am the attentional principle;” your spirit affirms, “I am the spirit;” or your Soul utters in the silence, “I am the Soul.”

In union you encounter the essence and join with it; in identification, attention seems to disappear and you become the essence. This union with essence is called Samadhi.

Using Identification in Meditation

In our meditation today, we will explore the state of union and identification. You will move your attention up to the pituitary center in the system of chakras that are in the Subconscious mind and focus upon your attentional principle. You will experiment with the two suggestions, “this is my attentional principle,” and “I am the attentional principle” or “I am consciousness itself.”

You will next move your attention up to the pineal center in the system of chakras that are in the Subconscious mind and focus upon the beginning of the current of the Nada that resounds there. Feel that deep within this current, your spirit dwells in a place of purity and peace.

If you have previously discovered your spirit, you will move on to the next step [described in the next paragraph]. If you have not clearly identified what your spirit is, feel into this current and see if you can sense a presence that is filled with love. Inwardly affirm, “oh my spirit, reveal your true form to me.” Once your spirit responds to you by showing itself to you, you can use this as your focal point. [To be sure it is genuinely your spirit, intend your contemplative mantra to touch this point. If it is not your spirit, it will vanish when you send this mantra as a beam of thought.]

You will remember the essence of your spirit. Then experiment with the two suggestions, “this is my spirit,” and “I am your spirit” or “I am love and beauty.”

Once you experience identification with these essences in your meditations, your meditations will move to a richer and profounder level. Rather than blindly groping in your mind, you will meditate with purpose, visualize a clear objective, and will consciously pursue the Great Work of unfolding your spiritual potentials and readying yourself to become a conscious co-worker with God.

Moving from the Meditative to the Active State

For some of you who do not have a lot of experience meditating, it will be more difficult for you to enter the state of meditation than to return to active processing. Your challenge will be to transcend the state of active processing.

Meditators with a lot of inner experience, who have reached great depths in meditation, often have the opposite problem. They can reliably shut down active processing and meditate deeply, but find it difficult to re-start this active processing mode of their mind. As a result, they may find that they stay in expanded vistas of awareness, and look upon the personality and the world as illusory.

Remaining in these expanded vistas is serene and blissful, but it does not permit you to actively own and operate in your life. Remaining in this heightened awareness is like walking around in a state of trance.

To come back, you must consciously bring your attention down into your waking state of awareness again. Before you get up from meditation, you need to ensure that you are fully back in the grounded state.

You will check to see that your awareness has closed down from your heightened state of perception and you are back in the room, back in your body, and back in touch with those who are around you.

Next, you will give yourself the suggestion, “what is necessary for me to do today?” Review your goals and objectives for the day. Notice any problems or issues that may need your attention. Recall if you have made any appointments or commitments that you must fulfill today.

Then commit yourself to your day. Aspire to do your best. Ask for the help of the Masters and the Divine to strengthen you and guide you. Take a deep breath, and dive in!

Thank you for attending our webinar today!

