

## **Strategies for Deeper, Clearer Meditations**

There are different strategies from which people approach meditation. As we will see, each strategy has some positive and negative characteristics; each strategy has some relevance for your spiritual growth.

Our inquiry today is how do you pick the right strategy, and how do you overcome the hindrances that interfere with going deeper in meditation. We will begin by looking at the four strategies.

- 1. Remain in an altered state of consciousness** [in union or identification with your ensouling entity, your spirit, a nucleus of identity, or your attentional principle].

This allows you to have full access to your Soul's compassion, enlightenment, and abilities.

But if you maintain this state for long periods of time, you can run the risk of depersonalization, derealization, delusional perceptions, and irrational or paranoid beliefs. You can become grandiose, feeling that you are omnipotent. Since remaining in this state for long periods of time shuts off your reality testing mechanism, you can become highly suggestible and vulnerable to others suggestions. Cult members typically adopt this strategy, and walk around in a state of trance.

- 2. Connect with the Soul and the Illumined Mind through the Antakarana.** In this strategy, you access the Higher Mind through asking questions, performing inquiry and reflection, and carrying on a dialog with your Soul.

You can gain access to information and guidance, and you can get help in making decisions.

The down side of this approach is that your Soul may not have gained much wisdom to share with you. Additionally, if you are traveling through zones of the Continuum like the Lower Astral Plane or the Psychic Realm, when you ask questions through the cord to the Higher Mind, you can sometimes connect with entities that dwell in these realms—they can tell you things that are complete fantasy or even outright destructive advice. The other issue is that the guidance that you receive may be so vague or general that it offers no clues as to what you need to do, and is effectively worthless.

- 3. Connect with the Soul or with God through the cord of faith.** This uses the cord of faith to pray to God for help, guidance, and comfort. They may also dialog through this cord, asking their questions, and listening for the response.

This approach allows a person to remain embodied and human, and can grant them humility. If their prayers are answered, they feel gratitude. If they feel God's love, they feel devotion and love for God.

The problem with this approach is that there is often no way to verify that the answers are coming from God, or from some other level of the mind. The other drawback is that this approach can foster spiritual dependence—rather than taking constructive action, they may seek miraculous manifestations. They may also be prone to magical thinking, expecting that whatever they want will be instantly delivered to them.

- 4. Remain in the waking state of awareness and be conscious of your experience in the present time.** This approach keeps attention in the grounded state of awareness, in a state of inner alertness (mindfulness).

The individual who keeps his or her attention in the grounded state is in the fully automatized and fully functional state, and is fully focused in present time experience.

The drawbacks of this state is that the individual only has access to information from the Conscious mind and memory, and is effectively cut off from the higher aspects of the mind. This may result in a limited range of responses available to the individual remaining in this state, and he or she may resort to the more the ego's more primitive ways of responding—instead of the Self's more mature ways of dealing with issues, and the Soul's altruistic, wise, and compassionate way.

People adopt one of these four different strategies, and this influences their functioning in daily life. Let's see who is adopting these strategies and how it impacts their functioning.

Followers of New Age groups, born again Christians, and spiritual groups that colonize the Cosmic, Supracosmic, or Transcendental bands of the Continuum commonly adopt the **type one strategy**: live in an altered state of consciousness. This approach allows them to present themselves to others as loving, virtuous, holy, and happy. But when we look a little deeper, we see that they also present a false self, or pseudo-personality, to others, which is out of touch with their genuine feelings. They split off and often disown their authentic, grounded, and embodied life; they may even see this aspect of themselves as an evil, lower self, or a man/woman of sin. Once this stance has been adopted, they may feel extremely uncomfortable with their human feelings and desires.



Intellectuals, writers, professors, philosophers, and Jnana Yogis use the **type two strategy**, abstraction into the intellect. These individuals keep their attention deeply absorbed in the intellect, and connect with the Higher Mind and the Soul through questions, inquiry, and deep reflection. This habit of abstraction can contribute to these individuals being absent-minded, neglectful of their appearance, and eccentric. While this strategy can capture brilliant ideas, it can also capture odd and curious notions through this means. This platform of relating to the world has been called *mentally polarized*.

The bulk of Christians and Jews, other than the charismatic and “born again” evangelical sects, and the faithful of many religions who are not able to maintain the saintly and detached altered state of consciousness held up as the ideal, adopt the **type three strategy**—contact with their Higher Power through faith. These individuals are in touch with their ego’s emotional core, and what they desire. This stance is capable of great devotion and self-sacrifice, and communion with their Higher Power brings them comfort, strength, and answers to their life problems. But they can also demonstrate blind faith, a rigid morality, and intolerance for other groups. This platform of relating to the world has been called *emotionally polarized*.

Secular humanists, scientists, and atheists; some Buddhist groups that emphasize mindfulness; and followers of Nature religions may be found among those who adopt the **type four strategy**—being in touch with the world, the senses, and their present time experience. They are realists and pragmatists. Their spirituality is an appreciation of the beauty of Nature and of the world. It may be hard for these individuals to conceive of a Transcendent God. They tend to favor a rational and empirical approach to discerning truth, and may distrust intuitive insights and emotional convictions.

## Other Visions of These Four Strategies

Psychiatrist Carl G. Jung also observed these dominant strategies for functioning. He called type one, the intuitive; type two, the mental; type three, the feeling; and type four, the sensory. He pointed out that while most people have the ability to function in all four modes, they appear to choose one as their dominant or preferred mode of functioning.



The four types also show up in Bhagavan Krishna's overview of Yoga in the *Bhagavad Gita*. His Raja Yogi appears to prefer the type one approach; the Jnana Yogi embraces type two; the Bhakti Yogi, type three; and his Karma Yogi, type four.

## Checking Out *Your* Dominant Mode

What is your dominant mode?

What activities do you do best in each mode?

When would it be optimal to adopt each mode?

When is it not appropriate to function in each mode?

How do you shift into each mode?

When have you experienced each mode in the past? What influenced you to enter that state?

Has your dominant mode changed in your lifetime? If so, what made you shift?

## **States of Mind and their Impact on Your Meditation**

The Yoga philosophers observed that in addition to these strategies for relating to spirituality, there was also what they called the modes of nature, or **Gunas**, that impacted people's ability to meditate. They also described an advanced state in meditation that transcended these modifications of the mind, which they called **Nirguna**.

These three gunas, they referred to as Tamo Guna, Rajo Guna, and Sato Guna. They believed that Tamo and Rajo Gunas most strongly impacted the meditator's journey inward. They advocated measures to actively cultivate Sato Guna to overcome the hindrances that arise within Tamo and Rajo Gunas, which they held would ultimately lead to the transcendent state of Nirguna.

We will briefly describe typical states that derive from these modes of Nature that you may encounter in your meditation.

**Tamo Guna** - "density" or "matter" interferes with your meditation.

1. You are physically ill, and cannot meditate.
2. You experience physical torpor, mental sluggishness, and sensory distractions; you can meditate only sporadically, at best.
3. You encounter strong internal identification [e.g., with reason, or with the ego] or internal barriers, such as inner gates or heavy karmic accretion, which do not allow your meditation to penetrate beyond the Conscious mind.



**Rajo Guna** – the activity of your inner vehicles of consciousness dominates your meditation experience; alternately, your commitments and external activities preclude having any time to meditate.

4. Your attention becomes absorbed in the activity of your inner vehicles—such as emotional processing, thinking, or remembrance and reverie—and you cannot move your attention out of this zone.
5. The external demands on you leaves no time or energy for meditation—your to-do list precludes finding time to meditate, and/or leaves you exhausted.
6. You encounter negative passions—such as lust, anger, greed, pride, craving—in your meditation session, and you spend all of your time struggling with them.

**Sato Guna** – You experience clarity, inner peace and silence, and are able to clearly reflect upon your meditation experience.

7. You have the ability to concentrate and to *associate* your mind in a sustained manner with a spiritual essence—your attentional principle, your spirit, a nucleus of identity, or an ensouling entity—(Dharana).
8. You have the ability to gain *union* with a spiritual essence (Dhyana).
9. You have the ability to gain *complete absorption in and identification with* a spiritual essence (Samadhi).

The initial objective of your meditation is to reach this Sato Guna level of functioning, so you can establish inner clarity, quietness, and stillness—the optimal state in which you can acquire knowledge, inner seeing and hearing, and consciously unfold your spiritual evolutionary potentials.

When you have been able to unfold your Soul through transformational meditation to the highest stages, you will reach the blessed shores of Nirguna.

We call the state of transcending the modifications of the mind, **Titiksha**. The attentional principle experiences this state when it goes to the origin of the mind stuff (above the origin of the 6th Transcendental Path) and transcends it—in this state it experiences itself as a pure wave of consciousness (chetan). The spirit experiences a similar state when it transcends the origin of the mind in its domain.

We call the state of transcending the helix of the mind, **Vairagya**. You achieve this state when you reach the Void, and the Divine empowers you to teach in the Hierarchy of Light, or in your spiritual lineage.

## Overcoming the Hindrances

As you examine the hindrances of the Tamo Guna and Sato Guna modes of Nature, which ones commonly interfere with your meditation?



Even the most experienced meditators have days in which Tamasic and Rajasic influences waylay them, and their meditation sessions are less than effective or productive. But it is possible to identify antidotes for these states; you can still meditate while you are in these states—even if you cannot gain the optimal states of stillness and clarity to which you aspire.

We show those who have taken or are currently studying the Mudrashram® Master Course in Meditation or the Accelerated Meditation Program specific tools to work with these issues. If you have not taken these courses, we would encourage you to do so, so you may have some of these antidotes, too.

	Hindrance	Antidote	Meditations possible in, or recommended for this state
1	Illness	Rest and get better	Remember the attentional principle and do your transformational mantra
2	Torpor and sluggishness	Eat stimulating food, fast and cleanse, exercise	Remember the attentional principle and do your transformational mantra. Use chanting to lift your attention into higher states of awareness.
3	Inner barriers hold you back	Pray and ask the Master to help you transcend these obstacles	Remember the attentional principle and do your transformational mantra. Use chanting to lift your attention into higher states of awareness.
4	Absorption in inner content	Remain inwardly aware and alert (mindfulness), search for the origin of the phenomena and move beyond it	Remember the attentional principle and do your transformational mantra. Use chanting to lift your attention into higher states of awareness. Use Vipassana to move through the content.



	Hindrance	Antidote	Meditations possible in, or recommended for this state
5	Too busy to meditate	Re-evaluate your life's priorities and schedule in time for meditation.	Perform Practical Meditation, Vipassana, and Watching Your Breath for stress relief during your breaks in your daily activities. Use the sword of discrimination and eliminate unnecessary activities from your life, so you will have time to meditate.
6	Encounter with negative passions	Learn to sublimate your passions and find healthy outlets for these drives.	Remember the attentional principle and do your transformational mantra. Use chanting to lift your attention into higher states of awareness. Do Nada Yoga to purify these passions. Perform Process meditation on each passion and root out its origin.

We encourage you to persist and do not give up in your meditations until you break through into the clear states of Sato Guna.

Work to overcome any hindrances that you identify, and use the supportive meditations to enhance whatever state you are able to achieve.

Learn to activate all four modes of functioning, when they are appropriate, so they will yield the best results in your inner and outer life.

Through these means, achieve and enjoy the deep and clear meditations that will ultimately lead you to Liberation and Mastery.

Thank you for attending our webinar today!

