

Markers of Spiritual Engagement

Those who affiliate with a spiritual path have varying levels of commitment and engagement. These different levels of engagement are briefly described below.

1. **Disciples are no longer engaged with the path.** These ones have focused on their personal issues, have stopped using Mudrashram® meditation, do not study Mudrashram® books or courses, and no longer come to events (webinars, classes, or Light Sittings). They no longer invoke or pray to the Masters of the lineage.
2. **Disciples are emotionally committed, but distracted.** These are so focused on their personal issues, that there is little time to meditate or attend events. They do sporadically meditate or attend events when they can. They do pray and invoke the Masters of the lineage to help them in their spiritual development and issues in their personal lives. They may spend some limited time reading Mudrashram® books and courses.
3. **Disciples do meditation as a habit.** These have resolved their personal issues to the point where they can schedule time for meditation, and do it regularly. They are not having significant inner experiences. They may on rare occasions come to an event. They do some reading of books or courses; they may order additional books. The main challenge for this group is to feel confident enough in their practice to complete the basic course (the Accelerated Meditation Program) and progress to more advanced studies. This group as a rule rarely asks for help.

4. **Disciples are eager to progress.** This group will attend webinars, Light Sittings, and classes when they can. They have resolved their personal issues to the point where they can devote extra time to study, to take advanced courses, and to spend extra time in meditation. These ones ask for help and will schedule consultations. They actively pray to and invoke the Masters of the lineage to help them. They may invest in their ongoing spiritual education by attending paid webinars.
5. **Disciples are eager to serve.** This group does all that the ones eager to progress do, plus are engaged in a service project to assist the Masters. These projects include typesetting, sound recording, video recording and editing, web site design or updating, or other duties that arise in the ongoing work of the Mudrashram® Institute.
6. **Disciples are willing to take responsibility.** These ones act as anchors for the work of the Mudrashram® Institute. In addition to their engagement to make progress and be of service, they may host events, serve on planning committees, or are willing to serve on the Board of Directors of the organization.
7. **Disciples who have surrendered to God.** These ones have made Mudrashram® the first priority of their lives. They develop themselves to where they can act as teachers, as instruments of the Light, and channels for the teachings of the Masters. These ones have solidified their connection with the Masters of the lineage, and can readily tune in to the Masters to give guidance, to present teaching, and to act as a conduit of their Light.



Spiritual progress is fueled by regular practice, dedication and devotion, and eagerness to learn. Not everyone can muster the requisite time, effort, and dedication needed to make significant progress in this lifetime—those that do, make their spiritual life a priority.

Moving to a Deeper Commitment to Your Spirituality

Those who have made great spiritual strides have done so because spirituality was the first priority of their life. It is important to honestly assess how important your spirituality is to you, and how much you seek to make genuine spiritual progress in this life. Spirituality is not the first priority for most people—it is incorporated into their lives to different degrees.

For some, meditation and spirituality are just a pastime. They go to church or their meditation group once a week, and then consider that they have taken care of their spiritual obligation. They don't give it further thought.

Others who struggle with emotional and personal issues look to their sources of spiritual guidance and inspiration for strength and succor. These are caught up in their battle with their personal demons and the crushing demands of life—they look to the Divine to save them and lead them to a place of security and peace.

Others have a burning intellectual curiosity, but they don't step beyond a philosophical wrestling with numinous spiritual ideas. They come to the doorway of the temple, but they don't go in.

Others dip in the sea of mysticism, going to this group and another, asking questions, attending seminars and classes, and taking initiations. But they remain restless, and cannot make a commitment to any—so they wander, trying to find their place, their true path.

Others embrace spiritual beliefs and doctrines, and seek to bring its urgent message to the world. They seek to convert others and bring them into the fold. They become focused on the outer work of the spiritual organization to which they belong, but make no inner progress. Other than prayer and contemplation, these ones do not transform inwardly.

Others progress to the point where they can begin to serve those who are within their mantle of consciousness, and dedicate themselves to serving those who have been sent to them. They may forget about themselves and lose themselves in service, forgetting to expand this mantle through transformation.

Rare among spiritual wayfarers are those that can combine commitment, increasing understanding, service, and transformation, so that they are able to balance spiritual development with service—these ones find the Integral balance, the golden mean.

Differences between Personal and Spiritual Commitment

When we consider the differences between personal and spiritual commitment, we find that they pertain to discrete bands of human functioning.

Personal Commitment is anchored in the Desire Body of the Metaconscious Mind. It permits a person to give a commitment to an agreement or contract, and to fulfill it. These commitments generally pertain to the objects of desire and the pursuit of objectives that bring fulfillment in human life.

Spiritual Commitment is anchored in the spirit and the attentional principle. It is able to take a sacred commitment, or vow. A vow is made to pledge loyalty to a lineage or spiritual teacher, to strictly uphold behavioral or ethical standards, to not reveal spiritual secrets, and to assume ministry under the aegis of the Initiates supervising the lineage and/or the Divine.

To adopt the adult role in society, the ability to make personal commitment is required. Those who are successful in their lives are those who are not afraid to make commitments, and honor these commitments and persevere in them despite obstacles, difficulties, or setbacks.

The higher order of commitment is required to succeed spiritually. Discipleship is founded on the ability of someone to make a commitment to a spiritual teaching and the teachers that promulgate that teaching. Holiness is based on the adoption of behavioral and ethical standards that promote purity, goodness, and virtue. Accepted discipleship, which confers the ability to teach and initiate on behalf of a lineage, requires even stricter standards than those mandatory for disciples on the path.

Consequences of violation of a personal commitment can have financial or legal repercussions, or result in the vitiation of the trust and respect of others, or loss of wealth, or a job or relationship. It can also result in failure to attain goals that they have set.

Breaking a spiritual commitment can lead to karmic darkening (sin) and loss of spiritual attainment (spiritual fall). The karmic sequelae of breaking a vow can lead to the necessity of reincarnation to work out these patterns until these individuals have reformed themselves.

Aspirants should meditate on the meaning of personal and spiritual commitments to ensure that they understand what these commitments require, and to sound their own willingness to make these commitments.

Disciples should be clear about the ethical and behavioral expectations of the path they have embraced and what additional requirements will become mandatory once they become teachers and initiators in this tradition.

Considering Commitment

Excerpted from *The Practical Applications of Meditation in Daily Life and Education*

In what is called the Metaconscious mind, you are able to determine the goals by which your human life is directed. A life without goals is a life without direction: you simply drift through life.

To set goals, you must take the time to reflect upon what your human life means, what your values are, what you wish to accomplish in this unique opportunity that your human life presents.

Once you have decided what your goals are, to reach your goals, it is important to understand the elements of commitment; what it means to make a commitment and how to activate commitment to achieve success.

The steps leading to commitment are listed below:

1. Become *Aware that you are at cause*. This is your free choice or volition.
2. Understand the *Purpose*. Know why the action must be done.
3. Get a clear *Goal image* or a picture of what the end result looks like

4. Have a *Plan to carry out the goal* in a discrete time frame sequence of actions.
5. Be sure you have *Ethical clearance* so that there is no moral conflict with the means of carrying it out, or about the prudence of doing it in the first place.
6. Use your *Social skills* to interact with the other people needed to accomplish the goal.
7. Make a *Commitment* to see the goal is reached.

Commitment can be the inner dedication and necessary sacrifice of time, energy, money, active problem solving (intelligence), reputation (self esteem), life, and attention to see that the goal is accomplished. It means to do whatever it takes to get the job done!

In making a commitment you are making a decision to ensure that the goal you set is carried through to its completion. You decide to dedicate the time, effort, and energy to the task.

You solve the problems that arise in your pursuit of the goal, and develop alternate or contingency plans to overcome these obstacles.

You need to enlist the help of others to help you reach the goal.

You may have to take risks to accomplish your goal and defer other desires while you work on this objective.

Your reputation as to whether you will be regarded as a success or failure by others may be challenged by your performance on this goal.

It may even change the course of your life, for better or for worse.

You will need to devote regular attention and may need to give much reflection on how to accomplish the goal when you encounter obstacles.

There are several barriers to commitment, including:

- Fears (e.g., failure/embarrassment/not regarded as competent or skilled/being trapped or tied down)
- Shame (ridicule by others/self-condemnation for not living up to your ideals)
- Conflicting priorities from other commitments and responsibilities
- Financial lack or perceived inordinate risk
- Conflict of values or loyalty
- Lack of knowledge/skill/information to carry out the task
- Uncertainty about what you really want

When you find yourself procrastinating, unable to commit to something you believe is valuable or worthwhile, it is important to examine which of these barriers is getting in the way for you. You can do a personal inventory on commitment by asking the following questions.

- Is this proposed commitment something truly important and worthwhile for me, or is it just a whim?
- What fears arise in me when I consider making this commitment?
- What are my conflicts because of other activities or prior commitment?
- What are my financial concerns about making this commitment?
- Does this commitment challenge my current values or loyalty to other people or institutions?
- Do I believe I lack the knowledge, skills, or information to undertake this task?
- Am I unclear as to what I really want in my life?

When you identify what barriers are coming up for you, ask yourself: Are these barriers surmountable at this time? Is there something I can change, something I can learn, or something I can do now to overcome this barrier?

If the answers to these additional questions are yes, next ask yourself: Am I willing to make these adjustments in my life at this time?

If the answer is yes, notice if there is anything else that comes up for you that presents a doubt, a concern, a bad feeling about the proposed commitment. Ask yourself, is there anything else that may make it unwise for me to embrace this commitment? Listen to your intuition concerning it.

If all the indicators continue to be positive, you will find that your objections and concerns have been handled, and you will be inwardly freed to make that commitment.

This process may be valuable to you if you intend to have a life in which you set long-term goals. For example, having a relationship, marrying, having children, purchasing a car, purchasing a house, obtaining education, and job training for your career, investing for retirement, joining the military, or accepting religious faith each require an extended commitment of your faculties and resources.

If you further consider that the ability to contract, to give your word, and make commitments is one of the markers of maturity, you may need to ask yourself that final, terrifying question:

Do I really want to grow up?

Grown-ups are those people who can make commitments.



How engaged are you with your spirituality? Do you feel that you should be spending more time meditating, being of service, or getting involved? Notice what arises for you when you consider this?

What commitments have you made to your spiritual practice? How about the spiritual teaching/lineage with which you affiliate?

What are your personal commitments? Are there barriers for you to keep them? What are solutions that others have found to be able to make these commitments? What solution might work for you?

Are there barriers that get in the way of you making spiritual commitments? What are they? Is there a resolution that you can reach, so you can honor them?



Thank you for attending our webinar today!

