Peak Performance

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Ideal Performance State
- body
- mind
Self-Talk
Cue
Confidence
Problem Identification & Correction

Two Viewpoints
- State
  - Episodic states of peak performance or flow states
- Trait
  - Continuous way of being
  - Becoming the master

“Many of the experts may be effective in the gym or on the turf, demonstrating fantastic skills, but unaware, unstable, or undisciplined in the mental and emotional affairs of daily life. We’ve all seen such experts at the Olympics, at Wimbledon, or at Pebble Beach. You can see many experts, but you’ll see few masters.

The master is a product of psychophysical training, a whole-body athlete who demonstrates unity in all his actions. He (or she) has a well-rounded capacity for life—in any environment, in any endeavor. The expert may shine in the competitive arena, but the master’s light shines everywhere”
Dan Millman, *The Warrior Athlete*, pp. 156-7

Establishing the Conditions of Peak Performance
- Removing interferences to good performance
- Cultivating the factors that potentiate peak performance

Unestahl’s Ideal Performance State (IPS)
- Intense attentiveness to a small target area
- Dissociation of everything else
- Altered state of consciousness:
  - Time/size distortion
  - Tunnel vision
  - Pain detachment
- Automatic response patterns
- Immediate recovery after mistakes
- Amnesia after perfect performance
Ravizza’s Peak Performance
• Intense focus of attention
• Relaxed but intense concentration
• Total involvement
• Present orientation
• Feeling in harmony with the activity
• Being in total control of the situation
• Enhanced self-observational capacity

Miner’s Peak Performance
• Narrow focus on activity
• Effortlessness
• Energetic/ lack of fatigue
• Time/size distortion
• Feeling of complete control & mastery
• Sense of things coming together or just happening
• Spontaneous skilled performance
• Joyful, happy performance
• Focused on the moment, full presence

Flow States (1)
Csikszentmihalyi, 1990
• Attention & organization of consciousness
  – “Buzzing blooming confusion of ordinary consciousness” (Wm. James)
  – Psychic entropy
  – Systematic application of attention increases the organization of consciousness and leads to flow experience

Flow States (2)
Csikszentmihalyi, 1990
• Skill-to-Challenge Ratio
  – “When the information that keeps coming into awareness is congruent with goals, psychic energy flows effortlessly”
  – Attention invested in realistic goals
  – Goals clear, feedback immediate
  – Necessity of finding challenges
  – “whenever the opportunities for action are equal to one’s capabilities”

Characteristics of the Flow State
• Skills match opportunities
• Transform adversity into challenge
• Merging of action and awareness
• Enjoying immediate experience
• Harmonious order in consciousness
• Altered time sense
• Greater self organization & complexity
• Improved quality of life & everyday happiness

The Skill-to-Challenge Flow Channel
Choking as an Altered State of Consciousness Opposite Flow

- Negative altered state of consciousness
- Negative immersion (caught up in thought)
- Intense self-consciousness
- Distractibility
- Stilted performance
- Emphasis on outcome instead of performance for its own sake

Factors that Facilitate Flow (Susan Jackson, 1995)

- Plans & preparation
- Optimal physical preparedness
- Positive attitude and confidence
- Zone of optimal arousal (ZOF)
- Motivation to perform
- Performance feels good
- Total focus
- Optimal environmental and situational factors
- Positive teams interactions
- Experience

Factors that Prevent Flow

- Inadequate psychological preparation
- Non-optimal physical preparedness
- Lack of confidence
- Non-optimal arousal
- Poor motivation
- Performance goes poorly
- Distraction
- Non-optimal environmental & situational conditions
- Toxic team interactions
- Lack of experience

Training: Learned Effectiveness (Rotella)

- Finding a way to perceive events so as to increase motivation
- Purposely seeking routines where intense and persistent efforts will be rewarded
- Approaches practice after failure with enthusiasm and likelihood of improving in the future
- Views weakness in a positive way
- Interprets anxiety as useful in guiding practice

Wheel of Excellence (Terry Orlick)

Seven Elements of Excellence

- Commitment to excel via discipline
- Belief in meaningfulness of pursuit & own ability to excel at it
- Full focus in the moment
- Positive images to excel & make corrections
- Mental readiness to maximize performance opportunities & learning
- Distraction control
- Constructive evaluation
Zone Profile (Orlick)

Training: A Systematic Program of Mental Skills Training (Unestahl)
- Inner Mental Training (IMT)
  - Skill acquisition
  - Ideomotor skill
  - Mental development
  - Activation regulation
  - Concentration training
- Motivational Development
- Application
  - Attitude training
  - Problem-solving

Applications of the Wheel of Excellence to National Hockey League Players
Barbour & Orlick, 1999
- All 7 wheel of excellence elements were common elite hockey players
- Full focus during practice & constructive evaluation were lowest scores
- Commitment to belief were highest
- Additional elements: fun & enjoyment

Applications of the Wheel of excellence to Top Classical Musicians
(Talbot-Honeck & Orlick, 1998)
- 16 internationally known soloists
- The 7 factors in the Wheel of Excellence well represented in this sample
- Additional factors:
  - Perspective of life-long learning & growth
  - Creativity
  - Spontaneity
  - Flexibility

Mental Readiness in 1984 Canadian Olympic Athletes
(Orlick & Partington, 1988)
- “Mental readiness was a significant factor influencing final Olympic rank”
  - Attentional focus
  - Performance enhancement imagery

Advantage of Peak Performance Training (Unestahl)
- 5000 Olympic-seeded European athletes who had taken IMT versus a larger number of those who had not
- 37% in IMT vs. 1% in control group got seeded for the Olympics or won an Olympic medal
**IMT Weekly Program**

**Skill Acquisition**
1. Muscle relaxation (general)
2. Muscle relaxation (specific)
3. Mental relaxation
4. Mental relaxation
5. Activation training
6. Meditation
7. Attention release
8. Dissociation-detachment training

**IMT Training—Motivational Training**
9. Goal awareness inventory
10. Goal analysis and selection
11. Goal formulation
12. Goal programming of motor skills
13. Career goals

**IMT Training—Applied Training**
14. Re-conditioning
15. Systematic desensitization
16. Thought-stopping
17. Cognitive re-structuring
18. Autonomic restructuring
19. Mastery training
20. Self-confidence training

**Uses of Hypnosis In Peak Performance**
- Reducing anxiety
- Identifying performance difficulties
- Reducing distraction
- Alleviating pain
- Locating the ZOF
- Enhancing confidence
- Establishing the conditions of peak performance

**Psychological Skills Training & the U.S. Women’s National Soccer Team**
(Hacker, 2001)
- Four Pillars of Soccer:
  - Technical
  - Tactical
  - Physical
  - Psychological
    - Increasing motivation
      - Goal setting
    - Increasing self-control
      - Imagery
      - Affirmations
      - Pre-competitive warm-ups

**Trait Viewpoint: Becoming the Master Flow as a Continuous Way of Being**
- The martial arts
  - Shaolin and Tendon Transforming Nei Kung
  - Zen archery
- The meditative arts
  - The Nine Stages of Staying-Calming
  - Awakening
Awakening

- Initial stages
  - Continuity & pervasiveness of awareness
  - Eradication of reactivity
- Later stages
  - Flourishing of positive affects & virtues
  - Awakening all levels of mind

Motor Skill Development

- Muscle strength
  - Amount of strength of each muscle contraction
  - High resistance/low repetition
- Muscle power
  - Force and speed of each muscle contraction
  - Low resistance/high speed
- Muscle endurance
  - Duration that muscle power can be maintained
  - Aerobic steady state vs. anaerobic interval training
- Muscle coordination
  - Balancing contracting and antagonist muscles

Motor Skill Training & Hypnosis

- Use of hypnotic imagery for:
  - Dart throwing
  - Foul shooting
  - Hitting a golf ball
  - Badminton or golf (Pates & Maynard, 2000; Pates & Palmi, 2002)
- Experience X Imagery Practice X Skill Level
- Feltz & Landers (1983) meta-analytic review of 60 studies:
  - “mentally practicing a motor skill influences performance somewhat better than no practice at all”

Mental Imagery Training: Examples

“I never hit a shot, not even in practice, without having a very sharp, in-focus picture of it in my head. It’s like a color movie. First I ‘see’ the ball where I want it to finish, nice and white and sitting up high on the bright green grass. Then the scene quickly changes and I ‘see’ the ball going there: its path, trajectory, and shape, even its behavior on landing. There is a sort of fadeout, and the next scene shows me making the kind of swing that will turn the previous images into reality.”

Jack Nicklaus

Visualizing Perfect Rebounding

“Within a week after the All-Star tour began, something happened that opened my eyes… I was sitting on the bench, watching Treu and McKelvey the way I always did. Every time one of them would make one of the moves I liked, I’d close my eyes just afterward and try to see the play in my mind…I’d try to create an instant replay on the inside of my eyelids.

Usually, I’d catch only a part of a particular move the first time I tried this… But the next time I saw the move I’d catch a little more of it, so that soon I could call up a complete picture… On this particular night I was working on replays of many plays, including McKelvey’s way of taking an offensive rebound and moving quickly to the hoop…Since I had an accurate version of his techniques in my head, I started playing with the image right there on the bench, running back the picture several times and each time inserting a part of me for McKelvey. Finally, I saw myself making the whole move, and I ran this over and over, too. When I went into the game, I grabbed an offensive rebound and put it in the basket just the way McKelvey did. It seemed natural, almost as if I were just stepping into a film…for the first time I had transcended something from my head to my body…I was my own private basketball laboratory, making mental blueprints for myself.”

Bill Russell
“A pump when I see the muscle I want, is worth ten with my mind drifting”

Arnold Schwarzenegger

“I did my dives in my head all the time. At night, before going to sleep, I always did my dives. Ten dives. I started with a front dive, the first one that I had to do at the Olympics, and I did everything as if I was actually there. I saw myself on the board with the same bathing suit. Everything was the same… If the dive was wrong, I went back and started over again. It takes a good hour to do perfect imagery of all my dives, but for me it was better than a workout. Sometimes I would take the weekend off and do imagery five times a day.”

Canadian Olympic Diver

Fundamentals of Mental Imagery Training

- Thoughts and images control motor response, e.g. ideomotor suggestion
- Peak performers visualize more frequently and better than others do
- Creating a mental image of the situation that can be shaped, modified, stored, and later activated
- Create internal blueprint for ideal motor skill
- Greater memory strength of mental image. More likely it will be activated in actual performance to guide peak performance during the event

Imagery & Peak Performance: Mechanisms

- Psychoneuromuscular theory (muscle memory)
  Engagement in a pattern of movements transmits a pattern of impulses from the brain to the muscles to execute the pattern of movements
  Similar impulses occur in the brain and muscles when imagining vs. actually experiencing an event
  Vividly imagining a pattern of movements innervates the muscles in a similar pattern/sequence to the actual motor movements
  A ‘muscle memory’ is created

Symbolic Learning Theory

- Imagery acts as a coding system in the mind that symbolizes a pattern of muscle movement
- Blueprint made at level of central nervous system
- Imagery enables performer to rehearse the pattern and sequence of movements as symbolic components of the task
- A ‘mental blueprint’ is created

Scientific Studies on Imagery Training

- Suinn’s downhill racing study
  - Monitoring of the pattern of EMG leg muscle activity during actual downhill ski race in an experienced skier
  - Monitoring of EMG leg muscle activity during visualization of downhill run
  - No significant difference in muscle activity in actual vs. visualized downhill run
  - Muscle firings peaked at certain point during visualization corresponding to times of greater muscle contraction during actual run
  - Similar neural patterns in imagined vs. actual performance, but less amplitude
  - Imagery alone produces specific pattern of innervation but at lower level than actual practice

Suinn, 1980
Congruency of Imagined and Actual Performance EMG profiles

- N= 5 champion performers
  - Equestrian, rower, swimmer, skier, basketball player
- EMG compared from actual performance to imagery “to see & feel” the athletic event
- Results:
  - Definite EMG response to imagery instructions
  - Substantial increase in EMG during mental rehearsal compared to baseline
  - Imagery amplitude spikes congruent with actual performance in time

Bird, 1984 Perceptual & Motor Skills

Example of EMG from an Equestrian During Imagery

Time Series Analysis

- Most imagery & EMG studies focus on amplitude & frequency of motor response
- Time series analysis necessary
  - Frequency & amplitude of motor response over time are highly correlated across the actual vs. imagery condition

Vehner, Vogt, & Stadler, 1984 Psychological Research

Fundamentals of Imagery Training

- Assessment of vividness of Imagery
- Basic Imagery Skills
  - Preliminary mental stabilization/bodily relaxation
  - Use of mental images, not thoughts
  - Creating & sustaining a general image
    - Visualization in front/inside
  - Adding details
    - Successive details
    - Accuracy & vividness
    - Experiencing with all the senses
  - Rotating & moving images
  - Breaking performance into a series of cue-linked images
  - Imaging the sequence of images similar to actual events

Displacement Technique

- Scene generation
- Graded suggestion for insight
- Rehearsal in fantasy
- Post-hypnotic reinforcement

Zone of Optimal Functioning (ZOF)

- Hanin
- Individual differences in optimal level of arousal for peak performance
  - Some athletes perform better when:
    - Relaxed
    - Pumped up
    - Have moderate arousal level
  - Too much relaxation decreases performance & takes away competitive edge for some athletes
  - Too high arousal decreases performance & induces anxiety for some athletes
  - Successful athletes tend to interpret high arousal and nervousness in a positive way (somatic anxiety)
  - 70% of competitive athletes enjoy nervousness associated with competition (Murray, 1989)
Zone of Optimal Functioning (ZOF)

- Activity-specific ZOF
  - Certain sports activities are associated with ZOFs
    - High arousal
      - Football line play
      - Power lifting
      - Figure skating
    - Moderate arousal
      - Basketball
      - Baseball
      - Gymnastics
    - Low arousal
      - Golf
      - Archery

Cognitive vs. Somatic Anxiety

- Cognitive anxiety
  - Results from negative self-talk, ruminative worry, and limiting beliefs/expectancies
  - Interferes with performance
  - Interferes with concentration

- Somatic anxiety
  - Conditioned somatic response to performance
  - Does not interfere with motor performance
  - May have facilitative effects on gross and fine motor performance

Classification of Anxiety Disorders

- Continuous arousal
  - Hyperarousal
  - Worry
  - + Avoidance = Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD)

- Discontinuous arousal
  - External
  - Internal
  - + Avoidance = Agoraphobia

- Both
  - Panic
  - + Avoidance = Agoraphobia

Treating Anxiety States

- Identification of:
  - Stressors
  - Manifestations of stress

- Self-monitoring and SUDS ratings

- Treating Strategies
  - Anxiety management training (AMT)
  - Cue-induced self hypnosis
  - Behavioral exposure-based methods
    - Systematic or hypnotic desensitization (phobia)
    - Fear-of-fear exposure or panic control Rx (panic)
    - Worry exposure (generalized anxiety)

Anxiety Management Training (AMT)

- Identification of stress manifestations
- Relaxation Training
- Progressive muscle relaxation (PMR)
- Cognitive Restructuring
Worry Exposure

- Identification of principle areas of worry
- Relaxation training
- PET exposure
  - most-to-least category of worry
  - worst scenario thinking
  - breaking link between worry and physiological arousal
- End with better/best scenarios

Panic: Fear-of-fear hierarchy

- I feel a little apprehensive
- I’m a little nervous
- Oh no! It’s one of those times
- My heart is pounding
- This will be the worst ever
- I’m getting really shaky
- I must look foolish
- I’ve got to get out of here
- I’m really losing it
- I’m going to die

Panic: Fear-of-Fear Protocol

- Construction of fear-of-fear hierarchy re: loss of control/intensification of state
- Cue induced hypnotic induction
- Hypnotic suggestion of elements from hierarchy
  - Least-to-most
  - Hypnotic suggestion of affective and cognitive state
  - Direct mastery of state of mind
  - Utilization of cued relaxation as needed

Zachar & Pekrun (1980)

Panic: Interoceptive Exposure

- Creation of analogues to somatic discomfort
- Use of exercise and breathing
- E.g.
  - Running in place
  - Head rotations
  - Holding the breath
- Notice/tolerate resultant bodily sensations
- Mastery of somatic discomfort
- 80-100% panic free by end of treatment

Panic: Panic Control Therapy (PCT)

- Role of hyperventilation in panic onset
- Cue-induced diaphragmatic breathing
- Interoceptive Exposure
- Cognitive Restructuring
  - Over estimation of danger
  - Catastrophizing consequences
- 75-87% panic free at 24-months follow-up
  vs. 40% in PMR and 33% control group
- 10-12 treatment sessions

Cisnera et al., 1995; Brown, Hertz, & Barlow, 1992

Diaphragmatic Breathing Protocol

- Check for thoracic (reverse) breathing
- Following the breath (top-down)
- Drawing the breath (bottom-up)
- Diaphragmatic breathing
  - Correct for abdominal breathing
  - Use of hands as feedback
Specific Phobia:
Systematic Desensitization Protocol
- Construction of fear stimulus-hierarchy
- Relaxation training
  - Use of SUDS ratings
  - Use of self-efficacy ratings
- Systematic desensitization (least-to-most)
  - In vitro Fantasy exposure
  - In vivo Real life exposure
- Exploratory therapy as indicated

Phobia: Coping Enhancement Protocol
- Scene generation of other people with similar phobia who effectively overcame it in various ways
- Graded suggestion for insight
- Rehearsal-in-fantasy re: sensed mastery
- Post-hypnotic reinforcement linking coping to just-noticeable-signs

Phobia: Hypnotic Desensitization
- All-at-once desensitization (not systematic)
- Cue-induced hypnotic relaxation
- Deeper relaxation, richer imagery
- Self efficacy and mastery suggestions
- Television subtitles method
- Post-hypnotic suggestion linking coping to just-noticeable signs
- Contingency suggestions
- Hypnotic challenge
- Concurrent exploratory therapy

Cognitive States that Interfere
- Levels of Cognitive Interference
  - Negative self-talk (momentary evaluations)
  - Irrational beliefs (stable structures)
  - Self-representation (overarching structures that integrate pattern of core beliefs)

Treating Negative Self-Talk
- Awareness of automatic thoughts
  - AT method
  - Hypnotic subtitles method
- Triple column technique
- Cognitive reframing and positive self-talk
- Ego strengthening methods

Identifying & Correcting Limiting Beliefs
- Exposure-based methods
- Dynamic exploration
  - Orient yourself back to sometime earlier in your life to some situation that served to develop or reinforce that belief
- Ego-state therapy (dissonance creation)
- Future-time-orientation (FTO)
  - Going about everyday life at some time in the future no longer influenced by that limiting belief
- Attachment-based interventions
Cognitive States that Potentiate Outcome

- Factors of awakening in early Buddhism
  - Mindfulness—continuous awareness
  - Self-correcting intelligence
  - Light-heartedness
  - Balanced energy
  - Concentration—staying on the intended object
  - Calming of mental content
  - Equanimity (no reactivity)

The Six Perfections (Mahāyana)

- Generosity of spirit
- Honoring commitments
- Patience
- Enthusiastic perseverance
- Deep concentration
- Primordial wisdom

Trust as the Central Potentiating Factor

- Big faith vs. little faith
- Trust in:
  - One’s own inner resources (self efficacy)
  - The unfolding of experience (outlook)

Contemporary Studies

- Hardiness training (Kobasa, 1979)
  - Perceived control
  - Challenge
  - Commitment
- The Five C’s of Peak Athletic Performance (Mahoney)
  - Consistency
  - Confidence
  - Concentration
  - Calming Anxiety
  - Commitment to a positive attitude

Ten Beliefs Providing a Mental Edge (Trubo, 1999)

- A loss becomes a gain
- If you do what you’ve always done, you’ll get what you’ve always gotten
- Imagination is more powerful than will
- Bodies work perfectly; the mind gets in the way
- Limitations are temporary
- Anyone can play any sport better
- Events have no meaning except what you give them
- Getting better is more important than winning
- Practice like you play
- The more you expect from a situation, the more you will achieve

‘No Excuses’ Werthner, 2002

- ‘No excuses’
  - Learning not to panic when everything is going well
  - Cashing in on years of preparation during the ‘big’ performance
  - “Being able to accept the sense of being fully prepared for an Olympic performance and having the ability to let it happen.”
Mental Toughness Training

- Used in extreme, high-risk sports
  - High altitude climbing
  - Deep sea diving
  - Sky diving
- Special skills
  - Extensive preparation & planning
  - Mental toughness training
    - Reaching to point of maximal discomfort and pushing it a bit beyond
- Focused attentiveness

Burke & Orlick, 2003

Mental Toughness: Mt Everest Climbing
Burke & Orlick, 2003

“Most of the climbers emphasized that what separated them from the many other climbers who did not succeed on Everest was their mental strength and their ability to apply mental strategies during hardship.”

“Success on Everest was 70% mental”

Characteristics of Highly Effective People (Covey)

- “basic principles of effective living…true success and happiness comes from learning to integrate these principles into one’s basic character”
- Principle-centered approach to peak performance
- Proven guidelines for human conduct
- Inside-out approach
- Deposits/withdrawals from emotional bank account

The Seven Characteristics
1. Being proactive
   response-ability not reactivity
2. Begin with the end in mind
   personal mission statement
3. Self-management
4. Think win/win; interdependence
5. Seek first to understand, then be understood
6. Synergize; whole > sum of parts
7. Balanced self-renewal

Virtues of Highly Effective Performers

- Process expectancies
  - Trust, openness, wonder
  - Courage
  - Proactive agency
  - Challenge
  - Commitment
  - Doubt
  - Fear
  - Ineffective
  - Pushing
  - Helpless & Hopeless
  - Aimless

Outlook

- Generosity of spirit
  - Selfishness
- Light-heartedness
  - Depressed
- Curiosity
  - Narrow-minded
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<th>Self-Regulation</th>
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<td>• Live modeling &amp; apprenticeship</td>
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**Span of Apprehension**
- Range of information processed at any given moment
- Span of apprehension inversely related to arousal level
- Differences in span of apprehension according to task:
  - Internal
    - Broad: Analysis
    - Narrow: Mental rehearsal
  - External
    - Broad: Assessment
    - Narrow: Action/Immersion

**Dimensions of Consciousness**
- **Internal**
  - Total Awareness
  - Paralysis by Analysis
  - Receptivity (Inner Concentration)
- **External**
  - Broad Assessment
  - Narrow Action/Immersion
  - Inflexible Frozen

**Associative/Dissociative Methods**
- **Associative Methods**
  - Greater in high training intensities
  - Greater performance increase
  - Less experience of ‘the wall’
- **Dissociative methods**
  - Endorsed by less experienced runners
  - Decrease in fatigue
  - Greater risk of injury

**Importance of Goals**
- Goal-setting preserves the skill-to-challenge ratio
- “It’s a dream until you write it down. Then it’s a goal.” (high school coach of Dallas Cowboys running back Emmitt Smith)
- Mind-setting provides the commitment to achieve goals (Baum, 1999)

**Goal-Setting & Peak Performance**
- Importance of goal-setting for challenge level
- Outcome v. Performance v. Process goals
- Goal identification
  - Short-term…in the next months
  - Intermediate…next few years
  - Long-term…in one’s career
- Goal formulation
  - Positive statements with specific goals
- Goal Programming
  - Daily evaluation of progress
  - Visualization of goal achievement and effect on performance

**The SMART Method for Goal-Setting** (Baum, 1999)
- Specific
- Measurable
- Attainable
- Realistic
- Time frame to achieve goal is reasonable
Performance Evaluation

• During last performance how did you manage:
  – Anxiety
  – Self-talk
  – Loss of confidence
  – Not being prepared in certain ways
  – Loss of focus…distraction…boredom
  – Inconsistent skill utilization

Reviewing Success History

• Review of a series of previous successes
• Way to re-access bodily/mental state common to each previous success
• Antidote for dips in confidence or self-doubt; help re-gain perspective
• Enhances feeling of accomplishment
• Establishes foundation for achieving future goals

Baum, 1999

Mastery

• Always finding the skill-to-challenge ratio through goal-setting & mind-setting
• Cultivating the potentiating ingredients
• Establishing the conditions of continuous learning
• Go slower, arrive sooner (Lynch & Scott, 1999)

The Problem of the Ordinary Mind

• Mind-perspective
  – Distractibility—mind doesn’t stay on intended object-of-focus
  – Discontinuity of awareness and state
  – Reactivity=suffering
• Event-perspective
  – Disorganization of unfolding experience
  – Scattered and elaborated mental content

Main Types of Meditation

• Concentration
  – Single intended object-of-awareness
  – Everything else is a distraction
  – Directing the mind so as to stay only on the intended object
• Awareness Meditation
  – Continuity of awareness, moment-by-moment
  – No concept of distraction
  – Next unfolding event is next object

Selecting a Meditation Object

• There is no “correct” object
• Choosing something familiar
  Nāgārjuna’s instructions
• Using a sensory object to reduce thought elaboration
  – A piece of wood or a stone
  – The breath
## The Seven Body Points (lus gnad)

1. Feet- cross-legged  
2. Spine– straight  
3. Upper Trunk– upright and open  
4. Hands– equipose  
5. Neck– slightly bent  
6. Tongue– touching upper palate  
7. Eyes– half open, fixed, unfocused

## Results of Holding the Body Points

1. Immovable body (lus mi gyo ba)  
2. Isolation of the points (lus dben)  
3. Staying without fatigue (lus gnas)  
4. Settlement (rang ‘babs)  
5. Rearrangement (sgrigs pa)  
6. Proper activity (las rung)  
7. Purification of energy channels (dag tshul)  
8. Firmness of body/mind (bsam gian)

## Concentration Training: Directing the Mind

- Directing and fixing the mind  
- The steering wheel metaphor  
- Keeps mind on the intended object against its momentum to scatter  
- Entails repeated effort

## Initial Concentration Skills

- Skill of staying on the intended object longer and longer  
- Skill of recognizing distraction more and more immediately  
- Skill of recovery  
- Isolating the intended object from background noise

## Types of Staying

- Continuous staying over time  
- Interrupted staying over time  
- Complete staying at any moment  
- Partial staying at any moment

## Intensifying

- Intensifying supplies more energy to concentration after directing mind to the intended object  
- Like using an accelerator while driving  
- Intensifying makes mind stay close to intended object  
- Too much intensifying causes agitation
Easing-Up

- Easing-up relaxes the energy supplied to concentration
- Like letting up on accelerator
- Easing-up heightens clarity of mind/object
- Too much easing-up leads to scattering

The Flashlight Analogy

- Holding the flashlight steady = intensifying (Staying)
- Supplying more powerful batteries = easing-up (Clarity)

Vigilance

- Intelligent identification of quality of meditation
- Self-correction of flaws during meditation
- Metaphor of the smart driver
- Styles of vigilance practice
  - Episodic disengagement
  - Simultaneous concentration & vigilance (a part of the mind remains vigilant)

Mental Pliancy

- Generalization of skills across meditation objects
- Tracking object during shifts in state
- Perspective taking
  - Event-perspective
  - Mind-perspective
- Shifting levels of mind
  - Coarse level
  - Subtle level
  - Very subtle level

The Continuum of Thought

- Elaboration
- Unelaborated
- Fleeting, barely recognizable thought
- Coarse Level
- Subtle Level

Problems of Concentration

- Elaboration of thought
  - Head vs. tail cognitions
- Attachment & aversion re: sensory objects
- Coarse drowsiness, dullness, & flightiness
- Failure to stay continuously or completely
Outcome of Concentration Training

- Staying continuously & completely (mind-perspective)
- Calming of coarse-level mental content (event-perspective)
  - Thought… Non-conceptual state
  - Percept… Clarity
  - Sensation/Emotion… Bliss
- Increased organization of consciousness
- Making the mind serviceable

Samādhi (Deep Concentration)

- Mind-perspective
  - Continuous & complete Staying
  - “intended object is devoid of its own form”
- Event-perspective
  - Non-conceptual state (no Elaboration)
  - “Awareness stays one-pointedly on that, penetrates into that, and takes on an identity with the intended object” YS 3:3

The Nine States of Staying

1. Directing
2. Continuous Directing
3. Resetting
4. Close Setting
5. Disciplining
6. Calming
7. Thorough Calming
8. One-Pointedness
9. Equanimity
10. Insight
11. Absorptions
12. Special Feats

Nine States of Staying:
The Path of Reflecting

- Reflecting oral instructions to mirror unfolding meditation experience
- Settling the wild elephant mind by repeatedly directing and fixing the mind on the intended object until it learns to stay #1
- Need to forcibly engage the object
- Continuously Directing #2—mind stays for longer duration but also wanders longer

Nine States of Staying:
The Path of Mindfulness

- The mind stays continuously on the intended object
- The problem of partial or patchy staying
- Correct by re-setting #3
  - Intensify (mind perspective)
  - Break object into smaller units (event perspective)
- The Problem of coarse dullness & flightiness
- Correct by close setting #4

Nine States of Staying:
The Path of Vigilance

- The problems of subtle dullness & subtle flightiness
- Increase in dullness so need to intensify
- Recognizing subtle dullness (“sinking mind”) with tool of vigilance
- Disciplining concentration with vigilance
- Coarse flightiness settles down #5
- Calming subtle dullness & flightiness #6
- Mind rarely goes to sense objects
Nine States of Staying:
The Path of Enthusiasm

- Thorough calming of subtle flightiness #7
- Automatic mindfulness & vigilance
- Cruise control—mastery of effort
- Unlimited, balanced energy for concentration (physical pliancy)
- Pacify afflictions and thought elaboration as soon as they arise
- Moment-by-moment concentration (one-pointedness) #8
- Equanimity; Balanced placement

Our mind should be like a fine, well-trained horse that is powerful but easy to control and direct

Kalsang Gyatso
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