

MetaMind Yoga



Amazing **Journey**
to a **Joyful**
Life

Margo Berman & Richard Israel, One Voice

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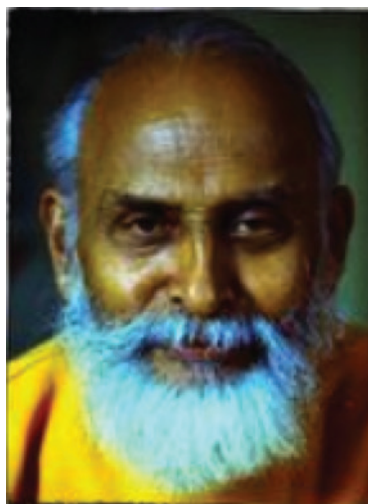
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Designed & Illustrated by Noel Valentine Walter

DEDICATION

MetaMind Yoga is dedicated to



Swami Nisreyasananda

(1899-1991)

In memory and gratitude.

The Authors

INTRODUCTION

It is up to each of you to focus your energies in order to achieve your goals. We are the guides. You are the seekers of light.

Have you ever wondered how you could acquire a more joyful life? Our search to answer this question has been lengthy, extensive and fascinating, taking us along many different paths and over a lifetime of discovery. We decided on Rāja (Mental) Yoga also known as the king of yoga as the foundation for this work. Rāja Yoga is concerned with the mind and its fluctuations and how to quiet or master these continual mental changes leading to a joyful life. Rāja Yoga is based on the Yoga Sutras of Patañjali, which prescribes adherence to eight “limbs” these being:

1. Yama: honesty, moderation, generosity
2. Niyama: mindfulness, use of energy, self-study
3. Asana: body postures

4. Pranayama: breathing Mental Asanas, control of Prana

5. Pratyahara: control of the senses

6. Dharana: concentration

7. Dhyana: meditation

8. Samadhi: super consciousness

These Yoga Sutras have been tried and proven by many hundreds of thousands of devotees in the East over thousands of years. Each one can stand alone or be combined with the other seven. This provides the practitioner a cumulative synergistic growth experience, which we term the *double whammy effect*.

We have not covered the branches of asanas and pranayama, as there are many excellent classes and instructors available in every country, town and village since Hatha Yoga became mainstream in recent years. If you are presently a Hatha Yoga practitioner, then *MetaMind Yoga* will prove a real boon. The connection between mind and body is all encompassing, with each being a hand-in-hand experience. The word yoga means to join, union, so practicing Hatha Yoga without the *MetaMind Yoga* piece is missing half the story. How could we take this ancient wisdom and make it comprehensible, simplified and interesting? This was our challenge. We started by reading extensively, literally the work of hundreds of present-day sages, philosophers and teachers, whose creative output we quoted throughout the text.

However it was the Mental Asanas that made this writing both meaningful and a living process. Now readers have the opportunity to experience the material first-hand and create their own unique journey with the 169 Mental

Asanas presented in this text.

We began by writing one book and ended up with three. You will discover all three in one, divided into the following parts.

Part One: The Source Within - Discovering Your Spiritual Energy

Part Two: Lessons from Nature - Tapping Into Universal Truths

Part Three: A Journey in Transformation - Talking to Your Soul

You will find it best to read one chapter a week from **Part Three: A Journey in Transformation - Talking to Your Soul**. There are fifty-one chapters (Chapter 49 to Chapter 100) designed to provide a year of transformational work. You will need a journal for this part. At the same time, you can start reading:

Part One: The Source Within (Chapter 1- Chapter 24) - Discovering Your Spiritual Energy.

Part Two: Lessons from Nature (Chapter 25 - Chapter 48) - Tapping Into Universal Truths.

MetaMind Yoga comprises 172 numbered Mental Asana (exercises).

You only need to develop a daily routine with the Mental Asana, which inspire you. These will make up your daily practice. Unlike Hatha Yoga, which has well over 170 Asanas, in an hour practice session of Mental Asanas you might do only 10 or so.

If you are reading this as an e-book, you will need a separate notebook for the Mental Asanas in Parts One and Two. How best to approach the Mental Asanas?

1. Have specific room where you will conduct your daily practice. Make it pleasant, with favorite pictures, and flowers. Be certain you will not be interrupted and that you feel safe and comfortable in this space. Do not use your bedroom, as this is for sleep.

2. You have five senses, hearing, sight, smell, taste and touch. For the majority of your life you have been using these five senses to experience the external world. What you see and hear all day, smelling and tasting food and touching clothes, keyboards and steering wheels. MetaMind Yoga requires you to use and develop the same five senses but apply them to an internal experience -the pictures you see in your mind. For example, close your eyes and visualize your front door. Imagine the key being turned. This will ultimately integrate all five senses as you develop this internal sensory skill.

3. The authors use the words “spirit,” “God” and “soul” in this book but you may choose whatever term you prefer. You do not need any special religious beliefs to conduct the Mental Asanas.

4. Keeping your journals is important because the process of noting a thought or internal experience is taking action. When you take action you are manifesting that thought or internal experience into the material world and recording your journey for future reviews.

5. Whether seated or standing to conduct the Mental Asana, it’s important to keep your back straight. When seated for meditation, rest your hands in your lap. When standing, have your hands by your side. In all cases have both feet planted firmly on the ground.

6. Make certain your body is hydrated throughout the day by sipping water.

7. Each practice session starts with ‘tuning in activities.’

A. Calming Breath: This can be done either standing or seated. Always breathe through your nose first into abdomen, then into your chest. Breathing out is the reverse - through your nose, then your chest, then your abdomen. The triangle breath is simple: breathe in to the count of five, hold for the count of five and breathe out to the count of five, hence the name triangle breath. Repeat this a minimum of 10-15 times or as many as you need to become relaxed and centered.

B. The Stress Buster: This can be done either standing or seated. Imagine you are a metronome seated on top of a piano. You sway your body gently back and forth, decrease the length with each swing until your physical body becomes at rest. However, continue the swaying motion inside your head, decreasing the length of each mental swaying movement until you become completely mentally and physically motionless. Take your time; the slower the better.

C. The Energy Boost: This can be done either standing or seated. Chi is a word meaning energy stored within us. When you smile at someone, you send them Chi. If the smile is returned, you receive Chi. Notice how good you feel the next time someone smiles at you. For the energy boost activity, close your eyes and imagine looking into a mirror and seeing yourself smiling back at you. Notice the difference in your energy level.

All of the above ‘tuning in activities’ can be done any time you feel stressed or in need of an energy boost during the day.

8. Feel free to open this book at any page and start. There is no right place to begin. It’s up to you.

Remember to be good to yourself: This book isn't a substitute for professional care and it's not a treatment for any mental or physical condition. Different things work for different people. Sometimes a method may stir up painful feelings, particularly if you have a history of trauma. Feel free to ignore any Mental Asana. If any of them make you feel uncomfortable, feel free to discuss them with a friend or therapist.

Like anything else, mastery will require practice and patience. You need to spend time daily on this journey and expect to experience small results almost immediately with the bigger accumulative *double whammy effect* appearing after some practice. This impact builds over time and will both astound and delight you. Remember, you are not alone practicing these Mental Asanas. People all over the world are your supporters, all of us taking this amazing journey together. Be grateful that you have the time, wisdom and interest to take this adventure.

For us this has been a labor of love. We hope it will resonate with you and touch your heart and soul.

In Love and Light,

Margo Berman and Richard Israel, One Voice

WHO ARE MARGO BERMAN AND RICHARD ISRAEL, ONE VOICE?

Margo Berman - Background

After a lifetime of creativity, I realized that all creative work was inspired by sources outside of myself. As I tapped into the universe for inspiration, I noticed that wonderful ideas seemed to birth themselves, using me as a conduit to enter into their own existence.

I wrote my first poetry at age six and began composing music at 12. As a teenager I created stories and was a published poet. Later I developed books and digital materials, including webinars on marketing, writing and creativity. All my life I have sought to ignite the creative spark in everyone I meet.

This is why I introduced Zen stories in my seminars and shared Eastern philosophy in my university courses. (I am a Professor of Advertising at Florida International University). I soon found I was drawn deeper and deeper toward my own eternal self. At the same time, I was energized to imbue client work with strategic insight, resulting in successful, award-winning creative campaigns. Targeted audiences were responding to relevant marketing messages that were specifically directed at them, which in turn helped clients grow their businesses.

I had already started developing innovative teaching techniques, including *tactikPAK™* (a patented system of learning in 9 business disciplines) and *Mental Peanut Butter®* (industrial-strength branding that sticks to the roof of your brain). I shared these and other mental strategies in various seminars. These unique methods helped others discover and strengthen their innate creative talent. Suddenly, they were able to tap into a universal energy, as if turning on the power, to reach a hidden, yet natural source. They were experiencing sponBRAINEous combustion.

During the last several years, I completed three advertising books: *Street-Smart Advertising: How to Win the Battle of the Buzz* and *The Brains Behind Great Ad Campaigns: Creative Collaboration between Copywriters and Art Directors*. Rowman & Littlefield published both. The first one is in Russian. My third book, *The Copywriter's Toolkit: The Complete Guide to Strategic Advertising Copy*, was released in 2012 by Wiley-Blackwell. All three books are available around the world: from Europe and Asia to Africa, Australia and the Americas.

Although I had been the presenter at many creative workshops, I felt compelled to attend a certain creativity seminar in 2005, where I met my co-author, Richard Israel. As if guided by cosmic consciousness, we were drawn to each other and instantly decided to join spiritual forces to write the first of three books: *The Source Within*. Soon, we completed *Lessons from Nature*, then, *A Journey in Transformation*. Once completed we realized that these books would be considerably more powerful if combined into one, greater than the sum of their parts, than they would be as separate entities. And that's how we arrived at the book you are reading right now.

Together, we wish to bring inner sight and transformative light to all those who seek eternal wisdom.

Richard Israel – Background

Looking back over the last fifty years in my search for esoteric knowledge I have always been interested in Hatha Yoga and attended Hatha Yoga classes in my twenties. Here I was introduced to Raja (mental) Yoga, which has resulted in a lifetime of study.

In the 1960's, I joined the Theosophical Society in Cape Town, South Africa where I was introduced to the teachings and writings of Madame Blavatsky, a Russian mystic and author of *The Secret Doctrine*.

Next, I discovered the writings of Alice A. Bailey, *A Treatise on the Seven Rays*, *The New Psychology*. And finally, I was inspired by the work of Gurdjieff, a profound Russian integrator of East-West mystical teaching, whose work was well documented by both Kenneth Walker and Ouspensky. In particular, the Gurdjieff system, known as *The Fourth Way*, had a profound effect on me.

In the 1970's J. Krishnamurti another modern-day teacher of spiritual truths, took me to the next level of my growth with his excellent series of books: *A Commentary on Living*.

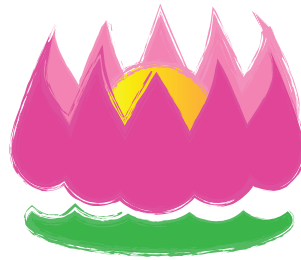
In the 1980's, while residing in Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) in Central Africa, I became acquainted with a living Master, a Ramakrishna monk, Swami Nisreyasananda (1899-1991). I studied with Swami in Salisbury (Harare) for five years and learned one of the most profound lessons: You should be interested in everybody you meet and everything that happens, but not to be attached to any one thing.

I understood that in order to reach inner tranquility, we must conquer detachment. But, realizing how difficult this was, I became fascinated with how the mind worked. This led me to begin researching how the brain processed information, and in particular, how it impacted business. Now, with twelve books published on these subjects, two international best seller -*Brain\$ell* with Tony Buzan, 1995 by McGraw Hill & Gower, translated into 20 languages and *Mind Chi, Re-wire your BRAIN in 8 minutes a day*, with Vanda North, 2010 by Wiley-Capstone. I am an Adjunct Professor of at Florida Atlantic University in Memory and Information Overload.

Seeking to help others find their inner light, I have distilled what I have discovered throughout my personal spiritual quest. Together with my writing muse and soul mate, Margo Berman, we created *MetaMind Yoga: Amazing Journey to a Joyful Life*.

DISCOVERING YOUR SPIRITUAL ENERGY

Part One: The Source Within



INTRODUCTION

“Every individual has within himself a great part to play and let no one think he is too small or insignificant. In spite of the past, something new can happen this moment when you are ‘tuned in.’ Take the insignificant part aside, accept it for what it is worth, leave it out of the way then tune in to the bigger thing.”

- Swami Nisreyasananda

Ready for the exciting journey of tuning into the bigger thing? Then, *MetaMind Yoga* will take you there. In times of financial upheavals, confused morality, and accelerated global change, more people than ever are searching for answers - answers that are not found in the external world of gurus, financial advisers, therapists, coaches, consultants or television sound bites. The answers are all to be found within.

We each have an innate ability to enjoy more of the bounties that life has to offer, and on more than one level. This book focuses on the spiritual plane of the life experience. It's a "how to" help you connect with your inner spiritual self. Don't believe that living on a higher level is only for the select few who have spent a lifetime in prayer, meditation and sacrifice. Nothing could be further from the truth. You have within your grasp everything you need to tune into the bigger thing and live in peace, harmony and beauty. It's your birthright.

Unfortunately, when we arrive on planet earth, there's no instructional manual provided on how to best to prepare for the journey ahead. Through trial and error, you stumble along your path, learning as you go, doing the best you can. Often you get bruised, wounded, tossed around and damaged, left wondering what it's all about. The good news is that *MetaMind Yoga* is designed to remove the bruises, heal the wounds, repair the damage and guide you to the answers you may well have been yearning for. Happiness does not necessarily revolve around material goods and possessions, it encompasses far more. There is a spiritual dimension critical to every human life that needs to be nourished, allowed to grow and bear fruit.

MetaMind Yoga derives wisdom from many of the predominant esoteric thinkers throughout the ages and summarizes their teachings in a simple-to-read and understandable format. Chapters are filled with inspirational quotes, easy-to-implement techniques and tried-and-trusted prescriptions to connect with your higher self.

Soon you will be in lofty flight, disregarding any feelings of emptiness or separation. Connected to a higher consciousness and alive in the precious moment and miracle of life.

Joseph Campbell termed "Samadhi" "the call to destiny." It can happen any time of our lives. It can happen to any one of us. With *MetaMind Yoga*, it might well be happening to you right now.

Enjoy the journey and may you be blessed with Peace.

Margo Berman and Richard Israel - One Voice

CHAPTER 1 – THE POWER OF ENERGIZING YOUR SPIRIT



“Matter is the vehicle for the manifestation of Soul on this plane of existence, and Soul is the Vehicle on a higher plane for the manifestation of Spirit, and these three are a Trinity synthesized by Life, which pervades them all.”

- The Secret Doctrine¹

Have you ever been told that you are in “high spirits?” Or have you ever paid that compliment to anyone else? Well, what is “high spirits?” Is it a certain glow people exude, a type of behavior, their smile, their language or all of the above? For many “spirit” is the same as vitality. And this is a good start. “Life force” and “consciousness” could well be other definitions.

Whatever the understanding of the word “spirit,” it is an essence each one has to draw on and connects us to a higher power. This power enables us to support our spiritual well being much like food supports our physical health.

Electricity is a good analogy. An electrical power source is presently generating from a main plant. From this central supply are connections to thousands of homes, schools, malls, hospitals, streetlights, plus the daily conveniences we use. Electricity runs the gadgets in your home that make your life enjoyable, from televisions lights, microwaves and air conditioners to computers. And, all you have to do is turn on the switch!

So it is with spirit, this vital power that connects us to a higher force. To use it, all you need to do is flip the switch. For many, the switch is turned on low power, while for others the power is on high. It’s important to know that you can energize your spirit any time. And, that is something you need to do.

“Flowers are for our souls to enjoy.”

- Guy Zona²

Do you have to go a retreat for week in order to energize your spirit? It would be nice but not essential when you know what it takes.

Do you have a favorite place you love to go that recharges your spirit? This could be a park full of flowers, a walk in the woods, a drive in the country, a beach, a sunset, a piece of music, a bubble bath, a massage or closing your eyes and imagining a perfect day.

Mental Asana One:

Think back to what have been the experiences, places, people or events that energize your spirit and list them below:

Next, decide which of the above you intend to do in the next three months and when you will do them. Enter these events in your planner so you can make the necessary arrangements to make them happen. Now you have something to look forward to. Do you have a person in your life you can share these with? Perhaps it's a hike in the country. If so, go ahead and take your friend along.

These are important dates you have made that you need to keep. It's part of your spiritual progress to develop *The Source Within*.

Whatever the current situation you're in, you always have the choice to decide how you will respond. A lesson in *A Course In Miracles* teaches us the affirmation: "I could see peace instead of this."

"Inner peace and love are the greatest of God's gifts."

- Tenton Sioux³

We all need rest and rejuvenation. Your spirit is no exception. If you're tied to an office or home, below is one technique you can develop to energize your spirit. In other chapters you will encounter more ways to energize your spirit. There is prayer, play, imagination, love, vision, meditation, creativity and choice.

You won't always be able to travel to some sacred place, a beach, forest or lake. Here's where the power of your imagination comes in. Filed in your memory is the experience you had when you actually last visited your sacred place. You can, however, create the same place with the following technique.

Mental Asana Two:

Find a comfortable place where you won't be interrupted. You need ten to fifteen minutes to conduct this Mental Asana. Sit or lie down with your eyes closed and wearing loose-fitting clothing. You want to be comfortable, yet alert. Take in a few deep breaths to bring yourself into a more relaxed state. Breathing in the life-giving force and breathing out all the nervous tensions captured in your body.

Next, imagine that you're going to a special sanctuary, which you have mentally created. It can be anywhere - a place you have visited that you loved or one you make up. As you enter the sanctuary, create as much detail as possible: the color of the walls, the feel of the floor, the texture of the furnishings, the wonderful aromas for this special room, the sounds of music or water. The more detail you can provide, the more meaningful the experience.

See yourself walking into this room and sitting in your comfortable place. Now you conduct your own mental ritual. It may be a prayer, sitting in the silence, meditating on your breath, singing, or dancing. Do what is

meaningful to you. Finally, spend some time being thankful for the sanctuary. Then, slowly leave, closing the door behind you, come back to your everyday life, refreshed and with your spirit energized.

This is an experience you can have as often as you like. Each time you do it, it will be more meaningful and powerful. You are developing new skills and resources and tapping into *The Source Within*.

NOTES:

1. Alice A. Bailey. *A Treatise on the Seven Rays*. London. John M. Watkins 1936, The Secret Doctrine Vol. 1, p. 80.

2. Guy A. Zona, *The Soul Would Have No Rainbow if the Eyes Had No Tears*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994, p. 125.

3. Guy A. Zona, *The Soul Would Have No Rainbow if the Eyes Had No Tears*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994, p. 108.

CHAPTER 2 – THE POWER OF NOW



“Right now a moment of time is passing! We must become that moment.”

- Paul Cézanne¹

Our minds are so cluttered with internal dialogue, with mental machinations and self-recriminations of past hurts and future dreams, we're not here at the moment. While we're busy beating ourselves up over endless regrets of “shouddas,” “wouddas” and “couddas,” we missed the opportunity of the moment because we just weren't here.

Why do we need to experience the moment and why is this important? Because what else is there? Yesterday is over, tomorrow is uncertain at best and all we have is now. The more we stay in the now, the more focused, more centered and more powerful we are. The truth is, the more we are here in the present, the more alive we are. Ask yourself this: “If you're not here right now, who's living your life? Better yet, who's running your mind? And finally, who's guiding your future?”

Be in the now. It seems like a simple statement: So why is it so elusive? Why is it simple to say and to understand but difficult for many of us to do. So difficult to be here, right now? Are we all suffering from attention deficit? Are we incapable of just stopping long enough to realize the moment that we're in? Are we so caught up in the minutia of imagined and exaggerated hurts and disappointments, we cannot focus our attention long enough to savor the moment.

Why is that? Because it's a challenge, because we are addicted to thinking. We feel anxious, the second we stop. If you doubt this, try just for a moment to stop thinking. To stop doing. Just breathe and read on. Now, just put this book down and sit quietly for a few seconds. Put the book down. Stop reading.

I bet a zillion ideas zipped past. It could be because when there's a break in our everyday routine, we feel uncomfortable, like we are wasting time, frittering away the moment. The fact is, we aren't doing that at all. What we are doing is actually experiencing the moment. The now. We are practicing what the Zen masters refer to as "mindfulness." We are in a state of attention.

Did you ever have to wait in line for something? While you waited, you probably watched that no one moved in line ahead of you. You waited, but you watched. You were in the now. But, if you were ever sitting at a light and someone had to honk you, because the light turned green and you didn't notice, you were not present at that moment. You were not in the now. How about when you missed your exit on the highway? Where were you? Here's a bigger question, who was driving the car if you weren't?

We're in automatic pilot so much of the time that we don't even have to be present when we're driving. How about when you're shaving? Did your hand slip, or were just not paying attention. The state of mindfulness is simple, once mastered; yet extremely difficult to master.

Try again. This time just listen to the sounds in the room. Then settle on just one and concentrate on it. Observe its rhythm, tone and timbre. It could be the sound of the air conditioner, the hum of the computer, the whir of the copy machine, the buzz of the light fixture. Stay with it. Focus on it. If you succeeded, even for a split second, you were in the now.

The Japanese speak about the bushido, the way of the warrior. There are three important elements to strengthening our visions: be present, be concentrated and be strong. Boldt explains being present as follows:²

"The Warrior is totally alive. He accepts his life and his death. Most people accept neither. They live in terror of death and muddle through life half asleep, scarcely aware of the dangers and opportunities that lie all around them. Native American warriors cried on their way to battle, 'Today is a good day to die!' Mohammed said, 'Die before ye die.' Japanese bushido teaches the warrior to be internally dead, meaning still. Being dead within, the samurai is completely free to respond—immediately and in all directions—without. The aliveness of the Warrior, his conscious, alert presence, arises from his inner deadness. In Japanese bushido, this consciousness is called the shin or spirit aspect."

To be in the now is to inhale life and deeply soak in the wonder of just being here. The miracle of your own existence.

Mental Asana Three:

This Mental Asana will help you measure how well you are able to stay in the now and help you improve your ability to do so. All you need is a wristwatch with a second hand. Focus on the second hand and repeat the word, “one,” silently to yourself as it moves around the dial. As you focus on the second hand moving around the dial, keep repeating the word “one.” Should *any* extraneous thought enter your mind, change your chant to the number “two.” When another thought interrupts, change your chant to “three” and so on. This process allows you to become aware of how unfocused your mind is, and it becomes a way to help you gauge how much more focused you are becoming as you continue to practice being in the now. Keep count of those unwelcome thoughts while keeping your focus on the second hand.

Start out doing the exercise for sixty seconds. See how well you do all the time counting those uninvited thoughts. Then increase the time to two minutes and then three. You’ll notice that as you practice this mindfulness technique, not only do your scores decrease but your ability to stay in the now at all times improves, too! You can experience this on YouTube being directed by Richard. Search “Mind Chi exercise to improve concentration.”

More about Mindfulness

Being in the now is one aspect of mindfulness. Another key element is observance or watchfulness. In this state, you notice everything around you. Without commentary. Or criticism. Instead you are observing in a totally detached yet interested acceptance. Although this sounds dichotomous, it isn’t. You can be devoid of opinion, yet intrigued by the subject. That is what detached, yet interested acceptance, is. You accept without reservation. You are observant, yet removed.

This state of nonjudgmental acceptance is exemplified in the Zen story that tells of a monk who was visited by the father of a teenage girl in the village. When the monk opened the door, the father, holding a baby in his arms, yelled at the monk, accusing him of making his daughter pregnant. Then, the father told the monk that he (the

monk) would have to raise the baby, after all it was his child. With that he handed the baby to the monk and asked, "Now, what do you have to say?" The monk's only reply was, "Is that so?"

He took the baby in and for one year raised the child as if it were his own, caring for the infant's every need. From that day forth, the once-revered monk was shunned by everyone in the village. No one would visit or study with him. After a year, the girl's father stopped by and told the monk that he made a terrible mistake that his daughter confessed as to who the real father was and told him who the baby's real father was. Embarrassed and ashamed, the girl's father went to the monk to apologize, explaining that his daughter finally admitted the truth. He asked to take the baby back. The monk obliged and said softly, "Is that so?"

Boldt explains concentration is as follows:³

"The essence of technique is concentration. One way of considering the Japanese Dos, e.g., Aikido, Judo, Kendo (sword), Kyudo (archery), Chado (Tea), is as a means of concentrating on a single act. If arranging flowers, or serving tea, then this concentrated presence will carry over to other aspects of your life. The person who does things in a sloppy fashion never develops concentration, that is, his or her expression of the Warrior."

Technique is never merely mental. It must become instinctive, immediate, and total. The warrior who has to think about what he is doing in combat will soon be dead. If one thinks of his motions in the bow, the arrow will miss. Training and technique must become total, must involve the body as well as the mind.

Yogi Berra once said, "You can't think and hit at the same time. To really hit you have to just get out there."

This state of flow, also called "in the zone," is the fourth stage of learning, the apex of knowledge, the mastery level of skill after you've moved from:

Level one: Unconscious incompetence - you don't even know what you don't know

Level two: Conscious incompetence - you realize what you don't know

Level three: Conscious competence - you are aware of your own performance

Level four: Unconscious competence - you can perform without thinking

The fourth stage is easy to spot. Watch world champion athletes. They perform remarkable physical feats and manage to make them look effortless. That's flow.

The connection between mind and body, as well as the importance of correct posture, are clearly expressed by Shunryu Suzuki.⁴

"The most important point is to own your own physical body. If you slump, you will lose yourself. Your mind will be wandering about somewhere else; you will not be in your body. This is not the way. We must exist right here, right now! This is the key point. You must have your own body and mind. Everything should exist in the right place, in the right way."

He went on to explain the necessity of maintaining the right posture not only during meditation, but also in all your everyday activities like driving the car, reading and so on. The idea is that correct posture is the right state of mind. One is not separable from the other. In short, maintaining the proper posture physically is crucial to spiritual progress.

He further explained, *“In this posture there is no need to talk about the right state of mind. You already have it. This is the conclusion of Buddhism.”*

Perhaps if we practice maintaining better posture, we would be mindful of our body and be more in the now. We also wouldn't lose our concentration while driving and miss the street we need or the exit we're looking for on the highway.

There is more to consider in mindfulness than being in the now and being aware of your body. Another element is being aware of your personal strength. Boldt described this element as: be strong, listing it as the third component in attaining your creative vision.⁵ A strong body is necessary because it will be required to move in difficult or unnatural positions during battle. Therefore, “when your body is strong, it obeys the commands of the mind and spirit.”

Although solid technique when fighting defeats a strong body, good shin or consciousness defeats a polished technique. This is why even eighty-year-old dojos will whip the strong, young students every time. The old master has the patience to search for his opponent's weakness. The Japanese call this, *suki*, or opportunity. When the master sees it, he strikes. Boldt clarified,

“The young buck, too eager to attack or too self-conscious, leaves himself open.”

It's easy to see the relevance of this story to other aspects of our lives. Being fit physically is also a metaphor for being fit mentally. If we “move” (take action) too quickly, without formulating a strategy, whether in our search for a fulfilling job or a complementary mate, we may miss a more rewarding opportunity. It is with careful reflection that we are able to clearly discern our next chapter.

“The whole thrust of Buddha's teaching is to master the mind. If you master the mind, you will have mastery over body and speech (Mastery of the mind is achieved through constant awareness of all your thoughts and actions) Maintaining this constant mindfulness in the practice of tranquility and insight, you will eventually be able to sustain the recognition of wisdom even in the midst of ordinary activities and

distractions Mindfulness is thus the very basis, the cure for all samsaric afflictions.”

- Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, Journey to Enlightenment⁶

Mental Asana Four:

This Mental Asana will help fine-tune your control of mindfulness.

How do you become aware or more mindful of your present thinking in the rush of everyday life? You need to set up a trigger word to allow you to randomly check your thoughts. For example, every time you take out your wallet or purse or every time you stop for a drink or a meal, you might say the word, “here,” to focus your attention.

Stop and immediately notice what you’re thinking at that moment. Were your thoughts in the past, the future or the present? Were you in the moment? This technique gives you insight into your thinking throughout the day and makes you more mindful of being in the now.

NOTES:

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4. Kazuaki Tanahashi and Tensho David Schneider, *Essential Zen*. New Jersey: Castle Books, 1994, p. 28-29.
5. Laurence G. Boldt, *Zen and the Art of Making a Living*. New York: Penguin Group Press, 1991, p. 64.
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CHAPTER 3 – THE POWER OF WORK



"No energy is ever lost in the cosmic scheme."
- Kenneth Walker¹

When seeking your life's purpose, look no further than your work. Because, the noblest activity you can be engaged in is your work. The human body you have been provided with is designed to carry out this sacred duty.

After all, work is an honored task of being of service to others.

What does the word “work” conjure up for you? How do you feel on a Monday morning starting a new work week? Work is where we spend most of our lives. Our attitude towards work is the starting point. “I never did a day’s work in my whole life, it was all fun,” Thomas Edison reminds us. Wouldn’t it be wonderful if we all felt that way? Well, now we can.

“If your occupation is honest, you can certainly conceive it as a work for God.”

- Monks of Ramakrishna Order

Do not fall into the misconception that the lucky person is the one who is comfortable being idle; nothing could be further from the truth. As John F. Kennedy advised, “There are risks and costs to a program of action, but they are far less than the long-range risks and costs of comfortable inaction.” Work not only gives meaning to life but also should be regarded as a spiritual journey in the quest for enlightenment.

Not only is work crucial for the development of one’s self-esteem, but work is also a natural way to discover a higher power. Everything in life can be converted into a spiritual activity. Work is no exception.

“Each of us has the ability to design and embody dynamic patterns of work that express our intelligence in action. By cultivating our inner resources as we work, we can enjoy success in what we do, increase satisfaction in our lives and generate a lighter and healthier way of being.”

- Tarthang Tulku³

This requires a new mindset. Yes, you might be doing a job, working for an employer, even working for yourself, because this is simply the way the world works. Regardless of whether you work for someone else or for yourself, as you complete each of the many daily tasks, make them each a conscious offering to a higher force. So it becomes far more than not just doing the job. For a boss, a patient or a customer. It’s that and more. It’s your service offered to a higher force. This changes your thinking about what you do and may sound a little unusual. However, as you develop this technique, new meanings will be revealed to you that turn work into a wonderful growth experience.

Let's take a fresh look at what works in the eyes of *The Source Within*.

Certainly, work is important in order to earn a living and provide for oneself and one's loved ones. If you consider the energy you put into your work and the payment you receive in the form of money, then that money is simply another form of energy. Your work becomes a transformational process in which one form of energy is transformed into another.

Work is certainly a gift, especially when you have lived in countries where there are large numbers of unemployed, some of whom will never have a chance to work steadily throughout their lives.

Work is an opportunity to express your God-given talents. The truth is, every one of us is gifted at something. By expressing that gift through our work, we are then shining God's light onto the Universe. Irrespective of what you do, no matter how humble the work, it is all-important in the great scheme of things. Every little action counts.

"Do whatever work is required of you but direct it to God, then your mind will not be disturbed."
- Monks of Ramakrishna Order⁴

Work is a meditation. Have you ever been so caught up in your work that time passed without your realizing it? This is also known as being "in flow." When that happens, you can regard your working hours as a meditation in which you will be focused on serving a higher purpose. In this mindset, you will not be distracted, not become upset and not feel stressed. You can do this by approaching your daily work with the following affirmation: "It is my privilege to be able to render any service to any being." If you can hold this affirmation in your mind for a year, you will elevate work into a work of art.

Work is a way to discover and develop yourself. Work also allows you to test your strengths and weaknesses, to interact with others and learn how you respond. Work is one way to reach a state of self-observation where you watch and learn about yourself. Imagine yourself in a movie theater, watching your work life appear on the screen. You will discover how you handle conflicts, difficult situations, demands, reprimands, challenges, and acknowledgments.

Work is all about improving yourself. It's the classroom for personal growth. It's an opportunity for self-discovery where the rewards are limitless. With this in mind, complete the following Mental Asana:

Mental Asana Five:

Think back to a challenging work situation you have faced. Write it down below.

Look back over this situation again and list at least five important lessons this experience taught you:

1.

2.

3.

4. _____

5. _____

You can repeat this Mental Asana with other challenging work-related situations in the past.

The above Mental Asana gives you a new understanding of why we face challenges in our work life and how they are actually “teaching lessons” in disguise.

Have you ever worked with people you truly admired and greatly enjoyed being in their presence? This may not be an unusual occurrence because Masters, who are here to teach us, appear in many shapes and forms. Your favorite waiter, hairdresser, cab driver, toll collector or airport porter could well be a Master. Be aware of all the people you’re in contact with during your workday. Masters are present and lessons can be learned, if you pay attention.

Your understanding towards work will change when you realize that your being of service is a sacred duty. In addition, you will soon recognize that accumulation of material goods can be addictive. And, that one possession can lead to desiring another. Ask financially wealthy people how much is enough and they will have difficulty answering you. You’ll also come to understand that all material things will eventually perish. That means you cannot own anything forever. Accumulated wealth may become a trap in which you will never be satisfied with what you have.

It is possession of spiritual understanding that gives you “ownership” over everything. This is the power and abundance within that work has to offer, once you understand the true nature and meaning of your work. Do your best work every day. *“When we do the best we can, we never know what miracle is wrought in our lives or the life of another,”* advises Helen Keller.

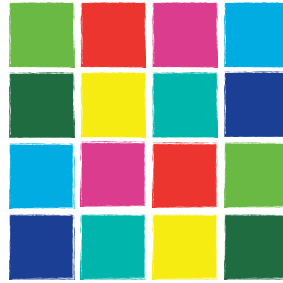
“The key to this inner development is activating awareness as we work - learning how to pay attention. By cultivating mindfulness and maintaining focus through awareness, we can heighten our energy and motivation, expand our knowledge, maximize our use of time, and enjoy the profits from our efforts each day.”

- Tarthang Tulku ⁵

NOTES:

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3. Tarthang Tulku, *Mastering Successful Work*. Berkeley, Dharma Publishing, 1994, p. 16.
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CHAPTER 4 – THE POWER OF PLAY



“The secret of genius is to carry the spirit of the child into old age, which means never losing your enthusiasm.”

- Aldous Huxley¹

Some of the most inventive minds rely on play as an integral part of increasing their imagination quotient. Academic research proves that having fun stimulates creativity.²

Doug Hall suggests spending an entire day with a child and doing everything the child does.³ Children are a wonderful source of creative inspiration because their minds are free and uncontaminated. Graphic designer Tibor Kalman agrees: “My wife Maira is an artist and important collaborator. She always makes me approach a problem backward and upside down. I also listen to children, who provide a constant inspirational whirlwind of difficult questions and free association.”⁴

Young thinking changes the way you perceive the world. It puts you in a state of awe over the universe. You see everything from a pure, untainted perspective.

“You just open yourself up to become like a child. All of a sudden, the world is a wide-eyed experience again. You start feeling again, and you see the world through the eyes of a five-year-old. Once you get rid of preconceived notions, ideas can start to cross-pollinate.”

- Eric Schultz⁵ Buena Vista Home Video (The Walt Disney Company).

Go to a toy store. Try out different toys. Is there one in particular that you enjoy? Buy it.

Look for another toy, perhaps one you can take with you, like a key chain with a miniature Etch-a-Sketch®, tiny Play-Doh®, springy Koosh® or little movable word puzzle. It doesn't matter which you select, just get one and keep it with you. Whenever you need to feel like a kid, take it out and play. You don't need to explain yourself to anyone. Your right brain will thank you.

"Fun fuels your brain."

- Richard Saunders⁶

Mental Asana Seven:

The next time you're at your desk and feeling drained, doodle. Just let your mind wander for a few minutes. When you come back, you'll feel energized and may have come up with a solution to a problem that's been haunting you.

"Kids have more ideas because they play with toys. Playing with toys makes ideas come to you. It's fun, too."

- Kristyn Hall⁷

Making work fun should be everyone's goal. If you haven't read *Fish!*⁸ the second ingredient in creating a high-energy workplace is play. In fact, any place can be turned into an adult playground. You could have a Ping-Pong table in the lunchroom. Or a dartboard in your office. Or a mini trampoline in the hallways. Or even basketball hoops in the garbage cans. If you're not having fun at work, you need to focus on finding a way to add energy, excitement and childlike play to your office environment. If you don't, you'll stagnate, and you and your team will have problems coming up with fresh ideas. You'll just keep producing stale solutions to old problems.

“If it isn’t fun, why do it?”

- Jerry Greenfield⁹ (co-founder of Ben & Jerry’s Ice Cream)

The truth is that as much fun as it is to be a spectator, nothing beats participation. Real fun is not a spectator sport. Don’t just watch someone using a Pogo stick. Try it. Don’t just observe people in-line skating, strap on a pair. Don’t just see people snorkeling, jump in.

“One can enjoy a game played by others, but one can only have fun by playing (in) it oneself.”

- Russell L. Wycoff¹⁰

You should play for the sheer joy if it. Think of it like a mental vacation, a little respite for your weary noodle. Give it a trip to anywhere, even if just for a few minutes. It doesn’t take long to feel rejuvenated. Do a crossword puzzle. Pick up a Rubik’s Cube. You don’t have to solve the problem for the right brain to be titillated.

“Fun is a recreative, an aesthetic, objective. It derives from the intrinsic value of the means employed. It has nothing to do with efficiency or economics.”

- Russell L. Wycoff¹¹

Remember, when your mind is at play, it’s not wasting time. It’s refueling for the next mental exercise you send it. Just like your body needs to rest after a workout, your mind needs a little break after a demanding assignment. In fact, research shows your mind needs a five-minute rest after every 55 minutes of intense work.

“The mind is not a vessel to be filled, but a fire to be sparked.”

- Plutarch¹²

When you’re looking to strengthen your ability to think creatively or to visualize a solution, the more you engage all your senses, the sooner new ideas will flow.

“Try involving all the senses. If you’re brainstorming a new children’s game, bring out some modeling clay to involve the sense of touch in possible new game ideas. If you’re writing a marketing plan, consider organizing it like Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony and including a dramatic and powerful opening few lines. If

you're giving a speech, try to paint pictures with your words."
- Bryan W. Mattimore¹³

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4. Robin Landa and Rose Gonnella, *Creative Jolt*. Cincinnati: North Light Books, 2000, p. 82.
5. Doug Hall, *Jump Start Your Brain*. New York: Warner Books, 1995, p. 40.
6. Doug Hall, *Jump Start Your Brain*. New York: Warner Books, 1995, p. 60.
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8. Stephen C. Lundin, Harry Paul and John Christensen, *Fish!* New York: Hyperion, 1996.

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CHAPTER 5 – THE POWER OF BALANCE



“One of the often overlooked advantages of looking after your physical health – with regular exercise and healthy diet – is the way it enhances your feelings about yourself and your future. Look after your physical body and your future will take care of itself.”

- Paul Wilson¹

The mind affects the body just as strongly as the body affects the mind. If you feel tired physically, you probably feel drained emotionally as well. Likewise, if you're happy and excited, your body feels energized. Have you ever noticed that when you're laughing and having fun, you are unaware of any aches and pains? That's because your mind is so relaxed and preoccupied with pleasure that it takes the attention away from whatever pain you had.

The truth is, you cannot ignore one part of yourself while focusing on the other. Dentists have a wonderful saying that explains the result of neglecting your teeth: *“Ignore them and they will go away.”* That is also true of your mental, physical and spiritual health. If you ignore your mind, it atrophies. Ignore your body and it deteriorates. Ignore your soul and it withers. Watch carefully throughout your life that you don't neglect yourself.

“If I had two loaves of bread, I would sell one and buy hyacinths. For they would feed my soul.”

- The Qur'an²

You may think your soul doesn't need to be feed but it does, just as surely as your body needs nutrition. Music, art, gardens, rainbows, sunsets, mountains all nurture your inner self. Quiet walks in the countryside, sunny strolls along the beach, and tranquil hikes across a mountain path help soothe your nerves. They make you feel more balanced, more centered, more alive.

*“Quiet by day,
Sound sleep by night: study and ease
Together mixed sweet recreation,
And innocence, which most doth please
With meditation.”*

- Alexander Pope, English poet³

Mental Asana Eight:

Take out your calendar and make an appointment with each part of you – your mind, body and soul – every week. It doesn't have to be a long appointment. Even 10 minutes can help you feel balanced. Write each one down in your agenda or on your calendar.

Here are a few examples to get you started:

For my mind:

On Tuesday (date), I will go to the bookstore (activity) and look for a book on meditation (activity).

For my soul:

On Thursday (date), I will light a candle and think about healing the Universe for five minutes (activity).

For my body:

On Saturday (date), I will take an evening walk and breathe deeply as I soak in nature (activity).

Now, you try. It's not that difficult to set aside a few minutes several times a week.

Start with five- or ten-minute activities. You can always extend the time later once you experience the benefits.

For my mind:

On _____(date),

I will _____(activity).

For my soul:

On _____(date),

I will _____(activity).

For my body:

On _____(date),

I will _____(activity).

Soon, your inner essence will beg for more moments like this, moment when you can compose yourself, special times when you can start to feel whole again. In no time, these moments will become a way of life and you won't be able to imagine living without allowing your body, mind or soul to replenish itself.

"The mind is the key to health and happiness."

- Sai Baba, Indian Spiritual Leader⁴

You will also notice that you feel calmer and better prepared to face adversity. You'll find that when small problems crop up, you won't be as upset by them. You might even smile quietly and say, "Oh, well," and enjoy the rest of the day instead of letting them throw you off balance and disturb your peace of mind.

"Cheerfulness is the best promoter of health and is as friendly to the mind as to the body."

- Joseph Addison⁵ (English essayist)

Listening to your inner needs is another skill you will quickly develop. If you feel tired, you will rest. If you feel emotionally drained, you will reflect quietly. If you feel mentally challenged, you will refuel with new insight.

“Your body doesn’t lie. If you listen to it carefully, it will tell you everything you need to know to keep healthy.”

- Sara Henderson, Australian writer⁶

There is no question that laughter is good medicine. Read the comics and look at the lighter side of the situation, no matter how difficult it may seem at the time. There is usually something so absurd about a painful situation that it seems humorous. Try to find that levity in every circumstance. You will also find that just as laughter heals the soul, a restful night’s sleep heals the body. Often, rest is the best medicine of all.

“The two best physicians of them all — Dr. Laughter and Dr. Sleep.”

- Gregory Dean, 20th century British physician⁷

When the mind is at rest, the body is not suffering from stress-induced ailments like headaches, stiff necks, backaches and nervous tension. Quieting the mind helps strengthen the body.

“To get the body in tone, get the mind in tune.”

- Zachary T. Berkovitz⁸ (20th century American)

Mental Asana Nine:

Make a list of physical activities you would like to do.

I’d love to:

Make a list of spiritual activities you would like to do.

I'd love to:

Make a list of mental activities you would like to do.

I'd love to:

Allow yourself time to enjoy these activities. Don't feel rushed or guilty that you are frittering away your time. You're not. You're spending it more wisely than you may have done for a long time.

"Noble deeds and hot baths are the best cures for depression."

- Dobie Smith, 20th century English writer⁹

Now, prioritize the list by putting numbers in front of each activity. The activities that receive first, second and third place are the ones you want to concentrate on. Go on, start today and enjoy yourself. You deserve it.

"Paradise is where I am."

- Voltaire¹⁰

Finding balance is a journey. Each step along the way brings you closer to feeling centered. It's okay if you miss a few steps or go off the path for a short time. Just remember, wherever you are is the right place to continue. You will feel better and better as time goes by. Just have patience and persistence. Your mind, body and spirit will shower you with gratitude and tranquility.

"Those who would preserve the spirit must also look after the body to which it is attached."

- Albert Einstein¹¹

NOTES:

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3. Maggie Pinkney, compiler, *The Ultimate Pocket Positives*. Australia: The Five Mile Press, 2001, chp. "Simple Pleasures."

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