

## **Meditations, Basic skills and development.**

The main quality of meditation is focus. The pursuit of the skill of Focus with the capacity to apply that skill to any endeavor, is the base quality that is required for any meditation and any mental skill. Meditation does not build focus, since it is a necessary quality for any mental pursuit, but instead limits focus and builds our ability to recognize that quality and control it.

In normal life, focus does not need to be maintained. Everything takes time and there are numerous moments that can be safely ignored without interfering with the ability to achieve a goal. There are some jobs that require the ability to maintain focus and many hobbies which build that ability. In fact, the main benefit of the arts is the capacity to maintain focus. Very few performances are possible, in music or theater, when focus wanders. In martial performances, focus is short term unless the opponent is equal or part of a group. The focus necessary for combat only exists until you or the opponent falls. While combat can continue for a long time, Much of that time is spent looking for an opponent or evading the attention of another. The amount of time that is actually spent fighting is minimal.

Meditations may require focus to be maintained for hours at a time. This Focus will always be divided amongst maintaining a physical quality, an energetic state, and a spiritual attainment. Whether moving or static, meditation requires the maintenance of nearly every skill which has been developed, simultaneously, for the purpose of ever higher attainment.

It is important to note that a physical posture is not necessary for any meditation. It is possible to focus the mind irregardless of what the body is doing. A given posture is combined with a given pattern of focus simply for efficiency. Rather than building direct control over the physical processes of the body, a posture is maintained, breath is controlled, and or you could be put on a special diet. Nothing in this document will approach that level of detail.

It should be noted that more advanced, often secret, meditations will build direct physical, mental, and energetic control so that the posture can be refined ever further. The mental focus will also be further refined with more precise imagery. This refinement continues with the energetic skills also.

Focus is the base quality which allows for Mental capacity just as breath is necessary for physical development. We will begin with some simple skill development and discuss a given skill's benefit. First let us recognize that thinking is not related to focus. Having thoughts does not mean that you have or lack focus. The purpose of the mind is to combine memory, instinct, and direct experience into patterns which may allow an increase in harmony. A catatonic person does not have any less mental activity than a schizophrenic who hears voices. The difference is in focus. The focus that allows the recognition of memory being different from experience and imagination. Focus is what causes us to pick one mental quality out from another and give it precedence. When, for example, a student is told to focus on the breath; they often place much effort into control of the breath. This is a valuable skill, but it misses the point of the exercise. It does not allow the recognition of Focus. Much like eating is defined as bringing the food to the mouth and swallowing. Very few people realize that how they chew matters, even though it is the most important quality of the whole process. The point of Focus training is to recognize that quality

and define it so it can be recognized, and strengthened, in every action throughout the day. Every thing you do requires focus. As such it can be trained during every moment of every day.

### *Focus on the Breath*

Sit or stand in a trained posture. Adopting a specific posture for meditation will help create a habit until the focus is strong enough to transcend this limitation. Anything can be used to develop the habit such as looking at a specific picture, being in a posture, chanting, or performing at a specific time. This is a habit and does not actually improve your ability so much as requires you to not do other things. When you have focus you will not need habits. If you need to focus quickly, because of a job, location, or other requirement; then you should meditate in a position you will use during your performance or while wearing your uniform. I would suggest you develop the meditation while you put on the uniform. Many surgeons, and other emergency workers, perform a standard ritual which coincides with preparations to perform their duties. Nearly every skilled worker also has a corresponding ritual which triggers the proper mindset.

In this posture, begin to notice the breath. Attention is not focus, however it gives focus something to work with. The physical body changes from moment to moment. The breathing will also change from moment to moment. This fact alone require that you have focus in order to feel the breath. Feel the breath. Do not try and control the breath. Do not define the breath. Feel every aspect of the breath in every component of the body. Narrow your attention to the body to such a degree that the outside of the body becomes unimportant at this moment.

Keep in mind that you can do this in an instant. The point is to do it over time and maintain the effort, equally, over the whole body. Initially, maintaining focus for one whole breath is actually an achievement. After this you should begin to count the breath. A number is chosen, usually fifty to a hundred, that this is maintained for. The ability to maintain this focus on the breath for fifty breaths is considered proof that further development is allowable and required.

After this would come any physical training. This actually allows you to physically learn faster and react more efficiently.

### *Focus on the Mind*

Attain the meditation posture. At this point we are going to apply our skills to the mind. The mind is a random combination of thoughts and perceptions. Most people follow experience, and this is defined as reacting to reality. The thoughts flow past like water and only those which have some similarity to current experience or emotion are considered relevant. During meditation, or any stillness, there is no experience to define thoughts. Many people perceive this to be the true activity of the mind. This is a misperception since the mind is no more or less active than at any other time. You merely pretend that the thoughts are more important at other times. That is simply the ego defending, needlessly, it's own existence.

Like previous skills and abilities, this can be attained in an instant. You merely want to maintain it over time. This skill allows you to recognize the depth and vastness which the mind is capable of existing

in. You quiet the body and outside perception. In stillness, the mind becomes apparent. Simply pay attention. Hear the voices, see the pictures, experience the memories, and pay attention to what is going on in the mind. Normally we focus on one thought at a time. Try and notice all of them. Notice the patterns and flow of thoughts. Notice how many thoughts actually exist at any one time. Notice how big the mind really is.

Now focus the mind. Like the breath, maintain attention on one thought. Usually a word is provided by a teacher as part of a specific path toward enlightenment. Sometimes a picture is mentally maintained in parallel to the thoughts. That will come later and has a specific purpose based on the picture. However we can start with the word "trust". This word probably has some strong emotion connected to it and will also have many secondary connections. Maintain this word in the center of your mind. As the connected thoughts come forth, notice each one. Notice how each new thing connected to the word arises, not only from the word, but also in relation to the thoughts that came before it. Maintain the word at the center and maintain each other thought, concept, and memory around it at the same time. Eventually, with skill and time, you will be able to maintain all related thoughts. At this point you will notice that the thoughts stop coming. Notice the pattern. Remove focus from the word and notice how the thought pattern falls apart. Start over. Use a different word.

This allows the recognition that all of those thoughts happen at the same time.

#### *Focus on the emotions.*

The focus on the emotions is also a major source of confusion for many schools of thought. The emotions are part of the physical reality of the body. They are not separate from the body. They are not messages from beyond. They are simply what happens when the mind and body interact. The Ego adds meaning to the emotions based upon what is necessary to create the illusion of control. As such, an important step to recognizing emotions is to first recognize when you are lying about those emotions. Many people try and control, or suppress, the emotion itself. The emotions are not the problem. The convoluted explanations that people use to defend the emotions are the problem. For this reason it would be more efficient to be able to recognize the mind before trying to focus on the emotions.

Upon recognizing an emotion, it is important to then choose another emotion. Like thoughts, all of the emotions exist at the same time. The body and mind are often in a state where one emotion is strongest and the others are unnoticeable. It is important to recognize that the other emotions aren't gone.

#### *Realize a process.*

There are many variations on this process. Many of them involve a blooming flower or the building of a temple. The religious overtones are not necessary. Many of the non religious examples involve artistic endeavors of some kind. Such examples involve flower arrangement, bonsai, poetry, painting, and nearly any other type of artistic creation. The meditative process is simply one recognized thought to one recognized step. One thought to one brick, weld, petal, brush stroke, or poetic phrase is the basic pattern. When the "process" is finished then you rest for a few breaths and begin with another thought. This meditative process helps you recognize the path your thoughts take. With practice, it is possible to correct any undesirable deviations or relax any anxiety which coincides with a given thought path.

These meditations move into a practice where a given word/concept is explored both mentally and emotionally. Any other meditation is a combination of physical and mental states which are beyond the scope of this document.

As a disclaimer, I would like it known that all Meditative training is incredibly fluid. Imagery will change from region to region, style to style, tradition to tradition, and person to person. A teacher, who had experience teaching you, would modify an image to best transmit the learning from His, or Her, experience to your experience. This Document only has the purpose to remove the most common ignorance from the discussion of meditation. It is to allow a person, without a relationship to a teacher, to pursue basic skill in meditation. It also separates basic meditation skills from information that is actually social, cultural, or martial. Proprietary information actually sets you up to learn the more advanced knowledge from a given teacher within a given tradition. However, it is only valid for a given teacher and would cause needless confusion in your search for a tradition of learning.

For information and further contact:

Sifu Michael Boris

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