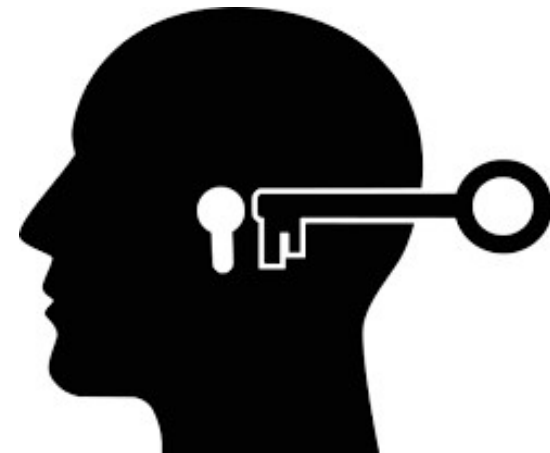


Dharana and Focus

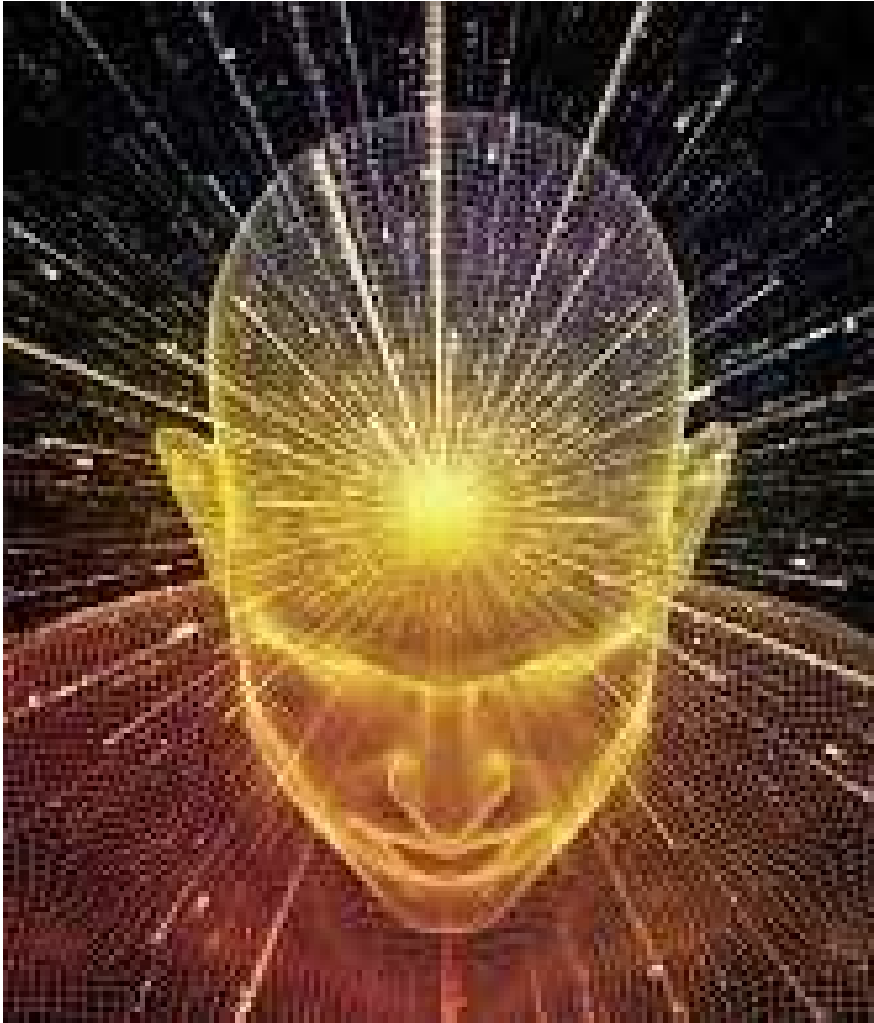
Lecture

Dharana is the Key to Mindfulness

- Most of the time our minds wander into the past and future, both cause much worry
- Eliminate that suffering by practicing present-moment awareness
- The suffering can be eliminated by learning to focus on **WHAT** you are doing **WHILE** you are doing it:
 - Washing dishes
 - Driving
 - Folding laundry
 - Chopping vegetables
 - Holding a conversation



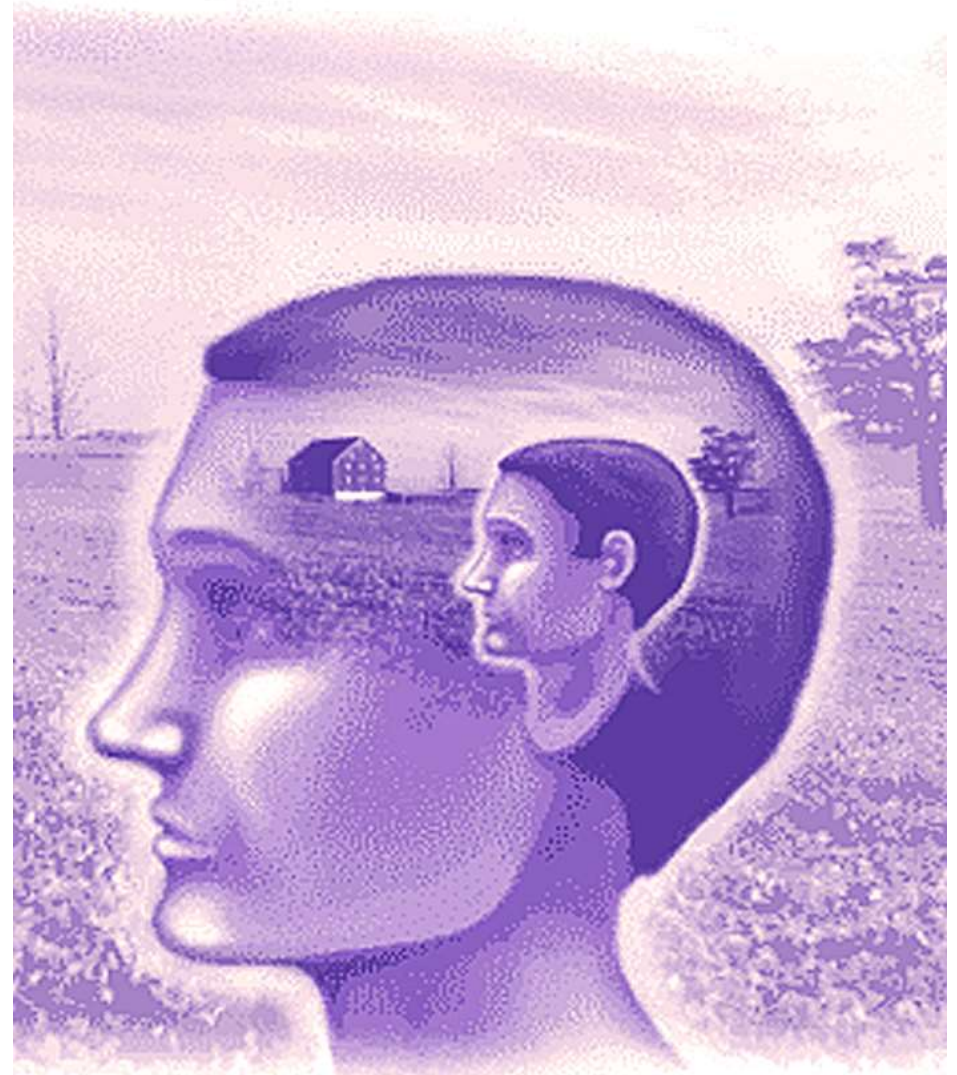
Four States of Consciousness



1. Canalata - Random thinking
2. Ekagrata - Focusing
3. Dharana* - Focusing with effort, hold concentration on a single internal or external focal point where all body consciousness and restless thoughts cease
4. Dhyana - Effortless expansion of consciousness, the mind becomes absorbed by the object of focus

Dharana and the Witness Consciousness

- To practice Dharana, you must cultivate your Consciousness, the part of your awareness that is aware of awareness.
- Dharana's three elements of awareness:
 1. Your origin of consciousness
 2. Your thoughts and feelings
 3. Your object of meditation (breath, mantra, candle, etc)



Benefits of Dharana

- Increased emotional intelligence
- Access to higher states of consciousness
- Better selective attention
- Increased Visual scanning
- Better at repetitive activities
- Builds intuitive thought

- *A selective review of dharana and dhyana in healthy participants* (Telles, et al., 2016)

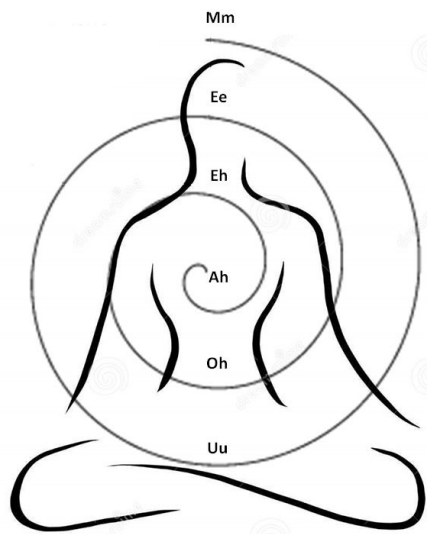
Dharana

Practice



Dharana Techniques

- Balancing Asana
- Focus on Breath
- Focus on Sankalpa
- Vowel Spiral
- Written or Om sound
- Tratak, or candle gazing

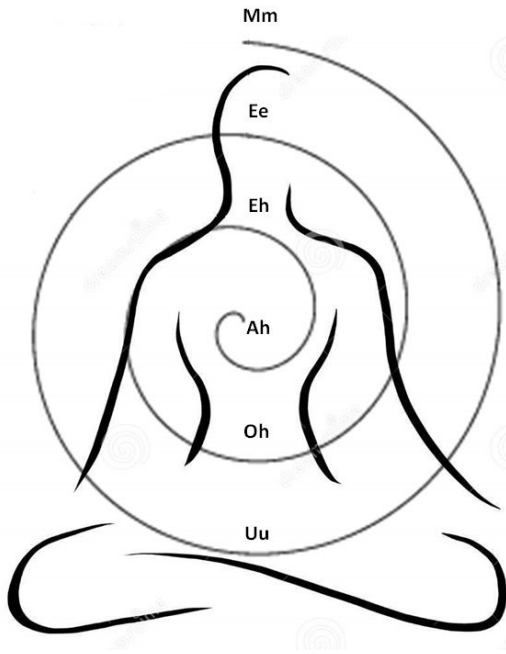


Vowel Spiral

- The Vowel Spiral is a sound practice that uses vowel sounds (plus a humming sound) to move vibration around into different areas of the torso.
- It is used for both relaxation and as an awareness building exercise.
- Rather than chanting loudly, reserve some of the energy for yourself by directing it inwards to create a stronger sensation of vibration.
- A slow and smooth exhale creates a smooth tone and builds control over the diaphragm and breath.
- This is an excellent practice to do alone when you are feeling stressed or hurried, before bed, or before other meditation or yoga practices to help you center and ground.

Vowel Spiral, cont.

- Begin seated. Take a few breaths into the lower belly and exhale naturally through the nose
- Chant at natural speaking pitch, can also place hand over the areas of the body where the vibration is strongest
- Each vowel resonates within your body at different levels bringing awareness and relaxation



1. ***AHH at the Heart***
2. ***EHH at the Throat & top of Chest***
3. ***OOO at the Belly (lips round, open jaw)***
4. ***EEE in the Head (smile wide with the mouth)***
5. ***UUU in the Pelvis, Legs & Feet (lips round, open jaw)***
6. ***MMM at the Crown (tongue tip at roof of mouth)***
7. ***AHH at the Heart***