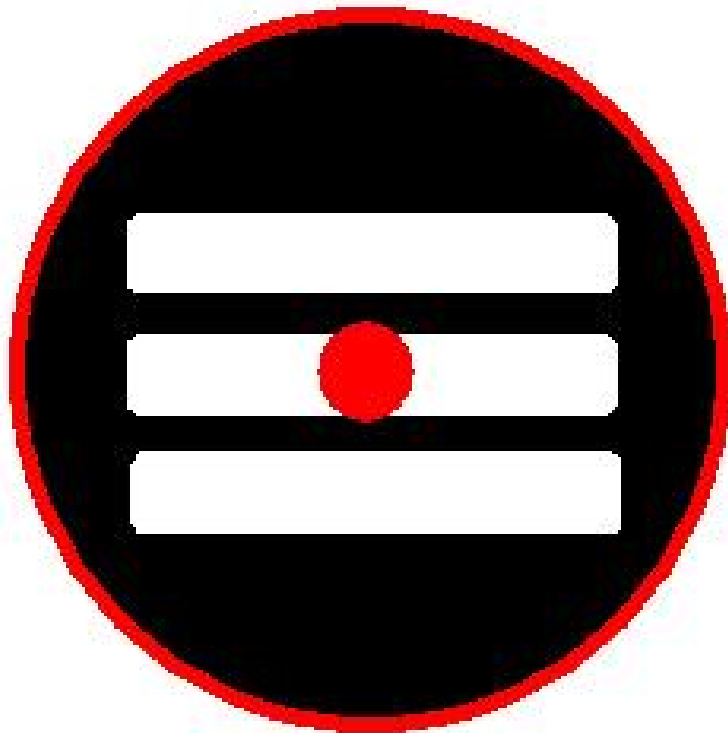


INTRODUCTION TO
THE PRACTICE
OF AWARENESS



Peter Wilberg

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TAKING TIME TO BE AWARE	2
AWARENESS, SPACE AND TIME	3
AWARENESS AS TIME-SPACE.....	4
THE VARYING SHAPES OF PEOPLE’S TIME-SPACE.....	5
AWARENESS AS LIBERATION IN THIS LIFE.....	6
‘MEDITATION’ IN THE NEW YOGA	7
THE FUNDAMENTAL CHOICE TO BE AWARE	8
FROM BEING AWARE TO BEING AWARENESS	9
AWARE ACTION AND AWARE IDENTIFICATION	10
CHOOSING FREEDOM THROUGH AWARENESS	11
THE FIRST FUNDAMENTAL DISTINCTION.....	12
THE FOUNDATIONAL MUDRA.....	13
THE FOUNDATIONAL MANTRA.....	14
INNER SILENCE AS THE SECRET OF AWARENESS	15
LISTENING FROM TRANSLUCENT INNER SILENCE	16
LISTENING AS PATH TO HIGHER KNOWLEDGE	17
THE NEW YOGA FOUNDATION MEDITATION	18
THE FOUNDATION MEDITATION IN VERSE.....	20
THE IMPORTANCE OF MEDITATING ‘NEGATIVITY’	21
ON ‘DIFFICULTIES’ IN SUSTAINING AWARENESS.....	22
FROM BEING TO BODYING AWARENESS	23
QUESTIONS THAT CULTIVATE BODILY AWARENESS.....	24

TAKING TIME TO BE AWARE

In robbing us of time, today's culture also robs us of dignity. But dignity has no great value in a culture devoted to progress, power and productivity. Since time is money in modern culture, few of us can afford dignity.

Alexander Lowen

Today's world faces a grave economic, ecological, cultural crisis – indeed a global CIVILISATIONAL crisis. The word 'crisis' means a 'turning point' in time. The basic need expressed in this crisis however, is to find a way of BEING-IN-TIME and BEING-IN-THE-WORLD that is no longer dominated by 'busy-ness' - by DOING – and aimed only at HAVING. The new relation to time that human beings so desperately need at this time is one in which they give themselves time, not just to produce or consume, work or play – but to truly BE. That means giving themselves time to BE AWARE. For to truly 'be' is to BE AWARE. Just as to truly 'meditate' is simply to take time to BE AWARE, and to abide in AWARENESS. Only out of a deeper, more meditative awareness can come better decisions and deeper more thoughtful solutions to world problems. Only by taking time to BE AWARE can people learn to be and relate to others in a more meditative and aware way – thus transforming human relations. And only through meditative awareness can important DECISIONS, whether in personal life, business, management or government be properly pre-meditated, taken with full awareness of all there is to be aware of. All MISMANAGEMENT, MISGOVERNMENT and MISTREATMENT of others stem from the self-defeating rush of busy-ness, from believing one has NO TIME TO BE AWARE – whereas in fact it is the very culture of busy-ness that slows down and delays aware, effective and empathic action. All the business powers of this world conspire to keep us busy in an unaware way - forcing us to sell our time to them in the service of ever-more productive and mind-numbing 'labour'. In return they sell us ever-more mind-numbing products - and equate 'quality time' with the purchase and consumption of these products. Yet the global business culture of enforced economic conscription, speed and busy-ness also expresses a deep-seated fear of awareness – not least an unwillingness to be fully aware of all the ways in which, lacking awareness, human beings are currently destroying each other and the earth. This civilisational crisis and turning point in time tells us – IT IS HIGH TIME FOR HUMANITY TO BE AWARE.

AWARENESS, SPACE AND TIME

BHAIRAVA [Shiva] is he whose light shines in the minds of those YOGIS who are intent on assimilating time into the eternal present of awareness...

Guru Abhinavagupta

Only by giving oneself TIME to Be Aware can we come to dwell in an expanded SPACE of awareness, an awareness that can embrace our experience of ourselves, other people and the sensory world around us. Only through dwelling in this expanded SPACE of awareness can we maintain awareness of more than ONE thing AT THE SAME TIME - more than one aspect of ourselves and others, more than one thing or thought, more than one feeling or voice within us, more than one choice before us.

'Time' is the very SPACE of awareness, more or less expanded or contracted, that we feel within the Moment.

'Space' is the very TIME we give ourselves to expand the spaciousness of the awareness we feel within the Moment.

Without giving ourselves TIME to Be Aware, the SPACE of our awareness is contracted to a single FOCUS and we lose a sense of the expansive FIELD of awareness in which we dwell. We become like dwellers in a spacious ocean - dwellers so used to just focussing their awareness on one thing or another within that ocean that they have ceased to be aware of the ocean AS SUCH - no longer seeing it, sensing it or even surmising its existence. Without the ocean, we could observe and study none of the beings that dwell within it - nor would they exist. Similarly, without space or time, we could be aware of nothing - 'no thing' - within them. Awareness, like space and time, is the precondition for our experience of any thing whatsoever - and for their very existence or being.

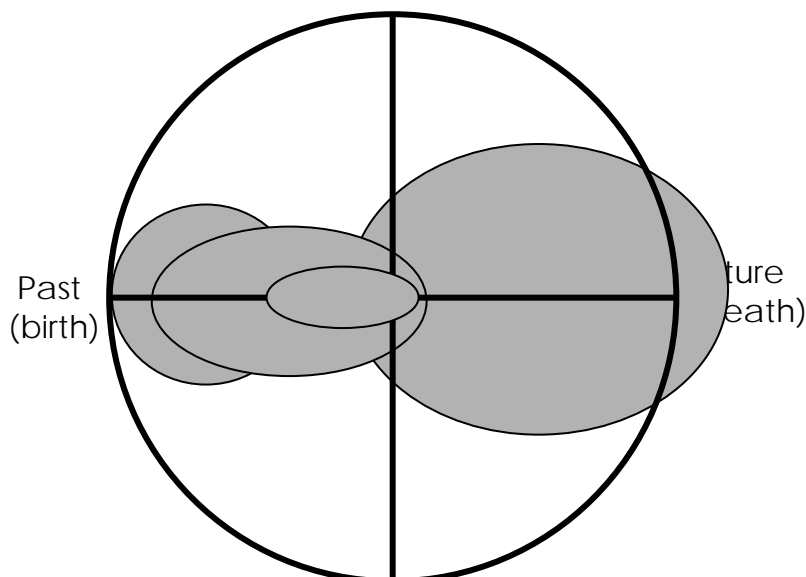
AWARENESS AS TIME-SPACE

Time, the '4th' dimension, has an INSIDE. 3-dimensional space IS our physical experience of that insideness of time – the spacious insideness of THE MOMENT. Just as there is nothing 'outside' awareness, so there is nothing we can experience 'outside' THE MOMENT - understood as the entire awareness FIELD of our immediate experiencing. All thoughts about past and future actions and events arise within this field - as elements of our immediate, PRESENT experiencing within the moment. The 'insideness' of time is the EXPANSIVE INWARDNESS of THE MOMENT - a TIME-SPACE embracing all three dimensions of space. If we let thoughts and feelings focussed on the past or future take us away from the spacious field of our HERE-AND-NOW SENSORY EXPERIENCING then we truly get 'lost in time'. Indeed just THINKING of past and future events as if they were moment 'points' on a one-dimensional line of time - preceding or following a point that we call the 'present' moment - is to forget that THERE IS NOTHING OUTSIDE THE MOMENT - no point or period of time that it does not or cannot embrace within it. If, even 'for a moment' therefore, we forget that all our thoughts and feelings ABOUT past and future events ARE PART OF our immediate experiencing WITHIN the moment, then we cease to experience the true nature of THE PRESENT MOMENT itself - not as a point on a line of time but as an expansive 3-dimensional time-space embracing all possible past and future events and MOMENT POINTS within it.

Within the spacious INSIDENESS of the MOMENT we can and do shift the FOCUS of our awareness, both temporally and spatially – for example focussing on different objects or activities in space, or on what we think of as 'past' and 'future' events. 'Linear' time itself however, is nothing but the illusion that arises whenever we shift the FOCUS of our awareness, but do so without continuing to feel the entire 3-dimensional FIELD of awareness WITHIN which these shifts of focus occur. For then our whole experience of time becomes one-dimensional - reduced to an experience of intervals or periods on a 'line' of time stretched out between MOMENT POINTS – different concentration points or FOCI of awareness.

THE VARYING SHAPES OF PEOPLE'S TIME-SPACE

Space is more than just physical space. It is the time-space or temporality of our awareness. Yet many people's awareness of time is so CONTRACTED to specific foci - whether in the past, present or future - that it lacks any SPACIOUSNESS even in 2 dimensions. Instead it is reduced to a series of points on a 2-dimensional line. Alternatively, the two-dimensional plane or three-dimensional 'volume' of their temporal awareness may take the form of bloated regions or bubbles of time in the past or future, regions which are more or less cut off from one another and from the individual's area of present awareness. The diagram below represents different people's temporal awareness in the form of 2-dimensional areas within a larger, circular 'event horizon'. The horizontal axis within the event horizon is time as we usually conceive it - a line from birth to death. The circular or elliptical regions within the event horizon are examples of the countless different 'shapes' that temporal awareness can take in 2 dimensions. Any person's time-space field may be more or less spaciouly expanded or contracted, embrace more or less of their past and future, and be more or less oriented towards past or future. Indeed some people's times-space may be CENTRED at a point in or even 'off' the conventional time line, just as its centre and/or area may reach BEYOND the apparent 'event horizon' of birth and death (grey-shaded shapes). How would you draw the shape of your time-space?



AWARENESS AS LIBERATION IN THIS LIFE

The traditional aim of yoga has been 'liberation' ('Moksha' / 'Mukti') from the reincarnational wheel or 'circle' ('Chakra') of time – the cycle of birth and re-birth. Life as lived in the physical plane is in one-dimensional time - experienced as a linear sequence of moment points, and also perceived as part of a linear series of incarnations – the cycle of birth and rebirth. Life as experienced in the 'after-life' and 'inter-life' is life lived WITHIN the unbounded and all-embracing time-space of the moment. It is liberation from linear time, a liberation that Tantric practices also aimed to achieve in this very life ('Jivanmukti'), through taking our awareness across the apparent threshold of awareness we call 'death'. 'Dying', in its true essence is not a point or process in linear time, but the very process of TRANSITION from being in time to being or dwelling in the spacious present, - the unbounded inner time-space of the moment. Symptoms of aging and 'dementia' such as memory loss or loss of time-orientation simply reflect the essential nature of this transition. The temporal awareness of souls who have crossed the threshold is a time-space that can expand to embrace both past, present and future lives, selves and events. Those who experience the reality that 'the moment has no outside' in this life, who can expand their temporal awareness in tandem with the spatial expanse of their awareness, are no longer 'alive' in the ordinary sense, but have re-linked with that self – their eternal soul or Awareness Self, which is 'already dead and not yet born' - albeit not in terms of linear time as experienced by the physical self in the life between birth and death. Higher consciousnesses or 'Oversouls' are indeed truly MOMENTOUS beings, beings whose temporal awareness within the MOMENT can span not only multiple lives, actual and potential, but whole epochs of historical time. That Entity or Oversoul whose immediate temporal awareness has a trans-historical character - SPANNING the entire history of humankind is the 'Christ' entity. It is one of a number of entities – 'gods' - whose incarnations serve to facilitate corrective interventions in the historical maturation of human awareness across the epochs – including our own.

'MEDITATION' IN THE NEW YOGA

Giving ourselves time to BE means giving ourselves TIME TO BE AWARE – aware of all that there is to be aware of, all there is to sense and feel, experience and explore, enjoy and delight in, process and ponder, recollect and anticipate, delve into and draw insight from in the present moment.

The root meaning of 'to be' is 'to dwell or abide'. The meaning of yoga 'meditation' in THE NEW YOGA is not simply something to be 'done' now and then at some specific time. On the contrary, it means constantly giving ourselves time to be aware - to 'dwell' or 'abide' in awareness. From BEING AWARE comes the ability to Be or 'dwell' in awareness. From BEING AWARE and BEING-IN-AWARENESS comes the ability to fully identify with the awareness in which we dwell – to BE AWARENESS.

We dwell within awareness as we dwell within space. The experience of BEING AWARENESS is comparable to identifying with the space we sense within and around us, experiencing it as a unified and singular space of awareness. It is this that leads to a new experience of space itself as the inner spaciousness of the present moment.

THE NEW YOGA is a radical departure from all traditional, modern and New Age yoga practices whose focus lies on stretching and contorting our physical bodies. Its purpose instead is to stretch ('tan') and guard ('tra') awareness. That is why it is 'tan-tra' in the truest sense. 'Meditation' in THE NEW YOGA is not an effortful Buddhistic practice of seeking to 'empty' the mind of thoughts.

For awareness, whilst no 'thing', is not an empty nothingness but the spacious FIELD of our immediate experiencing. BEING-IN-AWARENESS allows us to affirm and become even more INTENSELY aware of every thought and thing, sensation and feeling, conception and perception, word and image - but without becoming bound to or identified WITH it.

THE FUNDAMENTAL CHOICE TO BE AWARE

You may be aware – sometimes, often or all the time, of so-called ‘negative’ feelings - feeling as if ‘it’s all too much’ or you can’t ‘cope’, feeling joyless or depressed, bored or fed up, even to the point of being tired of living or wanting to die. You may sometimes be aware of thinking so-called negative thoughts about yourself - thinking that you are bad or mad, unworthy or incapable, a failure or disappointment to yourself or others. You may also be aware of feeling and thinking about others in ‘negative’ ways – for example feeling or thinking that they do not really see you, that they dislike or hate you, are ignoring or avoiding you, judging or attacking you. You may be aware too of thinking that your life situation is hopeless - that there is absolutely nothing you can do to change it or change the way you feel.

To obtain relief or feel better you may seek to DO SOMETHING, to change things, yet are aware that your actions will change nothing. Yet even if there IS absolutely NOTHING you can DO to change things or to feel different – you still have a fundamental choice. That choice applies whether the thoughts, feelings or life situation you are aware of are ‘negative’, ‘positive’, or a mixture of both. This choice however, has NOTHING WHATSOEVER TO DO with things that you can or cannot DO to change whatever it is you are aware of - for example choosing to repress or run away from it, to blame and attack yourself or others for it, to fight it or resign yourself to it, to ‘live with it’ or to kill yourself because of it. The fundamental choice has to do with BEING, not with DOING. And whilst a seemingly simple choice, it is in essence the most fundamental and profound choice each and all of us can make - at any time, in any situation, whatever it is we are aware of thinking or feeling, and whatever we are aware of thinking and feeling about ourselves, other people, our life as a whole or the world as a whole. The choice is simply this: to lose ourselves in UNAWARE IDENTIFICATION with whatever ‘it’ is we are AWARE OF - or, alternatively, to give ourselves ALL THE TIME WE NEED to stay with and actively identify with THE VERY AWARENESS OF IT.

FROM BEING AWARE TO BEING AWARENESS

THE NEW YOGA is founded on a fundamental ethical choice – a commitment to always and first-of-all give ourselves TIME TO BE AWARE. Only out of this commitment can we make the fundamental choice to identify with awareness - rather than losing our awareness in the very things we are aware of.

A motto of THE NEW YOGA is - “If there’s nothing you can do, don’t do anything” – except to Be Aware, abiding in the awareness of all that you sense within and around you, whether ‘positive’ or ‘negative’.

If we are unknowingly identified with what it is we are AWARE OF, we surrender to it and let it possess us, behaving in ways that are all an expression of it. As a result, NOTHING we do or don’t do CAN change anything – because EVERYTHING we do or don’t do IS AN EXPRESSION OF THE VERY THING WE WANT TO CHANGE – thus reinforcing it. If, on the other hand, we give ourselves enough time to just ‘abide in’ and ‘be’ the awareness of that thing - IDENTIFYING WITH THAT AWARENESS rather than with the thing we are AWARE OF, then we will find, in time, that the ‘thing’ itself does indeed change.

THE NEW YOGA is thus a meditative, transformative process that leads us from BEING AWARE of something or other to BEING THE AWARENESS of it.

Out of BEING AWARENESS comes a new awareness - new ways of sensing, feeling and thinking the things we are aware of. Out of BEING AWARENESS comes a wholly new and CHANGED awareness of ourselves, other people or life situations and life as such. Out of BEING AWARENESS too, come new ideas about what we can or cannot DO – leading us to act in new, more aware and creative ways, ways that are NOT a self-reinforcing expression of the very things we wish to change - but instead express an ALREADY CHANGED way of thinking and feeling them.

AWARE ACTION AND AWARE IDENTIFICATION

Life is ACTION. Action always implies the possibility of choice. Our every choice however, is itself an act – an act of identification with a particular pattern of action. For ‘identity’ itself is made up of patterns of action. UNFREE action is UNAWARE action, based not on choice but on UNAWARE IDENTIFICATION with particular patterns of action or behaviour. Truly FREE action on the other hand – FREEDOM ITSELF – is AWARE action, action that comes from identifying with awareness as such and that is not simply a REACTION to things we are aware of. That is why only by making THE FUNDAMENTAL CHOICE – the choice to identify with awareness as such rather than anything we are aware of – do all our choices become free choices. For awareness is what opens up alternate possibilities and patterns of action, thus allowing us to freely CHOOSE our actions.

THE AWARENESS of any ‘thing’ – a sensation, emotion or thought, behavioural pattern of action or bodily symptom – is not itself any such thing. Awareness as such is essentially FREE of sensations, impulses, emotions, thoughts etc. That is why the Fundamental Choice to identify with pure awareness frees us from UNAWARE IDENTIFICATION with anything we are aware of. Yet this PRIMARY IDENTIFICATION with awareness also offers us the choice to freely identify with things – to practice AWARE IDENTIFICATION. For paradoxically, it is by freely CHOOSING to identify with things that we come to no longer experience them AS ‘things’ at all. If, for example, we choose to identify with a physical symptom or ‘dis-ease’, we cease to experience it simply as some ‘thing’ we are aware of. Instead we will begin to experience the symptom AS a ‘state of consciousness’ - a specific felt QUALITY of awareness. By choosing to identify with the symptom as a ‘state of consciousness’ or ‘quality of awareness’, the symptom itself will begin to disappear AS a symptom – as some bothersome ‘thing’ we are aware of. Through AWARE IDENTIFICATION with things we can experience the reality that everything we are aware OF - not least our own body - also IS an awareness in its own right.

CHOOSING FREEDOM THROUGH AWARENESS

If you are not AWARE of the way you are thinking, feeling, speaking or acting you cannot CHOOSE to think, feel, speak or act differently. In other words: IF YOU ARE NOT AWARE, YOU HAVE NO CHOICE. That is why the Fundamental Choice that each of us can and needs to make is to Be Aware. For awareness itself automatically expands the range of ALTERNATIVE choices we are aware of at any time and in any situation. In this way it automatically extends our Degree of Freedom. Without identifying with awareness - Being Awareness - our actions cease to be free choices and become mere reactions to things we are aware of. With awareness, we become aware not just of 'how things are' but of the countless choices available to us in responding to them. Every moment of everyday life we are constantly faced with choices - whether to do or say something or not, whether to do or say one thing or another, whether to do or say something in one way or in another way etc. All the moment-by-moment 'micro-choices' we make - whether to work or rest, eat or drink, move or stay still, even whether to let a particular thought pass or not, or whether to let ourselves fully feel a particular feeling or not - affect not only our entire day but our entire life - and the life beyond that. And it is such moment-by-moment 'micro-choices' that shape the most momentous 'macro-choices' of our lives - for example choices to do with relationships, occupation etc. There are of course certain things we CANNOT choose. We cannot, for example, choose not to die. But nor, if we want to LIVE fully and in full freedom, can we choose NOT TO CHOOSE. That is why THE NEW YOGA is above all a yoga of AWARE ACTION - action that is free because it is not simply an unaware REACTION to things and people but freely chosen in awareness of alternative possible actions. All the countless meditational practices of THE NEW YOGA, starting with the basic practice of Being Aware, should not be thought of as effortful 'disciplines' but as new types of CHOICES we can make - choices that are fundamental to achieving the single most important aim of 'Tantra' - the greatest possible FREEDOM both in this life ('Jivanmukti') and beyond.

THE FIRST FUNDAMENTAL DISTINCTION

The distinction between anything we experience or are aware OF and the very AWARENESS of it is fundamental to THE NEW YOGA. It is the same as the distinction between objects we are aware of in space and the SEEMING emptiness of space itself. Indeed it is the very SAME relation - since space as such is essentially nothing 'objective' but the subjective space OF awareness in which we experience things, both inwardly or outwardly. What happens however, if people are UNABLE to make the Fundamental Distinction between 'things' they experience - including their own thoughts ABOUT those things - and the spaces of awareness in which they experience those things and thoughts? If their sensory or emotional experiences are too intense they may feel 'overwhelmed' by them, or filled to the point of bursting by them - unable to feel them safely embraced within a larger space of awareness. Alternatively they may seek to habitually contract the space of their awareness to a narrow focus, fearing that if their awareness space were expanded it might fill with things that are 'too much' for them - or that they would rather NOT be aware of in the first place. Either way, their actions will be a mere reaction to their experience, and their behaviour an unaware expression of it. In addition, their thoughts themselves become mere mental interpretations placed on their experience - rather than the expression of a deeper, more meaningful and insightful awareness of the things they experience. Indeed they may use thinking to constantly and obsessively 'objectify' their experience - in doing so turning both themselves and others, both things and thoughts into mere intellectual OBJECTS of their minds. In this way however, they impoverish the rich SUBJECTIVE dimensions of their experience, and deprive their thinking itself of richer experiential sources. Worse still, in doing so they turn THEMSELVES into mere objects of their own mind and intellect, actions and perceptions, judgements and punishments. Worst of all, they may experience THEMSELVES too, only as OBJECTS of other people's actions and perceptions, thoughts and emotions and turn other people into mere COUNTER-OBJECTS of their own.

THE FOUNDATIONAL MUDRA

Awareness has the essential character of the 'space', outer and inner, in which we find ourselves - and within which we experience things. 'Being Awareness' is attained through 'Being Space'. This means adopting a basic bodily bearing or 'Mudra' traditionally known as 'Khechari Mudra'. The essence of this Mudra lies in choosing to identify with the seeming emptiness of space rather than anything we are aware of within it. In this way we can pass from an intensified awareness of space as we ordinarily sense it to a profound experience of awareness itself AS infinite space.

THE FOUNDATIONAL MUDRA

1. Feel the outer surface of your body as a whole.
2. From that surface sense the entire space around your body.
3. Visualise and feel that space extending infinitely in all directions – above and beneath you, to either side of you, behind you as well as in front of you.
4. Be aware of the seeming emptiness of space as something identical with awareness – being that without which you could not be aware of anything within it.
5. Sense your body surface again, this time visualizing and feeling the insideness of your body as a hollow space
6. Whatever thoughts, feelings or sensations you are aware of within the hollow spaces of your head, chest and abdomen, identify with those spaces themselves rather than anything you experience within them.
7. Experience the sensed inner space of your head, chest and abdomen as one singular inner space or 'field' OF awareness.
8. Let your sense of your own body surface dissolve, thus experiencing Awareness AS space - a 'unified field' no longer divided into 'outer and 'inner' spaces.

THE FOUNDATIONAL MANTRA

Whenever we have a feeling or thought that could be expressed in such words as 'I feel this' or 'I think that' - and even if we have no words to describe what we think and feel, the most important words missing are not simply those that would allow us to say what we think and feel. The first and most important words missing are unspoken words, a silent mantra. Were they to be spoken the words of this Silent Mantra would be "THERE IS AN AWARENESS OF ...".

If all we wordlessly experience or express in words is the sense that 'I think this' or 'I feel that', in effect we are IDENTIFYING OURSELVES WITH OUR THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS. Similarly, if all we wordlessly experience or express in words is a thought or feeling ABOUT someone or some thing, then those thoughts and feelings so much focus our awareness on that thing or person that we cease to be aware of them AS thoughts and feelings. In effect, then we ARE IDENTIFYING OUR THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS ABOUT REALITY WITH REALITY. The Silent Mantra is the wordless awareness that would go together with saying to ourselves words such as the following: "THERE IS AN AWARENESS OF thinking this", "THERE IS AN AWARENESS OF feeling that" - or "THERE IS AN AWARENES OF having this thought or feeling about this thing or that person." The mantra is fundamental in helping us (1) not to IDENTIFY with our own thoughts and feelings, and (2) not to identity those thoughts and feelings about reality WITH reality. The words of the Silent Mantra work in an even deeper way - helping us to distinguish between ANYTHING WE ARE AWARE OF - whether a thought or feeling, sensation or emotion, conception or perception, word or mental image - from the WORDLESS AWARENESS OF IT - and the awareness too of whatever it is that the thought or feeling, sensation or emotion, conception or perception, image or word - actually expresses. That is why the unspoken words of the silent mantra - "THERE IS AN AWARENSS OF ..." - are the first and most important words along THE WAY OF AWARENESS, and why they are also the FOUNDATIONAL MANTRA of this WAY - of all that can be attained through THE NEW YOGA OF AWARENESS.

INNER SILENCE AS THE SECRET OF AWARENESS

BEING-IN-AWARENESS is BEING-IN-SILENCE. BEING-IN-SILENCE means staying or dwelling - 'being' - within that silence. Similarly, identifying with INNER SILENCE – BEING SILENCE - is the principal way of BEING AWARENESS. BEING SILENCE does not mean BEING SILENT all the time. BEING SILENT is nevertheless the most basic way of giving ourselves TIME TO BE AWARE - the way we call LISTENING. Time given to Listening in inner silence – both to ourselves and others – is time given to Awareness.

“Not knowing how to listen, neither can they speak.”

Heraclitus

BEING AWARE of silence means LISTENING into the silence out of which all our thoughts first arise and take shape. If we do not listen in this way before we speak, we do not really speak at all – for our words do not re-sound from depths of SILENT AWARENESS but become mere unaware expressions of our immediate or past EXPERIENCE. That is why, for most people, 'listening' is merely a brief prelude to speech in which they prepare to express their thoughts in words – but without any awareness of where they are coming from and what they are really expressing or saying with them. In speaking they identify with their mental words and inner voices and not with their silent source. In particular, they remain UNAWARE of the way in which both WHAT they experience and the WAY they think and speak about it are coloured by the underlying 'mood' or inner 'tone' of their experience – by TONES OF SILENCE which are essentially TONES OF AWARENESS itself.

In THE NEW YOGA on the other hand, listening is not just a prelude to speech. It is the principal way of giving ourselves more TIME TO BE AWARE of all that we are experiencing and of the ways we are thinking about or giving expression to it. Listening, in other words, is the specific 'yoga' or discipline of sustaining, staying and dwelling in INNER SILENCE – of BEING IN SILENCE and thereby BEING-IN-AWARENESS.

LISTENING FROM TRANSLUCENT INNER SILENCE

“In the attitude of silence the soul finds the path in a clearer light, and what is elusive and deceptive resolves itself into crystal clearness.” Mahatma Gandhi

BEING-IN-SILENCE does not imply the cessation of all thought or mental ‘noise’. Instead it is what allows us to LISTEN inwardly before we speak, thereby HEARING our own thoughts, even before or without expressing them, as INNER SOUND - inner words, speech or voices. These are what give shape to the inner TONES OF SILENCE – those TONES OF AWARENESS that colour and are coloured by our experience. Like any audible sounds or voice tones they can have countless sensuous qualities - brightness or darkness, warmth or coolness, sharpness or dullness, lightness or heaviness, softness or hardness, flatness or depth, dissonance or resonance. Such TONES OF SILENCE – of awareness - can also be either clear and translucent, coloured and textured, or simply muddied. Through staying in INNER SILENCE - through ‘listening’ we give ourselves TIME TO BE AWARE, and to stay in awareness. Only from the most TRANSLUCENT INNER SILENCE however, can we open up a CLEAR SPACE OF AWARENESS. It is only within this clear space of INNER SILENCE opened up by our listening that we can HEAR our own thoughts taking shape as INNER SOUNDS, becoming aware of them as mental words and voices before - or instead of - speaking them. It allows us to beware – ‘BE-AWARE’ - of how our ‘inner speech’ might be shaping, colouring, muddying or totally obscuring the translucent clarity and openness of our INNER SILENCE, and with it, our awareness. TRANSCENDENTAL AWARENESS is sustained and restored through sustaining or restoring a TRANSLUCENT INNER SILENCE. Within the open translucency of inner silence not only thoughts but things themselves can become more vividly ‘audible’ to our inner hearing. For things too ARE sounds. Just as we can get to know people more deeply by listening from a place of translucent INNER SILENCE uncluttered by our own thoughts – not only to their speech but to the inner tone of their silences, so can we enhance our awareness of things by opening our hearing to THEIR silent sensory speech.

LISTENING AS PATH TO HIGHER KNOWLEDGE

“On the path to higher knowledge, the listening skill is extremely important. We must become accustomed to listening in such a way that we quiet our own inner life completely when we listen. Once we are practiced in listening in this way ... we begin to learn how to unite ourselves with the being of the other person and fully enter into it. We begin to hear through the words, into the other person’s soul.

As we consistently practice this new habit, sound becomes the medium through which we can perceive soul and spirit ... Then a new sense of hearing comes to life in the soul. The soul becomes capable of hearing “words” from the spiritual world that are not expressed in outer tones and cannot be heard by physical ears. Perception of the “inner word” awakens. Truths are gradually revealed to us out of the spiritual world. We hear ourselves spoken to spiritually.

Whatever we hear from the lips of true spiritual researchers is only what they have brought into experience in this way.”

Rudolf Steiner

THE NEW YOGA FOUNDATION MEDITATION

The FOUNDATION MEDITATION of The New Yoga can be practiced alone, at any time and in any place or situation, as many times and for as long a time as possible - until the practice of BEING AWARE, BEING-IN-AWARENESS, and BEING AWARENESS becomes 'second nature' to you - through the most basic practices of BEING SILENT and BEING-IN-SILENCE. To begin with you may find it more effective to engage in the meditation jointly with others - for any length of time from five minutes to an hour. Yet there is also a much deeper meaning to engaging in the Foundation Meditation as a joint meditation. That meaning is expressed by the saying: "Where two or more are gathered in my name, I will be there." For the "I" in question is that Self in all of us (whether symbolised by Jesus or Buddha, Brahman or Shiva) which does not 'have' awareness but IS Awareness - and is therefore a portion of the Divine Awareness that is God. Since it IS awareness, that Self is also united to the Selves of all others THROUGH awareness - through the 'Holy Spirit'. By conducting the Foundation Meditation in the co-presence of others, each is graced by that Spirit - by that Divine Awareness which embraces all things and beings and is present within each as its Silent Source and Source in Silence.

GUIDE TO THE NEW YOGA FOUNDATION MEDITATION

Note: If engaging in the Foundation Meditation as a joint meditation, always do so with explicit intent, at an agreed time and for a mutually agreed period of time.

1. **Take time to become aware** of your BODY SURFACE as a whole, and use it to sense the entire space around your body.
2. **Take time to be aware** of different things you sense and perceive in the space around your body - but in such a way as to maintain awareness of that space as a whole - both the space around that object and around your body.
3. **Keeping your eyes open** and continuing to sense the space around your body, sense the inwardness of your body too as a SPACIOUS INWARDNESS - uniting the sensed inner spaces of your head, chest, belly and lower abdomen.
4. **Be aware of anything you sense** within those inner body spaces - whether thoughts arising in your head space, sensuous textures of feeling or intensities of emotion, felt needs or desires, or muscular impulses to act or speak.
5. **Be aware primarily** of your immediate BODILY sense of each and every thing you are aware of sensing both within and around you - from the sensory qualities of things and people, to thoughts that arise in your head space, or anything you sense in your chest, belly and abdominal spaces.
6. **Sensing the spaces within and around your body** at the same time, begin to feel them as one singular field or space OF AWARENESS and identify with that UNIFIED FIELD OF AWARENESS as a whole.
7. **Let your awareness wander freely** between different things you are aware of within this spacious field of awareness and let new things arise within this field - but without losing your awareness of the spacious field as a whole, or letting it get lost in any one thing or thought you are aware of within it.

THE FOUNDATION MEDITATION IN VERSE

Giving oneself
Time to Be Aware.
All the time one needs
To feel what is there, and more -
To be aware of all there is to be aware of.
To recall distinct events, and differentiate
The feelings they have left us with.
To let the many threads of our life
Disentangle in our Field
Of Awareness.

To freely shift our
Focus of awareness
From one hot spot to another,
Without ceasing for a second to
BE that awareness, to abide in and
Identify with The Free Awareness Field,
That Field which has no fixed Focus
And thus frees us from Fixation
On any thing or thought,
Any person or problem,
Event or emotion.

Freely following that
Rhythmic flow of Awareness,
That lets us move between feeling
Something there, in its spacious field,
Sensing where we feel it in our bodies.
And feeling ourselves INTO it, but then also
Feeling the free space all AROUND it, and the
Space surrounding our body as whole - that
Infinite Field of Free Awareness, from and
Within which - AS WHICH - we move
Rhythmically into and out of our
Finite self and body.

THE IMPORTANCE OF MEDITATING 'NEGATIVITY'

The feelings evoked by a 'tragic' piece of music are nothing 'negative', however negatively we might label them in words. Just as there is no such thing as a 'negative' musical tone or chord, so there is no such thing as a 'negative' feeling or emotion. Anything we feel as 'negative' is in essence something we seek to limit or NEGATE a full and intense AWARENESS of. We do so out of fear and the false belief that affirming 'negativity' is 'negative thinking'. This fear is misplaced for many reasons. For one thing, to intentionally AFFIRM our awareness of anything – even so-called 'negative' feelings - is by its nature a POSITIVE act. Secondly, our awareness of a thought or feeling is not ITSELF a thought or feeling, 'positive' or 'negative'. Positively affirming that awareness therefore, does not bind us to 'negative feelings' but is the very act that FREES us from identification with them. Thirdly, 'negative' feelings are there to point us to problematic or limiting aspects of our reality that we need to face and find new ways to respond to. "The wise man points at the moon. The fool looks at the finger." If our awareness becomes fixated on the feelings as such we become like this proverbial 'fool' - failing to see the difficult or limiting aspects of our own or other people's reality that they are pointing us to. This in turn limits our capacity to act positively in response to these difficulties. The alternative to becoming fixated on or identified with 'negative' feelings is not to NEGATE our awareness of them, but instead to positively AFFIRM that awareness - to feel and follow those feelings to what they are pointing us to in ourselves or others. The awareness with which we do so can then become a pointer in itself – a source of fresh insights into our own or other people's difficulties, pointing us to new directions we can follow and new decisions we can take in relation to them. A most important variation of THE NEW YOGA FOUNDATION MEDITATION, the practice of giving ourselves TIME TO BE AWARE of all that there is to be aware of - 'positive' or 'negative' - is therefore to intentionally use it to MEDITATE THE NEGATIVE. That means granting time, whenever we feel a strong or generalised 'negativity', to MAKE AN INVENTORY OF THAT NEGATIVITY - starting from our immediate BODILY sense of it as 'stress' or 'depression' for example, and exploring this to then identify and intensify - one by one - all the different emotions that have 'coagulated' into it. That way they can point us to events or aspects of our lives we have not yet given enough awareness to – an awareness out of which will come all the 'pointers' we need.

ON 'DIFFICULTIES' IN SUSTAINING AWARENESS

The two 'Foundation Stones' of The New Yoga of Awareness are The Fundamental Distinction (between awareness as such and anything we are aware of) and The Fundamental Choice – either to identify with things we are aware of, or to identify with the pure awareness of them.

Experiencing The Fundamental Distinction is essential to exercising The Fundamental Choice. It can be explained by 'comparing' pure awareness with the clear spaces (outer and inner) within which we experience things. But it can only be truly experienced through intensified bodily awareness of space itself, inner and outer. For only through that enhanced bodily awareness of space (achieved through awareness of our body surface) can space itself be experienced as the spacious field of pure awareness – not just a useful analogy for it.

Many people say that though they understand the Foundation Stones, and whilst they are often or sometimes able to feel or identify with pure awareness, to sustain awareness through the day appears to them like an almost impossible challenge. For at other times they still find themselves letting go of all round spatial awareness, losing themselves in trains of thought, identifying with emotions, acting or speaking impulsively etc. etc. To which I say: go back to the first Foundation Stone - the Fundamental Distinction - and apply it TO the very difficulties you are experiencing. Don't say to me "It's very hard", "I still lose myself in trains or thought" or "I still get identified with my emotions", or "I still react impulsively" etc. Say to yourself "I am now aware of thinking or feeling 'it's all very hard', "I am now aware of losing myself in this train of thought, identifying with this emotion or reacting impulsively in this way." Being aware of experiencing such 'difficulties', you can then make 'meta-level', 'reflexive' or 'iterative' use of the Foundation Stones – distinguishing the very awareness of those difficulties from the difficulties themselves, and choosing to identify with that awareness and not the difficulties. Without this 'iterative' application of the Fundamental Distinction and Choice to the very difficulties experienced in sustaining awareness, no one can do so continuously. It is through my own application of these Foundations Stones to the difficulties that I – like others - face in sustaining awareness through The New Yoga that I also find subtle new ways of experiencing the Fundamental Distinction and exercising the Fundamental Choice. This iterative use of the two Foundation Stones is thus in effect a hidden, third Foundation Stone – yet one essential to the success of the other two. Indeed this 'third' Foundation Stone is the basis on which I myself constantly gain – out of awareness of my own and other people's difficulties – new insights into all those Foundational principles and practices of awareness which are 'The New Yoga'.

FROM BEING TO BODYING AWARENESS

Your AWARENESS of the space around your body is not itself something bounded by your body surface. And yet it is itself a BODILY AWARENESS. Similarly, your bodily awareness of land, sea and sky does not end at the boundaries of your body but reaches to the very horizon of any landscape, seascape or skyscape you behold. Your bodily sense and feeling for the colours of a landscape, the glow of a sunset sky, or the undulations of the sea, is not something locked up inside your head or brain. Nor is your bodily awareness of an indoor space, and your tangible sense of the other bodies within it – both objects and people – something bounded by your own body. Even your ‘mind’ is part of your bodily awareness, being a space of awareness in a part of your body – your head - within which you experience thoughts arising and passing away. The body has always played a central role in Tantric symbolism. That is not because the body was seen as the biological basis of awareness or ‘consciousness’, but because “the body is an awareness” (Carlos Castaneda). Being so, its only boundaries are boundaries OF awareness.

Traditional Tantric teachings recognised that awareness, like space itself, is essentially bodiless and unbounded, and yet at the same time takes on an infinite variety of bodily shapes and forms - physical and non-physical, natural, human and divine. These bodily shapes appear bounded from the outside, but since every body IS an awareness, like awareness as such, they are essentially unbounded. THE NEW YOGA OF AWARENESS is above all a yoga of BODILY AWARENESS, recognising that the body is not simply some bodily object or ‘thing’ we are AWARE OF, but a bodily shape, tone and texture OF AWARENESS. Awareness, though bodiless, is nothing but awareness OF bodies and of bodyhood. Awareness itself - ‘spirit’ - is what ‘bodies’ itself in different shapes and forms. BEING AWARENESS therefore means sustaining immediate BODILY AWARENESS of ourselves, other people and the world. BODILY AWARENESS in turn is the key to BODYING AWARENESS, learning to give it active bodily expression in our every word and deed, look and gesture, movement and comporment.

QUESTIONS THAT CULTIVATE BODILY AWARENESS

How much of my body as a whole am I aware of right now?

How aware am I of my entire upper body above the waist?

How aware am I of the contact of my feet with the ground beneath me, of my legs, belly and entire lower body below the waist?

Which regions of my body can I choose to become more aware of in order to become more aware of more of myself as whole?

How aware am I of my head and body surface as a whole?

How aware am I of the entire space all around my body surface?

How far can I feel my awareness extending into that space in all directions?

To what extent can I feel the entire space around me as a space of awareness - one that surround and embraces not only my own body but every other body around me?

How much inner space do I feel within my sensed body surface?

How much do I feel this space as a free space of awareness?

How much clear and uncrowded inner awareness space do I feel within my head, chest and belly respectively?

To what extent do I feel the inner awareness spaces of my head, chest and abdomen as one singular space of awareness?

Where do I feel my awareness of myself concentrated or centred in the sensed inner spaces of my body?

How far can I allow my awareness to descend from my inner head space to that of my chest, belly and lower abdomen?

How far up above my head and down below the ground can I allow my awareness to rise or descend?

To what degree does my face, posture and body language as a whole give full expression to my bodily self-awareness and to all that I sense in the body spaces within and around me?

How aware am I of another person as 'some-body' and not just a 'talking head' - of their faces, eyes, posture and breathing?

To what degree can I sense, with and within my own body, the degree and expanse of another person's bodily self-awareness, through the way it finds expression in their body language?