1. Mind and Its Potential

Meditation One: Reflection on the Continuity of Consciousness

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PRELIMINARIES

Begin with a short period of relaxing physical exercise, yoga or tai chi or a short walk in quiet surroundings. Prepare your altar, or simply light a candle or some incense to help create a sacred space within which to meditate.

After you sit in your meditation space, calm the mind further with a few minutes of breathing meditation. Simply bring your awareness to your breath, to the expansion and contraction of your abdomen as you inhale and exhale. You can also use the breath-counting exercise from the recorded meditation.

When distracting thoughts or emotions arise simply take note of them, and let them go without any conversation whatsoever.

Do this for three to five minutes, or more if you wish.

Now, imagine that you are surrounded by all the people of your life – friends, enemies and strangers. Bring these people to life in your contemplation; imagine they are really here, in this space with you, doing this meditation with you.

Then, adjust your motivation. Consider your intention for your spiritual practice in general and this meditation in particular. Carefully make the determination to use your study and meditation to increase your understanding and insight, and to take the next step on your spiritual journey for your own sake, for the sake of all the people of your life, and by extension all universal living beings.

THE ACTUAL PRACTICE

Begin to watch the activity in your mind – the flow of thoughts, emotions, sensations; judgments, projections, expectations.

Just watch these mental events without involvement of any kind – no criticism, no attraction, no rejection; watch what is going on like a neutral, scientific observer who has no investment in the objects of observation. Watch the process.

After some time, catch one of these mind moments and from that point begin to journey backwards in time, from one mental event to the previous one.

Briefly scan your mental experiences, traveling backwards through the last hour, through the morning, back to breakfast, back to your waking. Is there a relationship between one moment and the previous one, or the one before that?
Go back to the dreams that you remember. Back to the night before, to the thoughts that you had as you went to sleep. Are there connections, relationships, between these mental events?

Go back through yesterday, the day before, last week, last month, last year.

Don’t engage with the story that is unfolding. Simply watch without involvement, without judgment, just looking for connections.

Go back as far as possible in your life watching the mental events of your youth, of your childhood, your infancy, perhaps even your birth.

If you can go back to your birth, what happens then? – in the womb? – at the moment of conception? Try to see the possibilities. Does the flow cease? Does it continue?

Relax, and let each mental event arise in its own time and observe the process at work.

When you have gone back as far as possible, gently return to the present moment. Again watch the activity of your mind; observe these arising mental events without involvement of any kind – criticism, attraction, or rejection – looking for the connections.

Now, imagine your mind stream flowing out before you, one thought and then the next…into the future. Imagine the process.

Let your imagination go. Watch the possibilities for the future - your mind flowing out into the rest of the day, into tomorrow…next week, next month, next year...and so on…until death.

Consider the possibilities at that point. Does the flow cease? Does it continue? Does it change?

What happens now? What are the possibilities?

**DEDICATION**

Once again, settle in the present moment. Bring to mind the motivation that you established at the beginning of the meditation. Dedicate the understanding, the spiritual energy and creative potential that you have generated doing this meditation to the realization of your goals, to taking the next step on your spiritual journey, for your own sake and for the sake of all the people of your life.

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NB: Throughout this reflection, watch whatever arises carefully, without expectation or judgment. Stay open to the possibilities, just looking for the connections and
relationships between one mind moment and another, between one sequence of thoughts and another. Do not get involved with the content of your thoughts.

This reflection is not a regression exercise. It is an exploration of how consciousness works, from moment to moment. Understanding the process involved is more important than seeing our birth or past lives; understanding the relationships and links within the stream of consciousness is the key to understanding karma and the cycle of past and future lives. So, as you meditate stay clear and detached, like a cool, neutral scientific observer, watching the process with no investment in the nature of the content.

Enjoy the process and have fun! This is a voyage of discovery.