

## Handout

### *The Joy of Being* Teacher Training Module Four

#### Class 21

Chapter 17 “Mind and Perceptions” pp.104-16

#### Part I

13th, 15th April 2026

#### Key phrases and sentences:

... the shimmery quality of the mind at rest. p.104

A positive neutral response is free of grasping—allowing us to experience the calm and openness of simply being. p.105

## Class

### 1. Initial in-class readings

When we contemplate without focusing on any specific object, we can observe the shimmery quality of the mind at rest. Then eyes and ears begin to grasp for sight and sounds, sending a flow of raw sensory data through our nerves. Within moments, impulses begin to pop up, forming ripples on the calm surface of mind. The flow of data becomes more insistent: Ripples become surges and waves that flow into consciousness and take on shape and form. Almost instantly, shape and form are no longer naked, but fully clothed in meaning and embellished with layers of associations and judgments, likes and dislikes, want and don't want. Suddenly we are aware: the perceptions are clear and distinct, and we know what they mean from their characteristics. We can identify not only a woman, but can also

gain a wealth of information from her clothing, manner, and hairstyle. We see a robe and recognize from its style and color a lama, priest, or nun. Similarly, every perception comes dressed in its own distinctive clothing, and we know from that clothing what the image means, what to expect from it, and how to respond. The view is established, the meanings determined, and the mind is made up. Once all the perceptual threads are tied up into a single knot, it is almost impossible to untie them, sort them out, and come to a different conclusion. pp.104-5

## 2. Movement and Contemplation

First, get the body and breath comfortable by some variant of the *Morning Exercises* (pp.19-20). Then, *panoramic seeing* with unfocussed gazing.

Next, the suggestion is to start with a contemplative practice based on not focusing on any specific object, and noticing if there is any sense of *the shimmery quality of mind at rest*, or if the senses immediately grasp after sights, sounds, thoughts, etc. This sets a benchmark, which can be referred back to at the end of this series of three classes.

### 2a. From Group One, Integrating Body and Mind:

**J2 Releasing Energy**, then **J3 Freeing Energy**, then **J1 Half-Lotus Sitting Posture** (the Seven Gestures). Then a few deep breaths and general self-massage of body, wherever it is needed.

Again, practise contemplating without focusing on any specific object (Just *BE* i.e. *the calm and openness of simply being*; with a panoramic gaze). Don't look for the

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shimmery mind, only notice when there is distraction and then come back to non-focusing.

### ***Perceptions Dictate Responses***

From time to time, especially if something has gone wrong in our lives, we might wonder, "How did that happen?" But we have little knowledge of how the process of cause and effect works. ... Activated by the stream of perceptions that flow through mind's treasury of memories and associations, ... mental events follow each other like boxcars on a train. Each has its own cause, effect, and outcome, yet all are linked together, influencing and reinforcing each other.

Some perceptions are familiar, and some are not, but in general they are related enough to enable us to respond: we want, or don't want; we grasp or reject; or we are neutral, not particularly motivated to reach out of to turn away. Neutral responses can be either positive or negative. A positive neutral response is free of grasping—allowing us to experience the calm and openness of simply being.

Each of these—perceptions, mental events, and attitudes—has its own character that urges for expression. Since consciousness carries on these characteristics, our perception and the feelings that result are closely attuned to them. When a characteristic manifests, mind and body have to obey, and they obey in ways associated with each one. When these characteristics are positive, mind and body may manifest love and joy. When the characteristics are negative, mind and body may manifest anger and rage or dullness and apathy. ... Whatever feelings and

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emotions come up, we have to deal with them. They control our being, and we have no choice. pp.105-6

## **2b. Group Three, Stimulating Inner Energy:**

**J21** Opening Energy, *Key Instructions: Take a deep breath and open the chest with HAA pronounced loudly. Loosen the belly.*

**J23** Embracing and Uplifting, *Key Instructions: Breathe lightly, pulling the stomach in a little. Visualise the flow of energy in your arms, hands, and fingers.*

**J24** Energy Freely Rising, *Key Instructions: Relax your arms and stand still.*

### ***How We Identify with Feelings and Emotions***

Feelings and emotions present themselves to us like a progression of television shows. But we have little control over the programming—it turns on in the morning and continues to run through the night. Depending on the ebb and flow of events, our shifting perceptions, and internal dialogues, we feel the rapturous pleasure of love, the dull stagnation of boredom, the ebullience of joy, the agitation of anxiety or frustration, the warm reassurance of happiness, the pain of disappointment or loss. We see, we observe, and the force of our perceptions casts us into the drama. The script has been already written: the emotional reactions are predictable, and we experience what our impulses dictate. Once we take ownership of the experience, once we say “I am happy,” “I am angry,” “I am sad,” I and the experience become one: I cannot separate myself from my perceptions or my emotions, or make distinctions between myself and my responses. pp.106-7

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Contemplation instructions: notice whatever experience or emotion is present for you right now e.g. “I am tired, sad, angry, happy etc.” Then ask (*ask mind*) “Who is tired, sad, angry, happy etc.?” Don’t try to answer the question by thing e.g. “Me. I am tired, sad, angry, happy etc.” Just sit with the question.

**2c.** Final movements to be practised, joyfully, playfully happily, creatively, from Group Six, Opening Presence:

**J37 Opening Mind and Body**, *Key Instructions: Feel the energy flow in the neck and back, and gently connect those sensations through your shoulders into your arms. Pay attention to the sensations in the shoulders, elbows, and wrists and the flow of feeling in the chest. As you lower your arms, stay closely in touch with the sensations in the lower body as well. Stretch your fingers out widely, touching air and space. Gently breathe, mixing sensations into feelings. Stay in touch with the energy of the shoulders and arms, the back of the neck, and the spine. Feel the tension in the shoulders as you push one arm forward and pull one arm back. When you become more experienced, you can practice the whole series with more vigour.*

**J39 Expanding Joy**, *Key Instructions: Feel the sensation in the chest. Release the arms slowly and stand still.*

**Based on *I Know What I Mean***

“I am happy.” Although we may know conceptually that this statement refers to a feeling-tone that happens to be present at the moment, we have established the association of “I” and “happy” because that is the way we have learned to use the language. If someone asks, “What do you mean when you say I?” those not trained in an analytic way of thinking are likely to say, “You know what I mean.” This means that you both agree and no

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further explanation is necessary. There is happiness, and this happiness is somehow “I.” This association bonds to the resulting perception: “I am happy.”

If we continue to ask what the connection between “I” and happy means, the person questioned may be at a loss for words. “What else could it mean? You are happy.” The meaning of “happy” has been effectively transferred from a passing feeling-tone to “I”, where it may influence on one's sense of self for a spell of time. pp.107-8

Sit and contemplate how being *happy* influences one's sense of self. Ask (mind) “Who is happy?”

### 3. Discussion and Closing Gesture

#### Assignments for the week

##### 1. Reading

As always, read the chapter again and again, and consult the workbooks.

##### 2. Exercises and Meditations

All Classes: Practise contemplating in a non-focusing way, with panoramic eyes, and recognising any quality of *the shimmery mind* (without striving or grasping after it; just let it *BE*).

### **3. Reflection and journaling**

Do you understand the difference between meditation and contemplation? Can you express it artistically, creatively?