

Flows of Awareness (on a Book) — Contemplation

Streams of sensations and information pour into our mind and our emotions from our daily world, its people, and its inventions. Rivers of emotion twist relentlessly within our consciousness, night and day. Our bodies are sprinting vigorously from the womb to the grave. Our thoughts are moving, our feelings are in motion — in other words, we live in *flows of awareness*. Our awareness of life and of ourselves is also a moving thing, continuously vibrating and changing.

How to Practice

This first level is designed to help you become aware of your flows of awareness. After all, your awareness is flowing broadly and quickly over many subject fields, along with many emotions and fantasies, throughout the day, in all likelihood. So, in beginning to be conscious of your awareness flows through contemplation, you are getting to know yourself and your inner dynamics better. Hopefully, through contemplation you will become your own best friend and not feel that you are a slave to, or dominated by, random, churning flows which are prompted so easily by sensations from the outer world or memories from the inner world.

Contemplation, or conscious awareness flow, is usually begun by choosing some subject, or some object, as a beginning point and then, in a minute or five minutes, you'll be amazed to note how many flows you've had and where you have ended up starting with such a simple thing as a book.

Just hold the book in your hand and let it be the beginning point for your contemplation. You can start out quite easily by holding the book in your hand and saying, "I am now opened to be conscious of the flows of my awareness starting with this object, with this book, which I hold in my hand."

Sometimes your mind tries to impress you that it is already perfectly developed and will not play the game, will not allow a flow of awareness to occur. In this case, just ask yourself, "Thought of this book suggests what other thought?" And allow one thought to suggest another to suggest another until you are off and running. Or, you could also say, "Thought of this book suggests a memory which

is ..." and then allow your memory to suggest more thoughts and more memories. And you'll be experiencing an awareness flow as mighty as an active volcano.

Benefits

It's important for a serious meditator to do dozens — if not hundreds — of contemplations. Starting with different objects, or even with pictures of people you love, allow the flows of awareness to move. With your cooperation and your attention, you'll gain many insights, and some contemplations will be so rich you'll want to recall them and write them down, how one thought or feeling suggested another, and another, and another.

Contemplation is a great aid in rounding out your memories, getting a sense of what life is about, in addition to being able to watch, observe, distinct flows of awareness.