



# RADIANT MIND

TEACHINGS & PRACTICES TO AWAKEN  
UNCONDITIONED AWARENESS

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# RADIANT MIND STUDY GUIDE

## INTRODUCTION

This study guide contains a series of exercises for you to engage in as you listen to this audio program and work with the Radiant Mind approach to happiness and fulfillment. The study guide details the exercises and processes that I refer to in the course. Many of the exercises are embedded in the audio tracks, so I haven't repeated those here. If you'd like to do an exercise more than once (which I highly recommend) then you can easily find the track by referring to the list of tracks.

The exercises in this study guide are things for you to do on a week-by-week basis, ideally during two or three months. In order to give you the most benefit from your engagement with Radiant Mind, I have also added some exercises that aren't mentioned in the audio program, which provides you with a more complete and comprehensive set of material.

As you listen to this program, I'm sure you'll realize that Radiant Mind is experiential, rather than theoretical. It's not about collecting more information and new ideas, but about opening yourself to a direct experience of unconditioned awareness. The following exercises offer you the opportunity for doing exactly that.

As you work with each exercise, see how much you can allow yourself to release goals, expectations, and your attachment to results. There is no right or wrong way to do these exercises. Some of them will be easier for you, and some more challenging. You will probably notice that you have an aversion to doing some of the exercises. That's fine. See if you can work with all of them, allowing the aversion to be there, without letting it stop you from going ahead.

Whenever you notice that you are putting any kind of pressure on yourself, just let it go and return to a place of openness, curiosity, and acceptance. This fundamental attitude is important when you are working with a partner as well. If you are working with a partner, allow yourself and your partner to proceed at an easy, natural pace, without knowing where you will end up.

You may notice your conditioned mind wanting to make conclusions about what you've learned from doing these exercises. This is not why you are doing them. You're actually discovering how to go beyond all conceptual positions—to live with paradoxes and beyond the mind that needs to know. See how it feels to remain in a fluid and unfixed state of awareness, without having to demonstrate or prove anything at the end of your experience. If you find yourself getting serious or heavy about this work, invite some lightness and playfulness into the experience.

## SESSION I

# RADIANT MIND

1. Your ideas about unconditioned awareness
  - A. What terms or concepts do you tend to use when thinking and talking about what we are calling “unconditioned awareness”?
  - B. What is unconditioned awareness for you?
2. Examining your experience of unconditioned awareness
  - A. If you enjoy experiences of what you consider unconditioned awareness, how do you know they are experiences of unconditioned awareness?
  - B. If you feel that you have not yet experienced unconditioned awareness, how do you know that you haven’t?
  - C. Did these last two questions shift your understanding of unconditioned awareness or of your own experiences?
3. Recognizing your natural homing instinct for unconditioned awareness
  - A. Can you recognize a natural inclination for the mind to move toward the experience of inner peace and carefree effortlessness?
  - B. In what situations have you come into contact with this homing instinct?

## SESSION II

# OBSTACLES TO RADIANT MIND

1. During the coming days, observe how you share your problems with other people
  - A. What kind of support do you want when you express areas of difficulty, conflict, or unhappiness?
  - B. Do you expect people to “buy into” the reality of your problems without question? Or are you ready for them to challenge you a little?
  - C. How attached are you to your suffering when you express your problems?
  - D. Observe the same aspects described above when people share their problems with you.
  - E. Has this exercise given you a different perspective on the way you relate to your own suffering?
2. Exploring your relationship to suffering
  - A. What are the main areas in your life where you suffer (For example, at work, with your body, with your family, with trying to create intimacy.)?

- B. Is this suffering necessary? If suffering is not necessary, why do you think it is happening?
- C. Do you ever tell yourself that you need to suffer in order to be fulfilled? If you do, how do you do this? What are the words, images, and feeling tones you use in order to perpetuate this belief?

D. Complete the following sentences:

During the next week, I will get frustrated when/by . . .

I will be upset by . . .

I will feel sad when . . .

I will feel bored when . . .

I will feel disheartened when . . .

I will feel vulnerable when . . .

I will feel overwhelmed when/by . . .

I will feel victimized when/by . . .

E. How do you feel about your suffering right now?

3. Write down this sentence: “I suffer, yes, but this doesn’t mean that anything is fundamentally wrong.” Put this in an obvious place so you can reflect on it during the day.

A. What happens to you when you contemplate this statement?

- B. Does your mind want to argue with it?
  - C. What is your immediate experience when you open to the possibility of suffering without concluding anything about it?
4. Exploring the need to be active
- A. During the coming days, look at your need to be doing things, to be busy and engaged in a project of some sort. There's no need to change what you're doing. Just observe the need to be doing something. What do you tell yourself about your necessity for engaging in activity?
  - B. What do you do to remove feelings of boredom, anxiety, restlessness, and fear?
5. Exploring the need to know
- A. During the next several days, observe your need to know. What happens to you in the face of uncertainty, ambiguity, and paradox?
  - B. How do you stimulate your thinking (For example, by reading, by talking, by watching TV, by surfing the internet.)?
6. Fearful and inflated projections about unconditioned awareness
- A. What does a state of final liberation mean to you?

For example, does it mean you won't suffer anymore? Does it mean you won't be reborn? Does it mean that you won't fear illness and death? Do you think you will lose interest in people you care about, or that it will jeopardize your career? Will you be more or less capable of fulfilling your daily commitments?

## SESSION III

# JUST SITTING

Unconditioned awareness is a state of being, so it's a quite different thing from a system of meditation. Even so, the practice of taking a break from our routine activities and “just sitting” without any agenda can be a wonderful addition to our complex lives. If you don't already have a contemplative practice, then while you're engaged with this course, I recommend the very simple practice of “just sitting.” The practice couldn't be simpler. It consists of:

- disengaging from high-level external stimulation, such as other people, television, books, and computer screens.
- sitting in a relatively still position, or lying on your back if you prefer.
- being silent and awake.
- doing whatever you're doing.
- doing this for between 10 and 20 minutes each day.

If you're uncomfortable, you can shift your position, move your legs or your

hands, scratch an itch, stretch your neck, and so on, but don't get up and move around or relocate your body.

Within these parameters, simply do whatever you're doing. Think what you're thinking, feel what you're feeling, experience what you're experiencing. There's no right or wrong way to just sit. There's nothing to concentrate on, nothing you *need* to do.

If your eyes are open, let them be open. If they're closed, let them be closed. It's not possible to become distracted in this practice because there's no object of contemplation or method to follow. It's impossible for you to go wrong. If you enjoy a session, you enjoy it; if you don't, you don't.

## SESSION IV

# PRACTICE AND THE SPIRITUAL PATH

1. Examining your relationship to meditation practice
  - A. Why do you meditate? Why don't you meditate? Is it an integral part of your life? Is it a burden? Is meditation something that seems necessary and important, but which doesn't seem to come together for you? Do you like to meditate, or do you find reasons to avoid it?
  - B. Does your meditation practice hold some promise to you? What do you expect from meditating? Is there a discrepancy between your

expectations and the actual results of your practice? Is this a source of disappointment and discouragement for you?

- C. If you have a regular practice, how does it feel if you miss a session?
- D. What changes could you make in your life that would support a contemplative practice? These could be changes at home, at work, in your relationships, in your lifestyle, etc.

## 2. Interrupting your regular meditation practice

- A. If you have a regular meditation practice, stop it for one week. If you have commitments that don't allow you to do this, then just imagine not practicing. How do you feel? This isn't sacrilegious. It's just a way of testing your attachment and aversion to your practice.

If you haven't begun the practice of just sitting, I again invite you to begin this practice. If you feel some aversion to doing it, don't let this stop you. Remember, on the nondual path we are no longer as controlled by what we like and don't like.

- B. How do you feel at the end of a week of starting or interrupting your practice? What have you discovered about your preferences? Have you been able to release the grip of your preferences at all?

## SESSION V

# LOVE AND INTIMACY

1. If we look at ourselves honestly, we're continually judging and assessing the values, beliefs, appearances, etc., of other people. In just the same way, people are continually judging us. For the next week I'd like you to accept, without reservation, everything that people think or say about you. You don't need to know what they are thinking, but let them have their judgments—positive and negative—without becoming involved. Give people the freedom to think whatever they do about you.

How does this exercise make you feel?

2. In the nondual state, there is no fixed center to our existence. In a sense, we expand to include everything. For the next week, I'd also like you to dissolve the boundary between yourself and others. Explore the possibility that other people are aspects of your expanded mind. When people come into your field of awareness, it's like the arising of a new thought or feeling. Instead of thinking, "They really have nothing to do with me," you can connect with people that have the same level of concern and attention you give to your own experiences. After all, when people enter your awareness, they are part of your experience. If you need some additional direction on how to do this, then listen to Session Nine, Part Eight, "The Intimate Embrace: You Are Everything."

## SESSION VI

# CREATING COMPLETIONS

1. Imagine that you have one week left to live. Who do you want to speak to before you die? What do you want to say to them, or ask of them? In this exercise, I invite you to have two or three conversations during the next two weeks in which you restore a relationship that is incomplete. This might consist of acknowledging a grudge you hold toward someone and expressing regret for indulging your resentment. Or you might express deep love and appreciation for someone who doesn't really know how you feel about them. Try to find completion with these people either by having a conversation with them in person or, if that's not possible, internally (by having a conversation with yourself).
2. Complete in the here and now
  - A. This week I'd like you to work with the principle of saying nothing more and nothing less than what's needed to stay complete in the moment. The sign that you're complete is that you don't *need* to think more about what you have just said, or haven't said. You don't need to process your actions, so you are free to engage each moment freshly and spontaneously.

## SESSION VII

# FIXATIONS

### A Partial List of Fixations

We fixate:

- whenever we attempt to prolong or shorten an experience.
  - when we resist or give in to an experience.
  - when we try to draw attention to or push attention away from ourselves.
  - when we try to dramatize or trivialize what we're experiencing.
  - every time we try to validate or invalidate our own or someone else's beliefs.
1. Observe your fixations during the next week. Notice how and when they arise in your experience.
    - A. If you are listening to a news report, notice how you approve and disapprove of whatever is being expressed.
    - B. When you're with a group of people, notice how you attempt to contract or expand your field of influence. Observe how you like to be acknowledged, or how you prefer to be ignored.

- C. When you're in a social setting, notice how you want to stay where you are, or how you'd like to be somewhere else.
  - D. When you're aware of how other people experience you, notice any pride or embarrassment that might arise.
2. What kind of situations stimulate your fixations?
  3. What actions do you make in response to your fixations?
  4. What feelings accompany these fixations?
  5. Can you track these feelings in your body?

## Observing Your Suffering

1. When you suffer, what are you concluding about yourself, life, and the universe? Have these conclusions changed since you began this program?
2. Do you think suffering means that there is something missing or lacking? Does it indicate something inadequate or fundamentally flawed about you?
3. Identify some of your own avoidance tactics, your favorite strategies for avoiding suffering. Try to observe yourself as you're doing them. How do you avoid your thoughts and feelings? Do you turn on the TV, go to your computer, phone a friend, or go to the refrigerator?

## SESSION VIII

# BROADENING THE RIVER OF LIFE

### 1. Saying yes instead of no

During the next two weeks, when you recognize that you are saying no to what you're experiencing, experiment with saying yes. If this is difficult for you, say to yourself, "Okay. This is what's happening. It's difficult, but I'll be with it, I'll let myself experience it."

### 2. Embracing yourself at a level beyond comfort and convention

During the next week, have significant communication with one or two people (or types of people) with whom you normally would not interact. As you interact with them, try to take on their values, beliefs, and behavioral characteristics for a short while. Feel what life might be like for them.

### 3. Connecting with the unconditioned at the time of death

The ultimate and most reliable resource at the time of our death is the deathless experience of unconditioned awareness. Imagine you're on your deathbed listening to your own voice guiding you through the final hours before you'll be clinically dead. Prepare a script in which you're guiding yourself through your own death.

- A. What would you like to hear now, and even beyond the time of your clinical death?
- B. What can you say that will help you stay connected to unconditioned awareness?
- C. What would be the most helpful things for you to hear at this moment?
- D. Sketch this script out on paper or record it.

## SESSION IX

# NON-DUAL PRACTICES OF PURE LISTENING, DECONSTRUCTIVE INQUIRY, AND “SHOWING NOTHING”

### 1. Pure listening

Pure listening is the kind of listening through which nondual masters hear and respond to everything. Pure listening is the same as listening from no-mind or beginner's mind. When we listen with beginner's mind, we hear everything but we don't do anything with it. Everything registers, but we don't add anything to what we've heard or take anything away from it. You might like to experiment with this type of listening. You can begin by listening to your own thoughts in this way, and then

also learn how to listen to the TV or the radio in this way. Then you can bring pure listening to the way you listen to people in real life. This way of listening might feel quite strange at first, so you can begin by just doing it for a few minutes at a time.

What has this practice opened up for you? How does it change the structure and content of your interactions with people?

## 2. Deconstructive inquiry

This week, while you're just sitting, walking, or taking a shower, practice deconstructive inquiry. Let your mind become still. Then, in a mood of inquiry, gently ask yourself, "Who am I?" "Who's sitting here?" "Whose body is this?" When thoughts and feelings arise, inquire, "Who's thinking?" "Who's feeling?" "Who's asking these questions?" If a problem arises, ask, "Who has the problem?" If you're watching TV, ask yourself, "Who's watching TV?"

## 3. "What is this?" "Where is that?"

Here is a very simple process for connecting you with the infinite, unconditioned, unlocateable dimension of existence. You can do this by yourself or with a friend. If you do this by yourself, find a settled place, then ask yourself, "What is this?" Then, whatever you come up with,

ask the next question, “Where is that?” Continue to ask the question, “Where is *that*?” until . . .

#### 4. Show me nothing!

In the Rinzai tradition of Zen Buddhism, students often start the insight riddle (or koan), *mu*. Mu means nothing. When students meet with their Zen master, they are asked to demonstrate mu. Effectively, they are being asked to show “nothing”—no thing, no mind, which is unconditioned awareness. You might like to work with this with a partner. Have your partner ask you to demonstrate nothing. Your challenge is to deliver an experience of contentlessness to your partner. Contentlessness is the experience of being in objectless consciousness (aware of nothing) at the same time that you’re in the midst of your fully functional, embodied experience. Whatever you do or don’t do, it doesn’t produce anything in your partner’s mind that is associated with your actions or stillness. If what you do produces a response—if it gives your partner something to think about or ponder—you’ve missed the mark.

# RADIANT MIND GUIDED PRACTICES

Part Three—Introduction to the guided practices

Part Four—Deep relaxation: Nothing to do, going nowhere

Part Five—Just sitting: Beyond duality

Part Six—Pure unconditioned awareness

Part Seven—The eternal present: There is only now

Part Eight—The intimate embrace: You are everything

Part Nine—The ultimate medicine: Healing yourself with unconditioned bliss

Part Ten—Perfection everywhere: Universal completion

Session nine includes a series of guided contemplations to help you experience *Radiant Mind* directly. These practices are designed to be listened to in sequence as they build on each other, and it is strongly recommended that you listen to all practices in a single sitting. Each guided practice is approximately 20 minutes long and should be listened to at a time when you can sit quietly with your eyes closed and without interruption. Even though some of the practices can be done with your eyes open, you should not do any of them while you're driving a car or engaged in work that requires focus and concentration.

After all of these practices have been listened to at least once, you are free to go back and listen to any of the individual practices whenever you want, and in any order. But I recommend that you first listen to them in sequence and then go back and use them as you feel, concentrating on the ones you enjoy.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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Adyashanti, *True Meditation: Discover the Freedom of Pure Awareness*, Boulder, CO: Sounds True, 2006.

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California Institute for Integral Studies, and the Omega Institute, and given invited presentations at Stanford Medical School, Columbia University, and institutions worldwide. For more information, please visit [www.wisdom.org](http://www.wisdom.org) and [www.radiantmind.net](http://www.radiantmind.net).



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