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Intro

I am writing this document both for personal study/organization and in case it helps anyone else starting out with meditation. It is in (probably permanent) draft status, but do as ye will with the link and the text content.

Feel free to make suggestions, ask questions, tear me a new one for doing \$PRACTICE wrong, etc. in the comments :)

I've been doing some form of meditation since April 2022 (and thinking/reading about it for a while before that.) I'm working with Mark from <https://meditationstuff.wordpress.com/>. In the process I've gotten into Vajrayana Buddhism and am looking for some traditional/lineage instruction/community.

Flags:

Purple - things likely to change, so I have a chance of remembering to update them

Gray - no longer endorsed or no longer true, but leaving it in to document progress

References/Resources

These are all things I've engaged with on some level or read a fair bit of—want-to-read is elsewhere.

I have a running Z-Library list at booklist.is/booklist/768574/fd443a, but it excludes anything that's not a published print book. I haven't read and don't necessarily endorse everything on it.

Books/Websites/Longform/Authors

- **Global Wayfinding** <https://meditationbook.page/>
I'm taking this as my overall framework, in the global wayfinding online community, and sometimes meet with the author.
Core principles/concepts – willing good, non-monotonic paths, flow/relaxation and avoiding jamming or grinding, redo to undo

More on the specifics under practices.
- **Suttas/other basic texts**
<https://suttacentral.net/>
<https://discourse.suttacentral.net/t/how-to-read-the-suttas/6676>
<https://suttacentral.net/general-guide-sujato?lang=en>

<https://www.upaya.org/2019/12/the-heart-sutra-at-upaya-tanahashi-halifax/> nice translation of the heart sutra. Yay boundlessness :)
- **Ju Mipham Namgyal Gyatso** - <https://www.lotsawahouse.org/tibetan-masters/mipham/>
The master of Dzogchen philosophy. I'm reading his short/introductory texts and working my way up to Beacon of Certainty (have the book of the Pettit translation)
<https://www.lotsawahouse.org/tibetan-masters/mipham/lamp-to-dispel-darkness>
<https://www.lotsawahouse.org/tibetan-masters/mipham/profound-shamatha-instruction>
- **Aro gTer**: books (Shock Amazement, Roaring Silence, Journey into Vastness), online course (adapted mostly from Roaring Silence)

Western Vajrayana community with meditation resources structured around *the four*

naljors of Dzogchen sem-de, an alternate route to emptiness and nonduality in order to approach Dzogchen. All of the above books are that practice at varying levels of resolution/detail. The naljors are shi-ne, lhatong, nyi-med, and lhundrup, corresponding to emptiness, form, nonduality of emptiness and form, and rigpa/ground.

https://www.aroencyclopaedia.org/shared/text/n/naljors_ar_01_ncr_eng.php Interesting practice tidbits–lhatong/gYo-wa as flow state, shi-ne impossible (without variations) for some people

https://www.aroencyclopaedia.org/shared/text/k/karma_ar_eng.php

“Anarchy is the naturally manifesting inner government of awareness – unconditioned, present, direct, and utterly responsible. Enlightenment means relinquishing the police state of karmic-vision and assuming personal responsibility.”

- See also: **Vajjarana Now/Evolving Ground** (similar practices).

<https://vajrayananow.com/>

<https://www.evolvingground.org/>

Another Western vajrayana site. For some reason I find Aro’s presentation of the same concepts easier to understand, but it helps to have multiple sources and I’m interested in their thoughts on creating a different kind of modern Buddhism. Not **currently** in the discord community but might join eventually

- **Right Concentration - Leigh Brasington**

The ultimate jhana book. I’m not really at jhana level **yet**, but his description of access concentration was really helpful when I inadvertently entered it and was so startled by not making constant painful effort that I thought I’d triggered some kind of bliss state.

The compassionate and pragmatic tone makes it extremely inspirational to read. Also, Leigh Brasington’s website has a lot of good resources

(<http://leighb.com/index2.html#buddhism>)

- **The Path of Love - Tasshin Fogleman**

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1nrHi6vTRJI_MELW_gtTiEaaYwK8l82ytMlpHbmM0KNY/edit

Tasshin is a sweetie and this is a super sweet book. One of the most motivational and inspiring texts I read starting out in meditation, and not only a good metta book but a good meta book (hehe). So many good habits/cross-pollinatey things here, like the gentle persistent tinkering spirit, the foundation of self-love, following flow/ease/what feels uncomplicatedly good.

As you can tell by our respective massive google docs, I am at most a different kind of sweetie, so I had to try a bunch of crazy stuff to bootstrap my way to metta practice in the first place. More on that in the practice section. Once I got going I could follow the practices here.

- **Mastering the Core Teachings of the Buddha - Daniel Ingram**

<https://www.mctb.org/mctb2/table-of-contents/part-i-the-fundamentals/15-postures/>

<https://www.mctb.org/mctb2/table-of-contents/part-i-the-fundamentals/10-objects-for-insight-practice/>

See also <https://firekasina.org/>
<https://danielpostscompilation.blogspot.com/p/blog-page.html>

Qualified recommendation but I've gotten a lot out of it. Lots of people have (rightly) pointed out dangers of going overboard on vipassana without a strong foundation of other practices + mental health, and while the book addresses that, it probably doesn't go far enough. I don't know or care about the maps of enlightenment or late stages.

I do recommend this book for very simple nuts-and-bolts practices, as in the chapters linked above. It was the first book to describe vipassana in a way that seemed both possible and desirable to me—more about the actual mental processes desired than codified practices, and pretty explicitly pro- resilience, living in the world, having emotions, etc. I'd be interested in other vipassana/theravada/etc resources with those traits, but for now, this is what I've got.

SSC Review:

<https://slatestarcodex.com/2017/09/18/book-review-mastering-the-core-teachings-of-the-buddha/>

Context/counterpoint?

<https://web.archive.org/web/20210123151831/https://jhanajenny.com/mind-illuminated-mctb-sectarianism/>

- <https://web.archive.org/web/20210118013346/https://jhanajenny.com/> Jenny Jennings Foerst's blog—website is down for some reason. Background is a mixture of theravadin and Bon dzogchen/mahamudra. Another person trying to construct an eclectic/mixed-lineage full-stack path.

- **Buddhism for Vampires**

<https://buddhism-for-vampires.com/essays>

People tend to be more into David Chapman's Meaningness/Vividness but this is what resonated with me

<https://buddhism-for-vampires.com/disgust-as-buddhist-practice>

<https://buddhism-for-vampires.com/naropa-dakini>

<https://buddhism-for-vampires.com/kangling-chod>

Practices/Instructions/Guided Meditations/Methods

- <https://www.buddhistinquiry.org/resources/offerings-analayo/compassion-audio/>
Incredible metta and emptiness audio. Literally made me feel things I hadn't felt in years. I might read the book but more interested in practice than history at this pt
- Michael Taft - Deconstructing Yourself
<https://www.youtube.com/c/MichaelTaft108>
<https://deconstructingyourself.com/nondual-awareness-meditation-series>
Very gentle/chill/flexible/nondual vipassana meditations

<https://deconstructingyourself.com/nonduality>

Good discussion on effort/effortlessness practice dichotomy

- http://www.rc.leighb.com/more/A_Partial_List_of_Insight_Practices.htm
What it says on the tin.
- <https://vajrayananow.com/journaling-a-staged-path> longterm vajjarana meditator's experience with The Mind Illuminated. NB I haven't looked into TMI at all due to reading this, since it just doesn't seem like what I'm looking for and I'm still making plenty of insight progress with MCTB. So it may or may not be a fair characterization
- Frank Yang - Fastest Way to Enlightenment
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vBKEnnRTeSg>
Weirdly nsfw, also made me feel kind of weird and woozy for a while after watching
It's bad on purpose to make you click
finding presence of awareness in the dimension of my supermodel girlfriend's armpit,
In all seriousness, I guess I lucked into doing what this guy recommends by accident.
The very early parts are relatable and the later parts could be like that for all I know. I think a lot of his approach comes from Michael Taft and Shinzen Young. The *expansion/contraction* concept/framework is super super good (same axis as stillness/motion and emptiness/form but characterized by how you the meditator experience them, and also more obvious how they're linked. Correspondence to 'expanding awareness' is v much not a coincidence imo.) Watch this if you do vipassana, zen, or dzogchen and you like the vice documentary about riff raff slanging slices into the mosh pit.

Buddhism/History/Culture/Languages

- <https://neuroticgradientdescent.blogspot.com/2020/01/mistranslating-buddha.html>
When in doubt, interpret things as concrete practice instructions rather than metaphysical statements! Also great explanations of tanha and dukkha
- <http://leighb.com/listlist.htm> List of Buddhist Lists
- <https://discourse.suttacentral.net/t/how-early-buddhism-differs-from-theravada-a-checklist/23019>
- <https://www.himalayanart.org/>

States/Phenomenology/Experiences/Psychology

- <https://medium.com/@vezhnick/nyams-i-have-known-and-loved-fb0516f1bae1> Brief introduction to jhanas, Ne-pa, and gYo-wa
- <http://hurlburt.faculty.unlv.edu/codebook.html> Phenomenology/categories of mental events and experiences

I only (re?)gained the ability to "just read"/"just listen" without having a bunch of other

thoughts somewhat recently. It's very pleasant and nice and has increased my desire to read and ability to listen to/be present with people

- https://www.johnwelwood.com/articles/TRIC_interview_uncut.pdf Spiritual Bypassing
- <https://www.cheetahhouse.org/> Help for side effects of meditation
- <https://hollyelmore.substack.com/p/i-believed-the-hype-and-did-mindfulness-meditation-f-or-dumb-reasons-now-im-trying-to-reverse-the-damage> Mindfulness side effects—lines up fairly well with negative reviews of TMI. In Global Wayfinding framework, this kind of thing occurs but is a temporary stage before things improve.
- <https://freedom.brick.do/cursed-problems-oJYxZnVAg7O9> Cursed Problems—dealing with feedback loopy life stuff. FWIW, for all my criticism of Existential Kink, it's great for exactly this type of problem
- <https://knowingless.com/2018/09/21/trauma-narrative/>
- <https://www.thenewatlantis.com/publications/reading-ourselves-to-death> downsides of text/language/conceptuality
- <https://meditationstuff.wordpress.com/2021/03/18/dont-be-here-now/> On escapism
- <https://slatestarcodex.com/2014/03/17/what-universal-human-experiences-are-you-missing-without-realizing-it/>
- <https://slatestarcodex.com/2015/11/03/what-developmental-milestones-are-you-missing/>
-

Philosophy/Ethics/Virtues/Worldviews

- <https://tasshin.com/blog/all-that-is-necessary-to-be-a-bodhisattva-is-to-want-to-be-one/>
This essay gave me the courage to admit I was doing something and commit to continue doing it. I haven't read it in a while because it makes me cry too much.
- <https://vividness.live/emptiness-form-and-dzogchen-ethics>
“So moral considerations are intangible yet reliable; interpenetrating yet distinct; transient yet enduring; amorphous yet clear; ambiguous yet definite.”
“Dzogchen has no fixed method; it is inherently improvisational, in all aspects, not just ethics. However, it deploys methods when, and if, they are useful. What methods? It has some of its own; but it also happily uses whatever tools are ready to hand. The Kunjé Gyalpo details the limitations of the methods of Sutra and Tantra, but it also recommends deploying them when they are helpful. Sutra and Tantra take their methods as Ultimate Truths; Dzogchen re-appropriates them as heuristics, ways-of-looking, tricks of the trade.”
- <https://www.accesstoinight.org/lib/authors/thanissaro/precepts.html>
More traditional take on 5 precepts. “There is a tendency in the West to dismiss the five precepts as Sunday-school rules bound to old cultural norms that no longer apply to our modern society, but this misses the role that the Buddha intended for them: They are part of a course of therapy for wounded minds. In particular, they are aimed at curing two ailments that underlie low self-esteem: regret and denial.”
- <https://greg-goode.com/article/you-dont-have-to-call-it-emptiness/>

- <https://greg-goode.com/article/logic-and-the-direct-path/>

Wikipedia/Glossary/Terms

- <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dzogchen>
- <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rigpa>

Live Practices

What I've tried, am working with or have worked with, have a little bit of a handle on, etc.

I'm defining meditation loosely as any activity where I am committed to being as present/aware/concentrated as possible. There's some amount of practice in daily life, on the way in and out of sleep, etc happening for sure, but I don't want to poke at it too hard lest it stops ;)

Global Wayfinding

<https://meditationbook.page/>

PITH INSTRUCTIONS (quoted)

- When you have a choice, usually but not always choose effortlessness, effortless action, and spontaneity over effort. When it's safe/good/right/ok, let it happen; let yourself find yourself doing what you've just now already been doing.
- Usually, though not always, though definitely in the limit, choose wellbeing and relief.
- Be patient, do it differently, but don't do it harder.
- Temporarily, when it's safe, give up concrete and particular goals.
- Allow yourself to be very surprised, allow yourself to be nonnormative.
- Relax, surrender into (when safe), flowingly, participate.
- When safe, let it hurt.
- Be loosely precise, precisely loose, let go.
- Slow down, allow detail to come and to unfold and to present itself to you.
- If there is resistance, then there is force, they are like a Newtonian equal-and-opposite pair, and they mean that something is unheard, something is left out, something is too fast, something is out of order.
- No haste, no rushing, no hurrying, no skipping, no corner-cutting, no bypass, no override, no-out-of-order, no jamming, no grinding
- All "mistakes" are undoable. They are part of the process, part of the timeline, they are accounted for.

- When safe, allow memory, allow fantasy, allow planning and problem solving, allow thinking and reverie, all is "permitted"/"allowed"/etc.

Todo reread doc much more, take notes, in-plain-english some parts or describe my experiences/write in dialogue with them

Had a sort of microcosm global wayfinding with running—start in a non-forceful way, pursue + will good, become more embodied. Was extremely successful and loved running for a while (after hating it for my entire life.) Lost pretty much all progress after having long covid and have been too discouraged by that to start again, but I think there's something to be said for cultivating ease/flow/intuition within particular domains and carrying over local to global wayfinding (and it's not massively destabilizing unless you hone in on the deepest darkest ones first, tbh.)

Hyper-condensed summary and notes of main protocol, with some connections to other practices. This is **too condensed**--read the book first, get confused, then look at various individuals' specific glosses on it.

(Often good to spend some time just drifting before/after/within any particular practice; some will explicitly encourage you to do so.)

Meta Protocol - <https://meditationbook.page/#meta-protocol>

What is happening when you meditate? What are you doing when you meditate? What is good or bad (currently, not in general), and if you aren't sure, how might you be able to tell?

Ask and incline toward answering these questions, alone or in dialogue or on paper,

P0 -

P1 -

P2 -

P3 -

P4 - If it's good to do so, incline toward being aware of nothing.

"Aware of nothing" is a bit of a double meaning, but both possible meanings have a place in Global Wayfinding and some lineage history.

There's possessing non-pointed awareness, being aware of nothingness. In zen/dzogchen you reach such a state by doing nothing and letting go of anything you find yourself doing, until mental events slow to a stop. As meditation practices go, that is about as gentle and

rewarding-at-any-level-of-practice (though certainly not easy, the first months are a lot of constructive failure and lots of unpleasant things can come up) as it gets. Also, many brain worms die on the way out, and it is the foundation for a number of other practices, and eventually, a way of resting the mind.

Then there are cessations, where consciousness ends entirely and comes back. In some traditions this is considered the pinnacle of practice, in Global Wayfinding it's less that and more something good and likely to happen on its own in super advanced stages, I think? And something many people might need to cultivate on purpose or go through a lot of, while many others would not need it at all (the same is true of jhanas or really any other statey state.)

P5 - Stabilize any sensations/thoughts/feelings/experiences in this particular moment you can (and it's good to) stabilize; when you are done, completely release the intention to stabilize.

This is probably the closest Global Wayfinding comes to "concentration" practice. Of course, it's constrained by the fact that some things are more stable than others—but that's fine, you can try p5 on different things or states of being and see which are which. Active stabilization is often more useful than "allowing things to be as they are," and these tend to approach similar states anyway so it doesn't really matter. (E.g. it precludes making shi-ne harder by worrying about whether you're letting go the right amount or too aggressively.)

Visualization practices and kasina practice seem to obviously fit in here, maybe in the most intuitive way, as objects that take a tiny bit of effort to stabilize. There could also be the opposite of impermanence practice that leads to the same result (try to stabilize some body sensation and notice when/how it moves anyway), or a way of realizing some things are always there in the background with no fuss (except perhaps quieting down enough to see them.)

P6 - WILL GOOD. IMPROVE EVERYTHING. DO BETTER. BE BETTER.

It's rarely that simple, hence the other practices. But when there is a \$20 bill lying on the ground, do pick it up.

P7 - Release, surrender, let go of everything in your awareness and your relationship to everything. Allow everything to change freely, release the need for it to be a particular way.

Basically redo-to-undo (but not conjuring it up for anything in particular, more just letting it happen.) There's a place for total non-conceptuality or emptiness (and whatever you do to get there), for sure, but also for more targeted/localized stuff, like revisiting particular memories or associations and taking them out of narrative. This is really hard to do directly and often doing so creates more kinks and whorls you'll have to take out later...so just let it happen where it will, and if you experiment or direct your attention to particular things, work in tiny micro moves.

P8 -

P9 - <https://meditationbook.page/#p9>

Imagine your ideal day in as much vivid, first-person sensory detail as possible.

Many details in link.

When I've done this it's mostly just comforting? I also can only get so far, like I'll be half an hour into thinking about it and only be at 10am

P10 -

"Explore what you want and what you might do by imagining/generating immersive, concrete experience, as if you're fully living it, in two subsequent moments. And repeat.

first person concrete experiential qualities in —> first person concrete experiential qualities out"

P11 - <https://meditationbook.page/#p11>

Stop meditating. Try stopping anything.

Essential

Preliminary and Auxiliary Practices -

Interpersonal stuff/many protocol—honestly have not worked with this and it seems like the hardest part of the protocol to test for other people too.

4 Naljors of Dzogchen Sem-De

Transcribe/paraphrase some stuff from Roaring Silence

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cZ6cdlaUZCA> Shinzen Young's description of Shi-ne Shi-ne with form (usually, observation of breath) as preparatory stage for formless

Aro Email Course progression:

- Totally unstructured observation
- Count exhalations up to 21 and back down to 1, starting over if you lose count or break concentration
- Drop the count, but remain focused on in- and out-breaths
- Let go of inhalation, find presence of awareness during exhalation and use it to gently clear out thoughts
- Let go entirely

Lhatong

Nyi-med

Lhundrup

Insight

<https://www.mctb.org/mctb2/table-of-contents/part-i-the-fundamentals/5-the-three-characteristics/>

Impermanence:

Choose between choiceless awareness and structured observation

Notice phenomena arising and then passing away. Breath, different body parts, physical sensations, things vibrating/pulsing. Aim for speed and accuracy. If something seems solid or continuous, don't worry, just watch it until it isn't!

Easy version—rest 2 fingertips on knees/table, track which one you feel.

Harder—observe as many sensations in general as fast as reasonably possible, dissect breath into sub-breaths

Haven't tried, seems interesting—working with thoughts

Have noticeably built speed/stamina in a few tries. If I'm looking at sensations moving at the right pace, very quickly move into a kind of flow state. Almost video-game-y feel and is exhausting on long timescales (pleasantly and improvingly, like letting your mind play fetch in the backyard.)

I've read that counting or noting with some sound/subvocalization is helpful for some people, but it's just kind of painful for me—conceptual mind is disconcertingly loud and can't talk fast enough anyway. I've had the best luck just *being* each of the sensations in series, perhaps with subvisualization of a ping-pong ball bouncing between them. (Doesn't feel possible to separate observation and experience anyway.)

Is ^ actually Ihatong/gYo-wa? And if so, does it matter?

(https://www.encyclopaedia.org/shared/text/n/naljors_ar_01_ncr_eng.php)

I read the rest of the three characteristics chapter (see misc quotes), but impermanence has been the easiest thing to wrap my head around or practice very directly. I have a sneaking suspicion that if you hit impermanence hard enough, you get the no-self for free. (In hindsight/after playing with this more, it's a pretty distinctly self-less experience.) Dukkha is nowhere to be found when I'm in the zone, actually! I do notice physical pain, hunger, etc but don't seem to process them the same way, and they are actually kind of fun to work with if it feels safe. Could be that I'm just too busy to grasp.

Global Wayfinding noting practice –

<https://meditationbook.page/#a-bare-bones-bottom-up-noting-esque-practice-without>

“Participate, tinker, experiment, allow (simultaneously and continuously sequentially):

- Deliberately (lightly, minimally) attend (or pay attention) to things or raw sensations as such

- Effortlessly allow yourself to passively notice whatever you (happen to passively) notice or are noticing
- Let go, take a break, daydream, be lost in thought, be lost in memory, be in reverie, forget
- Find/realize yourself doing or experiencing whatever you find yourself to be ([just] now already [have been]) doing or experiencing
 - (Do the above [finding/realizing] minimally, barely there, liminally--back off, let it [the doing or experiencing] be, let it maybe undo itself, let it maybe release [itself].)
- (Usually but not always, neither encourage nor suppress language/language-ing)
- (Sit, stand, lay down, readjust)"

Concentration

- Mindfulness of breath--for pure concentration, make the task difficult and absorbing. No need to decompose sensations or obsess over impermanence/movement, just try to stay with the breath as accurately as possible without (consciously) influencing it. I've had a lot of success with counting to 21 and back (as suggested in Aro newsletter), some difficulty reaching or preserving access concentration without the count. At some point it got *too easy*, though, and I don't really enjoy troubleshooting and adjusting the concentration object to exactly the right level (at least not as much as doing radically un-finicky things like shi-ne.) I don't actively practice pure object-directed concentration much anymore, except as something to do if I wake up in the night and can't sleep. I'm sure I'll want/need to eventually, just on a little break. If this level of concentration became a stable rather than unstable equilibrium (under perturbations of method/technique I mean, it is for mental events) I'd be all over it.
[transcribe or paraphrase some suggestions from Right Concentration]
- Jhanas?? Someday??
Thinking I should try cultivating concentration with metta or body scans if I'm hitting hurdles with breath, might report back if so

Morality

- Metta and Brahmaviharas:
<https://www.buddhistinquiry.org/resources/offerings-analayo/compassion-audio/>
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1nrHi6vTRJI_MELW_gtTiEaaYwK8l82ytMlpHbmM0KNY/edit
 Metta practice was really difficult for me to start, and I should at some point write about how I got unstuck (mostly via the Bhikku Analayo audio meditations above.) It's super important, and the only thing that's helped at all with my fear of crowds, but so personality-sensitive and path dependent in ways I'm not sure other things are.

I promise you though, even if you don't think you're capable of summoning unconditional love, it will happen eventually. For most people, images/thoughts of loved ones or some "easy to love being" is the best route to start, and phrases provide a very natural way of approaching metta. The Path of Love goes into tons and tons of detail on this. Thinking of my dog and about bugs has been a great boon.

I have some issues with uhh thoughts and words (and separately, struggled with keeping the few people I wasn't ready to think about yet off my mind), and it proved easier to sneak around that. For me it was more like boundless, untargeted love is always switched on, but it's very subtle, and I had to develop concentration and get comfortable to notice it.

- Love might just be different qualia than you think it is, straight up.
- compassion and emptiness
- compassion and desire from aro stuff
- You can't skip metta for yourself forever (you can for as long as you need) because that maintains a self-other distinction
- maybe good to build concentration first, maybe good to build metta + emotional resilience first and direct it at specific beings later
- trauma sensitive metta?
- Bad people are bad at being good
- Don't worry about the phrases like "may you be at peace" or whatever. if phrases are the right thing to do in the moment they will float up and be there
- Once you make the metta you can just leave it there, if intensifying feels weird or bad or doesn't work. You can focus on stabilizing it, or saturating space with it, or just hang out. Lots of things to do in metta-space and all of them are good.
- Whatever bad stuff's going on around you can become an intensely powerful, terrifyingly sublime karuna practice. This might be a necessary stage even, although probably a shorter one than you think. (my life is pretty good, I'm just emo) It also might feel necessary and actually just be hurting you. *standard global wayfinding warnings apply*

- <https://www.lionsroar.com/how-to-practice-tonglen/>

Miscellaneous

- Gendlin's Focusing
<https://meditationstuff.wordpress.com/2015/07/16/the-fastest-introduction-to-focusing/>
Global Wayfinding is influenced by Focusing and this process has been kind of folded into/is one possible way of doing p2
- Somatic practice (mine is pretty loosey-goosey and more or less Focusing applied to pain/muscle tension/etc.)
https://twitter.com/relic_radiation/status/1524504085269041153 super helpful
handouts/images
This is totally a special case of p2 as well. For me it produces very vivid "entities" to

Speak to, with clear voices and appearances. They don't feel permanent or reified or from-outside though, more like a tool my body makes to speak to me in that moment

- Walking meditation
- Alexander technique/expanded awareness

<https://expandingawareness.org/courses/>

Underappreciated how much this is a) a form of meditation and b) has attendant power and risks. I still recommend it though.

Once you really have the immediate surroundings -> peripheral space mental move down, try doing it immediate surroundings -> space occupied by your body

Experiences/Journaling/Milestones

To do: go through meditation journal, posts/texts, etc. and correspond events to dates. Ideally I'd like to have a somewhat accurate timeline.

Also, I describe this stuff as I experience it, not to make any claims about attainments, or to suggest anyone else should do the same. I just want to have a bit more to go on than memory looking back, and to collect some data for Global Wayfinding.

I'm still really new to this, anything good that happens is likely path-dependent or contingent or coincidental in some way, and I don't want to bias anyone else's observation of their own experiences.

Before Practicing/had I Already Started

Did not (as far as I remember) have jhanas as a child, or arising-and-passing event, or anything like it. No memory of any definitely-supernatural events (still a physicalist lol).

Have always a sense of people/places/objects/concepts as specifically meaning-loaded (in ways that often match the ideas of angelic, demonic, blessed/cursed, possessing non-consequentialist goodness/badness, or eldritch-ness, or just extra power/importance, or consciousness in objects/concepts), or there being an extra visionary layer on top of the world that's structurally similar to reality, even if we can't see exactly how yet. This layer is distinctly panpsychic but also distinctly *not* one consciousness, there are many overlapping beings in it. Until recently I thought everyone could see it, and someone had to tell me that's not the case :p

Did have softer/less formal analogues to Focusing and Existential Kink in place, semi-consciously developed, had been using them for years, had some non-monotonic bad experiences but overall positive.

Had to rewrite/destabilize and resettle my entire blame/forgiveness/justice/sin/purity/etc apparatus to deal with both some paranoid or schizotypal tendency, and trauma/abuse/having enough people others would agree are out to get you, that you wonder if you're right about the rest. Felt a sense that this was a test, solve this problem or get eaten alive, but more

clarity/determination about it than fear. It worked pretty well and when I ran into Global Wayfinding, I was like “wait, you can just do that to your entire mind? Awesome! Oh shit, that means I’ve started, I’d better finish...”

This region of stuff has settled and is in equilibrium internally, but there will be some smoothing left to do as it connects and merges with other things. There was some level of dissociation or numbing mixed in that I’ll have to redo-to-undo, but remarkably little (I’ve poked at this via psychedelics and purposely revisiting triggers and usually just been relieved to find there isn’t too much there.)

Practice Timeline, Milestones, Etc.

I have a paper meditation journal and I cannot+will never be assed to copy everything from it fyi. This is just highlights. Full journal entries (for when I make it to my laptop before the book) in end section.

- March 28 2022 - first opened global wayfinding doc
- April 2022 - not sure of exact timeline but was doing global wayfinding p2 onramp, Expanding Awareness Alexander technique course, miscellaneous meditation articles/videos
- Some time in early April–triggered somewhat unpleasant altered state doing an Expanded Awareness guided meditation. Extreme positive emotions at first but then heartbeat racing/chest tightening triggered a panic attack. Someone suggested it might be jhana 1, I don’t know (I don’t think my senses disappeared in that way, though at this point I can’t really remember exactly what it was like.)
- May 11 2022 - started Aro course (started at some advantage since I’d been doing shi-ne for a while before.) Have been mostly following it pretty closely since
- May 18 2022 - first access concentration with mindfulness of breath
- June 4 2022 - first time actually feeling something from metta meditation
- June 20 2022 - repeatable no-self-y state/new mental move from vipassana, might be gyo-wa?
- July 9 2022 - experienced some gap between self and world temporarily closing, not permanent but can bring it back at will
- July 14 2022 - successful shi-ne to lhatong/ne-pa to gyo-wa transition, I think??

Leads to Investigate

- Ways to go deeper with standing and walking meditation? I currently find them pleasant/calming and not much else, curious about the insight angle. Or do I just need to spend more time on this and it’ll become clear?

- Currently reading The Trackless Path
- To read: Mipham's Beacon of Certainty, Spectrum of Ecstasy, Compassion and Emptiness in Early Buddhism by Bhikku Analayo, The Supreme Source and The Crystal and the Way of Light (Chogyal Namkhai Norbu), Dudjom Rinpoche's The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism, Greg Goode's The Direct Path
- I've been told to look at Shinzen Young's stuff many times but it looks like A Whole Thing and I'm a little allergic to ~science of spirituality~. It seems potentially helpful enough I should try to get over this, maybe? Good summaries/reviews?
- What's a good order to read the pali canon in?
- Do more samatha troubleshooting with Right Concentration

Wild Speculation/Rants/Takes

schizos gotta schizopost B)

- Little taxonomy of meditation intentions/directions/basic moves/elements that can be combined etc:

Contraction - pursue

form/movement/impermanence/effortlessness-by-being-subsumed/seeing the machinery

Expansion - welcome

expansion/emptiness/stillness/smoothness/effortlessness-by-relaxation/turning the machine off

Willing - use your *effort gas* (in a gentle-not-strainy way) in whatever way it currently exists, without taking it apart too much. Maybe more accurate to say stop trying to fuck with the illusion of free will and use that energy to fuck with something else. Asymptotes to being effortless but still able to do things, or so I've heard, I can't even imagine what that would be like...

-> Metta, much of global wayfinding, fire kasina, probably a lot of tantra stuff (so much visualizing, sounds exhausting, is it ok to just play loud instruments and look at corpses?)

- Cryptic statements collection:
As above so below
Return until you remain
- Radical centrism on the 5 precepts:
5 precepts exactly as written are watered-down vinaya (see David Chapman—though his history/scholarship can be dodgy, I should fact check it.) Also, they are pretty arbitrary, and I don't believe in deontology anywhere else. BUT it's all-important to act a) skillfully and b) without denial or dissociation. And that takes some (compassionate, not repression- or self-cruelty based) restraint, and will likely involve some version of the 5

precepts in spirit, even if you let go of rigid attachment to rules.

FWIW I've committed to vegetarianism (easy, for my body+life situation at least) and not lying (much harder. I catch myself making white lies as excuses unthinkingly, and it's never been to my benefit let alone anyone else's.) I maintain a carve-out for lying to malicious authorities or to save someone's life, but it hasn't come up.

I wasn't stealing before or after. I have benefited from committing to not consenting to sex if any part of my bodymind is not on board with it (some time before starting meditation, thankfully, and ofc only if you're in a situation where it's safe to do so, but if you're not meditation has to be pretty low in your priorities...) This is pretty obvious sexual misconduct if you ask me, and any discussion of the 5 precepts for non-monastics that cares about including women should mention it. It seems like the same type of blind spot for male teachers/practitioners as Tibetan lamas not realizing Westerners usually hate themselves and should point a bit of compassion inward.

I'm not abstaining from drugs/alcohol (in Minecraft), but I avoid them in public settings or around people I don't trust, to minimize the chance of breaking another commitment. I've been on and off caffeine for years, but can't figure out how to get by on less than 10 hours of sleep/modulate tiredness to a normal working schedule without it. Feel like caffeine intensifies tanha/grasping in a surprisingly pointed way.

- Universality/accessibility/neurodiversity/etc. How much can you actually systematize meditation across different people, different minds, different bodies? Is there anything some people just can't do?

Probably needs some psych/neuroscience but I'm a little allergic to meditation-pseudoscience and don't want to wade right in. I can think of a few people to ask for pointers but kinda feel like I should just keep practicing/reading and take notes as I find it.

Would really love to see books that are less about meditation-as-treatment and more about mentally ill or neurodivergent people meditating for the same reasons anybody else might.

Possibly relevant stuff:

Various meditation-risks and trauma-sensitive mindfulness sources

Comment in Right Concentration about jhanas being inaccessible on certain antipsychotics (seemingly not other psych meds)

Comment in Roaring Silence that some people just don't get complete absence of mental events from shi-ne and have to use other approaches

Lots of (mostly positive!) stories about physical disability from suttas and early tantra sources, someone's probably compiled them somewhere?

- Connections between different approaches to emptiness, maybe some synthesis of theravada insight practices and dzogchen 4 naljors. Hard not to notice similarities,

curious if I'll be able to map these things out better in a few years. Tendency for different traditions to characterize each other in blatantly unfair or incorrect ways, seems like there's a lot of potential for an open minded reader/practitioner to draw some connections.

Buddhism horseshoe theory???

- I'm skeptical of post-rat psychedelics-as-spiritual-growth culture (for different reasons than Mark!) and should probably write up why at length somewhere it's actually relevant and people can discuss it. Instead I'll just type some stuff here.

The gist of it is that you learn very little from being in some state, and a *lot* from following a traceable, often repeatable path there and back. People think they need to learn geography but actually need to learn hiking, navigation, surveying, etc., and being airlifted somewhere by a substance isn't great for that. There's also a lot of confusion of psychological and spiritual problems.

Qualifying the above—I'm not knocking psychedelics for psychological development (which is often gating the other stuff!) *Integrating* trips might be building the relevant skills (probably very dependent on how you do it.) Also, it seems like I find reconstructing mental moves often doable and usually fruitful, and this isn't the case for everyone (many people's practice is not even super dependent on discrete mental moves, but this is the one thing my brain understands and I gotta work with it.)

- Internal Family Systems/Existential Kink/any parts-of-self technique all feel vaguely off or wrong to me, hard to articulate why. Maybe self just doesn't divide up that consistently for me and so it would be more like making a tulpa than giving an existing thing a voice. General suspicion of catharsis/confrontation as opposed to just gently returning to the thing you want to do, or being a sensation/feeling wholeheartedly, or unifying and stabilizing.
Caveat: I did something similar to Existential Kink but looser/less formalized for years before encountering the book; I would still recommend the book w/ a warning to not fixate on practice/ritual and more just consider the possibility you're secretly getting off on things. There is a bit of gross prosperity gospel/law of attraction stuff in the book though :/ don't do new age protestantism kids
- Want to go on a cursed continental philosophy and psychoanalysis binge and link the concepts to...other concepts from other things. Curious if there's a thin-slice mental moves or qualia reading of it along the lines of the Mistranslating the Buddha article

The reason I'm *certain* there's something here is that, knowing what I know now, Bataille's Erotism: Death and Sensuality strikes me as an expression of deep, bittersweet yearning for non-duality. (Honestly, me too buddy!) I think he correctly identified the death/sex/big tacky ritual stuff as downstream of and a path to that essential impulse in the same way as tantra, but didn't have the knowledge or support to get there. I never actually finished that book though (only because I got distracted trying to finish college, not because it was bad.) Also I feel like the Body without Organs has to

fit in with some meditative absorptions or something, but nobody knows what that shit is anyway

<https://medium.com/@charredlurker/red-pills-and-white-rocks-an-addict-s-guide-to-neoreaction-924af36380a7> feels at the nexus of the two worlds

- Renunciation

<https://meditationbook.page/#renunciation-quibbles-and-other-things-draft-needs->

I feel like renunciation spontaneously happens if/when it is good, with little feeling of loss (though you may need to apply willpower/discipline to keep it going.) But that might not be trad Buddhist take (definitely not in the context of children being raised as monks/nuns, maaaaaybe not for early buddhism?)

Worth remembering Buddha was talking to ascetics/renunciates in the suttas for the most part, advice doesn't necessarily apply in the same way to householders or non-ascetic practitioners etc etc

Miscellaneous Quotes

"Most meditators sometimes feel 'I can't do this, because I am not smart enough / not spiritual enough / not disciplined enough / too emotional / too intellectual / too old / whatever'. Untrue. Anyone can meditate – because meditation is non-doing. It requires no particular skill – and therefore has no prerequisites. All it requires is persistence.

When discouraged or doubtful concerning meditation – recall the experience of recognising *wandering mind* and returning to awareness of breath. *That* is the essence of meditation. If you have experienced 'returning'—even once—you can trust that meditation is possible for you.

If meditation goes smoothly for a while – you may also feel 'This is great – I am great – I'm far ahead of those other people – soon I will achieve great things and everyone will notice how special I am and will be impressed and respectful'.

The antidote is to realise that the path to enlightenment is both lengthy and well-worn. Countless people have gone before us, beaten a track, and left sign-posts. Sometimes they may be seen ahead in the distance waving encouragingly. Progress along the path *is* great, but it does not make anyone special – because anyone can do it, and a great many have."--Aro mailing list

"There is more to this second characteristic, and it relates to the third characteristic of no-self. We are caught up in this bizarre habit of assuming that there is a boss controller entity called "I". Yet the definition of this seemingly permanent thing must keep constantly changing to maintain the illusion in an impermanent reality. This takes up a lot of mental time and energy and is continually frustrating to the mind, as it takes so much constant work and effort. It is also

mentally painful. This process is called “ignorance”, that is, the illusion of an “I” which assumes that everything else not conceived as such is “not I”.

This is the illusion of duality, and the illusion of duality is inherently painful. There is just something disconcerting about the way the mind must hold itself and the information it must work to ignore or deny to maintain the sense that there is a permanent and continuous self. Maintaining it is painful, and its consequences for reactive mind states are also painful. It is a subtle, chronic pain, like a vague nausea, like a mild headache. It is a distortion of perspective that we have grown so used to or embedded within that we hardly ever notice it. The suffering caused by continually trying to prop up the illusion of duality is “fundamental suffering”. This definition of suffering or dissatisfactoriness is the one that is most useful for insight practices.”--MCTB on dukkha

“My favorite exercise for examining dukkha is to sit quietly in a quiet place with eyes closed and examine the physical sensations that make up any sort of desire, be it desire to get something (attraction), get away from something (aversion), or just check out or go to sleep (ignorance). At a rate of one to ten times per second, try to experience exactly how you know that you wish to do something other than simply face your current experience as it is. Moment to moment, try to discern every little uncomfortable shift, urge, impulse, and tension that prods your mind into fantasizing about the past or future or stopping the meditation entirely.”

- turn on sensations of the desire to get results
- turn on the pain and unsettling sensations that make the mind shrink, reject, or contract
- turn on the boredom that is usually aversion to suffering in disguise
- turn on the sensations of restlessness that try to get you to stop meditating and do something, anything, else
- turn on anything with fear or judgment
- turn on any sensation that smacks of grandiosity or self-loathing
- turn on the things that typically derail meditation and make them into meditation objects.

When facing painful sensations or thoughts—why are they painful? How do you know they are painful?

No-Self:

One of my teachers wisely said, “If you are observing it, then by definition it isn’t you.” Notice that all of what we call “reality” seems to be something we can observe. The hints don’t get any better than this. Here are some more points of theory that are very useful for insight practices and our attempts to understand what no-self means:

- There are absolutely no sensations that can observe other sensations. (Notice that your experiential reality is made up entirely of sensations.)
- There are no special sensations that are uniquely in control of other sensations.

- There are no sensations that are fundamentally split off or separable from other sensations occurring at that moment.”

Journal Entries (long, rambly)

July 9 2022 - during Bhikku Analayo emptiness audio meditation, sense of barrier disappearing or moat being closed between me and the world. Lingered for several hours, and I can voluntarily bring it back with a mental move similar to expanding awareness but pointing inward. Delicately but exquisitely cozy, comfortable, spacious way of existing.

Realize I usually have a number of concentric circles going (some very inner thing that retreats as far in as possible out of fear, a gap between that and the mind, a gap between that and the body, then another gap between body and world, then between immediate-world and far/peripheral world...) Circles were gone, didn't feel like a walled garden anymore.

Kinda reminds me of <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2TE7HFBzf-w>



July 13 2022 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sk11GOBjgiU>

In and out of vipassana-stream, I eventually reached a bright/pleasant/tranquil state (though interrupted with lots of sensations, and with intentionally using pain/itching/etc to draw energy and keep myself awake. Also movement?? Not really into perfectly still sitting these days) Asked to identify and draw awareness to the part of mind that is still. I found a little black sphere of nothing happening, then let the rest of mind/body/sensations slosh around it and swing from it

July 14 2022 - Listened to Bhikku Analayo emptiness 3. Somewhat struggled to follow recording (boundless space, boundless consciousness etc just sounds a bit nuts to me), became fairly concentrated on nothing in particular by the end. Afterward, doing formless shi-ne, drifting in a loose cycle between complete blackout, awareness returning, then thoughts beginning again. On a whim, open eyes and (I guess?) unconsciously tap into sensations during one of these transitions, in the brief gap between dullness and thought. Immediately sensations gently bubble up/flicker/arise and pass/whatever, no discernible self, etc. Same state I've experienced before a few times. I guess this is the

shi-ne to lhatong transition. Exactly as advertised, kind of crazy.

Some pain in my jaw brought me back to ordinary consciousness very quickly, but I was actually trembling (I think?) for several minutes after. Still feel hyper-attentive to any shaking in my body 15min later.

Getting the feeling that the 4 naljors is much less something totally distinct from pragmatic dharma insight practice (I don't know about trad anything), and more like a weird speedrun route through it. It requires some kind of difficult and sensitive moves, but it feels safer in some sense because it puts the requirement for ease/grace/fluidity up front (instead of letting you get some distance and then experience horrible side effects.) Have a feeling it's easier to do either if you have some familiarity with both.