



Positive Thinking for Radiant Health and Peace of Mind

Topic Schedule:

- Lesson 1: As you think so you become; the importance of having a positive life vision
- Lesson 2: Cultivating virtues and the removal of limiting ideas - part 1
- Lesson 3: Cultivating virtues and the removal of limiting ideas - part 2
- Lesson 4: Thought culture in the four paths of Yoga
- Lesson 5: Daily routine, resolutions, spiritual diary and self-analysis

Lesson 1: As you think so you become; the importance of having a positive life vision

As a man's faith is, so is he.

Teachings from Bhagavad Gita Chapter 17:

The whole world is made up, as it were, of faith.

When Sattva is strongly developed, when there is a preponderance of Sattva or purity in a man, it is easy for him to attain Self-realisation or the knowledge of the Self. If Rajas is predominant, the faith becomes the handmaid of activity. If Tamas or inertia prevails, faith is annihilated.

As is the tendency (Vasana), so is the desire; as is the desire, so is the action.

The faith of each is in accordance with his nature, O Arjuna. The man consists of his faith; as a man's faith is, so is he.

Points for summary:

- One's faith (view of life) is determined by the nature or contents of the impressions in their subconscious mind.
- These tendencies and impressions of the past generate the desires, aspirations, etc of life.
- What one is dedicated to in life, one's contributions, impact on people, society, humanity, etc are the result of their faith.

Divine Thoughts for Freedom from Diseases (Thought Power - Swami Sivananda)

The best medicine or panacea for all diseases and for keeping good health, is the entertaining of divine thoughts. The waves released by divine thoughts, Kirtan, Japa and regular meditation, will electrify, rejuvenate, vivify, and energise the cells, tissues, and nerves.

Another cheap and potent drug is to keep oneself always joyful and cheerful. Study Gita daily, one or two chapters with meaning. Keep yourself fully occupied which is a remedy to keep off thoughts of worldliness.

Fill the mind with Sattva and enjoy wonderful health and peace. Obtain an association with the wise, cultivate faith, serenity, truthfulness, courage, mercy, devotion, love, cheerfulness, confidence, divine thought and divine virtues.

Understanding the laws of Thought, you can mould or shape your character in any way

you like. The common saying, “**As a man thinketh so he becometh,**” is one of the great laws of Thought. Think you are pure, pure you will become. Think you are noble, noble you will become. Become an embodiment of good nature. Think good of all. Do always good actions. Serve, love, give. Make others happy. Live to serve others. Then you will reap happiness. You will get favourable circumstances, opportunities and environments.

Points for summary:

- The most important factor for health, physical and otherwise, is entertaining Divine thoughts. This is accomplished by regular Sadhana of meditation, Japa, pranayama, asanas etc.
- Keep yourself always joyful and cheerful by giving the mind powerful, high-quality knowledge, such as Bhagavad Gita.
- Keep yourself fully occupied. A vacant mind is the key to troubles.
- Feel the mind with Sattva through association, cultivation of divine virtues, etc.
- As you think, so you become - think you are pure, pure you will become. Wish good to all, make others happy, serve them.

Lesson 2: Cultivating virtues and the removal of limiting ideas - part 1

Negative Thoughts; The Primary Cause Of Disease

The primary cause of diseases which afflict the body is bad thoughts. Whatever you hold in your mind will be produced in the physical body. Any ill-feeling or bitterness towards another person will at once affect the body and produce some kind of disease in the body. Intense passion, hatred, longstanding bitter jealousy, corroding anxiety, fits of hot temper actually destroy the cells of the body and induce disease of the heart, liver, kidneys, spleen and stomach. Violent fits of hot temper do serious damage to the brain cells, throw poisonous chemical products into the blood, produce general shock and depression and suppress the secretion of gastric juice, bile and other digestive juices in the alimentary canal, drain away your energy, vitality, induce premature old age and shorten life.

When the mind is agitated, then this body also is agitated. Wherever the body goes, the mind follows. When both the body and mind are agitated, the Prana flows in a wrong direction. Instead of pervading the whole body steadily and equally, it will vibrate at an unequal rate (unrhythmically). Then the food is not digested properly. Diseases originate. If the primary cause is removed, then all diseases will disappear.

The pains that afflict the physical body are called secondary diseases, whilst the Vasanas that affect the mind are termed mental or primary diseases. If bad thoughts are destroyed, all bodily diseases will vanish. Purity of mind means a healthy body. Therefore, be careful in your thinking, in the selection of your thoughts. Always entertain noble, sublime, loving and kind thoughts. You will have harmony, health and beauty.

An Exercise For Developing Virtue

Examine your character. Pick up the defects you find in it, and find their opposites. Let us say that you suffer from irritability. The opposite of irritability is patience. Try to develop this virtue by meditating on the abstract virtue of patience.

Regularly, every morning, at dawn sit down in the meditative posture. Sit in a solitary place for half an hour:

1. Think of patience
2. Think of its values
3. Think of its practice under provocation
4. Think of yourself as perfectly patient, a model of patience
5. End the meditation with a vow that "This patience, which is my true self, I will feel and show, today and every day"

Thus, take one point each day (or for a longer period of time). Think about that point steadily, without letting the mind wander.

The use of autosuggestions:

General autosuggestion: Day by day, in every way, I am getting better and better by God's Grace.

Repeat 20 times upon wakeup and falling asleep, when the subconscious mind is open and the conscious-reason mind is not fully active.

Specific autosuggestions:

Points to consider when creating specific autosuggestions:

1. The goal we want to accomplish should be reasonable, within the scope of our faith.
2. Avoid the mention of the ailment or difficulty the autosuggestion is aiming to relieve.
3. Immediate commencement of getting better.
4. Rapid progress.
5. Complete and permanent cure.
6. No use of words that have hesitant connotation such as maybe, I will try etc.

Best when used together (just before or after) the general autosuggestion.

Example:

"From today onward I shall become more and more conscious of all that is happy, positive and cheerful. The thoughts which enter my mind will be strong and healthful ones. I shall gain daily in self-confidence, shall believe in my own powers, which indeed at the same time will manifest themselves in greater strength. My life is growing smoother, easier and brighter. These changes become from day to day more profound; in a short space of time I shall have risen to a new plane of life, and all the troubles which used to perplex me will have vanished and will never return."

Points for summary:

- Purity of mind means a healthy body. Vasanas are termed primary diseases.
- Virtuous qualities in the character are cultivated by meditation on the virtue, as you think, so you become.
- Repeat the general autosuggestion 20 times at wakeup and falling asleep.
- Design specific autosuggestion and use it just before or after the general one.

Lesson 3: Cultivating virtues and the removal of limiting ideas - part 2

Just as a container creates the illusion that the space inside it is separate and smaller, so the mind creates its own walls, and hence, the illusion of separation from the Self.

- Swami Vishnudevananda

Self-correction method

(From Twenty Important Spiritual Instructions: No. 18 - Self Analysis)

Think of the mistakes you have committed during the course of the day, just before retiring to bed (self-analysis). Keep a daily spiritual diary and self-correction register. Do not brood over past mistakes.

Once you correct yourself, the necessity of brooding goes away. In the evening, after having done the day's work, sit for fifteen or twenty minutes and recollect what actions you had engaged in from morning till evening. Recollect what you did, how you did it, why you did it. Ask the question "why?" What was your ultimate object in performing every action? Was it only to help someone else? Was it only to fulfil your duties, etc, or was there something else also? What was your inner feeling when you engaged in each action? This kind of recollection and self-analysis is known as introspection. Daily introspection is very necessary for the spiritual seeker. For this purpose, set apart a certain time in the evening, sit and review the whole day's activities and try to go into its inner contents.

Fear

This is a very great obstacle in the path of God-realization. A fearless dacoit who has no deha adhyasa (body identification) is fit for God-realisation. Only his current will has to be changed. Fear is an imaginary non entity. It assumes solid forms and troubles the aspirant in various ways. If one conquers fear, he is on the road to success. He has almost reached the goal. Fear assumes various forms. There is fear of death, fear of disease, scorpion phobia, fear of solitude, fear of company, fear of losing something, and fear from criticism in the form of "what will people say of me?". Fear of public criticism stands in the way of the aspirant in his spiritual progress. He should stick to his own principles and own convictions. Then only he will grow and realise.

One may not be afraid of the knife of the surgeon. One may not have any fear for wild animals in thick forests. One may not be afraid of the machine gun in the battle field. But such fearless people may be afraid of slight public criticism or a slight disease, etc.

It took me many years to understand thoroughly the secret subtle workings of the mind. Mind havoocs through the power of imagination. Imaginary fears of various sorts, exaggeration, concoction, mental dramatisation and building castles in the air are all due to the power of imagination. Even a perfect healthy man has some imaginary disease or the other due to the power of imagination of the mind. Much energy is wasted on account of imaginary fears.

Fear drains the energy quickly. It destroys the vitality. It produces poverty of blood. It produces indigestion, headache and debility. It paralyses the brain and nerves. It makes one morose and gloomy. It retards growth, structure and nutrition. Extreme fear brings immediate death by causing heart failure. When one meets a tiger face to face in the forest, the body becomes rigid and paralysed and the mind becomes like a log of wood. Thinking and reasoning vanish. The victim becomes dumb.

All aspirants suffer from this dire malady, fear. Fear of all sorts should be eradicated totally by:

1. Atma Chintana - meditation on the infinite, immortal Self
2. Vichara - inquiry, negation of the non-Self as not real
3. Devotion - practice prayer and self-surrender
4. Cultivation of the opposite quality - courage. By developing courage you can destroy fear.
5. Autosuggestions will help you a lot in removing fear.

How peaceful and strong are they who have triumph over fright!

Points for summary:

- Have a dedicated notebook for self-analysis practice at the end of each day.
- Choose two methods by which you will consciously work on removing fear and develop courage.

Lesson 4: Thought culture in the four paths of Yoga

Karma Yoga

Acting in the vision of the Divine virtues, creating a new vision for life in light of the virtues:
Service of humanity is service of God.

Karma Yoga expands the heart and breaks all the barriers that stand in the way of realising the ultimate unity. It helps you to develop divine virtues such as mercy, tolerance, kindness, cosmic love, patience, self-restraint, etc. It destroys jealousy, hatred, malice and the idea of superiority.

Bhakti Yoga

Being an instrument of God, surrendering one's experiences to God. Seeing God in others.
The practice of Bhakti Yoga transmutes the lower emotions into devotion. Emotion is weakness and must not be equated with divine love, which manifests as peace and joy. The lower emotions are not suppressed however, but are utilized and sublimated.

Without emotion there is no love, and without love one cannot approach the infinite Love that is God.

Through the higher emotions the devotee reaches out to the Divine. His practice is carried out by formal worship and by seeing the Lord in all names and forms at all times. With purification the receptive heart receives the continual flow of divine love.

Raja Yoga

The practices of Yamas (restraints), Niyamas, asanas, Pranayama and regular concentration and meditation to purify and stabilize the mind.

The Yamas are: non-injury, truthfulness, non-stealing, celibacy, non-greed.

The Niyamas are: cleanliness and purity, contentment, self-control, study of the scriptures, devotion or surrender to God.

Jnana Yoga

One of the powerful methods of Jnana Yoga to cultivate our understanding of the import of its subtle teachings is through Vedantic analogies called Nyayas. The following are a few examples:

Snake and rope: At night, a man treads upon a rope and mistakes it for a snake. When a light is brought, he sees his error and his fear vanishes. This illustrates how qualities of the world are superimposed on Brahman until Realization is reached.

Gold and ornament: Although ornaments are of diverse forms, they are gold in essence. Likewise, there are various kinds of pots – big, small, round, narrow – but basically, all of them are only clay. This Nyaya illustrates that the names and forms of the world are in essence Brahman alone; Brahman appears in all shapes and forms.

Ocean and waves: There are countless waves in the ocean, and each can be perceived separately. But all are water, inseparable from the ocean. In reality, they are identical with it. Brahman and the individual souls are the same body.

Lotus leaf: When it rains on the lotus, the drops will gently roll off the leaves and fall to the ground without wetting the leaf. So also, Brahman is the untainted substratum of the world. It is like the movie screen – unaffected by the play of light and shadow upon it.

Pot and space: Space (ether), is unaffected by the walls of the pot which appear to separate the space into “inside” and “outside”. But when the pot is broken, what was “inside” and what was “outside” are seen to be the same and have undergone no change at all. The Atman may seem limited by the mind and body, but it is one with the Supreme. This Nyaya illustrates the Upadhis.

The story of the sheep-lion.

Points for summary:

- Set a dedicated time regularly for a conscious practice of Karma Yoga - service of others for the sake of aligning the actions with divine virtues. The virtue can be pre-decided upon also.
- Practice of prayer, a short Puja, feeling the presence of God in nature, the night sky etc.
- Cultivating one Yama and one Niyama for a period of a month. Regular practice of meditation, Pranayama, Asanas.
- Contemplating the oneness of the Self through Vedantic analogies.

Lesson 5: Daily routine, resolutions, spiritual diary and self-analysis

In order to implement and apply the Yogic teachings and practices in our daily life, Swami Sivananda teaches that we should follow these fundamental practices:

1. Take spiritual resolutions, what you would like to commit to in terms of daily practice, cultivation of certain virtues and qualities etc.
Resolutions can be taken on special days such as birthdays, new year, holidays with special significance for us etc.
2. Design a daily routine which reflects your various duties - worldly as well as the Sadhana you wish to commit to. This should include items such as:
 - a. Wakeup time (recommended around dawn)
 - b. Shower
 - c. Morning meditation period
 - d. Morning Pranayama and Yoga Asanas.
 - e. Study
 - f. Breakfast and daily duties etc.
 - g. Evening or night time practice - can be some more meditation, study.
 - h. Finish with self-analysis and spiritual diary.

Note: You can join the ashram's live-streamed satsangs at 6 am and 8 pm as part of your routine.

3. Monitor your routine and resolutions with a daily spiritual diary and review the day for eradicating vices and cultivating virtues (self-analysis).

Resolves for Quick Spiritual Progress

By

[Sri Swami Sivananda](#)

1. Maintain a daily [spiritual diary](#), and at the end of every month send a copy of it to your spiritual guide who will give you further lessons for your progress.
2. Keep a daily Mantra notebook and regularly write a page or two of your Ishta Mantra or Guru Mantra in ink.
3. Chalk out a daily routine for daily practice and stick to it at any cost. Distractions and obstacles are many. Be ever careful and vigilant.
4. Make a few resolves for practice during the New Year as shown below. Any of the resolves may be crossed out, added to or altered, to suit the individual temperament, convenience or stage of development.
5. Do not abruptly change the mode of living. You can grow and evolve quickly in the spiritual path, and develop your will power and control the mind and the senses by sticking to the resolves. Do not try the impossible at first. Take your resolves very cautiously and ascend step-by-step on the ladder of Yoga.
6. If you fail in any of the resolves through lack of self-control, unknowingly or by force of circumstances, you should perform some extra Malas of Japa or give up one meal to remind yourself of the resolve and to impress the mind of the importance of these resolves (self-punishment).
7. The resolves form should be prepared in duplicate and one copy duly signed should be sent to your Guru so that you may not be tempted to relax your efforts, ignore the resolves or break any other under the slightest pretext or lame excuse.
8. Request all your spiritually inclined friends to maintain such resolves, daily spiritual diary and Mantra note-book. Thus you can elevate many from the quagmire of Samsara (worldliness).

IMPORTANT RESOLVES

1. I will perform Asanas and Pranayamas for _____ minutes daily.
2. I will take milk and fruits only in lieu of night meals once a week/fortnight/month.
3. I will observe a fast on [Ekadasi](#) days or once a fortnight/month.
4. I will give up _____ (one of my cherished objects of enjoyment) once every _____ days/month or for _____ days/months.
5. I will not indulge in any of the following more than once every _____ days/weeks or for _____ months.
(A) Smoking, (B) Cards, (C) Cinemas, (D) Novels
6. I will observe Mouna (complete silence) for _____ minutes/hours daily and _____ minutes/hours on Sundays/holidays, and utilize the time in concentration, meditation, Japa, and introspection.
7. I will observe [Brahmacharya](#) (celibacy) for weeks/months at a time.
8. I will not utter angry, harsh or vulgar words towards any one during this year.
9. I will speak the truth at all costs during this year.
10. I will not entertain hatred or evil thoughts towards any one.
11. I will give away _____ cents per dollar of my income in charity.
12. I will perform selfless service (Nishkamy Karma Yoga) for _____ hours daily/weekly.
13. I will do _____ Malas of Japa daily (Mala of 108 beads).
14. I will write my Ishta Mantra/Guru Mantra in a note-book daily for _____ minutes or _____ pages.
15. I will study _____ Slokas of Gita daily with commentary.
16. I will maintain a daily [spiritual diary](#) and send a copy of it every month to my Guruji for further lessons.
17. I will get up at _____ a.m. daily and spend _____ hours in Japa, concentration, meditation, prayer, etc.
18. I will conduct [Sankirtan](#) with family members and friends daily for _____ minutes/hours at night.

Signature: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Date: _____

Spiritual Diary

The spiritual diary form can be found at: <https://www.dlshq.org/teachings/diary.htm>

Following are the questions:

1. When did you get up from bed ?
2. How many hours did you sleep ?
3. How many Malas of Japa ?
4. How long in Kirtan ?
5. How many Pranayamas ?
6. How long did you perform Asanas ?
7. How long did you meditate in one Asana?
8. How many Gita Slokas did you read or get by heart ?
9. How long in the company of the wise (Satsanga) ?
10. How many hours did you observe Mouna ?
11. How long in disinterested selfless service ?
12. How much did you give in charity ?
13. How many Mantras did you write ?
14. How long did you practice physical exercise ?
15. How many lies did you tell and with what self-punishment ?
16. How many times and how long of anger and with what self-punishment ?
17. How many hours you spent in useless company ?
18. How many times you failed in Brahmacharya ?

19. How long in study of religious books ?
20. How many times you failed in the control of evil habits and with what self-punishment ?
21. How long you concentrated on your Ishta Devata (Saguna or Nirguna Dhyana) ?
22. How many days did you observe fast and vigil ?
23. Were you regular in your meditation ?
24. What virtue are you developing ?
25. What evil quality are you trying to eradicate ?
26. What Indriya is troubling you most ?
27. When did you go to bed ?

Points for summary:

- Create your own resolve form. Include in it the spiritual practices you want to include in your daily routine. Include practices from this course as well.
- Design a daily routine accordingly.
- Design a spiritual diary with the items that are currently relevant for you. Follow the diary to monitor your routine on a daily basis.

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti
Om Peace Peace Peace