When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe.

John Muir
Opening into Allness

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Foundations
We’ll be exploring experiences of Steadiness, Wholeness, Nowness, Allness.
In the Garden of the Mind

1. Be with what is there
2. Decrease the negative
3. Increase the positive

Let be. Let go. Let in.
Mindfulness is present in all three.

“Being with” is primary – but not enough.
We also need “wise effort.”
Which Means Changing the Brain For the Better
Neurons that fire together, wire together.
Have It, Enjoy It
Think not lightly of good, saying, “It will not come to me.”

Drop by drop is the water pot filled.

Likewise, the wise one, Gathering it little by little, Fills oneself with good.

Dhammapada 9.122
Keep a green bough in your heart, and a singing bird will come.

Lao Tzu
Steadying the Mind
Basics of Meditation

• Good will toward yourself
• Posture that is comfortable and alert
• In the present; aware and letting go
• Stable object of attention
• The mind settling and coming to rest
Mental Factors of Steadiness

• Establishing intention
• Relaxing body and breath
• Warming the heart
• Feeling safer
• Opening to positive emotions
Neural Factors of Steadiness

Intention – Top-down and bottom-up
Relaxation – Parasympathetic NS
Heartwarming – Social engagement sys.
Safer – Calms sympathetic NS
Positive emotions – Steadies attention, reduces “craving”
Enjoying Wholeness
The Parts and the Whole

Suffering is parts struggling with parts. Meanwhile, there is always mind as a whole. Mind as a whole simply is, not a problem. When you experience your mind as a whole, suffering falls away.
What helps us experience the mind as a whole?
Self-Focused (blue) and Open Awareness (red)

Ways to Activate Lateral Networks

Focus on the present moment.
Don’t problem-solve, fantasize, or ruminate.
Relax the sense of “me” and “I.”
Widen into a panoramic view.
Rest in “don’t know mind.”
Sense your body as a whole.
Sensing Your Body as a Whole

Be aware of sensations of breathing all over your body.

Pick an area (e.g., chest) and include all the sensations there as a single whole.

Relax and receive sensations.

Gradually include more of your body.

Abide as a whole body breathing.
Softening All the Edges

Relaxing, abiding as a body breathing
Sensations softening together
Heart softening
Everything in the mind softening together, a single mind process, awareness included
Edges softening between you and everything
Receiving Nowness
Enlightenment is to forget this moment and grow into the next.

Suzuki Roshi
Let go of the past, let go of the future, let go of the present, and cross over to the farther shore of existence.

With mind wholly liberated, you shall come no more to birth and death.

Dhammapada, 24.348
The Present Moment of Mind

Now is the great mystery: infinitely thin temporally, yet containing everything.

Imagine super-slow motion mindfulness of the emergent edge of Now, coming into being as it passes away.
The neural networks of **alerting** track the leading edge of the windshield of consciousness.

These alerting networks entwine with **allocentric** networks that support the sense of being one with everything.
If you let go a little, you’ll have a little peace.

If you let go a lot, you’ll have a lot of peace.

If you let go completely, you’ll be completely peaceful.

Ajahn Chah
Letting Go

Rest in a sense of alrightness . . . peaceful, contented, warmhearted.

Be mindful of this moment continually emerging . . . so it’s alright to let go.

Let go while exhaling.

Be mindful of sensations, all experiences changing . . . letting them pass away.
Opening into Allness
Allocentric Framework

Based on more ancient regions of the brain

Being-ness; alrightness already

What it is, independent of “me”; impersonal

Upper visual field
Egocentric Framework

Based on more recent regions of the brain
Doing-ness; goal-directed
Where it is, related to “me”; personal
Lower visual field
The Allocentric/Egocentric Dance

Alternately normally
As one increases, the other decreases
With new stimuli – thus, alerting – allocentric increases briefly, then egocentric response shaped by the hedonic tone
Factors of Allocentrism

Fullness – nothing missing or wrong
Wholeness – wide inclusive awareness
Nowness – alerting, openness
Tranquility – GABA-regulated switches
Recognizing interconnectedness – you’re a local ripple in the vast ocean of causes
Much as the mind is a whole, the material universe is a whole.
The allness that includes every sort of mind and matter is also a whole.
Allness as allness is always allness.
Much as mind as a whole is never a problem, allness as allness is never a problem.
Opening, in Peace

Feeling at ease . . . tranquil and alert
Your gaze or imagination extend out to the horizon and beyond
Experiences flowing, edges softening
Knowing you are lived by everything
Opening into allness
Intimations of The Unconditioned
What is it that is true?
My mind has reached the unconditioned.

I have attained the destruction of craving.

Dhammapada 11.154
The entire world is in flames,
the entire world is going up in smoke;
the entire world is burning,
the entire world is vibrating.

But that which does not vibrate or burn,
which is experienced by the noble ones,
where death has no entry –
in that my mind delights.

The Buddha
The born, come-to-be, produced,
The made, the conditioned, the transient,
Conjoined with decay and death,
A nest of disease, perishable,
Sprung from nutriment and craving’s cord –
That is not fit to take delight in.

The escape from that,
The peaceful, beyond reasoning, everlasting,
The not-born, the unproduced,
The sorrowless state that is void of stain,
The cessation of states linked to suffering,
The stilling of the conditioned – bliss.

Itivuttaka 2.16
Consider what may be always just prior to the emergent edge of now.
Also consider whether consciousness is necessary for quantum potentiality to congeal into actuality Now... continuously, throughout the universe.
Be still
Listen to the stones of the wall
Be silent, they try
To speak your
Name.
Listen to the living walls.
Who are you?
Who
Are you? Whose
Silence are you?

Thomas Merton
Pointing directly to the heart-mind

See your own nature

And become Buddha.

Hakuin
See RickHanson.net for other good books.

See [www.RickHanson.net/key-papers/](http://www.RickHanson.net/key-papers/) for other suggested readings.


Suggested References - 2


• Dudai, Y. (2004). The neurobiology of consolidations, or, how stable is the engram?. *Annu. Rev. Psychol., 55*, 51-86.


Suggested References - 4


