

Perspective-Taking and Meditation *A Perfect Couple?*

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Goals



- Demystify & simplify Perspective Taking (PT)
- Brief review of existing techniques
- Introduce “new” meditation as simple PT exercise
- Practice I-Am-Mantra Meditation twice

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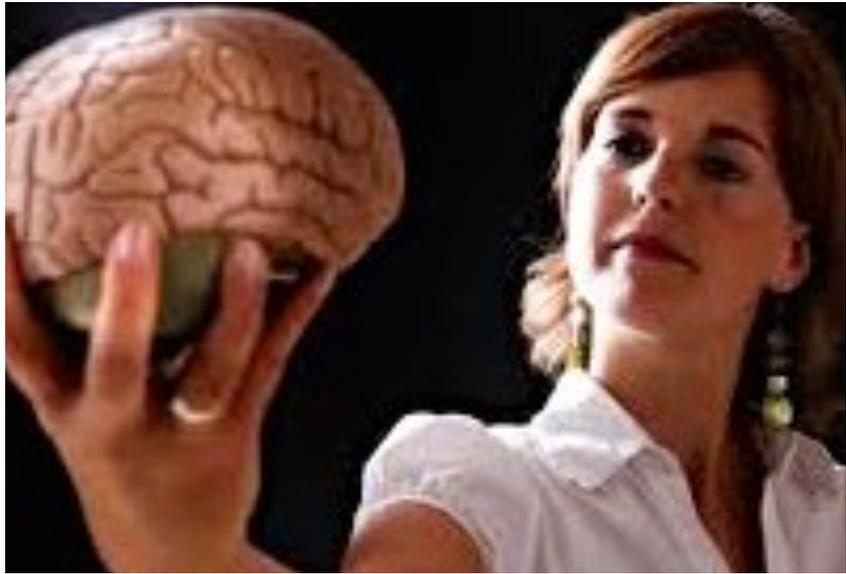
My Intentions and Yours

...and an Invitation

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Self-as-Context / Perspective Taking

“It's taking the perspective that there is a distinction between the self

and the thoughts and feelings (and other stuff) that the self experiences” (Hayes et al., 2012)
I am not my experience!



Perspective Taking – SAC Observer Perspective – Transcending

“The ability to take and change perspective on oneself is at the core of the experience of transcendence”
(Hayes et al., 2012)

Who am I ?



My body?



My mind?



or...?

Who am I ?



My body?

Which “model” am I ?



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Who am I ?



My Mind?



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Problem: Rigid conceptualized self dominates our thinking (and doing!)

- Our self-image
- All those “stories”...
- Fusion often problematic!

Who am I ?



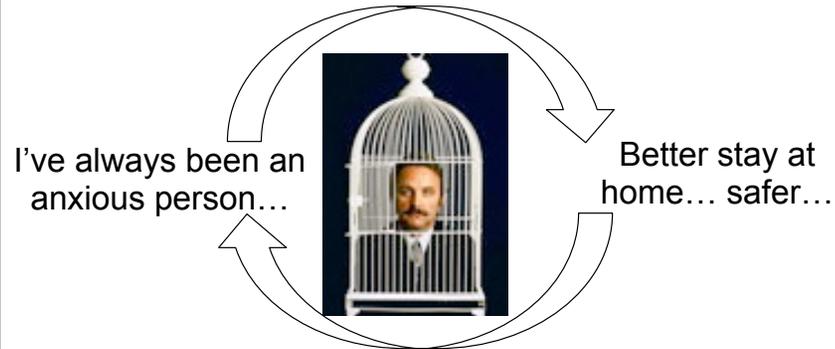
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Life in prison by an unhelpful constructed self!



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Conceptualized Self-Trap



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Who am I ?

I am self-descriptions (2 min):

- „Who are you? What do you think about yourself?“
 - I am...
 - I am not...
 - I am someone who...
 - I am someone who does not...
 - I am someone who is not...

- Notice – and notice who is noticing!

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Who am I ?



My body?



My mind?

or ?



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Who am I ? I-as-Perspective



- **No-thing!**
- **Transcendent = pure experience *beyond* any content and evaluations**
- **Without limits: beyond space and matter**
- **Entirely safe – Continuous – Always there**
- **Ultimately: Pure Consciousness–Being!**

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ACT Advantages of I-as-Perspective



- Creates distance to mind – facilitates defusion
- Supports acceptance & willingness
- Promotes compassion & friendliness
- Helps us experience a whole/pristine aspect of ourselves
- Provides connection to our source/origin



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Who am I? I-as-Perspective



- Space / Context (e.g. house metaphor)
- Your Choice: Weather or Sky?



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Observer-Perspective – Witnessing Awareness



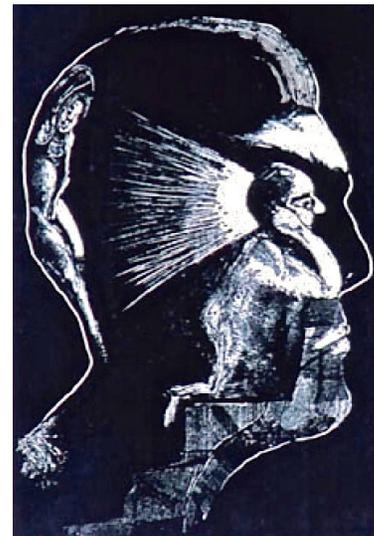
Must we be
a player?



How about **Being** the board / field?

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Changing Perspective: I-as-Observer



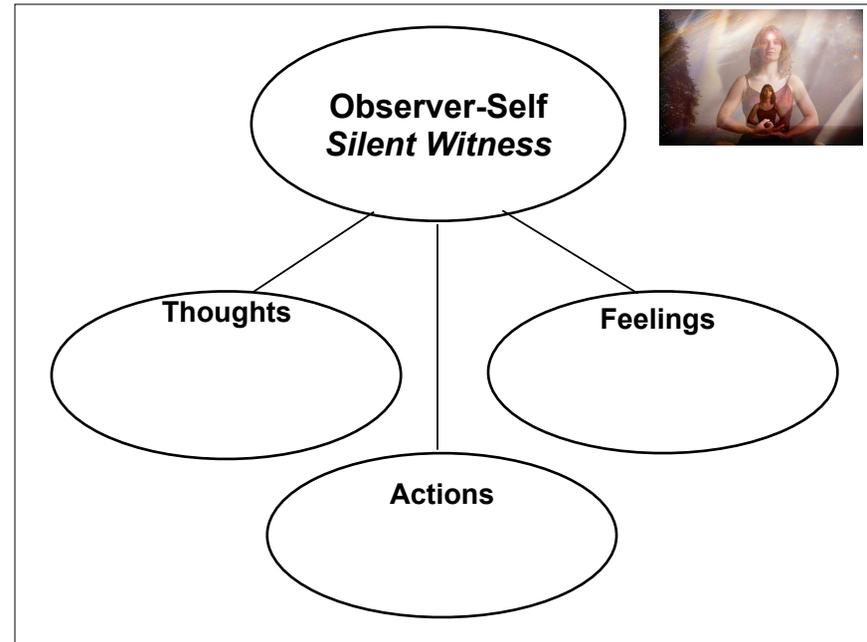
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Exercise: The Constant Observer *Who is behind your eyes?*

Notice what you think and feel...*and who is noticing!*



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Experiencing I-as Perspective

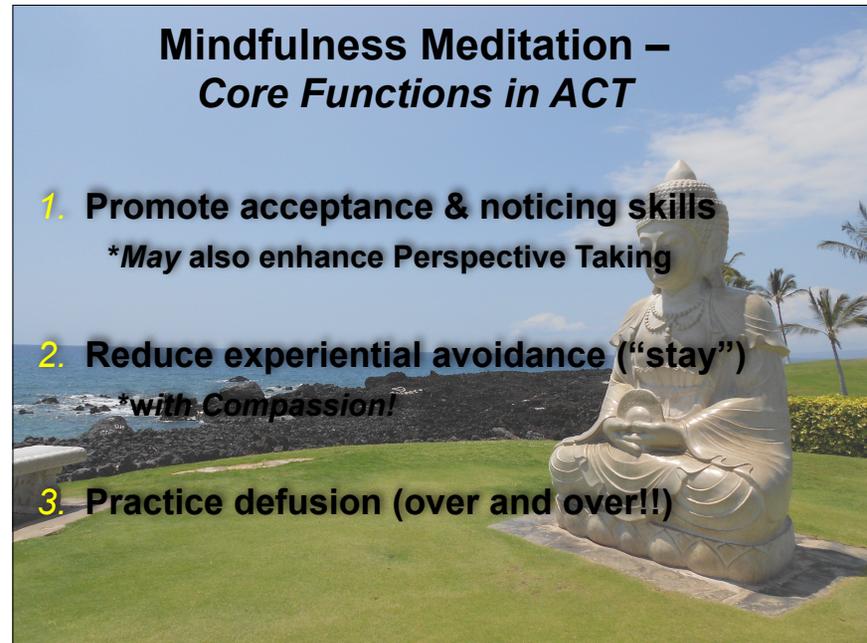
- **Very helpful: Daily Meditation (!)**



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Mindfulness Meditation – Core Functions in ACT

1. Promote acceptance & noticing skills
**May also enhance Perspective Taking*
2. Reduce experiential avoidance (“stay”)
**with Compassion!*
3. Practice defusion (over and over!!)



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Mindfulness Meditation in ACT – Some Potential Issues

1. Compliance can be a struggle
2. Some people still find it difficult
3. Perspective Taking implicit but not explicit

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Suitable Validated Meditation Techniques

(1) Mindfulness

- Noticing experience
- Focus on breath



(2) Transcendental Meditation (TM)

- Natural transcending with mantra
- No effort, focus, or concentration
- Glimpsing the “Big Self”



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Meditation:

*Letting go of the small self –
Opening up to the “Big Self”*

Goal: Settle the Mind & Experience “Yoga”

Yoga = union of body, mind, and spirit

- experience moments of silence and wholeness
- restful alertness!

*Restful alertness and wholeness, the feeling of expansion and bliss
and the inner certainty: this is my home, this is my Self,
the experience of my inner essence.*

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Who am I ?

Self-as-Perspective

- No-thing!
- Transcendent = pure experience *beyond* any content (and evaluations!)
- Without limits - beyond space and matter
- Safe - Continuous - Always there - Unchangeable
- Ultimately: Pure Consciousness - Being!



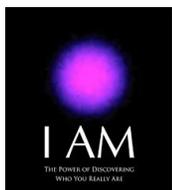
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Exercise: Mantra Meditation



Mantras

- primordial sounds – vibrations
- **'I AM' especially suitable for ACT**
- Alternatives: *Amen, Aham, A-U-M*



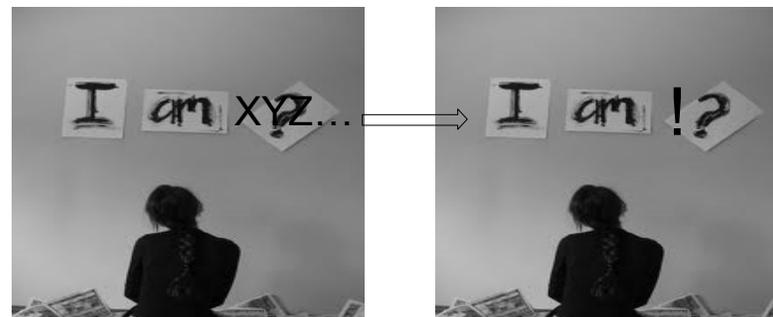
[http://www.tm.org. \(meditation.de\)](http://www.tm.org. (meditation.de))

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Mantra Meditation in ACT: Experiencing the "Big Self"



- Notice stories about ourselves **and drop them!** by gently thinking the *I AM* mantra



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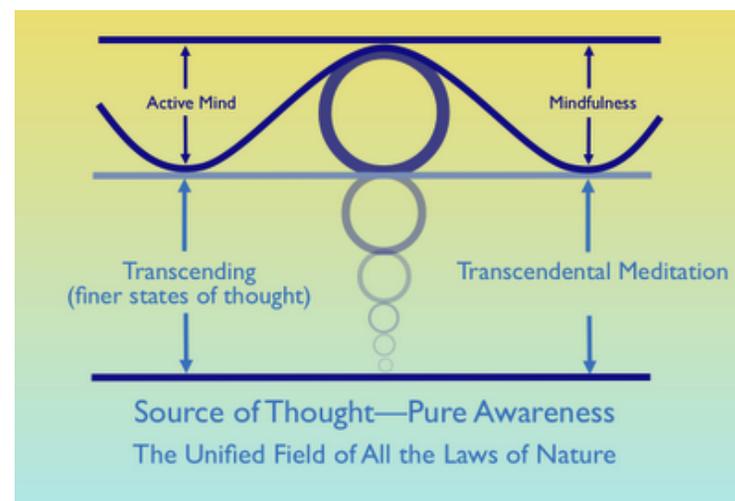
Rationale for *I-Am-Mantra-Meditation* in ACT



- (1) **Undermining constructed self by dropping all content:** from *'I am XYZ'* to simply *'I AM.'*
- (2) **Experiencing transcendental awareness**
- (3) **Quick positive effects – physiology self-reinforcing**
- (4) **Easy-to-learn**

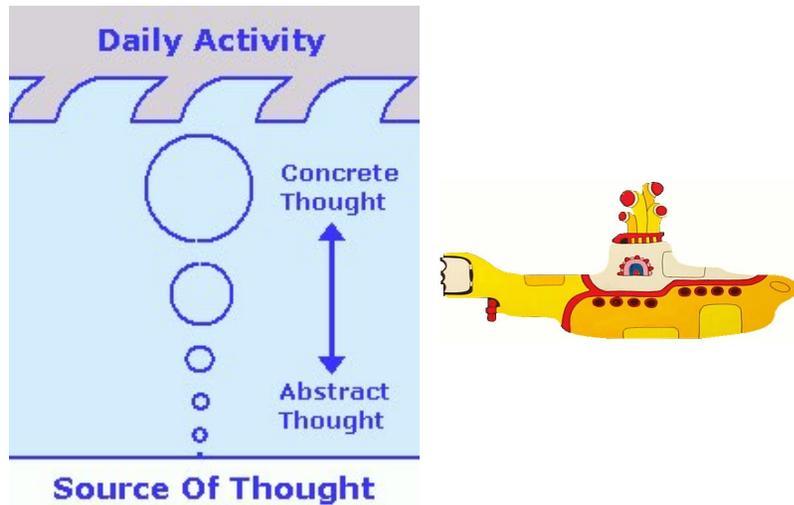
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Mantra Meditation: Transcending *what does the mantra do?*



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Mantra Meditation: Transcending *what does the mantra do?*



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Mantra Meditation: Technique

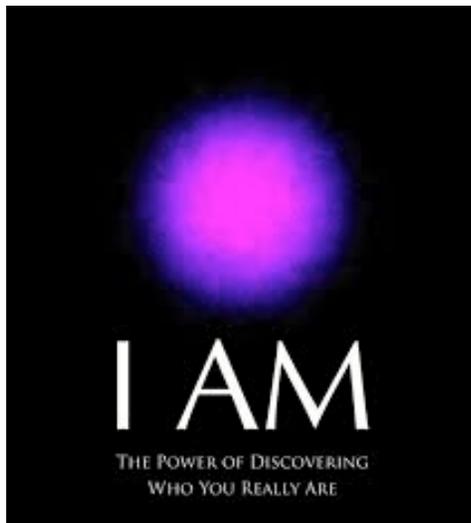
2x daily, 15-20 minutes



1. **No concentration, focus, or strain – no mind control !!!**
2. With eyes closed and sitting: Think & repeat mantra very softly – as it comes naturally
3. Let mantra become softer, less distinct > finer levels
4. When noticing thinking, **gently** return to thinking the mantra
5. Allow all experiences
6. Innocence: No expectations of any particular effects
 - *every meditation session is correct and effective
 - *effects occur automatically in everyday life, not during meditation!

[http://www.tm.org. \(meditation.de\)](http://www.tm.org. (meditation.de))

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Long-Term Effects of Meditation

- **Glimpses of Transcendent Self become more extensive**
- **PT becomes easier / more natural**
- **People do feel better 😊**

More silence and wholeness, the feeling of expansion and bliss and the inner certainty: this is my home, this is my Self, the experience of my inner essence.

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Effects of TM (over 300 empirical studies)

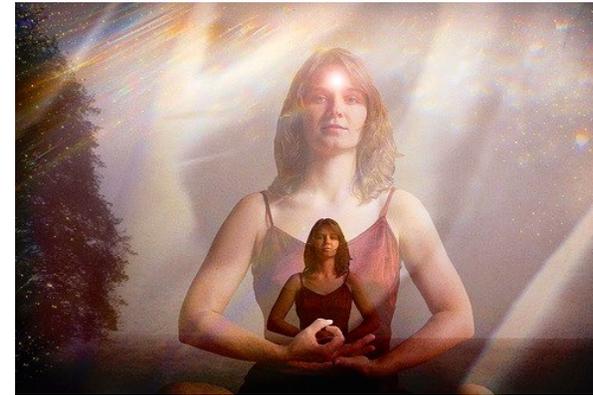
- Physiological
 - Cortisol & Glucocorticoids ↓ Prolactin ↑
 - Synchronises brain waves; more alpha activity
 - Blood pressure & Stress disorders ↓
- Psychological
 - Anxiety, Depression, Anger ↓
 - Equanimity, Compassion ↑
 - Restful alertness, “Bliss without focus” ↑
- Spiritual
 - Closeness to nature; God

<http://www.meditation.de>

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Perspective-Taking and Meditation *A Perfect Couple?*

YES !!!



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