

Wings for Awakened Heart

Wings for Awakening

Seven Factors & Five Faculties

- Adapted from writings of Ajaan Lee Dhammadharo

Tranquillity meditation (samatha) is a mind snug in a single object of meditation. It doesn't establish contact with anything else; it keeps itself unaffected by anything else.

Insight meditation (vipassana) is when the mind lets go of the object of meditation in a state of all-around mindfulness and alertness.

* * *

Seven Factors of Awakening

Tranquility meditation is composed of seven basic qualities.

1. **Mindfulness** as a factor of Awakening. The mind is centered firmly on the breath, aware of the body, feelings, mind, and mental qualities.

2. **Investigation** of present qualities as a factor of Awakening: We attend to the breath watching where and how it may spread throughout the body. We investigate ways to adjust, improve, choose, and use our breath so that it give us comfort. We abandon whatever breath exploration that is not beneficial.

3. **Persistence or Energy** as a factor of Awakening. We are committed to the breath. We stick with it, and it sticks with us as we keep dissolving the Hindrances from the heart. We bring ourselves back from each and every distracting perception.

4. **Rapture or Joy** as a factor of Awakening. When the mind is at ease and quiet, the breath is nourishing and refreshing which brings on a joyful state. We're free from the Hindrances and from every sort of restlessness, like a white cloth that's spotlessly clean. When the mind is clear in this way, it feels the ease of comfort and fullness, which gives rise to a sense of deep satisfaction, termed rapture or joy.

5. **Serenity or Tranquility** as a factor of Awakening. The breath is smooth and established throughout the body. The elements are at peace, and so is the mind. Nothing arises as troublesome or agitating.

6. **Concentration** as a factor of Awakening. The attention to the object of meditation, the breath, is steady, and unwavering. The mind takes a firm stance on a single object.

7. **Equanimity** as a factor of Awakening. When body, feelings, mind, and mental qualities are fully snug with one another in the object of breath,
— mind stays effortlessly with the breath
— mind doesn't fashion anything at all,
then mind doesn't latch onto any manifestation of good or bad. Neutral and unperturbed, it doesn't approve or disapprove of anything.

With Tranquility Meditation so developed, Insight Meditation which is then letting go of the objects of meditation, is the natural progression.

* * *

Five Faculties

When tranquillity imbued with insight arises in the mind, five faculties arise and become dominant all at once, manifesting in the heart.

(1) Your **conviction** becomes solid and strong. Whatever anyone else may say, good or bad, your mind isn't affected. (2) Your **persistence** becomes resilient. Whether anyone teaches you the path or not, you keep at it constantly without flagging or getting discouraged. (3) **Mindfulness** becomes dominant. You don't have to force it. It spreads all over the body, in the same way that the branches of a large tree protect the entire trunk, without anyone having to pull them down or shake them up. Awareness becomes entirely radiant in every posture: sitting, standing, walking, and lying down. It knows on its own without your having to think. (4) Your **concentration** becomes dominant, too.

Whatever you're doing, the mind doesn't waver or stray. **(5) Discernment** becomes dominant within you as well.

Development of 7 Factors of Awakening

1. Make a resolution, intending to keep mindfulness and alertness firmly focused. Keep continual watch over the mind to keep it with the breath in line with your original intention. Keep warding off the Hindrances, the various distractions that will come to spoil the energy of your concentration. This is **mindfulness** as a factor of Awakening.

2. Once the breath is well cleansed and purified, let this purified breath spread to care for the body throughout its various parts. Once the body is nourished with this purified breath, it becomes purified as well. What we experience now is pleasure and ease. Or, if you want to use the breath to care for any particular part of the body — a great deal or a little, heavily or lightly, blatantly or subtly — you can do so as you like. This **investigation** of present qualities as a factor of Awakening.

3. Tend to the breath, keeping watch over the mind, not letting it stray off in search of other preoccupations that would break your original resolution. Don't grow discouraged in the face of weariness or difficulties for body or mind. Be resolved on cutting away obstacles, whatever direction they may come from. This is **persistence or energy** as a factor of Awakening.

4. When these first three qualities are fully developed and pure, they give rise to a feeling of brightness, fullness, and satisfaction. The breath is full. The breath blossoms beautifully under the direction of mindfulness. This is **rapture** as a factor of Awakening.

5. When the mind stays completely with the breath, it doesn't waver or loosen its grip in the wake of any passing distractions, as when sounds strike the ear and so forth. Feelings are still experienced as they are felt, but at this point they don't give rise to craving, attachment, states of being, or birth. Awareness is simply aware. This is **serenity** as a factor of Awakening.

6. When awareness is solid and sure, radiant and full in every way, knowledge arises. We both know and see what our present condition comes from and where it will go. We see this so clearly that we will perceive kamma and its results, both in ourselves and other people. This is manifestation of **concentration** as a factor of Awakening.

7. Once the mind has followed these steps from the first to the sixth and then lets go to be still with a spacious sense of relaxation, not fastening onto any sign, or object, or anything at all, that's **equanimity** as a factor of Awakening.

When we understand all seven of these factors of awakening and can develop them in full measure within the heart, they all come together at a single point releasing the heart into insight.

The reason we're taught to develop these seven qualities in our breathing is so that we can still the Hindrances within us.

We can think of the Hindrances as the breath impregnated with ignorance and darkness. When this happens, we're like a person standing in the darkness who can't see oneself or anyone else, we are stuck fermenting in our defilements, full of conditions. This is the undeveloped breath, untended and undirected. When we dissolve the Hindrances the mind will be radiant and bright, it moves naturally into insight, seeing the way things are, the dharma, clearly in terms of both cause and effect.

Through tranquility and insight ignorance and hindrances are left behind, the heart becomes pure, open, and free from blemish... awakened.

No matter what you're doing — sitting, standing, walking, talking, whatever — as soon as you think of practicing concentration, your mind will immediately be centered. When developed, whenever you want it, just think of it and you have it. When your concentration is easily accessible, insight meditation is no problem. Your discernment will be sharp of what's outside and what's inside, freeing the heart to awaken.
