



Tergar Meditation Group

Meditating with Thoughts

In this series, we will explore the practice of using thoughts as a support for mindful awareness. Since many of our unconscious patterns and deeply ingrained habits are rooted in the shifting flow of thoughts and memories that occupy our minds, learning to be aware of our thoughts as they arise and dissolve can change the way we experience ourselves and the world around us. Below you will find more information on these topics, as well as suggested readings from Mingyur Rinpoche's books, simple instructions for daily meditation practice, and links to related teachings and downloadable guided meditations.

The Practice of Meditating With Thoughts

Thinking is the natural activity of the mind. The goal of meditation is not to control thoughts and feelings, but to be aware of the depth and range of experience as it unfolds in the present moment. Bringing awareness to the stream of words and images that move through the mind allows us to use our thoughts, rather than be controlled by them.

Reading: *Joy of Living*, pp. 161-166

Meditating With Thoughts in Daily Life

In daily life, we rarely pause to observe all the thoughts that occupy our minds, yet these same thoughts shape the way we experience the world. Bringing awareness to thoughts in the midst of daily life can be deeply transformative. Rather than being controlled by habitual reactions and thought patterns, we can explore the workings of the mind as we go about our day with a sense of confidence and curiosity.

Reading: Review *Joy of Living*, pp. 200-204

Meditating With Thoughts in Difficult Situations

When habitual thoughts and emotions dominate our experience, our ability to respond with wisdom and compassion to challenging situations is impaired and we lose touch with the basic goodness of awareness itself. Meditation allows us to see habitual thoughts and reactions as they arise. By learning to be with our thoughts, rather than be controlled by them, we can experience the spaciousness of awareness even in the midst of difficult circumstances.

Reading: *Joy of Living*, pp. 166-167



~ Daily Meditation Practices ~

Sitting meditation practice¹

- Begin by *resting in open awareness*:
 - Relax your mind and remain present. Don't try to focus on anything in particular or control your mind, yet do not get lost in thoughts either.
 - Leave all of the senses open, without trying to block any aspect of experience.
- When your mind becomes active, *rest your awareness on thoughts*:
 - Bring your attention to the words and images that move through awareness.
 - Don't hold onto any particular thought, or try to block or analyze others.
 - Let thoughts come and go freely, observing the natural flow of mental activity.
- End by letting go and *resting once again in open awareness*.

Meditation in action

- When you wake up, form the intention to be aware of your thoughts throughout the day.
- Remind yourself of this intention as often as you can:
 - Pick specific moments to remind yourself, such as during breaks, at meal times, or when you get up to do something.
 - Place reminders, such as sticky notes, around your home and office in places where you will see them frequently, or use a digital reminder on your computer or phone.
- When you remember your intention, observe how your thoughts arise in response to what you experience. Don't control your thoughts, just be with them as they come and go.
- Come back to this practice as often as you can throughout the day.

¹ If you are new to meditation, we recommend that you start by meditating twenty minutes each day, either in one session or two ten minute sessions.



~ Teachings, Guided Meditations, and Other Resources ~

Online Readings

- [Meditation and Non-meditation](#) by Mingyur Rinpoche

Online Videos

- [My Story, Part I](#) by Mingyur Rinpoche
- [My Story, Part II](#) by Mingyur Rinpoche

Guided Meditations and Other Online Audio

- [Awareness in Everyday Life](#) by Tim Olmsted
- [Guided Meditation: Thoughts](#) by Mingyur Rinpoche