



**THE INSTITUTE FOR
JEDI REALIST STUDIES**

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Force 101

A course developed by the Jedi Academy, an affiliate training program of

The Institute for Jedi Realist Studies.

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Introduction

Welcome to Force 101. This class is structured as an introductory study of the fundamental "Force" principles, and will enable you, the student, to be prepared for the more intensive work found in later Force classes.

Force 101 was written and developed by Inari. The current instructor will introduce their self either on the Institute for Jedi Realist Studies discussion forum or in the Academy section of the Institute for Jedi Realist Studies website in the same area as you found this document. Be sure to contact them once you submit your first assignment to ensure they are aware of your work.

Assessment for this course will be based on the following:

- Participation in forums and discussions. When this course is run as part of a group class you are expected to interact with the other students, asking questions and providing your unique perspective. When this course is studied individually you are required to respond to instructor's comments. You may also start discussions on the forums on any topic in the course.
- Journaling about what you experience when doing the practical exercises will form the bulk of your assessment. The instructor needs to know that you are doing some work in order to pass this course, and also to be able to help you should you experience difficulty or have questions. You also need to understand that these exercises Inari provided should be practiced beyond the scope of the week in which they are presented. Ideally, you will copy these exercises back to your computer and begin to accumulate your own personal library of training exercises.

When you have completed an assignment, post it in your wordpress journal and also contact the instructor in the manner they specify. If at any point you are unable to reach the instructor contact either the guidance counselor or the principal.

Force 101 – Structure

The topics are planned to run weekly, in conjunction with Meditation 101. We have endeavored to keep these as closely related as possible, where possible. However, the timing ultimately depends on you. If you need more time to practice or understand a topic, take it. Just do not rush through the material.

What I would like you to do this week

This week is a fairly quiet one. I would like you to introduce yourself in the Force 101 Week 1 Discussion forum and describe some experiences you believe that you have had with the Force in the past.

Regards,

Inari

Lesson 1 - What is the Force?

Should we take even a cursory glance at the world around us, it is evident that the universe has a high level of complex order, creativity and organization. Mankind has long been aware of this, and has sought over the ages to explain how this came about. Different cultures have evolved different ideas to explain that greater mystery, that we here call the Force.

Taoism

The Tao was originally a philosophy best explained by Lao Tsu (Master Lao) in the Tao Te Ching, later expanded upon by the Chinese government into a religion called Tao Jiao, or Taoism in English. The Tao is rooted in a deep understanding of nature, that human life be lived in accord with the natural order of things. There are many teachings that you might recognize from the fictional Jedi universe that seem to have been influenced by Taoism. For example, a common theme in Taoist literature is that fulfillment in life cannot be attained by forcing ones own destiny; instead, one must be receptive to the path laid for them by nature and circumstance, which will themselves provide what is necessary. This, perhaps, illustrates a difference between the Dark and Light sides of the Force, where the Light side would follow the 'will of the Force' in a manner remarkably similar to that described by the Tao, and the Dark side acts against the 'natural order' to take their destiny into their own hands.

The Tao encompasses the flow of the very universe, it is a slow flow, yet powerful, and keeps the universe balanced and in order. It manifests itself though the change of the seasons, the cycle of life, shifts in power, time, and so forth. The Tao is the law of Nature, and when you follow it, you become one with it. Also related to the concept of Tao is that of qi. Qi is a Chinese term that translates as breath, vapour, and energy. Qi is the energy that circulates the universe, and it could be said the Tao is ultimately a flow of qi. Looking at it this way, we could consider the Tao to be akin to the concept of the Unified Force (a term from the fictional universe) and qi the Living Force.

I recommend that you obtain a copy of the Tao Te Ching at some point (and numerous translations are available) to study and enjoy. Though the Force is not necessarily the Tao (there are some key differences) they are quite similar and the book itself can help to induce a serene state of mind. My personal copy is beautifully illustrated with Asian pictures and is as much a lovely work of art as a spiritual text.

Brahman

Growing up in an Australian farming community as I did, the first time I heard the word 'Brahman' it was associated with a cow, such as the below. (Image sourced from <http://www.brahman.com.au>)



But no, despite the fact the cow turned up before the Hindu concept of the godhead in Google, in this lecture we are more concerned with the spiritual than the bovine aspects of the word. There is a pantheon of Gods in Hinduism, but the Brahman is what gave rise to the primordial being Hiranyargarbha, equated with the creator God Brahma. Hence the Brahman gave rise to the supreme God in Hindu.

This Supreme Cosmic Spirit or Absolute Reality called Brahman is said to be eternal, genderless, omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent, and ultimately indescribable by language (which the Tao is also said to be). It can best be described of as infinite Being, infinite Consciousness and infinite Bliss. It is regarded as the source and essence of the material universe. It is pure being. It is also beyond being and non-being, because it is our very consciousness.

It's a difficult concept to explain, and the very long words (in Hindu, not the omni's) make it a little more difficult. If we were to describe it in words we understand a little better, the Brahman is more of a holistic concept of the Force, or the Living and Unifying forces combined. It is both what everything was created from and the spark of life. A key difference between the Tao and Brahman is that of 'Bliss'. Taoism is not concerned with bliss, rather in the development of the self as a path to self-perfection, which was probably influenced by Buddhism (itself a product of an originally Hindu culture).

The Holy Spirit

Different Christian sects regard the Holy Spirit differently, some believe that it is a manifestation of God, others that it is non-physical and indwells every Christian, and is believed to give positive results by enabling a person to access their own, innate abilities. From what I understand of the Holy Spirit (and I was not raised as a Christian so please feel free to correct me on this), it is what a Jedi might term 'the voice of the Force', giving warnings and generally being the 'small, still voice within' to which one listens. Some consider the Holy Spirit to be the emanation of God, whereas some believe the Force to be the emanation of the Life Flow of the Universe.

Quantum Field

There is a theory in quantum physics called the 'Zero Point Field'. This is the same concept that is discussed in the movie 'What the Bleep do we know?'. Zero point energy, which was originally proposed by Albert Einstein and Otto Stern in 1913, is essentially an amount of energy associated with the vacuum of empty space. Another interesting aspect of quantum physics is the postulate that the presence of an observer is necessary. The observer and the system being observed became mysteriously linked so that the results of any observation seemed to be determined in part by actual choices made by the observer. To put this into simplified Jedi terms, if this is correct, then all the phenomena we see in the world are the direct result of us willing them to be. Thus, our will acts upon the Force at all times under this theory.

How does a Jedi view the Force?

I bet you've been waiting for me to give you all the answers in this section. Unfortunately, it's not as easy as that. If it were, I could write a book and retire at 35 to build a Jedi Temple. In the fictional Jedi universe, particularly in the pre-Empire times, all Jedi had been trained (I would even say indoctrinated) into a single view of what the Force was. There were many other groups mentioned

that also used the Force, but held different views and uses of it to the Jedi. So until those of us who are now Jedi get around to agreeing on a single view, the answer is this:

The Complete Definition of what the Force is, is unique to each individual Jedi. Each of us comes from a different background, and has our own ideas, our own way of relating to what the Force is. None of us can 'prove' that our ideas are correct. This is why it's philosophy, not science. Heck, even science only holds a certain view until another more acceptable view comes along...does this mean that the previous view was 'wrong'?

In the end, it doesn't actually matter what the Force is. If we didn't know what air was, would we no longer be able to breathe it? We can learn to access the Force, be guided by it, help others with it, or gain power over others with it if that be our desire. Additionally, when we die, whatever we are goes back to the Force, whatever that is, and becomes One.

It is actually fairly easy to see the Force in action. I am giving you the example of schools of fish, and flocks of birds. Each move and flow as one, one with each other, one with the Force, and hence become a single entity greater than (and less likely to be eaten than) the whole.

Please view the following videos from YouTube:

Video - bird storm <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VGLyBA3uLT0>

Video - Predators attack a large school of fish http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sk_Blp6w528

(If either of these videos cease to exist, please post in the guidance counselor's office area of the forum.)

Homework

Writing assignment: Choose any of the above names for the Force, research it, and then write an explanation of how that name refers to the Force. Provide evidence to support this theory. (If this assignment is done sufficiently it could be added to the library, with your permission.)

Journal:

Part 1: What is the Force to you?

Part 2: Find and post an image, movie, photo, or other piece of art that reflects your own interpretation of the Force.

Lesson 2 - Views of the Force: Neutral, Living, Unifying

We all have our own, personal views on what the Force is, as discussed by you all last week. This week, I'm going to quickly go through some of the ideas of the Force that were introduced to us in the Star Wars fiction, and how they relate to how we conceive of the Force. These explanations are derived from my personal understanding of these concepts and I welcome discussion if your ideas differ from my own.

The Living Force: This aspect of the Force was first mentioned in 'The Phantom Menace'. This is, in my opinion, the easiest way of thinking of the Force and the most readily experienced. It is called the Living Force because it is the energetic matrix that connects and 'quickens' living beings. To put it another way, think of the yourself as a person-shaped blob of vibrating energy and the space around you as being filled with energy that becomes less dense the further away from you that it gets and your vibrations get less strong the further away from that they get. Then, say, another person-shaped blob of vibrating energy moves closer to you until you are close enough that that your vibrations are partially affected by their vibrations. This is literally 'picking up their vibes' and you may be able to interpret their vibrations in order to gain information about that person, for example. This is what was hinted at by Yoda's remark "Luminous beings are we".

As Jedi, we train in order to become more sensitive to the vibrations coming to us, I'm not going to say 'from outside' because there IS no outside, just progressively less 'you'. Through the Force you go on forever. You have probably heard the saying about a Jedi being 'in the present'. We exist in the present, from moment to moment, in order to remain aware of this constant influx of information coming in on the energetic vibrations. Being in the present can be hard, our minds prefer to brood on the past or speculate about the future, hence we train in meditation in order to bring our monkey-minds under control (I suggest you take up meditation if you are not doing it already).

There are several different ways in which we can make use of the Living Force, here are a few examples.

Empathy: Through the Living Force, we can feel what others are feeling as if we ourselves are feeling it. This can be a great tool in helping others, such as in counseling or healing, because we can quickly find the source of the others problem. Very sensitive people might have problems with empathy because they are picking up others energy and 'owning' it, not realizing that it is in fact not their own. It is valuable to work on self-differentiation and grounding if you have this problem.

Healing: I'm going to describe this one from my own personal experiences, as I have just completed a diploma in various physical and energetic massage therapies and have found this skill useful during treatments. I use my hands to 'dowse' areas of both physical tension/pain (felt through keen awareness of the underlying physical structures) and energetic stagnation or weakness, which I feel in my hands as an almost slippery electric tingle (stagnation), sucking or generally 'weak' feeling (energy deficient) or too much energy (heat). There are many, many different forms of healing, many involve the individual learning how their particular energy interacts with others energy to give certain responses. I've learned that the feelings I get when people have certain problems feel these certain ways to me. I'm sure they feel different to other people. It is also possible to take the underlying Living Force energy and channel it into the other person's body, such as is done in Reiki or Quantum Touch.

Telepathy: I'm sure we all know this one, perhaps you have had some experiences with this, perhaps not.

The Unifying Force: The Unifying Force is the cosmic force, physical matter, the physical laws such as gravity, the sum total of all that was and shall ever be (along the lines of the Akashic Records if you have heard of that concept). It also encompasses the Living Force, if the Living Force is the water, the Unifying Force is the container that shapes and contains it. When we experience moments of transcendent oneness, we connect with the Unifying Force.

Some skills that are of the Unifying Force are precognition, telekinesis, and awareness of energy such as ley lines, dowsing for water or oil, etc. They are skills where we are connecting to an energy that is not of a living creature.

Neutrality: We have one last concept to look at, which is that the Force is neutral. This is where those who interpret the Force literally as God might disagree with me. In the Force, life and death, creation and destruction, are not 'good' or 'evil', they just are. Death and destruction pave the way for new life, new creation and then cycle back to death again. Every element on this Earth, including those that make up your body and the screen that you are reading from right now, exist because a star exploded and died, and dispersed the various elements created during its life and death to where they could eventually become you. It's a pretty cool concept when you think about it for a moment.

The movies also speak about the 'will of the Force'. This phrase is misleading because it makes us think that the Force has a consciousness and desires, when actually it is referring of the conspiracy of the Universe (i.e. the Force) to place us on a particular path. There does seem to be a purpose behind the Force, and sometimes we need to just have faith in this process and 'go with the flow', unless of course we choose not to.

I hope that you enjoyed this short introduction to some of the basic concepts of the Force. We will go further into these in future courses, but this is enough in the way of philosophy for the moment. Let's get on with the practical!

Lesson 3 - Learning to Focus

This week's lesson starts with an article about focus. Post your response in your journal and also email me with what you've learned from this article.

The Power of Focus

Written by Associate Professor Peter Dingle, Murdoch University
Sourced from 'Nova' magazine Vol 14 No.2 April 2007-04-15

Many people focus on the minutiae of life and as a result get the minutiae of life. Learn to focus on the important things in your life based on your values and then your big picture and everything else, including happiness, will come. The busyness in our lives has created a sense of distraction and difficulty maintaining focus and attention. Society now demands that we have multiple tasks often with competing and conflicting interests and we take pride in our ability to multi-task and wear it as our badge of courage. As a result of these demands, our brains attempt to adapt by rapidly shifting attention from one activity to another, creating an almost pathologically short attention span. When we do work we create energy, like a fire. A log burning on the ground sends heat and energy off in all directions depending upon the various winds and eddies. It is a bit like most people's lives, going off in many directions at once and not warming anyone. When you put it in an efficient structure, like a fireplace, it not only gets the smoke out of your eyes, but it focuses the heat and warms you.

The brain of modern Homo sapiens reached its capacity around 200,000 years ago and has changed very little since, and certainly not in the past 20 years. Research shows that speed and accuracy are often at cross purposes in the human brain. Beyond a certain speed of visual or auditory information input, memory becomes increasingly poor compared to straightforward presentations of the same information. Our brain is being forced to manage increasing amounts of information in shorter and shorter time intervals. To cope with this, the brain must restructure itself causing changes in its functioning. As a result, we often cannot exert control over our brain states, as experienced by people trying to quiet their minds during sleep or meditation. In the age of the four second media bite, instant gratification and busyness help create the adult version of social ADHD.

Multi-tasking experiments have shown that not only do people perform worse on all the projects on which they multi-task, but also it wastes valuable mental time and energy (Restak 2002). Despite all the myths, humans (including the female of the species) can only focus on one thing at a time. Doing two or more tasks splits that focus along with decreasing efficiency and effectiveness. With each shift in attention, our frontal lobes shift goals and activate new rules of operation. The amount of time lost during the brain's switching between tasks is dependent upon the complexity and number of tasks. With more complex tasks comes slower switching time. Hence the increase in road accidents through using mobile phones while driving. Research on mobile phones has found that even hands-free phones significantly reduce the reaction time in simulation exercises.

As an example of the complexity of multi-tasking, sit on a chair and rotate your feet in a clockwise motion. Then take your right hand and draw a big figure 6 in the air. You cannot do both things at the same time. Automatically, your right leg stops circling or rotates the other way, in the same direction as the number six you just made (interesting eh?).

In a series of tests carried out at the University of London, an average workers functioning IQ fell 10 points when distracted by ringing telephones and incoming emails. This drop in IQ is more than double the four point drop seen following studies on the impact of smoking marijuana. In one experiment, a 29 per cent reduction in brain activity occurred in subjects who were mentally rotating

tasks. In another experiment, volunteers took longer to do the same tasks if they mentally rotated between them compared to when they focused on each task individually until it was complete. In experiments when animals are taught to focus on one thing, a particular circuitry fires. When they are distracted by something else, the level of firing on the original circuitry is diminished. Just like humans, they lose focus. The more interested you are and the more your attention is captured on a particular task, the more activated is the related mental circuitry.

These and many other experiments have led us to believe that despite what we want to think, our brain can only focus on one task at a time. Multi-tasking is inefficient. The only exceptions to this are tasks that appear to use totally different parts of the brain, such as doodling while listening to someone, and unless it is on the phone this is just pure rudeness.

The fact remains that our mind has not caught up with our technology. We now live in a world very different from the one our mind was designed to inhabit and the conflict is confusing our mind and slowly killing us. Not only can we not focus, but even when we can, we are not focusing on what we should be. Focus does not happen without our intention and motivation – it takes effort and it also takes know how.

The most important first step is to focus on the right thing. Focus on what you want – not what you don't want. You will get what you focus on, so if you focus on the negative aspects of your life you will get them. The more you talk about lack, the more you attract it. Shift to having, not missing. When you focus on the positive, - on real solutions – your get things done; you do things differently. This is called the Law of Attraction.

Many years ago I took a few friends of mine skiing. They were all novices so after a few hours getting used to the skis we went up the first "kiddies' slope" at the top. The first person looked down this very mild slope and saw one lonely tree in the middle. There were at least 50 meters of open space on either side. But this friend said, "I don't want to hit that tree" and despite all her best efforts, she managed to miss all the open space and hit the tree. Fortunately, she was going very slowly and she was already on her backside 20 meters before the collision. I have no doubt that she hit the tree because she focused on it. You literally attract what you focus on.

Another example of this you can see for yourself and that has immediate results is your mood. If you focus on negative thoughts, you instantly change your mood. When you focus on being depressed, you not only begin to feel depressed but you also notice more depression around you. If you focus on happiness, you not only feel happier but you also notice more happiness around you. In one study, people were asked to focus on some sad childhood memories and when asked to identify situations in a group of photos they selected negative aspects of the photos compared to a control group. Similarly, another group shown negative videos reported more negative childhood memories than a control group. This is called mood congruence and you literally feel the way you are focusing. On the other hand, if you want to feel happy focus on some happy events and immediately your mood will begin to change.

Einstein's laws of relativity were not discovered by focusing on still objects. Instead, he imagined travelling at the speed of light. Flight was not found by focusing on objects on the ground. How to be healthy will not be discovered by focusing on illness like most of modern medicine- but focusing on being healthy and acquiring the tools to get there will succeed.

This is why the past 50 years of psychotherapy, where many practitioners made the clients focus on their negative states, has done so much harm to so many people. I know too many people who have been crushed by psychotherapists continually encouraging them to relive the nightmares of the past.

The science shows that these techniques do not work. Focus on the positive; focus on the present. This is also not to advise that you live in a dreamy world where you try to make everything positive; just don't put all your attention on the negative.

A number of motivational or health program fail because they create negative goals, for example, in the process of weight loss. To lose weight implies that there is something that you have to stop doing, something you have to give up. Similarly, with the Quit campaign where you have to give up smoking, the focus is on the negative. Both of these programs could quite as easily be called the 'Gain Life' program or "Get Health" program or "Live Longer" program, focusing on positive rather than negative choices. This approach would also build positive steps into the programs such as short exercise, relationship building, social events and then taking the negative things out – that is, moving away from the negative. Without having the right focus it is likely that the programs will ultimately fail.

One of the most effective ways of focusing thoughts is by using questions. Humans evolved with questions; in fact, it is our questioning minds that have taken us so far so fast. Questions tap into the sub-conscious and super-conscious minds. Our mind is continually asking questions (but not necessarily the right type of questions) in an attempt to further our survival. A two year old just asks questions: "Why, Mummy?" and "Why, Daddy?" This is their way of coming to grips with the world, finding out how it works and where they fit into it. At home, school and university, as well as in the workplace, we often condition people to stop asking questions. Once we stop asking questions, we stop growing. Change this because the only way to learn is by asking questions. Einstein knew this, and so should you.

Questions not only help us make sense of the world around us but also provide direction to our mind. The part of the mind that frames the questions is the prefrontal cortex. The prefrontal cortex is like the orchestra conductor – it literally tries to direct the rest of the mind. One way it does this is by framing questions. An example of this is when you meet someone you know but can't recall her name, and you repeatedly ask yourself, "What's her name?" usually, somewhere from five seconds to five hours later, you recall her name. The prefrontal cortex created the question and directed it to the rest of the mind. It then went about answering the question behind the scenes but always working until the answer was found.

Your mind is a little like an iceberg. At the top and above the surface is your conscious mind, directed and often dominated by your prefrontal cortex. Below it is the majority of your brain capacity, the sub-conscious and super-conscious that are always working behind the scenes. Yet at school and university we often teach people to focus only on the tip of the iceberg – the conscious thinking mind, the modern busy mind.

We also often learn early on in life to use the wrong types of questions like, "Why me?" and "What's wrong with me?" or "How come this always happens to me?" and so on. Your mind then goes on answering these and comes up with as many reasons as possible. If you want to be more negative ask these questions. If you want to keep procrastinating ask, "Why do I procrastinate so much?" If you want to keep a sloppy desk ask, "Why do I keep such a sloppy desk?" Whatever questions you ask, your mind will try to answer. Poor questions focus on the problem, not the solution, and don't help. Get the picture? You get what you focus on.

To tap into this ability you can learn to ask the right questions and to bring them into your control as questions that focus on solutions. Geniuses constantly ask questions. Leonardo da Vinci, perhaps the greatest genius of all time, asked questions like "What would it be like to fly or to travel the water?" Einstein asked great questions like "What would it be like to travel on a lightning bolt and

what would I experience when I did?" All the great discoveries have come out of the minds of people asking questions and then, when they got their answers, they asked more questions to keep building on their mental scaffolding. The right questions create new possibilities and new futures.

All the top sports or business people have asked the right success questions. "How can I do better?" "How can I use that idea?" "How do I become more productive?" Ask question on how to improve your life, relationships and work – how you can continually improve yourself. Ask questions to focus on the solutions, not problems.

Learning to Focus

The exercise this week is a short one, just to introduce you to some more of the basic concepts. The 'focus' (ha ha) of this course, however, is to get you actually doing practical exercises that will aid you in your development as a Jedi.

The idea of focus can mean many things and can be applied on many levels. But the key to understanding---and doing it---is making a mental effort to be aware. Now, we will be exploring awareness more in a couple of weeks.

Exercise 1 - The simplest, easiest attention and concentration exercise is for 3 minutes a day to sit 5 feet away from a black spot 2 inches in diameter on a wall trying to focus attention, to concentrate, to see nothing but that.

Exercise 2 - Another attention and concentration exercise is studying carefully for a few minutes a picture or postcard of something unfamiliar to one (this must never be the picture of a person, nor a place where one may have been or can be expected to be a person, nor animal ~it must be an unfamiliar scene -e.g. an artist's from imagination painted picture of mountains, fields; the same one always); then, after focusing attention, concentrating on it, one tries to recall details of it -daily increases success in focusing attention, concentration.

Exercises sourced from <http://www.geocities.com/cncntrtn/index.html>

Please select one of these exercises to perform daily over the next week. Each day or so, please write in your journal regarding your progress.

Yes, these will probably seem boring, but they are not for very long each day.

Lecture 4 - Oneness

I am sure that you have all heard or read in the fiction of Jedi becoming 'One with the Force'. This concept is mentioned in two contexts, when a Jedi is actively seeking to use the Force in some manner, and when a Jedi dies. The concept of Oneness with the Ultimate, Godhead or other higher order (depending upon ones personal beliefs) is very widespread throughout the world, most religions and philosophies embrace the concept under one name or another.

Therefore, we use the term 'Oneness' in a spiritual sense, to transcend the boundaries imposed upon us by the illusions created by the 'ego', these illusions being that we are individuals, and the illusion of time. It is an experience of the absolute interconnectedness of all matter and thought within space-time. It is a glimpse of the scope of the Force, which can be as awe-inspiring as it is usually brief.

Those of us who aspire to be Jedi, to feel and utilize the Force flowing through ourselves and the world around us need to learn to become One with the Force. This is very important. If you wish to become a Jedi, you need to be able to do this. It is ok for it to be intermittent at first, that is, after all, why we all train, in order to improve. The most important and useful tool you can have to experience Oneness with the Force is....you have probably guessed it.....yep, meditation. When starting meditation, we first need to learn to quiet the mind, then when we have done that (and believe me, it is no easy task) we can then begin to learn to turn our minds either inward to connect with the Force that flows through ourselves, or outwards to begin to experience the Force outside ourselves, realizing of course that there is no 'I', there is only the Force.

You need to learn to meditate!

This, however, is not a meditation course. Right now, I want you to realize how important it is to your progress to do this. I'll nag...I mean, remind, you from time to time during this course about the importance of meditating.

It is also helpful to do certain exercises to help you come to the realization that you and everything are One. This week's exercise is called 'Take off your head'. If you have any troubles with this exercise, please post or email me. If you are feeling a little disoriented while practicing this exercise, I suggest that you start off somewhere with quiet, relaxing sensory input and sit down. A park bench will do nicely. If you want more of a challenge, pick places that are busier with people (a market for example) or walk through somewhere that is busy.

Exercise – Take off your head!

Oneness as the first principle

Imagine you have no head. That's right, look at the world around you, but pretend that you have no head. Imagine that your body stops at your shoulders. You are no longer seeing with your eyes or your rational mind. Let the world you see take the place of your head. Now the world is in your head!

This odd experiment in entering an altered state of consciousness comes from D. E. Hardings book on meditation, *On Having No Head*, and is meant to help us experience the world in a new way. Practice it a bit. As you look about, try to pay attention to the fact that even though you have no head, you still have awareness of the world. Where is that awareness? Can you locate it? The situation will seem to change from the normal state of "I have awareness" to "Awareness is". Welcome to the reality of awareness, of "mind at large."

As you forget about your head, you open up out into the world and the world joins you and becomes you. You are still aware of individual objects -- the single flower, the bird singing -- but each is somehow connected to you, for the world is no longer blocked off from you by your head.

This exercise helps us to overcome our feelings of separation from the world, and establishes a feeling of connection with the world through the medium of the force. This week, I would like you to practice 'taking off your head' at least once each day, preferably more often. Please journal your experiences. I would also like you to incorporate this exercise into your general training, with the aim of this permanent "headlessness" being a constant connection to the Force.

Exercise sourced from 'Awakening your psychic powers' by Henry Reed, pg 22.

Lecture 5 - Developing Awareness

Over the last couple of weeks, you've undertaken exercises to first narrow your awareness to a single spot on a wall, or a small picture; and then to broaden your awareness past the limitations of your senses. How have you folks been finding these exercises? Too hard? Too easy? Too boring....perhaps boring is a state of mind that needs to be worked on, if that's been a problem.

As these two exercises have shown you, awareness is relative to an individual and also to circumstances. We may be partially aware of something (for example, if we are engrossed in a book but remain aware of someone else entering the room), subconsciously aware, or acutely aware of an event. Awareness may be focused on an internal state, such as a visceral feeling, or on external events by way of sensory perception. Simply put, awareness implies knowledge gained through one's own perceptions or by means of information.

Generally, people like to think that they are aware of what's going on around them, but that may be their ego speaking. Unfortunately, many people are quite mentally wrapped up in their own personal dramas, and have difficulty seeing beyond these. We've all done this, and we'll all undoubtedly do it again, but as Jedi in training, you need to start becoming aware of and dissipating the blinkers you've placed upon yourself (part of the point of the Personal series of classes) and also being mindful of them for the future, so that your vision is less clouded by the ego. Detaching from emotive situations by stepping outside of them, in a similar manner to how you step outside your thoughts and observe when meditating, is also a useful skill.

Tips for developing awareness

1) Maintain a peaceful and calm attitude: If you are tense, nervous, anxious, or throwing a hissy fit, it is almost impossible to move your awareness past your immediate self, the ego is having a field day keeping your attention focused on it.

Remaining calm despite what's going on around you is an enormous challenge, but it will allow you to maintain your awareness, liberate your psychic senses, and probably add a few years to your life as well. Just think of the fictional Jedi in the movies...the only one who reacted emotionally to issues didn't exactly have a bright future, did he? *wink*

2) Ground yourself: We'll be covering this further in later lectures, but for now, just think about how some of you have felt when doing the 'Take off your head' exercise. Some of you have described feeling 'swept away' and being disoriented. Now, we all need to have a strong connection to the earth to be able to function, and the process of grounding establishes that connection. You could think of it as setting strong roots in the soil before allowing your leaves to blow in the wind of the Force.

Some signs of being ungrounded are becoming anxious, grumpy, and then escalating into dramatics or crotchety withdrawal. It's a progressive state, and the key is to pay attention (bring your awareness) to these changes before they escalate. The next thing to reestablish the grounded state is to do some physical activity, preferably outside. Go for a 15 or 20 minute walk, or do some other physical activity. For myself, I like to walk or do some Tai Chi, and it doesn't usually take 15 minutes anymore, 5 minutes is often enough. We'll be covering other grounding methods in the future, but this is method is the simplest.

3) Pay attention to what your body is saying: I'm sure most of you are familiar with the cliché from the Star Wars movies, 'I've got a bad feeling about this!' When the characters in the movies are saying this, they are voicing the truths that their bodies are telling them. There are many ways of

picking up 'bad vibes' about things, our subconscious mind can pick up and connect information, our intuition can also pick up on things, but whichever way the information is discerned, often the first avenue taken will be via a reaction in the physical body. This is because our minds tend to be ruled by our egos, and have a tendency to filter and dismiss information, or even convince us that it's ok to do what is harmful. So, our bodies tend to become our barometers of truth, because it's so much harder to ignore physical signals such as aches, pains, flutters, ripples, tightness, fatigue, nausea, or sickness (though as a healthcare worker, I can assure you that people do manage it). The particular signal that you will receive depends on the situation and also on the individual, so what I feel will almost certainly differ from what most of you feel. For example, my primary warning signals come, quite literally, from my gut. I get stomach pains when I'm in a situation that I need to get out of. It took me a while to learn this, and it may take you a while too. Just remember, pay attention.

4) Observe, don't absorb: When you start to open your awareness, you can start to become open to other people's negativity, too. Just think, if you've ever been around someone who is very anxious and agitated, how long is it before you find that you are also feeling anxious? Probably not very long, in most cases. This is a form of 'psychic contamination', as we are all connected through the Force so we can feel what others are feeling. It is useful to be aware of what others are feeling, but it is not useful to be in the same emotional state as them. To avoid this, it is important to stay focused and committed to your own priorities and goals, to maintain your own boundaries and insulate yourself from unwanted influences.

Stay detached. When you are in situations where you need to stay psychically centered, it is useful to keep the following in mind – 'Observe, don't absorb', and 'It's not my movie', until this becomes a habit.

Being unemotional about others' pain doesn't mean that you don't care. Rather, by remaining unemotional and nonjudgmental, it is actually easier to feel compassion and love for your fellows, and to tune in to the Force to surmise how best to help them, because your own energy and emotions aren't getting in the way.

A way to stay grounded in yourself when exposed to emotional outbursts is to cover your solar plexus, with your arms folded. Energy comes into our bodies at around about our belly button, and folding your arms is a method of deflecting it. Another way that is less obvious is to turn your body slightly away from the other person, so that your center is not facing the other. And then breathe. If all else fails, make an excuse and leave the area for a time. You're still learning, and if you start getting overwhelmed, going away until you have recovered your equilibrium will be very helpful to you.

The key to awareness: pay attention

As you've probably determined by now, the key to developing your awareness starts with moving your attention beyond your own, immediate concerns, perhaps you could consider it as expanding the definition of what constitutes 'you' and issues relating to 'you'. We are all one in the Force, and hence everything potentially deserves your attention. It is important, however, not to spend too much time and energy focusing your attention on 'everything', this will become very tiring if you try to do this. Rather, when entering a room, say, you need to allow your attention to lightly flit over everything and everyone in the room, noting what there is to note and simultaneously being aware of yourself and any feelings you might get from your body or thoughts that pop into your mind regarding this room and its inhabitants. After this, you will probably need to split some parts of your attention between interacting with what you are doing in the room, and remaining aware of what is going on behind you or in other rooms.

Here is an example that those of you with children, at least, might understand. While I sit here typing this lecture, part of my attention is on what I am doing, part of it is on the washing machine, listening for the wash cycle to complete, and part of it is keeping a watchful eye/ear/sense out for what my children are doing. A small part is also open to the Force and whatever may come through from there.

This week's exercise is actually a sensing exercise that leads on from last week's work. However, I'd also like you to 'unofficially' make the effort to increase your awareness this week (and hopefully for every week following!), use the tips outlined in this lecture, and let us know via discussion how you are finding this, and at what level you consider your awareness to be at already.

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Exercise: Blindfold

One of the first steps to becoming a Jedi is to learn to stretch out and use senses other than your eyes. From a previous course, Nyara Tye gave us the following exercise:

Blindfold yourself and walk around the room, trying to sense things there and around you. Use your hearing and touch - reach out with your mind's eye. Feel the Force flowing through you. And most of all - concentrate.

Go ahead and try her exercise. Blindfold yourself and carefully walk around your home. If you relax, can you begin to "sense" where things are? Share your experience in your journal.

Lecture 6 - Intuition

If there is a cornerstone to your training as a Jedi, that cornerstone would be your intuition. It's possible that my fellow instructors would disagree with me there, but then again, perhaps they wouldn't.

Journal: Describe an incident where you should have trusted your intuition but did not and the ramifications of that situation. Do the same for a situation where you did trust your intuition and the ramifications occurring because of that. Describe the differences in the feelings of those two events.

So, what is intuition? The dictionary puts it as:

- 1 : immediate apprehension or cognition without reasoning or inferring
- 2 : knowledge or conviction gained by intuition
- 3 : the power or faculty of gaining direct knowledge or cognition without evident rational thought and inference

On the one hand we have logic and reason, and on the other, we have intuition. Both are necessary skills for a Jedi. In the fictional universe, we can see that the Jedi relied upon it fairly heavily. How have you done in the past, when it comes to paying attention to your intuition? Take a moment to reflect on your past experiences and ask yourself:

- Did these feelings turn out to be accurate?
- Did this psychic feeling help me?
- Did I trust it? If not, what did I trust?
- Would I have been better off had I trusted my intuition? How?

Many people acknowledge, in hindsight, the unhappy consequences of ignoring their intuition, but when they do trust it, it is almost always to their advantage. It assists you in your growth, can make us aware of our own shortcomings, and can also help you express your creativity. It can be hard to follow our intuition, though; to do so is an act of surrender on the part of the ego, and this can be hard to do.

The reading text I gave you this week describes several different types of intuition, as described by Edgar Cayce. Discovery intuition is usually an artefact of our subconscious. Our subconscious stores every detail of every experience we have ever had, and if stimulated by need, or by visualisation or relaxation, the subconscious will release back to the conscious mind necessary and helpful information. This sort of intuition will also often pop into your mind when you are daydreaming and doing another task, driving the car, for example. You are in a relaxed and receptive frame of mind without the ego playing watchdog for a time. This type of intuitive experience happens most often in your work or in an area that you've spent a great deal of time learning or reading about, or an area of interest. The fact is, you may have acquired bits and pieces of useful knowledge along the way, information that would provide an answer or solution. Your subconscious mind can take in and rearrange these bits and pieces and create new and significant relationships among these bits of understanding. The solution lies in finding new relationships to old information.

Another type of psychic experience is with telepathic connections to others, though this is a type of intuition that was not mentioned in the weekly reading. Now, how many times have you been

thinking about someone and had them call within a short time? How many times have you taken up a new interest, only to find people with the same newfound interest popping up all over the place?

In some ways, people could be likened to silent radio stations, broadcasting our own tunes, and though we are not conscious of it, we do like to harmonise with each other. We gravitate naturally to people playing 'our tune' and together we amplify our broadcast. Groups of people band together and 'group think' about things: pro-lifers, animals rights activists, fundamentalists, Jedi, to name a few. People think in blocks all around the world, and these blocks of mental energy float through the Force, influencing the ideas of the greater whole.

One problem this can cause for us is that if we are lazy and undiscerning about our thoughts, you can become something of a 'psychic garbage bin', in which all sorts of negative beliefs can settle and take over the mind. This may be one aspect of the 'Dark Side' of the Force, if you follow the dualistic model. Basically, you need to stop being lazy with your thoughts, accepting of whatever comes your way, snap out of your dreamy state and be here now. If you have a sharp focus to your mind, then you will attract only that telepathic information that is helpful to your focus. Setting goals keeps you free of collective negative emotion and attracts telepathic support.

The third source of psychic intuition, and which encompasses the bulk of the intuitive states described in this week's reading, could be described as access to the super conscious plane of energy. Every one of us has access to a Higher Source of knowing and loving guidance and it doesn't matter what you call it or how you think of it. It could be God or angels, it could be spirit guides human or animal, and it could be the spirits of the ancestors. I call it the Force, but I'm not fussed about what you call it, as long as you choose to listen to it! This type of intuition influences your future and the present choices you make that will set up your future. It influences your perspective and helps you look at your choices from a new point of view. These kinds of communications are felt as warnings, urgings, new ideas, inspirations, and breakthroughs in understanding, desires to redirect your life, a need to stop or let go of what you are doing, or a need to commit or go forward with what you are hesitant about. If you are wondering how you can tell if these are 'real' intuitive impulses or not, well, these experiences are loving, but not flattering to your ego; they are stable, consistent, unwavering but not coercive; subtle but distinct. They will leave you feeling reassured, relaxed, and certain of yourself, in spite of appearances, if you listen and pay attention. They will help you find inner security and spiritual peace of mind.

Now, if we faced the facts, your conscious mind will be much more willing to listen to these impulses if it has a jolly good reason to do so. It likes to consider itself reasonable, and if it accepts and understands the reasonability of listening to your intuition, it will do so more easily.

At its most basic level, all psychic development involves is becoming keenly aware of what is going on around and inside you, here and now. By tuning in to your little psychic impulses, you will notice what you may have ignored before now. Making this realization is a first step forward in your development. So, relax, enjoy, and notice impulses that you would have otherwise overlooked. Don't worry that you are imagining things. You aren't. You are just redefining your sphere of awareness and allowing it some room to play.

One final comment. Meditation. I'm not suggesting that you need to meditate to gain enlightenment, though of course if you want to, be my guest. Rather, the simple skill of learning to tell your mind to shut up...and having it do so; will greatly assist you in learning to distinguish between the voice of the Force and the other voices in your mind. The voice of intuition is subtle and very calming. The other voices are loud, and inconsistent! It also assists you in building your awareness of the here-and-now, which is the time in which you, as a Jedi, live.

Your Psychic Intuition

How do I know the ways of all things at the Beginning? By what is within me. - Lao Tzu

I know when I have a problem and have done all I can – thinking, figuring, planning – I keep listening in a sort of inside silence 'til something clicks and I feel a right answer. - Conrad Hilton

Intuition is often defined as knowing something without realizing why or how you know it. "Hunch" is a common synonym for intuition, as are being hit by lightening, having a light bulb light up inside your head, having everything fall into place, feeling something in your bones, or a gut reaction. Each of these figures of speech expresses an understanding of the nature of intuition.

Sometimes intuition is thought to be a synonym (and a more acceptable term) for rudimentary ESP. "Women's intuition" may be a cliché that expresses that viewpoint.

The word intuition comes from a Latin root meaning to look at, to contemplate. These images suggest other images: to look within, to guard (as in to look at or watch), and knowledge or know (as in to look upon). We can see these various dimensions of the root meaning of intuition involved in the many forms of expression of intuition.

The Nature of Intuition

In *The Intuitive Edge*, Philip Goldberg describes six types of intuition: discovery, generative, evaluative, operative, predictive, and illumination. Let's look at each one briefly.

Discovery intuition, or detection, provides insights into discoverable facts. It is the "Eureka!" phenomenon, made famous by Archimedes's experience in the bathtub. Stepping into the bathwater, he discovered that an object submerged in water displaces an amount of water equal to the volume of the object. The history of "serendipity" in science is full of accidental discoveries made possible by the intuitive recognition of the significance of an accidental observation. For example, noticing how coffee altered the colour of a napkin led to the development of chromatography (analysing substances by means of their colour). Noticed how some photographic plates had been darkened led to the discovery of radioactivity. Other serendipitous discoveries include the development of Pap tests, how to culture skin for transplant to burn victims, radar, X-rays, Teflon, vulcanized rubber, penicillin, and aspartame.

Generative or creative intuition deals with opportunities, options, possibilities, and alternatives. Learning to be in the right place at the right time is one example. Artists and inventors experience this form of intuition as they ask, "I wonder what would happen if I tried this?" They have a vague inkling of the possibilities, even though later they might describe it as a happy accident.

Evaluative intuition is the inner voice that comments upon circumstances. Socrates is said to have remarked, "By the favour of the Gods, I have since my childhood been attended by a semidivine being whose voice from time to time dissuades me from some undertaking, but never directs me what I am to do." Cayce's technique for developing intuition begins with this inner voice.

Operative intuition guides our actions. Unlike evaluative intuition, it has nothing to evaluate, but is just an urge to do or not do something. Vocational callings might be like this. One day during World War II, for no apparent reason, Winston Churchill suddenly decided not to enter his car in the usual way. Instead, he walked around to the other side – and thus avoided injury from a bomb that exploded near the other side of the car.

Predictive intuition contains an element of prophesy – you are not necessarily moved to action, but you have a hunch that something will happen. For example, when you are driving, you may anticipate that another car is going to make a sudden move. I experience this intuition in my research work – being able to predict trends, anticipating ideas, or knowing the sort of information discovered today that will be relevant years later as a trend emerges.

Illumination is the greatest form of intuition. Mystical illumination transcends the other forms of intuition. Although illumination is the rarest form of intuition, Goldberg maintains that if it is developed, it will lead to the others. Like cosmic consciousness and related experiences, the knower and the known become one.

Cayce's approach to intuition is to be consistently guided by the highest form of any activity and try to find the reflection of the highest in the smallest form. His perspective is rooted in the concept of Oneness. He bases the nature of intuition on the inherent unity in creation.

From the axiomatic principle of Oneness, Cayce asserts the implication that all knowledge is within! Here he captures two of the meanings of the Latin root of the word intuition: inner and knowing, or knowing from within, consistent with the Taoist expression of the Perennial Philosophy, as articulated by Lao Tzu at the beginning of this chapter. For Cayce, intuition is not a phenomenon, but an ongoing reality that reflects our interconnectedness with life. The various forms of intuition can be explained as manifestations of this underlying Oneness.

We tend to think of intuition as an inferior, uncultivated form of ESP. While we might grant that some unrecognized psychic information lurks beneath a hunch, it seems inferior to an ESP experience, in which we have full conscious knowledge of the psychic information. Goldberg, however, maintains that intuition is not just an inferior form of ESP, but that it is more than ESP, in that it goes beyond the information given.

Cayce also felt that intuition was not an inferior or undeveloped form of ESP – he considered it to be ESP plus. On many occasions, when someone asked Cayce for a reading about developing psychic ability, Cayce's source indicated that it would be better to develop intuition than any other psychic ability. For him, intuition is the holistic intelligence (often speaking as the "still, small voice within") that puts together not just facts, but also possibilities, personal values, and need, to nudge you toward an opportunity, or to create a useful, practical, and concrete result. Whereas psychic ability might request, like Joe Friday, "Just the facts, ma'am," intuition searches out where-shall-I-go and what-shall-I-do with the perceived facts. Creativity and intuition functioning are often linked in practice, because there is a creative aspect to intuition.

Suppose, for example, that I am struggling to understand a concept, I am standing in front of a bookcase. Perhaps one of the books may have something that could be helpful to me. Pure ESP could help me, to some extent. With clairvoyant ability I could, theoretically, touch the spine of each book and mentally scan its contents. Afterward, I could decide what might be helpful to me. Intuition, on the other hand, might direct me to a particular book. As I browse through the book "at random" I stumble on a passage that triggers an inspiration. ESP just gave me the facts, and I was left to sort them all out and decide what facts might be helpful. Intuition, on the other hand, led me right to what I needed.

In this example, intuition itself involved a creative act. It felt out a possibility, recognized its significance for helping me to get in touch with an idea that, as yet, did not exist in any of the books, but could be triggered in me – not in someone else – by a particular passage that I stumbled onto

"by chance." Synchronicities are often involved in intuition, demonstrating that intuition involves an attunement to a pattern of meaning. Thus intuition is a more holistic phenomenon than ESP, and more creative. Whereas psychic ability may yield information, intuition will usually yield results, decisions, calls to action, and other effects that have already been sorted through and evaluated as being in keeping with the needs, purposes, and values of the person.

The Need-To-Know Basis of Intuitive Guidance

Cayce goes beyond these descriptive statements of intuition to give its purpose. Intuition plays a guiding role in our lives. It operates on a "need-to-know" basis. It is elicited by need, when we are in danger (as in the case of Winston Churchill), or when we are creatively striving for some goal. Intuition is purposeful, not random.

This purposeful quality of intuition is one of the reasons Cayce considers it to be the highest development of ESP. It provides no information that you do not need. In Cayce's biblical vernacular, intuition is higher than raw ESP because "knowledge not used is sin." We become responsible for knowledge that we obtain. Random ESP, or ESP performed out of curiosity, can burden us with information that we cannot use. Intuition doesn't burden us, but gives us only the information we need and prompts us in its use.

Archimedes' discovery is a good example of the need-to-know basis of intuition. What he discovered seems so obvious: push something into the water, and the water has to make as much room as the object takes up – its volume. Why hadn't anyone else noticed this relationship before? What enabled Archimedes to discover it? Archimedes had a need to know – he was working on an assaying problem, trying to determine the quality of gold in a crown. The principle he discovered helped solve his problem. Archimedes' need to know stimulated his intuition.

The need to know is a good basis for beginning to recognize and develop intuition. The way to prompt intuition is to create a situation where there is a strong need to know, but no apparent way of knowing. Intuition will go beyond the information given, so be sure to take the time to survey as many of the relevant facts as possible. This strategy forms the basis of Cayce's suggested experiment on learning to recognize intuition.

Listening to the Still, Small Voice

How can we begin to recognize intuition? Cayce suggested starting with the simplest cases, where intuition can come into play in yes/no situations. They usually have to do with choices or decisions: Is this person telling me the truth? Would this be a good business investment? Is this really the career for me? Shall I take this job? Such decisions can be answered with a yes or a no.

Begin with some choice or decision that you have to make. Now use whatever resources you have that are relevant, and make your choice or decision. Study the situation, examine your feelings, make a list of pros and cons. This period of preparation is important. Intuitive information can build upon the foundation of information that you collect and evaluate at the conscious level. The period of preparation also places you into a position of attunement with the area or topic of your concern. After you have studied the situation, make your own decision.

Then, go into a period of meditation. In the meditation, align your vibrations to the highest ideal, the most universal or encompassing pattern of truth, with the understanding that your decision is to be in harmony with that ideal. Then bring your decision into mind and ask yourself, "Is this the right choice?" Listen for your inner reaction. The inner prompting that you get, yes or no, is the act of

intuition. It may come to you as a feeling, a thought, or you may even hear a voice saying, "No!" How your inner self will speak to you is something that you have to discover for yourself, but the response will come.

Cayce suggested this exercise specifically for learning to recognize the workings of intuition. It is also a workable form of seeking guidance. He suggests developing intuition by using it in an applied manner! If you will take real situations in which you care about the outcome, and apply yourself to figuring out a solution consciously, then seek a period of silence, you will experience an intuitive response to your choice or decision.

Feelings and images: Communications from the Inner Self

Cayce's experiment requires responding to one's inner self. Intuition, and its still, small voice, may come in a variety of guises, including feelings and images. Feelings, and imagery especially, can be the manifestation of the inner voice providing intuitive information. Remember Hans Jenny's vibratory patterns? When we are concerned about a particular topic or situation, we become attuned to it – our being begins to resonate to the vibrations of the situation. Our inner self begins to manifest the effects of that resonance by producing analogous patterns of its own, in the form of feelings and images.

Albert Einstein gave free rein to his imagination. Pondering the nature of time, he imagined being a clock that was hurled through space, traveling faster and faster. That image led him to the development of his relativity theory. Another famous example in the history of science was Kekula's discovery of the formula of the benzene ring. Pondering the nature of organic compounds, he found himself imagining a snake curled back on itself, biting its tail. He recognized in that image the pattern for the formula he was seeking. In such cases of scientific discoveries, the seekers were so intently involved with the problem at hand that they unconsciously became "one with" the object of study. Their whole being – their thinking, their feelings and imagination, their actions and their attention – became attuned to the vibrations of the mystery. This created a resonance between them and what they wanted to discover. The intuitive breakthrough was a manifestation of this attunement.

I am reminded of detectives who declare that in order to catch a criminal, you have to think like one. They express the resonance theme of intuitive discovery. By imaginatively becoming attuned to the mind of the criminal, the criminal is ultimately revealed to them. The Native American communicates with inanimate objects in nature in a similar way: to learn the wisdom of a particular stone, attune yourself to the stone. Open yourself up meditatively and allow the stone's vibrations to become your own. The Native American respects the flow of imagery in the imagination as a source of revelation, not a fantasy. As I meditate on the stone, according to the Native American approach, the stone's message will come to me through the imagination. As I contemplate the stone, my thoughts, feelings, and imagery are assumed to be the effect of the stone's vibrations upon me.

When I am in a counseling situation, listening deeply to a person's story, I find that I pay little attention to the words and concentrate more on the sound of the person's voice. The music of the voice is giving expression to what is going on at deeper levels within the person. The soul sings or cries through the sound of the voice. As I allow myself to listen in this way, it is almost as if I am becoming one with its tones and vibrations. As I do so, my body seems to resonate to the sound of that voice, my being resonates with the being of the person, and I can feel it. As I focus on these feelings, images and scenes appear in my mind. I have learned that these spontaneous fantasies, far from being a sign of not paying attention, are manifestations of intuitive knowledge about the person.

When I share these images and fantasies with person, I discover their meaningfulness. The images are usually not literally true. Their symbolic form is another aspect of the patterning of vibrations. Symbolic images are often highly condensed patterns of information. Just as we say "a picture is worth a thousand words," a symbolic image may contain several juxtaposed images, combining information in a creative way that reveals a hidden truth. Dreams, the image factory par excellence are thus a valuable source of symbolic intuitions.

Intuition as Open Channeling

Listening to the still, small voice within is a form of channeling. We say intuition involves knowing something without knowing how we know it. Have you ever had the experience of making a statement with conviction, then wondering afterward, as you marveled at the truth of what you said, "How did I know that?" We could say you were channeling – channelling information intuitively. In *Channelling: The Intuitive Connection*, William Kautz and Melanie Branon define channelling as a form of intuition, as an "inner process, an intuitive connection with a universal but unseen source of information and insight." John Klimo, in *Channelling: Investigations on Receiving Information from Paranormal Sources*, calls intuition "open channeling." He includes inspiration and creativity as other forms of open channeling, which he defines as "the ability to act as a vehicle for thoughts, images, feelings, and information coming from a source that is beyond the individual's self and from beyond ordinary reality (as we know it) – a source that is not identifiable and does not identify itself".

Cayce would call this channeling the "higher Self," the soul-self that is in touch with the universal consciousness. Cayce's trance state could be considered an example of open channeling developed to the state of universal clairvoyance.

Like other forms of intuition, the open channeling we call intuition often occurs in response to a need. As a speaker—and I've heard similar stories from other speakers—I sometimes digress from my planned remarks and launch into an impromptu commentary. While my mouth is churning out this material, I often marvel at the source of the ideas ("Hey! that's pretty good stuff!" I may think to myself). After the talk, someone invariably approaches me and says they weren't sure why they came to the lecture, but my spontaneous remarks about so and so answer to a real need. Open channeling can have a psychic component as well!

Often open channeling is prompted by a question. In lecturing, I have found that the question-and-answer session at the end often involves instances of inspired speech. A person's question, and the feelings that I sense behind the question, often trigger an intuitive response. It was said of Cayce that when he went into his trance, if he wasn't asked a question promptly he would go to sleep! I myself have felt that the energy of the question often is the source of inspiration for the answer. Cayce maintained that the desire of the questioner determined the type of material that came through his trance channel. It reminds me of how often I have heard that deciding on the most appropriate question is often most of the battle in getting the most helpful answer.

Intuition, Creativity, and psychic Awareness: The Personal Pattern

Cayce maintained that intuition is an inner response and the intuitive person is one who is familiar with the inner Self. Intuition is an expression of the whole person: it is not just a simple technique or an isolated skill. This is Cayce's holistic viewpoint, and the evidence seems to be in Cayce's favor. The personality profile of the intuitive person matches the profile for creativity and psychic ability, just as Cayce had maintained. Let's look at how researchers have identified that profile.

An experiment that has proved highly influential in the history of personality tests and research requires one to respond on the basis of an inner feeling. It is called the "rod and frame" test. Imagine

this situation: You are seated in a chair in a darkened room. On the other side of the room hangs an illuminated rod, a smooth, straight stick. The rod is hanging fairly straight up and down, but it can be rotated slightly by a control knob that you have in your hand. Your task is to turn the knob back and forth until the rod is straight up and down, along a true vertical. The test doesn't measure eyesight, but whether you can determine, from your inner sense, when the rod is vertical. To do that, you have to align yourself inwardly with gravity and with the rod and make a comparison between the rod's position and your sense of the vertical. People vary in their ability to make a correct determination of the vertical.

The real test comes when a frame is placed around the rod. The frame is purposely put a bit off the vertical, and then you have to determine the verticality of the rod. It is easy to be misled by the frame. Solving the test requires ignoring what your outer-directed senses are telling you in favor of cues you are getting from your body. You need your outer-directed senses to examine the verticality of the rod, but you have to ignore what your senses are telling you about the frame. The measure of verticality has to come from within.

People who can determine true verticality from this test are called "field independent," because they can operate independently of the external field created by the frame. This experimental testing procedure has been used to good effect to predict such personality traits as creativity, openness to inner experience, dream recall, and other aspects of intuition. It is a good example to show very concretely what it means to be in touch with one's "inner" self.

Meditation and the Development of the Intuitive Personality

Meditation seems to be the best all-around approach to developing the personal pattern that highly intuitive people display. The pattern, manifesting as intuition, creativity and psychic ability, is composed of such traits as field independence, openness and trust in one's inner experience, spontaneity, self-confidence, tolerance of ambiguity and doubt, and a willingness to risk criticism, to name but a few of the attributes of the inner-directed person. This profile fits with Cayce's assertion that intuition comes from within. It might seem that to develop all these traits a complete personality makeover would be required. But a personality change is not what is needed; it is learning to look and know what is within.

To develop a personal profile conducive to intuition it is not necessary to see a psychologist. In *Focusing*, Eugene Gendlin discusses the ability to look within, and describes processes for doing so. In his research, he has found that psychotherapy is effective only to the extent that it trains this ability. He has found, as have many others, that the very act of learning how to focus on inner events, feelings, and images is itself therapeutic. So perhaps there is a more direct route to developing the various personality traits that support intuition. Cayce and others who have studied intuition seem to agree that meditation is the best training and preparation for the development of the intuitive personality. Meditation certainly is a process of turning within!

Meditation can help us develop aspects of the intuitive profile. For example, meditation has been found to increase field independence. This effect makes sense, for through meditation a person becomes more sensitive and familiar with inner sensations and signals.

We become relaxed while in meditation, so the sensations, feelings and other signals are less disturbing. It is easier to allow them to come along and pass by. Meditation researcher Daniel Goleman theorized that meditation is like a generic form of psychotherapy, because while we meditate, we come to accept without distress whatever arises. We develop openness and self-acceptance during meditation. A recent study of meditation and psychotherapy conducted by Herbert Benson, M.D., of Harvard University confirmed this theory. He found that meditators had various

experiences during meditation that speeded up the process of therapy: childhood memories, new insights, release of suppressed emotions. Such events help us become more comfortable with our inner Self, more tolerant of its expressions.

Knowing what your feelings are, knowing when you are having them, being able to detect them, being able to identify them, respecting them—these traits are part of the package of self-acceptance that comes from personal growth, whether through therapy, meditation, or the school of life experience. Intuition depends on them, for it is necessary to be in touch with feelings to recognize intuition. Accepting feelings even when they don't correspond with one's thoughts and reasoning is part of acknowledging intuition. All these components of the profile of the intuitive personality can be developed through meditation. It is as easy as breathing—the inspiration of the energy of that links us with all life.

Exercise

This week I have some writing for you to do. Over the next week, I'd like you to notice and write down any and all unusual, weird, funny, bizarre, coincidental, surprising, odd—indeed, psychic—occurrences. This includes all impressions, impulses and what you might call coincidence. Everything counts. You might find that you may need to carry a small notebook or writing pad with you, and a pen or pencil, so you can scribble them down as they occur and transcribe them into your journal at a later time (hopefully not too much later). It is not unusual for people to be in the habit of ignoring or denying these occurrences that you actually block them out. I'd like you to try to take a fresh and open look at what goes on around and inside you and pay attention to every little thing.

Additionally, remember and write down any past psychic experiences that you can recall. Don't censor or disqualify certain ones because you don't think they are important enough. Every one counts. Remember as many as you can, and write over several days if need be as the memories return. Try to discern which of these experiences were from:

- * your subconscious storehouse
- * a telepathic connection
- * a higher plane of assistance

Trust your feelings as you try to discern the differences among various types of intuitive activity.

On a final note, have fun with this exercise. Don't try to force yourself to find the 'right' answer.

The aim of this exercise is to make you more aware of how often intuition pops up in your life, and how it struggles with other influences as it tries to sound off. By doing this, you'll become conscious of the times and ways you stop yourself from really benefiting from the guidance of yourself and the Force.

Lecture 7 - Blocks between you and the Force

It is a lot simpler to walk the Jedi path if you are not laden with baggage, physical, mental or emotional. During your study here at the Academy, you will be spending quite a bit of time in self-examination and self-development. In this lecture, we will be looking at some very specific 'blocks' that can occur, that may hinder you in developing an awareness of, and intuition through, the Force.

The religious training block

Quite a few of the students we have seen at the Academy have struggled to reconcile their early religious training with the changes that following a new path can bring. Many of us have been raised to believe in a powerful, authoritarian God and to respect the 'powers that be'. Along with this message is the implication that we are fundamentally flawed and untrustworthy, and that we should seek our authority outside of ourselves. It follows that a block that is based upon such conservatism can create an unconscious (or conscious) anxiety about trusting yourself. 'How do I know I'm right?' is a question we hear often (and occasionally say ourselves, amusingly enough).

Consider that the religious training you had as a child, the limitations that were placed upon you, were necessary for your development and protection at the time. Ideally, it guided you to develop a balanced sense of right and wrong, helped to develop your conscience, and taught you to respect others. As an adult now, these restrictions may be outgrown. Conclusions that you drew as child will not necessarily serve you now that you are an adult, especially if they were based on shame, guilt, or the need to control. Here we would say that intuition is the voice of the Force, but if you are so inclined you can also consider it the voice of God operating in your heart. As a person evolves and matures spiritually, he or she can become self-regulating rather than regulated by outside authorities.

If you have conflicts about religious beliefs versus personal intuition, the block can be overcome with effort on your part to reconsider the question of what is morally and spiritually appropriate—for you. As an adult, you have the right to investigate and learn more for yourself and draw your own conclusions. In developing your intuition, or connection to God, or whatever you like to call it, you are actually taking a huge step towards leading a spiritual life. True guidance is guidance for the good of all concerned, not just for you.

The 'Ugly Duckling' Block

Some of you reading this already know that you are psychic and have a connection to the Force, and you probably aren't very comfortable with it. You may sense things sooner than other people. You may read situations more accurately than other people. Your feelings often differ from the general consensus and prove to be accurate. This isn't comfortable for you, and it's often not comfortable for others. Their discomfort becomes your discomfort. It makes you feel self-conscious...like an ugly duckling.

Until you accept these abilities, realizing that they are in your best interest, you may feel burdened by being different, but you aren't so much 'different' as just more awake, more aware.

To be a Jedi requires that you be willing to be different, to stand apart from others and live your life as directed by yourself, and the Force. Most people in life fall into two groups, dominant and passive. Dominant people tend to push passive people around. Passive people submit to dominant people. But there is another group, not just made up of Jedi but as a general group, that is balanced, they seek to neither control or to be taken care of. To be a psychically and spiritually aware person,

attuned to the Force, is to be in this camp.

It is important to realize that this awareness is a gift, and to receive it you also need to agree to the responsibilities that go with it. Because there are responsibilities, you are obliged to take responsibility for yourself.

As you train your mind and spirit on the Jedi path, you will be met with various tests, some of these might be:

- * Unpopularity (you're not really going with the general run of people here).
- * Ridicule (people make fun of things they fear or don't understand)
- * Rejection (some people will think you are simply weird)
- * Criticism (some people criticize those who are different)
- * Lack of support (very few people support 'psychic' feelings)
- * Being misunderstood (you can pretty much count on this at some point).

When you begin to use your intuition, you begin to exercise your personal power, and if people around you have been holding your power for you, plan on a little bit of resistance from them before they'll go giving it back to you. Sometimes the people closest to you will be the most antagonistic when you begin relying on your intuition and the Force. This is more of a reflection of their insecurities than your abilities.

On the other hand, don't invite drama into your life as you embrace your intuition. True intuition, that connection to the Force, is subtle and quiet, and will leave you feeling secure if you listen.

The best way to overcome the ugly duckling block is to know that you are really a psychic swan. Attach your worth to your spiritual nature, and not onto appearances or the opinion of others. Hold your own counsel. Don't advertise. Let your truth advertise for you.

The Intellectual Censor Block

Some people self-censor their intuition. They determine them to be coincidences, chance, luck etc and not indications of true ability. 'How do I know it was real?' they say, or 'Well, I've had hunches before, but it wasn't any big deal'.

It doesn't have to be a big deal to have a psychic event, in fact, it rarely is. More often, it is a series of 'little deals' that make life easier and flow more easily.

One important decision you will need to make if an intellectual block is your problem is to lighten up, take it easy, and see how everything counts when it comes from the Force. Don't disqualify anything!

Keeping a journal to record your psychic impressions can be of immense assistance. Every time you have a psychic impulse or experience, or even if you just feel 'connected' to the Force, write it down, even if you think its ninety nine percent imagination. It won't be long before you will have to see just how frequently you are experiencing guidance and how accurate it is. It's a real eye-opener!

The Jedi path is one where you see the world differently, being able to see beyond appearances and into the true relationship between you and your life experiences. It is being receptive to the Force and its subtle guidance. It is being conscious enough to make choices that further you on your

spiritual path, and also follow the will of the Force. Intellectual blocks are mostly bad habits, learned perceptions, and insecurity. A good way to cure them is through a sense of humor, of wonder, and of awareness. So if this is your block, laugh, lighten up, and pay attention.

The Disorganization Block

So, the previous blocks relate to issues in the past. Now, let's have a look-see at the present. Now, for many of us, life is chaotic and demanding, and we tend to lose our focus as we move through the day. Often, this problem is reflected in our physical surroundings.

Where is my wallet? I can't find my keys. What did I do with that report? Where's Teddy?! (a common one in my house). Where did you put your sweater? How did this house get so messy!

The most concrete block to a person's intuition is having a disorganized life. Intuition or psychic ability is the ability of a person to perceive and be aware of subtle direction coming from the Force (or Higher Self, or God, etc etc). In order to perceive the guidance, you need to have a keen awareness, but if you live in disarray, with unfinished business, chances are you'll fail to perceive even the most obvious circumstances around you, let alone the more subtle, higher influences.

I suspect this is one reason why the fictional Jedi led a basically monastic lifestyle.

If you are not organized, you won't be able to consistently connect to the Force. Psychic ability is a moment-to-moment relay between your conscious mind and the Force. In order for that relay to occur, you have to be able to reflect on the present situation before acting. If too many responsibilities and demands are burying you alive, there will be no opportunity for reflection, as you will be too busy frantically holding everything together.

Organization is something that goes back to your intentions. It will follow true intentions, those objectives you really care about in your life. Organization is the by-product of clear intentions, and psychic guidance is the by-product of organization. Frantic, disorganized, dramatic people have very low levels of awareness. Basically, disorganization is an energy leak. Look at your physical surroundings and notice whether they reflect order, balance, and organization. It is very important to have outside order to support your inner order. For most people this means doing a spring clean, letting go of the unnecessary.

Remember that everything in your life requires attention and energy. Are your attention and energy being drained away on vast accumulations of old, unnecessary, outdated, disorganized, useless stuff surrounding you? If so, realize that all the disorder in your life steals your awareness, your most precious commodity (except maybe time lol).

Remember that everybody places different degrees of sentimental importance on stuff. Even bearing this in mind, though, ask yourself how much of your stuff is truly reflective of some important life experience and how much is just junk accumulated thoughtlessly and for no reason?

This, now, is the time to recognize the importance of simplicity in your life, and clear out of your life what really contributes nothing. If something no longer serves you, donate it back to the universe. Give it to a charitable organization, or check out 'freecycling' (google it). You may have noticed that all spiritual masters live simply (even the fictional ones), I'm not saying you have to live as austere as they— only that you need to keep out the unnecessary or useless so it won't clog up your awareness.

Taking Care of Business

In addition to simplifying and purging your life of the unnecessary, you need to take responsibility for your past obligations and commitments. Recognize what is niggling at your awareness because of neglect and clean it up. Take care of the old business so you can be free to move on to the new.

This is hard if you have no goals or only vague ones ('I want to be a Jedi' sort of springs to mind here). The more specific you are about your goals, the easier it is to identify what supports these goals and what doesn't. Clearing away the old and completing old responsibilities comes naturally if you are focused on where you are going next.

Now, you can't just walk away from responsibility, but it is worthwhile to ask yourself if they are:

- * unnecessary baggage from the past,
- * unfinished business from the present, or
- * sabotage

If it's unnecessary baggage from the past, now is a good time to practice the Jedi art of letting go. If it's unfinished business, finish it. If it's sabotage, see it for what it is and move away from it.

Psychic sabotage

This occurs when conditions, people, or even your own misconceptions actually work against your achieving your goals. Sabotage from the outside is most easily avoided by guarding your goals carefully and keeping them secret, or at least sharing them only with truly supportive people. Unfortunately, there are usually plenty of people happy to tell you that your intuition isn't real, well, don't give them the chance.

Living at the Proper Pace

The final block is being in too much of a hurry to stop and notice what is— what is going on around and within you. Just think about it for a moment, who's got a better idea of the road? Someone who driving down it at a hundred miles an hour, or someone walking along it? Who will notice more, In the case of the tortoise and the hare, the tortoise wins.

Those who live more slowly, who take time to notice the world around them and to focus inward for guidance from the Force, will be guided more effectively. Of course, you don't want to go too far in the other direction either, just live at a proper pace.

A proper pace is one that allows you time to take care of the necessary, a pace that allows time for work, rest, for meditation, for recreation, and for socialization. I know this hard to achieve, I struggle with this one myself, but you come much closer to it with clear goals. If you are too busy to feel, you are too busy to be aware. Remember...work is NEVER done.

Now, I'd like you all to move to these weeks exercises, which are of a different nature to those previous. I also invite you all to have a chat about what blocks you might have and what you can do about them. Share ideas.

Lecture 8 - The Living Force and You

(insert corny music here)

Reading assignment: Find and explain a passage from literature that to you, describes the Living Force

If we may, I would like to start this lecture with an article I found a few years back while googling on 'the living force' for a previous incarnation of this subject. The following writing is predominantly fan fiction, however I still found it an interesting and thought provoking work.

The Living Force

By Qui-Gon Jinn

translated by Elizabeth

*Reprinted in translation with special permission from the Jedi Temple Newsletter, published by the Jedi Council, Coruscant. Subscription is 24 daktaris per year for 6 issues and subscription requests should be addressed to Master Depa Billaba.

Over the dozens of years of my Jedi service, I have met hundreds, or perhaps thousands, of Force-sensitive non-Jedi, and have often been struck by the depth of their hunger for the knowledge of the Jedi Order. They feel a dissatisfaction with life which they do not understand and desire to learn how to better use their innate gifts. Had they been selected to become Jedi, they would have grown up with a regimen of training and self-discipline - a hard path, but one that would teach them to feel and to direct the Force within and around them. Gifted non-Jedi are in the frustrating position of sensing themselves to be at the edge of a great pool of knowledge and power and yet not knowing how to swim. When such people ask me, "What are the skills I had best to learn?" I respond that knowledge of the living Force can be the key to everything.

Almost everyone who has heard of the Jedi has heard about the Light and Dark sides of the Force. These are centered around compassion and greed respectively, and balance each other in an eternal dance of good and evil. But many lay folk are unfamiliar with the other great division. The Force is divided into two complementary aspects. The cosmic Force is impersonal in a sense; it encompasses destiny and foreknowledge, and binds and unifies the universe. This is the aspect of the Force which most people think of first. The Jedi powers of telekinesis and remote viewing are of the cosmic Force. The living Force, on the other hand, is our connection to other beings and to the universe on a more personal and intuitive level. It is through the living Force that we feel compassion, that we receive intuition, that we have a personal connection to others. It is with the living Force that the so-called Jedi "mind trick" is accomplished, as well as the various healing techniques.

The living Force is often said to be the lesser of the two aspects, but I consider such a statement to be misleading. The longer I live the more strongly I feel the opposite to be true. Jedi training has traditionally emphasized the cosmic Force as the core of the Jedi's power while the living Force was considered merely a practical element with less bearing on ultimate reality. The cosmic Force was that which was always real, while the living was transitory because it depended on the present, which of course passes as soon as it arrives, and on life, which is just as impermanent as an instant in time. In the words of Master Sel Selri, a great teacher of many millennia ago, "the cosmic Force is the path, and the living Force the journey."

But when we consider the cosmic Force carefully, we cannot shy away from the fact that it, too, has many ambiguities. A Jedi's vision of the future may sometimes seem vividly clear - and, to be sure, it

sometimes is - but most of the time it is more like gazing down a forking path. Different versions of the future will be achieved by different courses of action, and the outcomes are not always visible from where one stands. It is often the living Force (ironically, I think) that can resolve the ambiguity. Quieting the logical mind and listening to intuition is a way of knowing which path is the right one, even if we may not fully know yet why that is so. In this way, the living Force provides a kind of knowledge more mysterious and yet more powerful. Those who learn to use the two aspects effectively in tandem always prove to be the wisest decision-makers.

Jedi often refer to these living Force revelations about the "rightness" of certain courses of action as "the will of the Force." This too is misleading to the uninitiated, because it is often taken to imply that the Force has a consciousness and desires as we do. This is not the case. "The will of the Force" refers to the conspiracy of the universe (that is, of the Force) to place us on a particular path. There is a larger purpose that is being fulfilled, and it is sometimes wisest to simply have faith that that is the case and take the course that has been laid before one. The Force, as many Jedi thinkers over the ages have pointed out, doesn't have our personal best interests in mind. It is larger than us, larger perhaps than the sum of all of us, and it is only the truly selfless man or woman who can devote him or herself to its will, because it is a hard and thankless journey.

Why follow the will of the Force, then? Why not simply use personal, logical judgment? Not everyone agrees with the wisdom of unquestioning adherence to the will of the Force. The Force itself, after all, favors the Light side no more strongly than it does the Dark side. Is it not the better course to renounce all that has the taint of the Dark, and all that might pave the way for it, to use reason in the service of the Light?

The problem with trying to thwart the will of the Force, of the universe, is that ultimately it cannot be done. Balance is a thing at once tenuous and inevitable, a state toward which the universe always tends and yet which can be swayed. When the scale swings in favor of the Light, the Jedi are content. This, for us, is the most desirable balance, the one which by the firmness of our commitment we have maintained for ages. But the overall balance of power between Light and Dark will sway back to the center. This may sound pessimistic, but it is not meant that way. We all do our part to contribute to that balance by our compassion or by our greed. But if we throw our weight around and try to tilt the boat to one side or the other, it will always return to its upright position eventually, and perhaps roll to the other side in recoil. Such is the invariable rule. In a larger sense, the will of the Force can be considered to be this tendency toward balance. One who listens to the whispers of the universe, one who empties him or herself and feels, one who undertakes in faith the journey of the living Force, such a one knows that the ultimate balance lies at the point of infinite ambiguity where there is no Light or Dark.

The majority of Jedi whose primary focus is on the unifying Force refuse to accept this true balance - not as a reality necessarily, but as a goal. And perhaps this is their proper position on the issue, for if the Jedi did not fight for the Light then who would be the guardians of peace and justice in the universe, and the compassionate conscience of the Republic? The tension between the urge to balance which we feel through our intuition and the urge to good which we feel in our hearts and with our reason is in this way at the heart of the tension which many Jedi perceive between the living and the unifying aspects of the Force.

It cannot be overemphasized that it is crucial to strike a balance between reliance on cosmic foresight and living intuition. It may be true that blind faith in intuition is a risky thing, and a fault even a Jedi Master such as myself may be subject to. But in comparison with relying solely on a vision of the forking path of the future, it is in my opinion the lesser of the two evils. One of the fundamental tenets of the Jedi Order is that there is knowledge and ability beyond understanding

available to one who opens him or herself to the Force; with the Force, there is no ignorance, there is knowledge. And to temper one's reliance on intuition seems to me to weaken the potential of that greatest strength of the Force.

Only by making leaps of faith can one use it to transcend physical and mental limitations. In this way, the living aspect is the gateway to accessing the cosmic Force. True mastery of the living Force will automatically result in mastery of the unifying. Master yourself, and you will master the word around you to a greater extent than you might expect.

Master Jinn resides on Coruscant, but as an active Jedi he travels extensively in service as a diplomat and mediator of disputes. He is currently training his third Padawan learner.

Translator's note: I consider this a hybrid of editorial and fan fiction, describing the way I imagine Qui-Gon's beliefs about the living Force, balance of the Force, and so forth. It does not necessarily coincide precisely with George Lucas' beliefs or statements. These are Qui-Gon's thoughts, as I see them, and a character may believe differently from his creator.

Comments to: elizabeth@qui-gonline.org

Source: <http://www.who-gonline.org/features/livingforce.htm>

Note: This website no longer exists with this article, but we have included it for posterity. The email probably does not work anymore unfortunately.

Exercise – Yoga breathing

Yoga is a form of physical and spiritual exercise that seeks to bring silence and stillness to the action and movement of life. The Sanskrit word for 'breath' is prana, and it has a similar meaning to the Chinese 'chi', which we've mentioned before. One thing that I personally think about the Force is that it embodies movement, from the motion of breath in our lungs, to the slow growth of a tree, the endless spinning of a dead planet around a dying sun. Our minds, also, are generally filled with movement, thoughts, images, sensory stimuli. To be aware of the movement of life and of the Force, a Jedi employs meditation to still the motion of their own mind and become an observer to the movement of the Force outside of (and inside of) themselves.

Now, you should already have taken Meditation before or during this course, so you should know how to undertake basic meditation (even if you are still developing the skill) and I will not go over this in this lecture. However, there is a particular yogic breathing technique that is very useful in quickly clearing and sharpening the mind that I will share with you this week. If you haven't taken meditation, contact Jax or Phoenix for guidance.

This practice has several names, it was taught to me as 'Alternate nostril breath' and probably has some difficult Sanskrit name that I do not know. Another name for it I have seen is 'YinYang breath'. This exercise serves to balance the two hemispheres of the brain and assist in clearing energetic blockages. I'd like you to practice it over the next week. This is not an exercise you have to do when you are peaceful, rather it is good to employ it when you need some clarity to your thoughts. I like to use it before giving treatments or if I'm feeling stressed.

Make a loose fist with the index and middle fingers of the right hand, leaving the thumb and the last two fingers extended. Using the ring and pinkie fingers, gently close off the left nostril and breathe deeply in through the right. As you reach the top of your inhalation, release the left nostril and close

off the right one with your thumb. Exhale slowly and smoothly. At the end of exhalation, breathe in deeply through the uncovered left nostril. When this inhalation is complete, open the right nostril and close the left one again with the last two fingers, exhaling deeply and slowly through the right nostril before beginning the cycle all over again. Continue this exercise for two to four minutes. To extend this skill, try counting between breathes. Take a count of 8 seconds for the in-breath through a nostril (one-prettypony, two-prettypony, three-prettypony etc). Then close the nostril and exhale for the count of 4 through the alternate nostril. Breathe in for the count of 2 in that nostril and then repeat the process.

This is a VERY effective exercise and you'll only need to do it for a few minutes.

Lecture 9 - Energy and Grounding

Earlier in this series of lectures, it was mentioned that science is coming to the view that things, all things, including human beings, are made up of the same basic material; essentially packets of quantum energy. Matter is energy at a slower rate of vibration. So you and I, sitting here at our respective computers, are two bodies made of matter. We look different, think differently, and though we share the similarity of the energy pattern 'human' within that context we also have a very different energy signature, vibration, if you will.

In classic physics, energy has the following properties:

- * Energy can be transferred from one object to another.
- * Energy comes in many different forms, which can generally be divided into Potential or Kinetic energy.
- * Energy can be converted from any one of these forms into any other, and vice versa.
- * Energy is never created or destroyed – this is called the First Law of Thermodynamics.

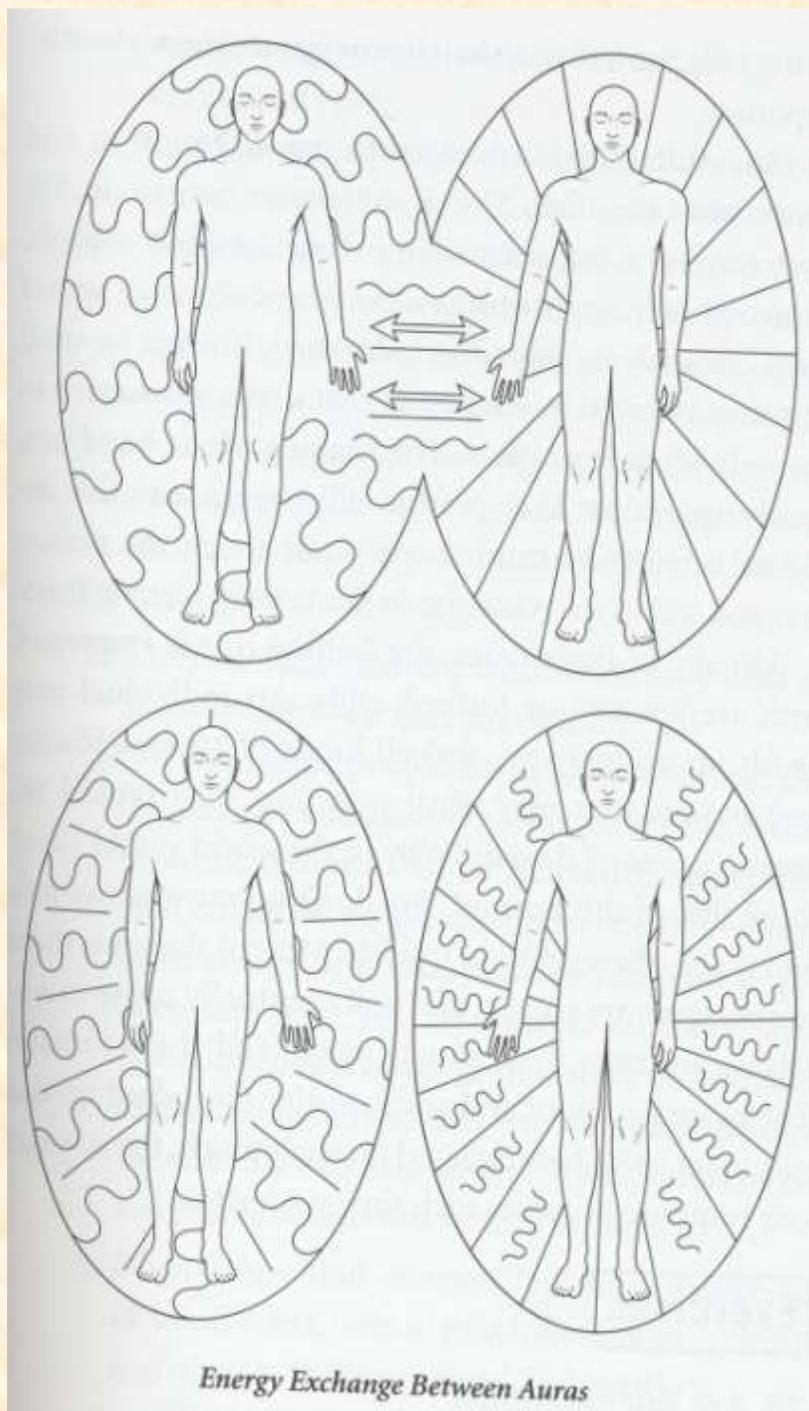
If we have a look at our physical senses, and remember that matter is just energy, you can see how these senses are dependent upon energy exchange. A photon of light emitted or reflected from an object is absorbed by the photoreceptors in the retina, and conveyed as an electrical impulse through the optic nerve to the appropriate areas of the brain. Tiny particles of matter contact the olfactory receptors in the nasal area, these are similarly converted to electrical signals to be interpreted by the brain once again.

Living things themselves also emit a weak radiation, some of which can be photographed under special conditions (Kirlian photographs, we'll talk about them some more next week when we talk about auras). When we interact with other people, or animals, or plants even, our personal energy transmission intermingles with their energy. Sometimes these interactions are more harmonious than others, which is why some people have green thumbs, others tend to have kids hanging all over them, or the cat that which hides when strangers are around suddenly pops out from under the lounge to rub itself all over someone it doesn't know, to the amazement of its owners.

Energy exchange between people, for example, can be synergistic. Think, for example, of a sports event where the crowd is excited. Many people feeling and thinking the same things creates a 'group energy' that begins to temporarily override the energy patterns of the individuals and create a 'group mind'. We see similar things with schools of fish or flocks of birds turning as one when a few of them see a predator.

One problem of this sort of energy exchange, as has been brought up by some of you during discussions, is that of very receptive people taking on the energy patterns of other people to an uncomfortable degree.

Energy exchange via the Aura



As you can see from the diagram above, when two people interact, their energy patterns mingle with yours. This can be a problem if their energy pattern is dissonant with your own, and can cause emotional defensiveness (when you feel that you are being invaded but don't understand why), or can literally suck energy out of you, or add it to your own, making you feel 'wired'.

There are two different ways of dealing with unwanted energy patterns.

Grounding

Consider yourself as an electrical energy station, sending out, picking up, and holding in energy all of the time. Multiple layers of physical, emotional, mental, psychic information is flowing into, around, and out of our bodies at all times. Grounding is a technique which calmly drains you of excess energy, helping to keep your perceptions your own, your emotions balanced, and your body relaxed.

The best method of grounding is simply to...touch the ground. Grounding means channeling your energy into the ground. If you are lucky enough to have a yard or garden, go into it and dig up the earth, or tend to the garden every day. If you don't have a yard, potting soil will also work, so start a balcony or window pots.

Working with clay is another way to get grounded, buy a bag of clay such as they use in schools, as it doesn't dry out as easily, and get creative. Play with it, have some fun while you're at it. Filing the garden or the clay, any activity that uses your hands in a creative way is very grounding. Artistic endeavors such as painting, needlework, carving, or undertake some tidying up like we talked about a couple of weeks ago. Cooking, and baking in particular are grounding, and can be nurturing as well (does anything smell as good as fresh baked bread straight out of the oven?) All of these activities are grounding, drain you of excess energy overload, and restore balance.

There are other methods, of course. One of my personal favorites is using water, especially after giving massage, where my hands have been exposed to another persons energy for an hour. I find that vigorous ritual hand washing with warm water, sometimes with some essential oil (I find sage effective) and accompanied by a visualization of the other persons energy going down the drain very effective and quite quick.

Exercising, going for a walk, or playing sports can also be grounding, and is particularly helpful if your energy is really sluggish or overcharged. Of course, you may be reading these and realize that you are doing some of these activities already. Congratulations on listening to your intuition, because it knows what you need to do, now you just know why.

Crystals and other Grounding materials

There are many types of crystals that can assist you with grounding. You could carry these in your pocket, put them in your desk drawer or beside your bed, or wear them as jewelry. Whenever you feel too charged up with other peoples' energy, hold your crystal in your hands, imagine the unwanted energy flowing out of you and into the crystal. From time to time, put your crystals in the ground to drain and clear them of their negative energy.

* Obsidian: volcanic rock, which is black and opaque, and is great for blocking energy. It is good for really sensitive people who pick up too much energy and are too concerned about other people. NB note that if you are buying 'obsidian' do NOT buy the colored glass you might see on Ebay. It is just colored art glass, not genuine volcanic glass.

* Fluorite: (especially green fluorite) is especially good for grounding and balance and is calming to the nervous system.

* Hematite: is also grounding and tends to stabilize emotions.

* Quartz Crystal, Grounding: A quartz crystal with an eight sided face is called a Grounding crystal.

They are quite rare. They assist in dealing with matters practically and with clear expression.

* Any stone that is associated with the Root Chakra in any texts you might have. These will generally mention those above, plus sometimes smoky quartz, Tan Jasper, Mugglestone and Black Tourmaline.

The main trick to keeping yourself grounded is to observe and be aware of other peoples energy (see this weeks exercise), keep yourself as clear as possible of negative energy by avoiding it when you can and grounding it out when you cannot. Ground as often as necessary, until it becomes second nature. Later in this course we will be learning about psychic self-defense, but for the time being, I'm going to suggest that you take the Zen route and simply ground out any negative energy that you experience.

We shall now move to the exercises.

Exercise: Becoming aware of others energy

When dealing with people, look at them. Study them. Hear what they are saying. This will be easier to do if you have been meditating to cut down on your own mental chatter. Allow yourself to notice and sense the energy of people, places, and things.

We all have distinct vibration patterns and tones. Some people's patterns are tense and static and their tone high-pitched. Other people's patterns of energy are slow and thick and their tone low and dull. Practice noticing the various types of energy, or 'vibes' people give off.

Whenever you encounter someone—friend or stranger, whether or not you know or like them—take a deep, slow breath when you are interacting, and as you exhale concentrate on how their energy feels to you. For the sake of helping you identify their energy patterns, see if you can classify it as:

- | | | |
|------------|-------------|--------------|
| 1. Fast | 2. Moderate | 3. Slow |
| 1. Tense | 2. Relaxed | 3. Dull |
| 1. Warm | 2. Lukewarm | 3. Cool |
| 1. Vibrant | 2. Calm | 3. Lethargic |

Emotionally, how does this person feel to you?

- | | | |
|------------|------------|------------|
| 1. Happy | 2. Neutral | 3. Sad |
| 1. Healthy | 2. Neutral | 3. Sick |
| 1. Calm | 2. Neutral | 3. Nervous |
| 1. Honest | 2. Neutral | 3. Lying |

Don't rely on the conversation you may have with someone to identify a persons energy. As we all know, many times what a person says is not at all an indication of how he or she really is.

Also during this exercise, notice your own energy pattern and vibration. How do different people affect you? Again, ask yourself, am I:

- | | | |
|--------------------|------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Calm | 2. Neutral | 3. Nervous |
| 1. Content | 2. Neutral | 3. Angry |
| 1. Happy | 2. Neutral | 3. Sad |
| 1. Comfortable | 2. Neutral | 3. Uncomfortable |
| 1. Honest and open | 2. Neutral | 3. Lying or covering up |

You might also find it fun to ask yourself, what color is this person on the emotional rainbow? Do they have red, warm, zoomy energy? Do they have orange, glowing, bouncy energy? Do they have golden-yellow energy, full of radiance, optimism, and strength? Do they have green, calming, nurturing energy, responsive and accepting?

Maybe their energy is light blue—serene, open minded, reflective and cerebral. Perhaps indigo—intense, mysterious and profound. Maybe violet—powerful, inspiring, regal, and uplifting? It could even be white—clear, safe, quiet and high. Maybe they are none of these colors, some people are grey, some brown, a few are even black.

What color are you?

The point of this activity is to teach yourself how a person's vibrational pattern affects you. We all have different responses and tend to have different interpretations of other peoples energy, and this exercise is to help you to determine how you personally do these interpretations.

I'd like you to write about at least five people, on the scale above, in your journal. There are no right or wrong answers here, just what you are feeling. Please practice the exercise with as many people as you can, however.

Closure

Thank you for embarking on this energetic journey with all of us at the Institute. It is our hope that you gained something valuable from this course, and your time spent at the Institute, and it is with the sincerest of hopes that we invite you all to continue your studies in more courses with us at this Institute.

In this course, we touched on basic energetic sensing, intuition, trusting your own feelings, and understanding our personal energetic fields. We also discussed the many theories on energetic fields, as well as the many theories of the breakdown of the Force. We practiced many different exercises that allow us to "get a feel for" the theories we discussed. Future Force courses will continue this journey in greater depth. You will also find further information throughout the forum. Explore, experiment, and share your experiences in your training journal or blog. In this way we learn from each other and expand our understanding of the Force, moving forward on the Jedi path together.