





Chopra Meditation Teacher's Manual



Table of Contents

Part 1: Welcome & Introduction

Welcome and introduction.....	7
Course overview.....	10

Part 2: The Art of Teaching & Presenting

Transforming from student to teacher	12
Teaching large groups	19
Public speaking.....	20

Part 3: Teaching the Classes

Teaching Class 1	26
Introducing yourself	27
Course overview	28
The antidote to stress	29
Meditation, thoughts, and the Gap.....	30
The software of the soul.....	32
The software of the soul, cont.....	34
The layers of life	35
The layers of life, cont.	37
Primordial Sound Meditation	38
Primordial Sound Meditation, cont.	39
Mantras as a meditation tool	40
Class recap and what’s next.....	40
Teaching Class 2	44
Getting prepared.....	45
Greeting your student.....	47

Performing the ceremony.....	48
The <i>Shanti</i> mantra.....	50
Home practice	53
Teaching Class 3.....	55
Introduction to the class.....	56
Preparing for meditation.....	57
When to meditate	58
How to meditate	60
Timing your meditations	61
Thoughts and experiences.....	62
Expectations of meditation	66
Completing a meditation.....	68
The mechanics of stress release	69
The value of meditation	71
Class summary.....	72
Explaining the group meditation.....	73
Leading the group meditation	76
Wrapping up Class 3	81
Teaching Class 4.....	83
Introduction to the class.....	83
The waking, dreaming, and deep sleep states.....	85
The higher states of consciousness.....	87
Program summary.....	90
Q&A	93

Part 4: Customizing Your Classes

Understanding your students.....	97
Teaching children and teens.....	100



Teaching people in the workplace 109
Special considerations 114
Sharing the science 119

Part 5: The Lifelong Learner

The best teachers are lifelong learners. 127
Introduction to the *Upanishads* 127
Introduction to the *Bhagavad Gita* 130
The 4 paths of yoga 137
Introduction to the *Yoga Sutras* 140

Part 6: The Primordial Sound Meditation Mantras

Uncover the gift inside the ceremony 145
Introduction to the Sanskrit language 145
The mantras 150

Part 7: Teacher Tools and Resources & Business Best Practices

Explore your teacher resources. 163
Discover and nurture the teacher within. 165
Business best practices 167
Outline: Standalone Introduction to Meditation class 174



Chopra Meditation Teacher's Manual

PART 1

Welcome & Introduction



Welcome and introduction

Welcome to *Chopra Meditation Certification*. You have chosen to embark on a lifechanging journey, and the Chopra community is here to support you on your teacher's path.

For years, thousands of people around the world have found deep fulfillment as Chopra-certified meditation teachers. Guiding others to enrich their lives through Primordial Sound Meditation is an incredible gift which magnifies individual and collective joy, contentment, and well-being.

In this program, you won't only learn how to teach meditation—you will also gain a deeper understanding of your own practice. The course is not difficult, but it requires dedicated time and focused attention. With intention, enthusiasm, and commitment, you will find it easy—even fun—to complete.

If you are prepared to devote sufficient time and energy to the curriculum, you will soon gain all the skills needed to become a Chopra-certified teacher of Primordial Sound Meditation.

Certification is the culmination of a 3-part journey—designed to expand, deepen, and refine the knowledge you've already gained by completing Chopra Meditation Foundations and Enrichment. When you have successfully completed the Foundations, Enrichment, and Certification courses—meeting all requirements and passing all evaluations—you will be qualified to teach the full, 4-part Chopra Meditation program. As a Chopra-certified instructor, you'll play an essential part in bringing the knowledge of unbounded reality and universal oneness to the world.

Please use this manual—together with the downloadable written content, videos, audio files, and other resources provided in the Enrichment and Certification courses—to prepare for presentation evaluations and testing. You may also make whatever notes, cue cards, or other resources may assist you in your studies and presentations.

There will be many opportunities for in-depth interaction between Chopra educators, staff, and course participants. To have the richest experience possible and form meaningful connections within the Chopra community, you'll want to take full advantage of these opportunities, participating fully whenever possible.

As you begin this course, it's a good idea to write out your intentions for becoming a certified meditation teacher. Keep them in a place where you will see them frequently. You can refer to them whenever you need to be re-inspired.

As you move through the course, note down any questions that come up for you, as well as topics on which you'd like further clarification. Imagine what your future students might ask, and write down any potential questions you aren't sure how to answer. You may post your questions in the Community Forum or ask them during the live sessions offered throughout the program.

By the end of Certification, you'll be ready to teach the 4 classes of the Chopra Meditation program. To develop your teaching skills, you'll present materials to practice students. This will include teaching basic Primordial Sound Meditation topics, giving students their personal mantras, and engaging in Q&A. You will also

demonstrate your skills and knowledge through oral presentations and testing. **All requirements must be completed and passed to receive a certificate of completion.**

You will soon join the global family of Chopra-certified instructors. You may look forward to a lifelong journey of growth, learning, and expanding awareness.

“

You must find the place inside yourself where nothing is impossible.

DEEPAK CHOPRA

Intentions and study tips

- Designate a comfortable, well-lit, and organized space where you can study. You may choose to personalize this space with affirmations, aromatherapy, mantras, and/or a list of your intentions to help you stay motivated.
- Choose comfortable clothing and seating arrangements. You might keep your yoga mat nearby for some well-deserved stretching between study sessions.
- Keep a journal by your side to reflect on the emotions and patterns that come up for you during this process. You might also write down your intentions and goals in your journal. These reflections will help you connect with students later as they go through their own transformation processes.
- Let your family and loved ones know you are embarking on this journey. It is an exciting time in your life, and the more you celebrate it, the more supportive others will be. Including loved ones in this process can be just as powerful as your personal motivation for becoming a certified instructor.
- Keep all of your books and notes in 1 easily accessible place.
- Purchase flashcards, highlighters, a notebook, folders, folder dividers, and pens. These will be useful as you read and study. Keep them handy in your study space.
- Find interactive study apps or websites for a fun way to learn, review, and integrate new content.
- Leverage the Community Forum to stay in touch with your classmates. Join or form a study group.



The study process

- Manage your time and establish a routine. Prioritize and commit to your studying by making a realistic study schedule. Set reminders on your mobile device for webinars, live calls, and personal study time.
- Create a checklist of studying milestones to achieve each day—for example, how many online lessons to complete, how many pages to read, how much time to spend studying, or which concepts to review.
- As you read, highlight key concepts that capture the essence and themes of each section of the text. Make notes in the margins of any printed materials. You might even make a habit of color coordinating what you highlight as you develop your own studying system.
- Take notes in outline form, if possible, and write down new definitions in your notebook or on flashcards. Make note of any online lessons you plan to revisit.
- Review your notes for at least 30 minutes each day to help you form new associations and retain information.
- Use mnemonic devices and associative tools—such as phrases, examples, diagrams, charts, and mind maps—to help you remember key concepts, Sanskrit terms, and new definitions.
- Paraphrase and summarize as you read to make sure you fully understand the text.
- See what connections you can draw between different topics.
- Quiz yourself by brainstorming possible exam questions as you read.
- Write down any questions that arise as you read so you can ask them in the Community Forum, in your participant groups, or during live calls.
- Take frequent breaks.
- Improve your teaching skills and reinforce your content knowledge by putting it all into practice. Try teaching others by organizing meetups, study groups, private classes, or group classes.
- Ask your family and friends to support you. They might help you study or act as a practice student.

Refresh, rejuvenate, and celebrate!

- Eat energizing and nutritious meals.
- Get abundant and restful sleep.
- Enjoy time with loved ones.
- Drink plenty of water.
- Spend time in nature.
- Practice yoga.
- Meditate.
- Exercise.
- Journal.
- Laugh!



Course overview

In Chopra Meditation Certification, you will learn how to teach the 4 core classes of *Chopra Meditation*:

Class 1: Introduction to Chopra Meditation

Class 2: Personal Mantra Instruction

Class 3: Perfecting the Practice

Class 4: Higher States of Consciousness

Each class presents its own body of knowledge and systematically leads to the next. The basic class format has been carefully designed to give students the maximum possible benefit and enjoyment. When you teach, therefore, it is important to present all 4 classes and follow the correct basic format.

Each class offers tremendous value and should be given equal importance. During your own studies, you may find that some material is easier to learn or has more appeal for you. Remember, however, that as an instructor you will constantly draw on all of this material—so plan to master every part of it. Although each class focuses on a specific aspect of Primordial Sound Meditation, you may address any of these aspects at any time, depending on the teaching context and the needs of your students.

We recommend that you lead group meditations for your students. It is best to include a group meditation as part of Classes 3 and 4. A 30-minute group meditation is optimal, though times may be adjusted as needed to accommodate your class schedule.

An additional component of teaching Primordial Sound Meditation is following up with students after they've completed classes with you. The initial course of instruction provides students with the basic tools needed to meditate successfully, but appropriate follow-up helps reinforce what has already been learned, introduce new knowledge, and encourage regularity of practice. Follow-up programs are an important aspect of creating long-term, satisfied meditators. More information on follow-ups will be provided later in the course.



Chopra Meditation Teacher's Manual

PART 2

The Art of Teaching & Presenting

Transforming from student to teacher

Even after you've completed Certification, you might have doubts: *Do I know enough? Am I ready? Do I really have what it takes to be a good teacher?* You may be tempted to compare yourself to other instructors and trainers—wondering if you'll ever be “that good.”

While your role models offer something to aspire to, there's no value in constantly comparing yourself to others. Similarly, you should avoid giving space to limiting beliefs with no basis in reality.

Becoming a better meditation teacher is an ongoing process with no real ending. For now, honor where you are in your journey—and engage in a few key practices as your teaching evolves.

Take a deep breath and believe in yourself.

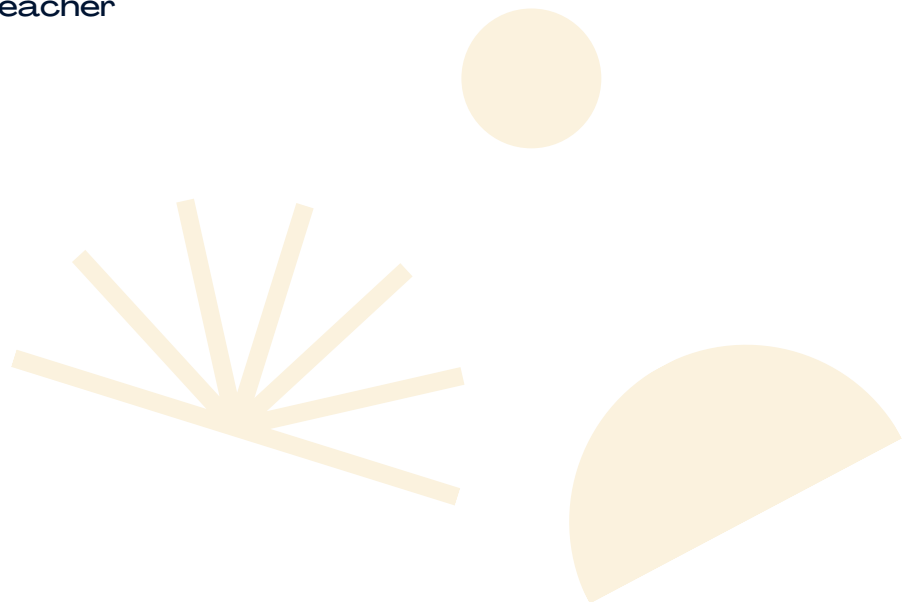
You may be new to teaching meditation, but everyone has to start somewhere. As you make the leap into the teaching role, it's important to cultivate a strong sense of confidence. This program will help you get there.

Do your best to silence self-doubt. You've worked hard to prepare yourself for this, and you'll soon have the knowledge and skills you need to be an effective meditation teacher.

But don't worry about knowing it all right away, or teaching the same way somebody else does. Trust that you *will* probably know more than your students—but even if they already have some meditation experience, they'll be eager to learn from *you*. Your perspective, your own experiences, and your commitment to this program will make what you have to offer as a meditation teacher valuable and one of a kind.

The 5 qualities of a great teacher

- 01 A good understanding
- 02 A passion for the subject
- 03 The ability to apply it
- 04 Making the connection
- 05 The call to teach





01. A good understanding

Get prepared.

In Meditation Foundations and Enrichment, you already touched on most of the content you'll be teaching—so *what is there to prepare?* While it may seem easy enough to rinse and repeat your own learning experience, there's much more to the art of teaching and presenting.

In an informal setting with family and friends, you may be able to communicate some of the basic ideas and practices you've learned. But when you're teaching a class—or even just 1 person who's especially interested in the content—they'll be able to sense if you're not *really* ready.

Gather your teaching tools.

As you learn to teach each class of the Chopra Meditation program, you'll receive slide templates, sample scripts, and other teacher tools to support your presentations. These resources are designed to ensure you don't forget to deliver any important content. They can also help your students stay on track and engaged.

The templates contain all the information needed to teach the core Chopra Meditation principles. Still, you'll probably want to adjust them a bit to suit your personal teaching style. Or you may decide to start fresh and create your own templates. Over time, you might even decide that some resources no longer serve you.

Once you know what resources you'll need, be sure to have them updated and ready to go before class begins.

Know your space.

Whether your classes are in person or online, preparing to make the most of your teaching space will help you deliver the best possible experience to your students. Does the available technology support your needs? Is your presentation software up to date? Is there room for everyone to sit comfortably?

Sometimes, you'll need to alter your setup and delivery. For example, if the venue lacks the tech needed to present your usual slideshow, you might distribute printouts of the slides instead—or simply write on a whiteboard, chalkboard, or flip chart. And if you typically use screen sharing in online classes but today's videoconferencing tool doesn't allow that, you may have to adjust your script and spend more time verbally illustrating the key points.

By preparing to teach within the limits of your space, you'll be able to focus your in-class energy on helping your students fully grasp the material.

Practice makes it ~~perfect~~ professional.

Perfection is a lofty goal, but practice always pays off. If you practice teaching your classes before entering the real-life classroom, you'll come off as that much more prepared—and professional.

At the beginning of your teaching career, it's a good idea to rehearse your presentations in front of a practice audience—or even just a mirror. If you can nail it when the stakes are low, you've got what it takes to nail the real thing too.

The teaching tools you'll receive in this course are a great way to support your teaching, but relying on them—or your memory—can only take you so far in a class you haven't prepared for. When you're out of practice or feeling scattered, it's all too easy to accidentally skip over some of the core content—and that isn't fair to your students.

The quickest way to lose your students is to lack continuity in your presentation. If you find yourself skipping around, circling back, repeatedly losing your place, or re-explaining material you've already covered, you may want to spend more time practicing before you present again.

Practicing your presentation ahead of time will help you deliver it confidently and cohesively. This, in turn, will build rapport with your students—and help them more fully engage with the material.

As you practice teaching, don't forget that you can reach out for support. Even the most seasoned meditation teachers will still ask a friend, family member, or colleague if they can quickly run through the class with them before a big presentation, or after being away from the content for a while.

Prepare for unforeseen events.

The field of infinite possibilities exists in the meditation teaching world just as much as it does within your own meditation practice—and it should be welcomed. When the unexpected happens, there's no need to panic. The answer or solution is almost certainly in your training. And if not, it's a beautiful opportunity to grow and learn.

Sometimes, you forget a teaching aid at home. Other times, your audiovisual equipment isn't working properly. Often, a student asks a question you weren't expecting. These are perfect opportunities to practice the mindful awareness techniques you've learned throughout your own meditation education.

Simply pause, take a deep breath, and allow the best course of action to present itself. The infinite organizing power of the universe will help guide you to the right answer. And if you've studied the material in this course and practiced teaching in a variety of situations, you'll be ready to handle any question, comment, or circumstance that arises.

Even if you feel like you could have handled the situation better, remember that everyone—even *Roger Gabriel*—makes mistakes. Remain humble, learn from the experience, and—if necessary—follow up and correct the mistake when you have the chance.



Get centered before you begin.

One of the most important parts of preparing to teach is checking in with yourself before class. Taking time for a short, private meditation can help settle your pre-presentation nerves. Performing a *pranayama* technique such as *ujjayi* or *nadi shodhana* may also help you calm your mind and body.

Deepak's **See and Be** technique is another powerful exercise you can do before you start teaching. Here's how to do it:

- 01 Stand in front of a mirror and look directly into your own eyes.
- 02 Look beyond the physical reflection and peer deeply into your soul.
- 03 Then, repeat the following:
 - *I am immune to criticism and flattery.*
 - *I am above no one and beneath no one.*
 - *I am fearless in any situation.*

Finally, seal the exercise by repeating the mantra *Ahum brahmasmi* (“I am the universe”).

Practices such as these can help you tap into your infinite wisdom and find calm before you enter the classroom. They're a reminder that you already have a good understanding of the teachings—and a profound calling to share their wisdom with others.

02. A passion for the subject

Is Certification enough?

Before beginning this program, you completed Chopra Meditation Foundations and Enrichment. Now, you've committed to completing Meditation Certification with the intention of becoming a Chopra-certified meditation teacher.

Once you've completed the course requirements, passed your final exam, and received your certificate, you will have sufficiently demonstrated your passion for meditation, and your education on the topic will be over. **You'll officially know it all! ...Right?**

No, not quite.

The “know it all” misconception

One of the biggest mistakes you can make is believing you already know it all. Once you've completed Certification, you'll still be just a few steps into a lifelong journey of learning and discovery. **But isn't that exciting?**

As a teacher, you'll learn at least as much from your students as they learn from you. As a part of the Chopra community, you'll continue connecting with other students and educators long after you've received your

certificate. You'll keep meditating, exploring, and collaborating with likeminded individuals, or—if you're lucky—non-likeminded people. Your passion for the subject will keep you learning about meditation throughout your lifetime—on your own and in community.

If you're so inclined, you may choose to continue your education through Chopra's other certification programs. In Chopra Health Certification—which also follows Foundations and Enrichment courses—you'll learn how to share the ancient wisdom of Ayurveda with the world. Or you might discover a calling to transition from teacher to well-being coach through Chopra Coaching Certification.

The only limits to your true potential are the limits you set for yourself.

Ultimately, you are responsible for being the best resource you can be for your students. One aspect of that responsibility is staying current with best practices and new developments in the meditation and well-being spheres. When it comes down to it, you are—and always will be—a student, too.

03. The ability to apply it

Remember your own experience.

Right now, you're in a unique position to reflect deeply on your experience as a student of Chopra Meditation. You have a strong grasp on what went well—and on what may have been harder to comprehend or implement. This firsthand perspective offers insight into the joys and challenges your students may encounter. You can use this knowledge to help them prepare for—and learn from—those experiences.

As a lifelong learner, you'll continue deepening your own Primordial Sound Meditation practice too, exploring the deeper teachings which underly the method. In doing this, you'll expand what's possible for yourself and for your students.

As you keep cultivating your own meditation practice, you'll receive the benefits of increased creativity, productivity, and connection. You'll also continue having new experiences which you can learn from and share with your students.

“

*The best way to learn anything
is to teach it as well.*

DEEPAK CHOPRA



Answering questions

Use your own experiences to connect more closely with your students.

Here are some tips for answering student questions:

- Always listen to the full question, rather than thinking you know what they're asking and cutting them off with an answer that may not be quite what they need.
- If you aren't sure what they're asking, request that they explain further.
- Provide simple, clear answers rather than long, rambling responses.
- Ask if you've answered their question. If not, offer a more detailed explanation.
- In group settings, try to give answers that are appropriate not only for the asker, but also for the other students.
- If a questioner is monopolizing your teaching time or asking questions of a too-personal nature, use your best judgment to decide what's appropriate.

04. Making the connection

Communicate clearly.

If you want your students to connect to the material, you must first connect with them. Understanding their experience—and relating to it—is a fundamental part of communicating the content. As a teacher, you'll need to leverage that connection to help you tell the story and facilitate meaningful conversations.

You can then take that communication ability to the next level by using—but *not relying on*—visual aids and graphical representations to enhance your teaching.

Sound like a lot? ***Don't worry.***

Use your resources.

The core Chopra Meditation classes are simple enough to follow. The concepts build on each other in a logical order, gradually bringing your students closer to a higher level of understanding.

Still, throughout this course, you'll receive ***sample scripts and bulleted talking points*** to help you and your students stay on track. While you're learning how to teach the classes, you may rely pretty heavily on these teacher tools—and that's OK!

But as your connection to the material and your students evolves over time, you're welcome—and *encouraged*—to customize these resources, making them into something that speaks more directly to your students. Eventually, you might even choose to forego the teacher tools altogether.

Basic presentation templates will also be provided. As you learn how to teach each of the Chopra Meditation classes, you'll get access to downloadable slide deck templates to support your teaching. In addition to listing the key points of each class, these presentation templates contain some visual elements to get you started.

However, these are just a starting place—the templates are meant to be customized. Feel free to change them up to better suit your teaching style and serve your students' needs. It's a good idea to take a critical look at your audience and choose visual elements that speak more directly to them.

Try to go beyond just *"making it pretty."* Use visuals purposefully. When chosen poorly, they can distract from or obscure the message. But when chosen wisely, they can elevate your presentation—deepening the connection between your students and the content you're teaching.

Here are a few tips on choosing the right visuals when customizing your teaching resources:

- Don't just choose images that represent your client. Choose images that relate to your client's underlying motivations and desires.
- Try to strike a balance. Not every concept needs to be represented visually.
- Be aware of what you're emphasizing. Identify the most important concept on the page, then choose visuals to support that.
- Make sure it's legible. Keep in mind how close or far away the student will be from the text or image.

05. The call to teach

Practice gratitude.

It's an honor and a privilege to be able to share the ancient wisdom of meditation. You've incorporated Primordial Sound Meditation into your daily life. You've experienced the benefits firsthand and committed to completing Chopra Meditation Certification. You've already answered your calling to teach. Wherever your teaching journey takes you, keep gratitude in your heart.

Be grateful to...

- Your students—for trusting you and your knowledge.
- The magnificent lineage of teachers who came before you.
- The worldwide network of Chopra teachers—of which you're now an essential part.
- Your own soul—for guiding you here.

If you're always grateful, you'll always be humble. From humility and simplicity, blessings will arise in your teaching and life.



Feedback and criticism

Be grateful for feedback and immune to criticism. Feedback is essential for growth—it should be received with gratitude. Everyone learns differently, and your approach to teaching will inevitably need refining at some point.

Keep your heart and mind open to the needs of your students. Ask them for feedback on your teaching and communication styles—they know themselves best, and what works for 1 student may not be especially effective for another.

When a student notes an opportunity for improvement or expansion in your teaching, thank them. Then, seriously consider their thoughts.

Still, sometimes a student will simply criticize your teaching or project their own hang-ups onto you—without offering any sort of constructive feedback. When this happens, stay centered. Be gracious with yourself, and lean into your confidence. As one teacher has said, *“Don’t get overly inflated by the amazing reviews and pay zero attention to the cruel comments. Look at what’s right in the middle—and there is where you will find the gold.”*

Teaching large groups

It’s easy to forge connections and promote engagement within small-group and one-on-one settings, but large groups present distinct teaching challenges. You can use specific strategies to make the most of large-group teaching settings like those found in meditation retreats, wellness events, and high-enrollment courses.

Build relationships and partnerships.

Running a large meditation event from start to finish on your own is possible, but it isn’t realistic for most people—and usually won’t yield the best results. It’s always a good idea to get outside support when planning, organizing, setting up, facilitating, and breaking down large events. Here are some tips for working with others to make a big event a success:

- Delegate logistics to other people.
- Work with the marketing manager to guarantee the event is properly promoted.
- Arrive early to look at the space and communicate any issues with it.
- Get to know the venue’s service manager.
- Communicate with the audio technician about audiovisual and technical assistance.
- Don’t be afraid to ask for help.

Align with your *dharma* and intention.

When preparing to offer or teach any class, get in sync with your purpose as an instructor. Why do you choose to teach? This is the perfect time to reconnect with your intentions—or formulate a new one that blossoms into a successful class or event. Remember: Intention always leads the way.

Create a thorough lesson plan.

Prepare your content in advance. Consider specific audience needs, and tailor the content accordingly. Go over your lesson plan several times, and consider connecting with other Chopra-certified teachers for feedback. Then, practice teaching the class.

Overdeliver and be professional.

When it's time to take the stage, be highly professional. Give your learners more than they're expecting from you in terms of knowledge and presence.

Be prompt, and respect the time that's been given to you. If something changes at the last minute, be flexible. Be gracious with mistakes—whether they're yours or someone else's.

Be courageous.

Speaking in front of large groups can be intimidating. But if you've prepared the best you can and are familiar with the material, be confident in your ability to present it.

Remember, you won't serve your students by playing small. Your job is to help them change their lives through the knowledge and practice of Primordial Sound Meditation.

Walk the talk, be humble, and stay grateful.

Sharing these teachings with a large group is both an honor and a privilege. Treat it as such by honoring the Spiritual Law of Giving and Receiving. Take time to appreciate this chance to tap into your *dharma*.

Your students have given you an opportunity to serve the world with your special teaching powers, and so have those who've helped you with the event. Recognize and thank them.

Public speaking

Nerves are normal when you first start speaking in front of an audience. Fortunately, though, public speaking is a skill you can develop and refine over time.



It's a good idea to regularly assess your presentation style, regardless of how experienced you are—or aren't—at public speaking. Make sure your content, delivery, and visual aids feel fresh, engaging, and relevant to your audience. If something isn't quite working anymore, try something new. And if that doesn't feel right either, try something else—until you find what works.

No matter what your speaking style is, it's important to be yourself and use your authentic voice—while still tuning into the needs of your audience. Don't be afraid to customize the classes; share the teachings of Chopra Meditation in whatever way is best for you and your students.

Regardless of your specific style, 4 best practices for public speaking can help you deliver more polished, professional, and impactful presentations. These are the **4 keys to speaking success**.

01. Organize your thoughts.

While your presentations will vary widely according to factors such as setting, audience size, and the length of time allotted for you to speak, these guidelines will help you prepare:

- **Choose an objective.** Give your audience a reason to listen. What will you tell them, and why?
- **Analyze the setting.** To whom will you speak? What is the occasion? Where will you present?
- Outline your presentation ahead of time.
 - 01 **Introduction:** Tell your audience who you are, why you're here, and what you're going to talk about.
 - 02 **Main message:** Make the point of your presentation clear.
 - 03 **Key points:** Offer detailed support for your main message.
 - 04 **Call to action:** Tell them what to do with your message.
 - 05 **Conclusion:** Review key takeaways and answer questions.

Make your points in a logical order. Be clear and concise so the audience can easily understand your message.

02. Be authentic.

Being real is key to being an effective presenter. If you can share your authentic self in front of a group, they're more likely to open up, too—and really listen to your words.

*When you respect your audience by being your genuine self, you'll be rewarded in turn with their respect. **These tips will help you be your most authentic self when teaching:***

- Let your passion show.
- Illustrate your message with personal stories.
- Let your knowledge demonstrate that you really care about the topic.
- Deliver complex ideas in simple terms.
- Be engaging and interactive.
- Relax and enjoy yourself.
- Be willing to admit when you don't yet know the answer.

Explore the topics about which you're the most passionate, and your excitement will shine through. This authenticity will make you a more effective presenter.

03. Make an impact.

Mental, verbal, visual, and aural components will influence how students respond to your presentation. It's important to consider these essential elements of public speaking when attempting to connect with and motivate students. ***These cues will give your presentation greater impact:***

- Self-confidence, enthusiasm, and a friendly manner
- Posture, gestures, and facial expressions
- Variation in speaking volume, tone of voice, and rate of speech
- Use of eye contact and pauses
- Conversational tone and well-placed humor
- Willingness and ability to answer participant questions

Use your body language, facial expressions, and voice to support your message and engage the audience. Use every tool available to inspire your students.

04. Assess yourself.

We've said it before, and we'll say it again: ***A good teacher treats feedback as gold.*** After each lecture, review your performance. What did you do well? What might you repeat, and what needs tweaking before your next presentation?

Regardless of how long you've been teaching, learner feedback inspires growth and helps you deliver your message more effectively. After each presentation, if possible, ask audience members what they loved—and what they didn't.

There are many ways to collect student feedback. For example, you may choose to pass out a printed review sheet at the beginning of class and your participants turn it in before leaving. You could also email a survey to attendees after your presentation, or collect anonymous feedback online. ***These tips will help you grasp the value in this growth opportunity:***

- Decide when and how you'll request and receive feedback.
- Prepare any surveys, questionnaires, or rating scales ahead of time.
- Take time to reflect on the feedback you've received.
- Differentiate between useful feedback and low-value criticism.
- Decide how to integrate feedback into your future presentations.

As you share your passion for these teachings and accept feedback with grace, you'll discover the presentation style that works best for you.





Chopra Meditation Teacher's Manual

PART 3

Teaching the Classes



CLASS 1:

Introduction to Chopra Meditation

Teaching Class 1

This first class of the Chopra Meditation program introduces your students to the origins, purpose, benefits, and mechanics of Primordial Sound Meditation, as well as the science behind the technique. Additionally, it presents a quick program overview and explains what your students can expect to learn in future classes. It is also an opportunity for them to meet you, get comfortable with the class structure, and start asking questions.

You'll get guidance on teaching each of the topics listed above. However, your classes will be most effective if you expand on these topics according to your own teaching style and the needs of your students. Present the content in your own words while maintaining awareness of these needs.

Each script provided as part of this Teacher's Manual is intended to be edited to suit your personal style of teaching. Take advantage of the editable fields to customize your classes.

Topics covered in Class 1

- 01** Teacher introduction and program overview
- 02** Meditation as the antidote to stress
- 03** The basics of meditation, thoughts, and the Gap
- 04** The software of the soul
- 05** The layers of life
- 06** The origins of Primordial Sound Meditation
- 07** Mantras as a meditation tool
- 08** Class recap and what happens next



Introducing yourself

Start your class by greeting your students. Before launching into the material, introduce yourself and any other instructors teaching with you. This is an opportunity to illustrate the impact meditation has had on your life and begin establishing a rapport with your students. This part of the class should last no more than 5-7 minutes.

What to include

- Your background and credentials
- How long you've been meditating
- What drew you to meditation
- The benefits you've experienced from maintaining a regular meditation practice
- Why you chose to become a Chopra certified meditation instructor
- How you're using your talents and special gifts to serve others

TIP

Group introductions

If the group is small, ask the participants to introduce themselves. Invite them to share what brought them here, why they want to learn how to meditate, and what new knowledge or skills they hope to take home. If the group is large, you might ask just a few participants to share.

Create your own introduction

Use the sample below as a starting point to create a script that engages your audience and shows your passion.

SCRIPT: INTRODUCING YOURSELF

I'm pleased to welcome you to the Chopra Meditation program. Thank you so much for being here.

My name is _____, and I am a Chopra-certified Primordial Sound Meditation teacher. My background is in _____. I have been meditating for _____ years. I first became interested in meditation because _____. Over time, I have seen _____ happen in my life thanks to the benefits of meditation.

I decided to become a certified meditation instructor because _____. Now, I get to use my gift(s) of _____ to serve the world by _____.

Before moving on...

Remember to address a few administrative points:

- Every class is an essential part of the program, and each one builds on the last. Encourage your students to make the most of this opportunity by being on time and attending every class.
- If you haven't yet scheduled your students' Personal Mantra Instruction appointments, do so before they leave.
- If you don't already have it, you'll also need to collect your students' birth information so you're prepared for their Personal Mantra Instruction.

Course overview

After you've introduced yourself and handled any outstanding administrative details, you'll need to tell your students what to expect from each class.

Create your own course overview

Use the sample below as a starting point to create a script that engages your audience and shows your passion.

SCRIPT: COURSE OVERVIEW

During this course, I will present lectures, facilitate discussions, and guide you in developing a meditation practice. The more you participate and apply the concepts in your daily life, the more you'll get out of the course.

Each lesson will last approximately 60-90 minutes.

In today's class, we'll learn how meditation dissipates stress, discuss the basics of meditation and mantras, and explore how to break free of old habits and conditioning.

We'll also examine how we are multidimensional beings by looking at Adi Shankara's model of the layers of life. We'll discuss the origins of Primordial Sound Meditation, explore the roles of mantras, and learn how Primordial Sound Meditation mantras are chosen.

The next class will be a monumental step toward establishing a lasting and life-changing meditation practice. In a one-on-one ceremony, I'll teach you your Primordial Sound Meditation mantra, which has been selected just for you using ancient Vedic mathematics. Then, I'll guide you through using it in a personal meditation instruction.

We'll all meet again on [date/time] to discuss the practical aspects of meditation: when to meditate and where, how to time your meditations, what to do with your pets, why you're having various experiences, and so on. We'll also meditate as a group.

SCRIPT: COURSE OVERVIEW

In the final class on [date/time], we'll meet to discuss the higher states of consciousness and the predicted benefits of meditation as we continue to practice regularly.

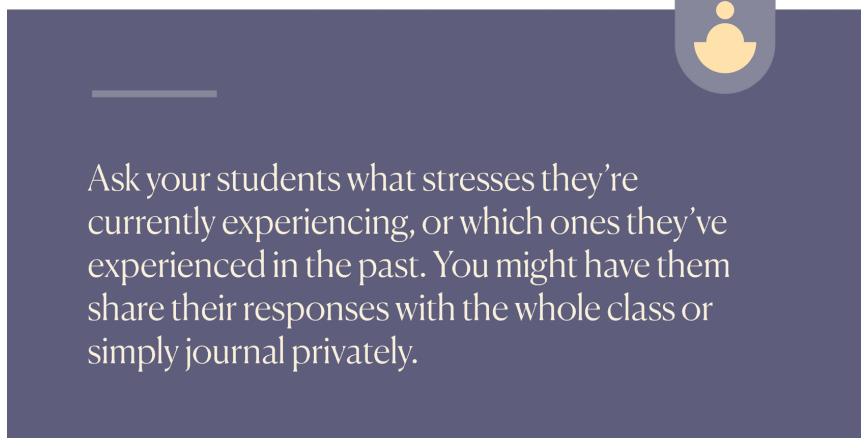
If you have any questions about what to expect from each class, please ask them now.

Ready to go? Let's get started.

The antidote to stress

Meditation is often associated with stress management techniques. Although the alleviation of stress represents only 1 of meditation's benefits, it's well worth discussing.

Stress inhibits the free flow of energy and information in the mind-body system. By teaching your students how to release accumulated stress, you can help them live healthier, happier, and more harmonious lives.



Ask your students what stresses they're currently experiencing, or which ones they've experienced in the past. You might have them share their responses with the whole class or simply journal privately.

It's important to teach students about the negative physiological effects of stress. This knowledge can help them more fully appreciate meditation's many mind-body benefits.

Create your own script

Use or modify this script to discuss the fight-flight-freeze response, and meditation's impact on it.

SCRIPT: THE ANTIDOTE TO STRESS

Fight-flight-freeze is a primitive stress response grounded in the survival instinct that kept our ancestors alive. It pulls us into a state of constricted awareness—from which there's no capacity for thinking creatively, broadening our perspective, expanding our awareness, or accessing our purpose. This state is useful for escaping physical danger and surviving life-threatening situations.

Even outside survival situations, stress can be beneficial. Eustress is when we experience minor stress

SCRIPT: THE ANTIDOTE TO STRESS

which motivates or invigorates us. We feel challenged but not overwhelmed.

Still, we don't want to live in a chronic state of stress. This is because constricted awareness has negative consequences when activated in everyday encounters.

Fight-flight-freeze causes characteristic physiological changes. These include increased heart rate, blood pressure, and stress hormone production; shallow, rapid breathing; decreased production of anti-aging hormones; increased sweating; weakened immunity; and the clotting of blood platelets.

It also causes changes in brain activity which allow us to react quickly in moments of potential danger but—when chronic—undermine the areas of the brain that feel gratitude, compassion, and connection. Additionally, stress and fatigue block the nadi channels through which the life force energy, prana, flows.

More simply put, a build-up of stress inhibits the flow of energy and information through our mind-body system. The more stress we accumulate over time, the more constricted and less efficient this system becomes.

Meditation induces a state of deep rest in which the body heals itself by eliminating stress, fatigue, and toxins. This deep rest also creates a state of restful awareness, prompting the brain to release neurotransmitters linked to various aspects of happiness.

It also leads to positive physiological changes. These include decreased heart rate and inflammation; normalization of blood pressure; deeper breathing; reduced stress hormone production and sweating; strengthened immunity; and increased production of anti-aging hormones and the enzyme telomerase. Additionally, our prefrontal cortex—the more evolved part of the brain—becomes more active, awakening gratitude, compassion, and connection.

The deep rest gained through meditation releases us from our constricted state, drawing us into one of expanded awareness. From there, we can better experience creativity, equanimity, vitality, joy, and purpose.

Meditation, thoughts, and the Gap

As you'll share with your students, Primordial Sound Meditation takes our awareness from the active level of the mind to quieter levels of the thinking process—until eventually we slip beyond thought altogether, to a level of pure silence and pure awareness.

Create your own script

Use or modify this script to explain meditation and the Gap to your students.

SCRIPT: THE BASICS OF MEDITATION, THOUGHTS, AND THE GAP

The human mind can be a chaotic place where thoughts move constantly in and out. Primordial Sound Meditation moves our awareness from the noisy activity of the mind to quieter levels of thinking until eventually, we slip beyond thought altogether.

This is what we call the Gap—the silent space between thoughts. We also call it the field of infinite possibilities, because between 1 thought and the next is the potential for any other thought. In the Gap, we find the silence of the spirit and bump into ourselves.

Remember this: you are not your thoughts—you're the thinker of your thoughts. So, the Gap between thoughts is the only place your true self can be found. Your essential nature, your soul, is a silent field of infinite possibilities.

Experiencing the field of silence and infinite possibilities through meditation keeps you rooted in calm. When you come out of meditation, you bring a little of this silence and possibility into your daily life. This means that even amid chaos, confusion, and change, you're rooted in silence, stability, and calm.



The software of the soul

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

The spirit is the universal consciousness that connects every thinking creation. To fully appreciate the value of meditation, your students will need to understand the software of the soul—and how it limits us.

Create your own script

Use or modify this script to explain the software of the soul.

SCRIPT: THE SOFTWARE OF THE SOUL

Most of us make most of our decisions based on habit and conditioning, whether we know it or not. When you take an action, *karma*, you create a memory of that action, *samskara*. The memory leads to desires, *vasanas*, which prompt future actions. We call this the software of the soul—the conditioning of our past actions, memories, and desires. It's the program that runs our lives.

This cycle limits you to repeating old patterns. Your memories and desires exist in the thinking process. Primordial Sound Meditation takes you beyond the limitations of thought, memory, and desire—into the field of infinite possibilities. You can then recognize the opportunity to move away from old patterns, consciously choosing the life you want to lead. Instead of being used by your memories, you can use them to experience greater joy, creativity, and love.

If a student has trouble grasping this concept, it may be helpful to use the metaphor of driving a car.

TIP

Use a metaphor

As you move through life, it's easy to get locked into a pattern that keeps leading you back to the same karmic action. This process is like driving a car down the same dirt road many times.

Over time, the wheels carve ruts in the dirt and the car automatically follows the path you've taken before. It's a conditioned habit. Your current path may serve you for a while, but if you forget that you can choose other roads, you may find yourself stuck in a well-honed rut. Meditation helps you break free of such ruts.

You might also choose to provide a real-life example—something your students can probably relate to.

TIP

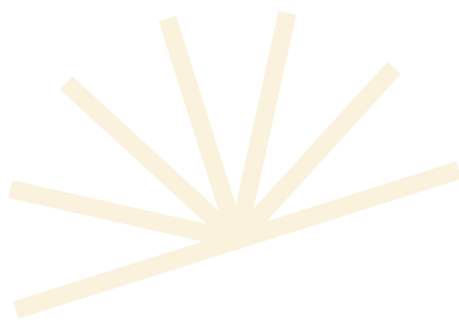
Try a real-life example

Let's say you haven't had any caffeine for years. But 1 morning, after an unusually late night, you decide to grab a quick cup of coffee to help you get through the day. Seems harmless, right? But this action (or karma) can create a memory (or samskara) of feeling more awake and alert. Your brain now associates that feeling with the cup of coffee you had.

The next morning, although you've had plenty of rest, you experience an unfamiliar desire (or vasana) to experience the same feeling of energy and alertness you had the previous morning. So, without really thinking about it, you grab your keys and drive to the nearest coffee shop. The next day, you experience the same feeling—and seek out that morning coffee again.

Without even realizing it, you end up creating a routine, visiting the coffee shop day after day. Eventually, you find yourself "needing" a cup of coffee—or maybe a few—every morning. You don't really understand how you got here, but it was that first cup which began the cycle of action, memory, and desire.

Meditation can help you break free of this cycle—or avoid entering it altogether.



The software of the soul, cont.

PART 2: WITNESSING AWARENESS

Beyond guiding students to escape the cycle of action, memory, and desire through meditation, you may help them develop the skill of witnessing awareness.

Create your own script

Use or modify the script below to help students break free from old patterns through witnessing awareness.

SCRIPT: THE SOFTWARE OF THE SOUL: WITNESSING AWARENESS

You can reprogram your soul's software by becoming consciously aware of the choices you make. Develop witnessing awareness by following these 4 steps.

First, witness the choices you make in each moment. By witnessing your choices, you bring the decision-making process from the unconscious realm into the conscious realm.

Next, stop and reflect. When you make a choice, ask yourself these questions: What are the consequences of this choice? Will this choice bring happiness and fulfillment to me? Will it bring happiness and fulfillment to the others it affects?

Then, tune into your inner wisdom. As you consider the choice before you, pay attention to the sensations in your body. Let the feelings of comfort or discomfort guide you. Most people receive the message of comfort or discomfort in the area around the heart. Others receive it in the solar plexus—this is the proverbial “gut feeling.”

Finally, listen to your body. Placing your attention on your heart or solar plexus, ask your body, “How do you feel about this choice?” If your body sends a feeling of comfort and eagerness, go ahead with the decision. But if it sends a signal of physical or emotional distress, carefully consider the outcome or consequences of your choice.

Over time and with regular meditation practice, we can begin to spontaneously make the choices that are right for us, rewriting the software of the soul.

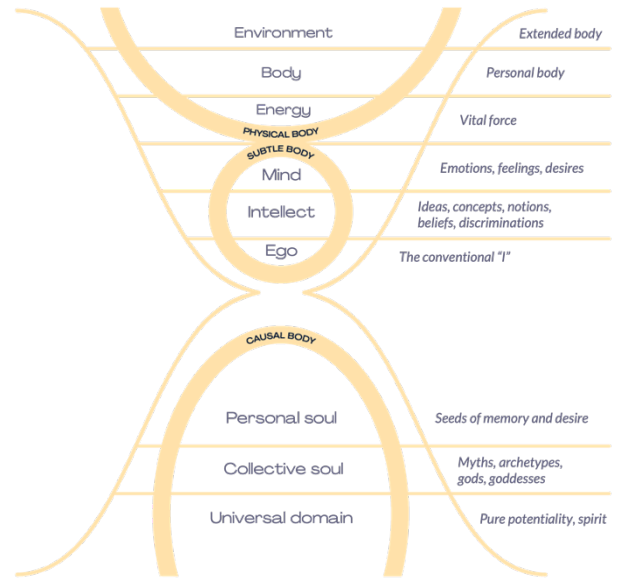
The layers of life

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

As you know, our essential state is pure consciousness, modifying itself into experiences. You learned in Chopra Meditation Enrichment that—according to the ancient Vedic tradition from which Primordial Sound Meditation is derived—we are multidimensional beings made up of 3 basic components: a physical body, a subtle body, and a causal body. Adi Shankara's model of the layers of life can help your students explore this concept.

Create your own script

Use or modify the script below to introduce your students to Adi Shankara's layers of life.



SCRIPT: LAYERS OF LIFE: INTRODUCTION

According to the ancient Vedic tradition from which Primordial Sound Meditation is derived, we are multidimensional beings made up of 3 basic components: a physical body, a subtle body, and a causal body. Let's look at each of these more closely.

The physical body is made of matter and energy. We often perceive the environment as something "out there," separate from ourselves, but it's part of who we are. Everything we do affects the environment, and everything that happens in the environment affects us.

When we start a car, something changes in the environment. When the weather shifts, it affects how we feel. We can think of the environment as our extended body.

Closer to home, we have a personal body. This is what we walk around in. We feed it, clothe it, and so on. It too is made of matter and energy—primarily from the food we ingest.

The subtle body is comprised of the mind, intellect, and ego. The mind is where we experience thoughts, feelings, emotions, and desires. The intellect is where we process information, have ideas, explore new concepts, and practice discernment. The ego is who we think we are—all the stories and conditioning with which we surround ourselves.

If you ask someone who they are, they might share information like their name, job, nationality, and so on. But none of these things are who they truly are; they are simply labels they give themselves.

Who we really are is much deeper. We find our true self in the causal body—so named because it causes

SCRIPT: LAYERS OF LIFE: INTRODUCTION

everything to happen. Here we find the individual soul, the collective soul, and—ultimately—universal consciousness.

The individual soul carries the seeds of memories and desires from one lifetime to the next—it has a much longer shelf life than the physical body. The collective soul gives us access to the potential and creative power of the collective human psyche, as expressed through archetypal energies, themes, and motifs. Universal consciousness brings us to the highest state of all-knowing oneness.

Separation between people—and a lack of awareness around our interconnectedness—is an enormous cause of conflict in today’s world. Imagine if your hands decided they didn’t like each other and started fighting. It would be ridiculous! Your hands have their own individuality but are part of the wholeness of the body.

Similarly, we each have our own individuality but, through meditation, realize our connection with the whole of humanity. Once we realize that at our deepest level, we are all connected, any need for anger and hostility will cease to exist—and a peaceful, harmonious world will emerge.

Primordial Sound Meditation guides us between the inner world and the outer world—from our individual identity to our universal identity. As we make this journey back and forth, we begin to realize that the layers of life are simply universal consciousness displaying itself in different disguises. The separation dissolves.



The layers of life, cont.

PART 2: DIG DEEPER

At this point, your students will probably be eager to receive their personal mantras and start meditating. But first, it's your job to help them understand that *everything* is spirit in different disguises. The layers of life framework can help your students get the most possible value out of this experience.

Create your own script

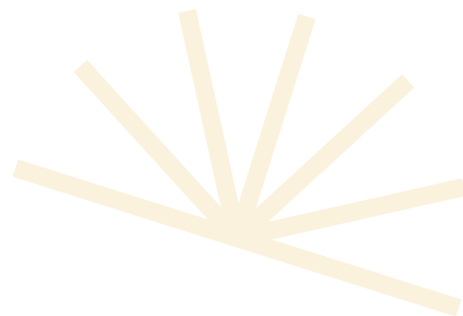
Use or modify this script to explain why the layers of life are important in meditation.

SCRIPT: LAYERS OF LIFE: DIG DEEPER

While these layers appear to be separate from one another, together they comprise the totality of our being and the various ways in which we can experience the universe. In meditation, we begin to realize that everything is universal consciousness or spirit in different disguises. Everything—every aspect of existence—is connected.

Primordial Sound Meditation takes us beyond the mind, intellect, and ego to the soul and spirit. Our being—our true nature—is one with the being of the entire universe. Meditation and self-inquiry are the way to this realization.

Meditation brings the essence of oneness back into our lives, restoring the memory of our wholeness. By realizing that at our deepest level, we're all one, we pave the path toward widespread peace.



Primordial Sound Meditation

PART 1: THE ORIGINS

Your students may wonder how Primordial Sound Meditation came to be, and the answer starts with the ancient Vedic sages. But rather than recounting millennia of history, you can provide a brief overview.

Create your own script

Use or modify this script to provide an abbreviated account of how Primordial Sound Meditation became what it is today.

SCRIPT: PRIMORDIAL SOUND MEDITATION: THE ORIGINS

Although the name is new by yogic standards, Primordial Sound Meditation originates in India's ancient Vedic tradition. Based on the teachings of eighth-century sage Adi Shankara, this meditation technique has been tried and tested for thousands of years.

This practice is based on primordial sounds—nature's most basic sounds or vibrations. There are 108 Primordial Sound Meditation mantras, derived from the study of ancient sages who recorded the vibrations of the universe in relation to the position of the moon.

But it wasn't until the late 20th century that this technique was revived, systematized, and made accessible to everyday people. In the early 1990s, Dr. Deepak Chopra and Dr. David Simon established the Chopra Center—now Chopra—in San Diego, California. Meditation had been effective in their own lives for more than 20 years, and they now wished to share it with others. Conferring with Vedic scholars in the U.S. and India—and joined by Roger Gabriel—they reintroduced this ancient technique to the world.

Deepak hopes that eventually, 1 billion people will be engaged in meditation or other awareness-expanding techniques. This critical mass of consciousness will result in a positive, paradigm-shifting change worldwide—and the advent of world peace.

Chopra has taught Primordial Sound Meditation to more than 100,000 people and trained thousands of teachers worldwide, moving us closer to that 1 billion figure. Together, we are raising the frequency of the entire world—and now, you're part of that movement.

It's an honor for me to begin teaching you Primordial Sound Meditation today.

Primordial Sound Meditation, cont.

PART 2: THE MANTRAS

Once your students understand how the Primordial Sound Meditation mantras function, they'll want to know how they're determined.

Create your own script

Use or modify this script to explain how Primordial Sound Meditation mantras are found.

SCRIPT: PRIMORDIAL SOUND MEDITATION: THE MANTRAS

Everything in creation is made of sound or vibration—even the universe itself.

Thousands of years ago, the ancient sages recognized that the sound of the universe changed periodically throughout the lunar cycle. They documented 108 different vibrations of the universe, each of which relates to the position of the moon. These are the primordial sounds.

Knowing the time, date, and location of a person's birth, we can use Vedic mathematics to calculate the moon's position at that moment. This allows us to identify the corresponding sound of the universe, which becomes a part of their Primordial Sound Meditation mantra.

Your personal mantra incorporates the vibration the universe was making at the time and place of your birth. This was the moment your awareness emerged from the nonlocal domain of pure potentiality into the localized, manifest world. According to Primordial Sound Meditation, the vibration that took you from the nonlocal domain into the local domain can also take you back. This allows you to journey from activity into silence—into an experience of pure awareness.

TIP

**It's accessible
to everyone.**

The closer you can get to the specific date, time, and location of your student's birth, the more accurately you can identify their mantra. But while not everyone knows exactly when or where they were born, Primordial Sound Meditation is accessible to all. If a student doesn't have their full birth details, use whatever they have to approximate this information. They will still benefit from the practice.

Mantras as a meditation tool

A mantra is a vehicle. It can be helpful to give students a general overview of mantras, then narrow the focus to their role in Primordial Sound Meditation.

Create your own script

Use or modify the script below to explain the role of Primordial Sound Meditation mantras.

SCRIPT: MANTRAS AS A MEDITATION TOOL

The word mantra has 2 parts: *man-*, the root of the Sanskrit word for “mind,” and *-tra*, the root of the Sanskrit word for “instrument.” A mantra is an instrument of the mind—a powerful sound or vibration that can be used to enter a deep state of meditation.

Mantras exist in many cultures and traditions. They serve a variety of purposes, which vary by tradition and individual. They can provide a means of heightened mental clarity, emotional healing, cultural connection, or personal affirmation.

In Primordial Sound Meditation, the mantra serves as a vehicle of sound to take us from activity into silence. As we repeat the mantra, it becomes increasingly abstract and indistinct. We experience expanded levels of awareness until we’re finally led into the field of pure consciousness from which the vibration arose.

Associating a sound with meaning perpetuates mental activity, but Primordial Sound Meditation mantras have no limited or conventional meaning—they’re used solely for their sound or vibration. When we use them in meditation, there’s nothing to hold our attention at the level of activity. We can then slip beyond that activity, into the Gap between our thoughts.

Primordial Sound Meditation mantras are repeated silently, soothing the nervous system and moving our awareness inward. Over time, this meditation technique expands our awareness and positively empowers all our actions.

It’s best to keep your personal mantra private in the silence of consciousness. Refrain from speaking it aloud or otherwise sharing it with anyone.

Class recap and what’s next

After discussing mantras, you’ll end the class with a brief recap, then explain what to expect during Class 2.

Create your own script

Use or modify the script below to recap the main points and let them know what's up next.

SCRIPT: CLASS RECAP

Today, I introduced Primordial Sound Meditation.

First, we discussed the impacts of stress on the mind-body system—and how meditation acts as an antidote. Then, we discussed the role of thoughts in meditation.

We learned about the software of the soul and how meditation helps us develop witnessing awareness—leading us to make better choices. We also examined Adi Shankara's model of the layers of life, exploring the multidimensionality of our being.

We discussed Primordial Sound Meditation's ancient origins and how the Chopra co-founders revived this technique for the modern world.

We explored the role of mantras as a vehicle, as well as how Primordial Sound Meditation mantras are chosen—and how they connect us to our universal nature of stillness and silence.

In our next class, you'll receive your personal Primordial Sound Meditation mantra, and I'll share how to use it. This is a special time—more of a ceremony than a typical class.

Ceremonies have been used for thousands of years to celebrate important milestones. I'll present your mantra by employing a traditional teaching ritual that honors those who have preserved this meditation technique throughout the ages. It will be an honor to share these teachings with you.

Please arrive a few minutes early. Allow for about an hour so you won't feel rushed.

It's best to come well-rested. If you're hungry, eat something light beforehand—but avoid having a heavy meal right before class.

You may bring a piece of fruit and a flower as an offering to the lineage of teachers. After receiving your mantra, you may take the offering home. It has essentially been blessed and now carries the essence of the ceremony.

[Note: You may ask students to bring these items, or you may provide them. If a student brings their own offering, they can take it home as a memento. This part of the ceremony is optional in virtual and large-group settings.]

I'll start by reciting a short Sanskrit chant, after which I will share your Primordial Sound Meditation mantra.

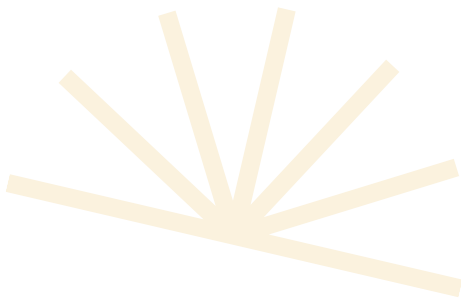
I will write your mantra down to help you remember it—you'll want to keep it somewhere private. I'll

SCRIPT: CLASS RECAP

have you repeat the mantra back to me, and we'll meditate together. Then, I'll ask you to practice the meditation on your own for about 30 minutes.

Receiving your mantra is an occasion that you'll remember for years to come. Consider doing something to make the day memorable. For example, you might wear something special, plan a nice meal, take a walk in nature, or spend the day in solitude—savoring the silence of meditation.

After you've learned to meditate, I'd like you to meditate at home for 30 minutes each morning and evening.





CLASS 2:

Personal Mantra Instruction

Teaching Class 2

During Class 2 of the Chopra Meditation program, you'll provide your students with the Personal Mantra instruction. This is intended to be a private, one-on-one ceremony in which you present your student's mantra and teach them how to use it.

Your role as an instructor is to begin class by chanting the *Shanti* mantra, then give your student their Primordial Sound Meditation mantra. You'll then meditate with them to make sure they're comfortable with the process, present them with a written mantra card, and have them meditate on their own for 15–30 minutes, depending on your schedule.

The more prepared you are to teach Class 2, the more smoothly it will go for you and your students.

General flow of Class 2

- 01** Get prepared.
- 02** Greet your student.
- 03** Perform the ceremony.
 - Chant the *Shanti* mantra.
 - Teach your student their mantra.
 - Meditate with your student.
 - Present the mantra card.
 - Have the student meditate alone.
- 04** Answer questions.
- 05** Assign a home practice.




Getting prepared

Important note

You should have already collected your students' birth dates, times, and locations before enrolling them in the Chopra Meditation program. You'll use this information to calculate their mantras before Class 2.

Before you begin

- ❑ Create a mantra card listing your student's name and personal mantra. Neatly write or type your student's Primordial Sound mantra that includes the transliterated and phonetic spelling.
- ❑ If you will be instructing several students, create a schedule that allows you to meet one-on-one with each person.
- ❑ Review the primordial sounds—make sure you're comfortable pronouncing the mantras you'll be teaching.
- ❑ If you're teaching a larger group, schedule an assistant to keep time during each meditation.
- ❑ If teaching virtually, ask your students to —if possible—arrange a quiet, distraction-free learning environment where they won't be disturbed.
- ❑ Before your students arrive, do a short meditation to calm and center yourself. If you're working with an assistant and it's appropriate, invite them to meditate with you.



Whether you're teaching in person or virtually, it's also important to set up the Personal Mantra Instruction space ahead of time. Read on for tips on making your teaching space as inviting as possible.

Setting up the space

In-person teaching

Before you begin Class 2, be sure to include the essentials. We've also provided a list of "nice-to-haves" to make your space more inviting for the ceremony.

ESSENTIALS	NICE-TO-HAVES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 2 chairs <input type="checkbox"/> Small table <input type="checkbox"/> Completed mantra cards (on the table) <input type="checkbox"/> Timekeeping device 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Lighted candle <input type="checkbox"/> Incense <input type="checkbox"/> Sri Yantra <input type="checkbox"/> Basket with fruit <input type="checkbox"/> Fresh flowers <input type="checkbox"/> Chair pillows for back support <input type="checkbox"/> Tissues <input type="checkbox"/> Room-temperature drinking water

Virtual teaching

Online instruction is similar, but you'll need to make a few modifications. Let's look at what your online teaching space requires—and what you can add for a special touch.

ESSENTIALS	NICE-TO-HAVES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Computer or mobile device with a camera and microphone <input type="checkbox"/> Speakers or headphones <input type="checkbox"/> Video conferencing tool such as Zoom, Skype, or Google Meet <input type="checkbox"/> Student's name and mantra <input type="checkbox"/> Timekeeping device 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Lighted candle <input type="checkbox"/> Incense <input type="checkbox"/> Sri Yantra = <input type="checkbox"/> Basket with fruit <input type="checkbox"/> Fresh flowers



Generally, it's best to teach in a quiet and well-lit room. Set up your teaching space according to your preference and your students' needs, but do your best to create a special environment. Remember, this is a special experience for your students.

Greeting your student

Before you jump into the ceremony, greet your student by name. You'll want to minimize conversation, but make sure your student is comfortable by asking if they have any questions before you begin.

Create your own script

In the space provided below, write a brief greeting for Class 2.

SCRIPT: GREET YOUR STUDENT

Performing the ceremony

Use the Personal Mantra Instruction script to perform the ceremony. This script includes instructions on chanting the *Shanti* mantra, teaching your student their personal mantra, and guiding them in meditation.

Speak at a comfortable pace, and be mindful of your volume. Your student should be able to clearly hear and understand you.

TIP: *If you instruct your student to close their eyes, set the example and close yours as well.*

What to say

The script below has been used by Primordial Sound Meditation instructors for decades and has been specifically designed to give your students the best experience. You're welcome to adjust the script as needed, but try to stay true to the integrity of the ceremony.

The *Shanti* mantra has been provided here in its original Sanskrit form, but you may choose to use the phonetic pronunciations available later on in this teacher's manual.

SCRIPT: PERSONAL MANTRA INSTRUCTION

We will now begin instruction in Primordial Sound Meditation. I will first say a short chant, then teach you your primordial sound. Please sit comfortably and close your eyes. I will tell you when to begin repeating your sound.

(Chant the *Shanti* mantra.)

Your primordial sound is ... (Repeat the mantra 4-5 times so they hear the pronunciation.)

Please repeat it.

Continue repeating it. (Wait 2-3 repetitions to confirm their pronunciation.)

Now say it more quietly. (Wait 2-3 repetitions and continue listening to their pronunciation.)

Now whisper it. (Wait 2-3 repetitions.)

Now think it silently to yourself, without moving your tongue or lips.

(Have them practice it silently for 2-3 minutes.)

Please open your eyes slowly.

Did you find the meditation comfortable?

SCRIPT: PERSONAL MANTRA INSTRUCTION

Good. Remember that repeating the primordial sound doesn't require a clear pronunciation. It's just a faint idea. There is no need to force it or concentrate—just think it easily, effortlessly.

When you notice that your attention has drifted away from your mantra to other thoughts or noises, gently bring it back to the mantra.

Now close your eyes again and continue meditating silently.

(Let them practice for 2–3 minutes.)

Please open your eyes.

Do you feel some settling down, some quietness?

Good. You are now practicing Primordial Sound Meditation. Just think the mantra easily. Whenever you become aware that you have lost the mantra, gently come back to it. There is no particular speed, rhythm, or pitch. Simply think it however it feels comfortable and effortless.

I've written down your primordial sound and its pronunciation in case you need to refer to it over the next few days. Please keep it somewhere private.

Now, I would like you to practice the meditation silently for about half an hour. Don't mind the time. When I whisper to you to end the meditation, stop thinking your mantra. Then, take a few minutes before slowly opening your eyes.

(Allow them to meditate for 30 minutes before bringing them out of meditation.)

Please release your mantra and take a few minutes before slowly opening your eyes.

Was it comfortable for you? Relaxing? Good.

Please remember to meditate at home each morning and afternoon until we meet again. Just sit comfortably with your eyes closed and practice silently for about half an hour each time. Please take a few minutes to come out of your meditation before resuming your daily activities.

When we meet again, we'll talk more about your meditation experiences, and I'll answer any questions you have. For now, please take this memento from today's meditation instruction.

(Offer your student a piece of fruit or a flower, if you have them.)

Enjoy the rest of your day.

Check in for comfort.

After performing the teaching instruction ceremony and allowing your student to meditate on their own for 15–30 minutes, check in with them. Ask them how they're feeling. Some students may not feel comfortable with their mantra just yet, and it's important to address this.

Your students may be uncomfortable with their mantra for any of the following reasons:

- They're confused about the mantra's pronunciation.
- The mantra reminds them of someone or something.
- They're attaching a meaning to the mantra.
- They're forcing or concentrating too hard on the mantra.

If your student expresses discomfort, offer your understanding and support.

- Ask your student to say the mantra aloud. If they're mispronouncing it, that could be the cause of their discomfort. If necessary, you may need to correct their pronunciation.
- If your student's pronunciation is correct, ask, "*What isn't comfortable?*" Their answer will help to guide you in determining the best approach to support them.
- Remind your student that the primordial sounds are just the sounds of nature—like the wind in the trees or the waves in the ocean. The mantra is used for its vibrational quality alone. Ask your student to let go of any meaning or experience they may have attached to the mantra.
- Your student may be forcing the mantra or concentrating too deeply on it. Remind them that we always repeat the mantra easily and effortlessly.

After you've addressed their discomfort, invite your student to meditate for 2–3 minutes. Then, check in again to see if they're more comfortable.

Answering questions

After the ceremony, you may answer questions pertaining to your student's immediate meditation practice. Let them know you'll discuss other topics in depth during the next class—and there will be plenty of time for questions then. Try to keep the focus on the mantra and avoid any unnecessary discussion.

The *Shanti* mantra

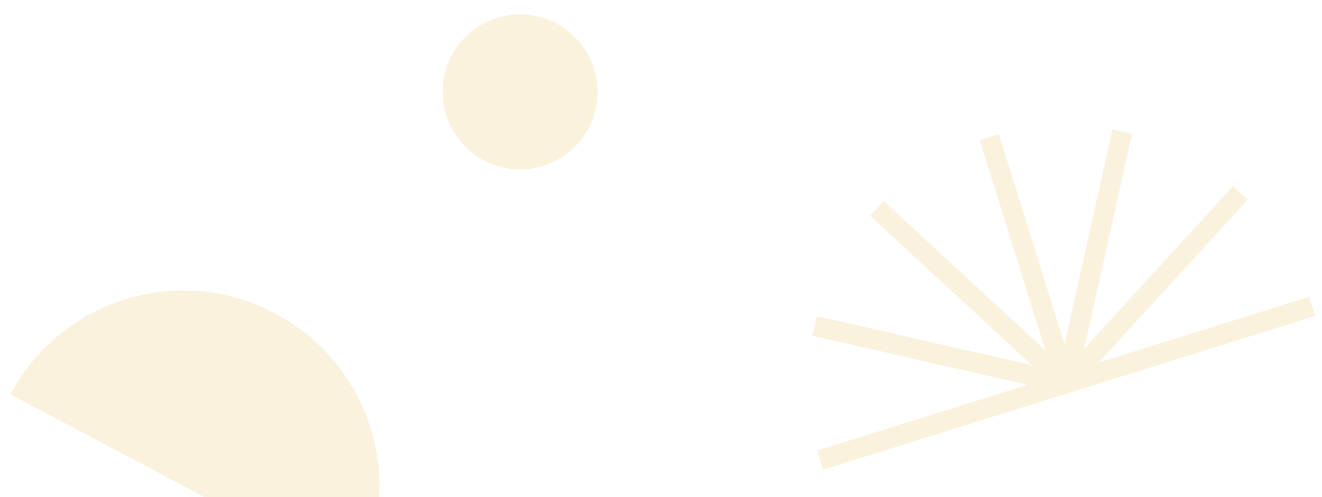
The *Shanti* mantra is chanted at the beginning of the Personal Mantra Instruction ceremony. You'll need to recite it when you teach your students. You can chant it before you meditate and any time you want to invoke a sense peace and gratitude for the teachings of the Vedic tradition.

By chanting the *Shanti* mantra at the beginning of the instruction, we connect ourselves and our students to this great lineage of teachings and teachers. On a subtle level, the mantra develops our humility as teachers. It reminds us that we are merely temporary custodians of this knowledge, privileged to share it with others.

What it means

The original Sanskrit of this mantra doesn't translate directly into English, but many interpretations exist. The translation generally used in Primordial Sound Meditation is as follows:

SANSKRIT	ENGLISH
<i>Om</i>	Om
<i>Vangme manasi pratisthita</i>	May my speech be well established in my mind
<i>Mano me vaci pratisthitam</i>	and my mind be well established in my speech
<i>Avir avir ma edhi</i>	Universal consciousness, may you be fully revealed to me
<i>Vedasya ma aniisthah</i>	You are the pillar of Vedic wisdom
<i>Srutam me ma prahasir</i>	May it not fail me
<i>Anenadhitenahoratra samdadhmi</i>	By this study day and night might I comprehend wholeness
<i>Rtam vadisyami</i>	May I speak the truth, may I speak the reality
<i>Satyam vadisyami</i>	May that provide guidance for me
<i>Tanmam avatu</i>	May that protect the speaker, may that nourish me
<i>Tadvaktaram avatu</i>	May that protect the speaker, may that protect the speaker
<i>Avatu mam</i>	Om, peace, peace, peace
<i>Avatu vaktaram</i>	
<i>Avatu vaktaram</i>	
<i>Om shanti shanti shanti</i>	



Phonetic equivalent

The phonetic pronunciation provided uses typical English phonetics. You're encouraged to listen to the Sanskrit version and create your own phonetic pronunciations—whatever makes the most sense to you.

SANSKRIT

Om
Vangme manasi pratishtha
Mano me vaci pratishthitam
Avir avir ma edhi
Vedasya ma aniiisthah
Srutam me ma prahasir
Anenadhitenahoratron samdadhmi
Rtam vadisyami
Satyam vadisyami
Tanmam avatu
Tadvaktaram avatu
Avatu mam
Avatu vaktaram
Avatu vaktaram
Om shanti shanti shanti

PHONETIC PRONUNCIATION

Om
Vang may man a see pra tish tee ta
Man o may vaa chee pra tish tee tam
Ah veer ah veer ma ay dee
Vey das ya ma anee ish tah
Shru tam may mah pra hah seer
Ah ney na dheer tay na ho ra tran sam da dhah me
Ri tam va dis yah me
Sat yam va dis yah me
Tan mam a va too
Tad vac tar ram a va too
A va too mam
A va too vac tar ram
A va too vac ta ra am
Om shan tee, shan tee, shan tee hee

NOTES: WRITE YOUR OWN PHONETIC PRONUNCIATION HERE.

Get comfortable with the mantra.

When you chant this mantra in a settled state, with humility and a sense of devotion to the teachings, it can momentarily raise your student's awareness to transcendental consciousness and your own to cosmic consciousness.

While you're preparing for your students to enter the teaching space, you can chant the *Shanti* mantra to clear and settle yourself and the space. You may chant it at other appropriate times, separate from the course, if you choose.

If a student shows an interest in the *Shanti* mantra, you're welcome to share about its meaning and origins—or even teach them how to chant it. However, this instruction is best saved for later (not during or immediately after the ceremony). Keep Class 2 focused on your student's Primordial Sound Meditation mantra.



Get comfortable with chanting.

When you begin learning the chant, it may be easier just to speak it. As you become more comfortable with the pronunciation, gently begin to chant. If chanting is challenging, find a rhythm and delivery that's smooth and comfortable for you. *Remember: your intention behind the chant is what's most important.*

Home practice

Before sending your student on their way, give them guidance on how and when to practice meditating with their new Primordial Sound mantra.

Student assignment

Instruct your student to continue practicing their Primordial Sound Meditation twice daily—once in the morning and once in the afternoon—until your next class.



CLASS 3:

Perfecting the Practice

Teaching Class 3

In this class, you'll explain the practical aspects of meditation, prepare students for the experiences they'll have during meditation, and discuss the mechanics of stress release.

In this session, you'll learn how to teach this content in a way that helps your students develop a lasting and effective meditation practice. You'll also learn how to lead the group Primordial Sound Meditation.

This class establishes the ground upon which your students will build their future meditation practice. If they grasp these basic principles now, they'll enjoy the life-changing benefits of meditation for many years to come.

Topics covered in Class 3

- 01** Introduction to the class
- 02** Structure of the Primordial Sound Meditation mantras
- 03** Preparing for meditation
- 04** Where and when to meditate
- 05** How to meditate
- 06** Thoughts and experiences in meditation
- 07** The breath, mantra, and rhythmic sounds in meditation
- 08** Timing and completing your meditations
- 09** Disturbances during meditation
- 10** Expectations during meditation
- 11** The mechanics of stress release
- 12** The value of meditation and keeping the mantra private
- 13** Class summary
- 14** Group meditation
- 15** What happens next



Introduction to the class

Start Class 3 by checking in with your students. Ask them if they have meditated at home since completing their Personal Mantra Instruction. Ask them how it went. Did they notice a difference between meditating with you and meditating on their own?

Some of your students may have not practiced meditating on their own yet. Rather than making them feel at fault, offer them forgiveness and invite them to share what has been holding them back. Their challenges may spark conversation and offer validation to other students who might be experiencing the same thing.

It's easy for people to feel like they're the only ones having a particular experience or feeling challenged by something. But by non-judgmentally creating a "group share" experience, you'll open the energy of the class and create space for every student to feel safe sharing.

After discussing your students' meditation experiences since their last class, explain that today you'll discuss the practical aspects of meditation.

Handling questions

Remind your students of how you'll handle questions. Emphasize that whether you take questions throughout the class or only at the end, all requests for clarification are welcome.

Once your students know what to expect from the class, you're almost ready to start teaching the practical points of meditation. But first, you'll need to talk a little more about mantras.

The key points

The Primordial Sound Meditation mantra is central to the Chopra Meditation experience. After answering a few questions, you'll want to emphasize these key points:

- Your student's Primordial Sound Meditation mantra has no particular meaning. It's used for its sound and vibrational quality.
- Attaching a meaning to the mantra keeps one's awareness at the surface of the mind.
- If your students attach a particular meaning to their mantra, they should release the association and return to the sound and vibration.
- The mantra is made up of 3 Sanskrit sounds: Om – [their personal mantra, or bija] – namaha.
- These 3 sounds take them from the universal level to the individual level, and then return them to the unmanifest.
- Their mantra is like a seed that, when nourished with daily meditations, will eventually bear beautiful fruit.
- Their Primordial Sound Meditation mantra is best kept private, as it is unique to them.

Preparing for meditation

Once you've addressed this information, it's time to give your students guidance on preparing for meditation. Remind your students that meditation should be effortless and can be done anywhere. There are really only 2 requirements:

- 01 Sit down.
- 02 Close your eyes.

Once your students understand the simplicity of meditation, you can give more detailed instruction on how to prepare.

Create your own script

Use or modify this script to teach your students how to prepare for meditation.

SCRIPT: PREPARING FOR MEDITATION

When you meditate, sit comfortably—whatever that means for you. Although classical yoga postures for meditation exist, don't force yourself to enter them unless they're comfortable for you. It's best to sit in an upright position, since the body associates lying down with falling asleep. That said, listen to your body and honor its needs.

Most of your meditations will probably be at home. However, since you only need to sit down and close your eyes, you can meditate wherever you happen to be. Don't let the fact that you're not at home in your favorite chair discourage you from meditating.

Some people like to create a special place to meditate at home. You may want to create a meditation space with some of your favorite things—such as pictures, crystals, a candle, and a soft blanket or pillow. Create a disturbance-free meditation environment, if possible.

It's usually best not to play music while you meditate. You're using the sound of your mantra to take your awareness inward, whereas music has the tendency to draw your awareness back into activity.

If you enjoy incense, it's OK to burn it while meditating. In fact, if you regularly light the same scent, your body will begin associating it with the silence of meditation. As soon you smell the incense, your physiology will start to settle down, preparing to enter a meditative state.

Close your eyes. This keeps your attention from being drawn outward into activity. If you're having difficulty keeping your eyes closed, stop thinking the mantra, open your eyes, and look around. When it's comfortable, close your eyes again and return to the meditation.

SCRIPT: PREPARING FOR MEDITATION

Whenever possible, create a disturbance-free meditation environment. If you have pets or children, give them something to occupy them—preferably in another room. Silence your phone and let other household members know not to come looking for you. It’s best to meditate indoors, where you can more easily control your environment. But if you choose to go outside, avoid sitting in direct sunlight.

When to meditate

Now that your students know how to prepare for meditation, they’ll want more details on when and how to practice. Knowing when to meditate can help your students organize their daily routines. Because Primordial Sound Meditation is typically only practiced twice a day, it can be easily integrated into any schedule.



Recommend that your students...

- Meditate for 30 minutes twice a day.
- Do their first meditation shortly after waking up.
- Avoid meditating after a heavy meal or vigorous exercise.
- Do their second meditation in the late afternoon or early evening, ideally before dinner.
- Avoid using meditation as a tool for falling asleep.
- Avoid meditating every time they feel negative emotions.

Once you’ve explained the *where* and *when* of meditation, your students will want to know more about the *how*.

Create your own script

Use or modify this script to teach your students when to meditate.

SCRIPT: WHEN TO MEDITATE

For maximum benefit, Primordial Sound Meditation should be practiced for 30 minutes twice a day. If you don't have a full 30 minutes, meditate for as long as you can. Don't let a tight schedule keep you from meditating at all.

It's better to meditate for shorter periods twice a day than for 1 long period only. Each time you meditate, you contact the field of pure awareness and begin integrating it into your life—so repetition is paramount. We generally don't recommend meditating more than twice daily, as this could result in releasing too much stress too quickly—leading to discomfort or a feeling of being spaced out.

The day's first meditation is best done just after you wake up. However, it's good to take a few moments to wash your face, brush your teeth, and use the bathroom, rather than just sitting up in bed and meditating.

Eating increases activity in the body, whereas meditation decreases it. So, it's best to eat after meditation, not before. If you must eat before meditating, eat something light—such as a piece of fruit or a few crackers—and allow time for your digestion to settle.

Because vigorous exercise also increases the activity of the body, it's also best done after meditation. If you must perform vigorous exercise beforehand, allow plenty of time for your body to settle, your breathing to slow, and your heart rate to normalize.

Gentle yoga or stretching can be done immediately before meditating. In addition to prepping the body for prolonged sitting, these practices can loosen surface stress, making it more easily released in meditation. Your second meditation is best done in the late afternoon or early evening, before dinner if possible. If you can't meditate before dinner, allow ample time for your food to digest before meditating.

Whereas meditation is restful alertness, sleep is restful dullness. It's best not to meditate right before bed, as this can make your mind too alert to fall asleep. Meditating while tired also increases your risk of falling asleep mid-meditation and missing out on some of the practice's benefits.

Although meditation will relax you, it's best not to develop the habit of using it as a tool to help you fall asleep. If your body begins associating meditation with sleep, you'll tend to fall asleep every time you meditate. That said, with regular meditation at the appropriate times, you'll likely notice a gradual normalization of your sleep patterns.

SCRIPT: WHEN TO MEDITATE

Don't use your mantra every time you feel anxious or worried—you don't want to begin associating it with these negative emotions. With consistent meditation, you should begin experiencing fewer difficult moments. Once in a while, though, if you're in a period of high stress, it's OK to do extra or longer meditations—as long as they're comfortable for you.

How to meditate

You'll now teach your students how to get started, what to expect, and how to use their mantra correctly.

Create your own script

Use or modify this script to teach your students the Primordial Sound Meditation method.

SCRIPT: HOW TO MEDITATE

Once you are sitting comfortably and have closed your eyes, gently begin repeating your Primordial Sound Meditation mantra silently to yourself. Repeat your mantra easily and effortlessly—almost as if you are listening to it, rather than thinking it.

Once you are sitting comfortably and have closed your eyes, gently begin repeating your Primordial Sound Meditation mantra silently to yourself. Repeat your mantra easily and effortlessly—almost as if you are listening to it, rather than thinking it.

As you settle to more refined levels of the thinking process, the mantra may change. Its speed, rhythm, and clarity may vary during your meditation. Although the mantra has a specific pronunciation, it may change or become distorted as you meditate and your awareness settles to more refined levels. When this happens, the mantra itself becomes more refined.

Think your mantra gently, and allow it to shift in any way that feels comfortable. Don't try to force a change, but don't resist any changes that happen naturally. As long as you still recognize it as your mantra, continue repeating it—even if it fades to a faint impulse. If you no longer recognize it as your mantra, gently reintroduce it at a more perceptible level.

Meditating should be comfortable. It's OK to move or shift your body if you need to.

From time to time, you will notice that you've drifted away from your mantra to everyday thoughts, noises in your environment, or sensations in the body. When this happens, you have a choice: You may

SCRIPT: HOW TO MEDITATE

continue to think thoughts or return to your mantra. In meditation, always choose to come effortlessly back to the mantra.

It doesn't matter how many times you lose the mantra during meditation. Whenever you realize you're no longer thinking it, return to it easily. Come back to the mantra at whatever level of pronunciation feels most comfortable.

Any time you feel you are trying to meditate or are concentrating on your mantra, stop, sit easily for a few seconds, then gently return to the mantra. Trying involves activity and holds our awareness at the level of the mind or intellect, whereas Primordial Sound Meditation is a process of letting go. We do less to gain more, until we slip into the Gap and do nothing—yet have the potential to experience anything.

Habitually thinking your mantra during activity will weaken its effects for taking you toward silence in meditation. If your mantra arises in your mind outside of meditation, release it and return your attention to your regular thoughts.

Timing your meditations

New students might worry about not meditating for long enough—or meditating for too long. You might suggest keeping time with a watch, timer, or smartphone app—especially one that ends the meditation with a soft chime or bell sound. The Chopra App has a meditation timer section with a variety of lengths to choose from. Emphasize that as your students meditate more regularly, their physiology will adjust and know when to bring itself out of meditation.

Create your own script

Use or modify this script to teach your students how to time their meditations.

SCRIPT: TIMING YOUR MEDITATIONS

If you always meditate for the same length of time, your physiology will automatically adjust to this. You will begin to know when the time is up.

But if you need to check the time during meditation—especially while you're still new to the practice—keep a watch or other timekeeping device close by for when you need a quick look. There are also a

SCRIPT: TIMING YOUR MEDITATIONS

number of meditation timer apps available for download to your smartphone. If you choose to use a timer, choose a soft chime or bell sound to gently take you out of the meditation.

Thoughts and experiences

As a teacher, the most important thing you can do is remind your students to ***be easy with themselves*** and ***let go of expectations***. Remind them that you're here to support them on this journey of returning to the memory of wholeness and the essence of who they really are. Assure them that although some experiences may draw their attention away from the mantra, they are common and not a sign of failure.

Create your own script

Use or modify this script to help prepare your students for the experiences they may encounter.

SCRIPT: THOUGHTS AND EXPERIENCES

There are a variety of experiences that can show up in the form of thought, taking your attention away from your mantra. You may have a continuation of ideas, images, memories, or the everyday thoughts of your life's activities. You may see pictures, colors, light, or other visual images. People who are especially visual may even see their mantras.

You may become aware of a physical sensation in your body. This could be tingling, twitching, warmth, or some slight physical movement. Physical sensations are due to stress being released, or the body readjusting and reawakening after some stress or toxins have been released. If a sensation is so strong that it's difficult to return to your mantra, don't force it. Gently allow your awareness to be with the sensation.

When you realize your thoughts have shifted to other things, your attention is no longer gripped by the sensation and you can now return to your mantra. You may become aware of some emotion, happiness, sadness, or slight sensations in the area of your heart. These are also indications of the release of stress. If the mood or emotion is strong and it is difficult to go back to your mantra, allow your awareness to rest easily in your body. It will be spontaneously drawn to the physical sensation associated with the emotion. Breathe into the sensation until it starts to diminish, and then return to your mantra.

SCRIPT: THOUGHTS AND EXPERIENCES

You may find yourself listening to a sound in your body or a noise outside in the environment. Although noises can be disturbing, they are not a barrier to meditation. Even in noisy situations, you are able to think—and, therefore, you can think your mantra.

Be easy with these experiences without attempting to force them out of your awareness. Just allow your attention to flow effortlessly back and forth between your mantra and any other mental activity. When you realize your attention has drifted away from your mantra, gently bring your attention back to it. Whenever you have a choice, choose the mantra over other thoughts.

There are several types of experiences you may encounter during meditation. There may be variations and combinations of these experiences, but they all fall into 4 basic categories.

Repeating the mantra

Use or modify this script to prepare your students for what they may experience while repeating their mantra.

SCRIPT: REPEATING THE MANTRA

As you repeat the mantra, you will notice that it is just like a thought, except it has no meaning. As you repeat the mantra, it may change. The mantra may become faster and slower or louder and fainter.

However the mantra changes, continue to repeat it innocently—without resisting changes.

Sometimes you will notice that you're having thoughts simultaneously while repeating the mantra. When you notice this, gently drift back to favor the mantra.

Falling asleep

Use or modify this script to prepare your students to practice self-forgiveness if they fall asleep during meditation.

SCRIPT: FALLING ASLEEP

If you fall asleep during your meditation, it means you're tired. This is a normal experience and if it hasn't happened to you yet, it will probably happen sometime in the future.

SCRIPT: FALLING ASLEEP

You will usually know if you've been asleep. You may be slumped over or feeling heavy and dull. When you wake, finish off whatever meditation time is remaining. If you slept right through to the end of your meditation, meditate for at least 5 minutes before getting up.

Sleep is restful dullness; meditation is restful alertness. If you have time, it is always best to finish with the alertness of meditation. Falling asleep once in a while just means that you are a little over tired at that time. If you find that you are falling asleep nearly every time you meditate, this means you have too much fatigue in your life and should see what changes you can make to reduce this.

Are you getting enough sleep at night?

Are you working too hard?

Are you under too much stress?

If you are sick or pregnant, your body will require more rest and so there may be a greater tendency to sleep during meditation and this is okay. However, under normal circumstances, it is better to sleep at bedtime and remain alert during meditation so you can gain the maximum value from both activities.

Experiencing thoughts

Use or modify this script to help your students prepare for having thoughts in meditation.

SCRIPT: EXPERIENCING THOUGHTS

Thoughts are a normal part of the Primordial Sound Meditation experience. Don't struggle against them or try to shut them out. The harder you try to stop thinking, the more the thoughts will crowd in.

It is common to experience thoughts, emotions, restlessness, boredom, and frustration when there is a lot of turbulence in your life. You may think, "This isn't working" or "I want to give up." During these times, remember that everything you're feeling and experiencing is due to the release of stress. Keep going, and know that your meditation practice is helping you shift from stress and constriction to peace and expansion.

Your mind is usually engaged in a continuous internal dialogue, where the meaning of 1 thought automatically leads you to the next. When you repeat your mantra mentally, it interrupts the normal flow of thoughts and your awareness is able to settle down to quieter, more abstract levels.

SCRIPT: EXPERIENCING THOUGHTS

Most thoughts have 2 aspects: a sound or vibration and a meaning. It is the meaning that holds your attention at the superficial level of your mind. Because the mantra is a thought with no meaning, there is nothing to keep you at the level of your mind or intellect.

We can think thoughts at the surface of the mind or at deeper levels. Even though you have drifted away from the mantra to other thoughts, you may be at a deeper, more abstract level. Return to the mantra at whatever level of repetition feels comfortable.

The process is to go back and forth effortlessly. If your mantra and other thoughts seem to be going on at the same time, favor the mantra.

Slipping into the Gap

Use or modify this script to help you describe the Gap to your students.

SCRIPT: SLIPPING INTO THE GAP

While it may not be overtly noticeable, all thoughts have a beginning and an ending. The Gap is what we call “the space between each of our thoughts.”

We are constantly experiencing the Gap—it exists between every thought we have and the next. However, because of the busy activity of the mind, we rarely notice it. During meditation, we slow the activity of the mind so we are able to spend more time in the Gap. This gives us access to the field of silence and infinite possibilities—the soul and spirit.

When you slip into the Gap, there is no mental activity, no mantra and no other thoughts. This is pure awareness, not awareness of anything in particular. You weren't asleep and yet a little time has passed.

This experience is referred to as “slipping into the Gap.” We only become aware of slipping into the Gap after it has happened. If you think you are in the Gap, you are not, but you may have just been there. It is often very brief so you may hardly notice it. It is very subtle, so even though it may be happening frequently you don't always notice it. Sometimes it may be followed by a feeling of expansion, peace, or bliss.

It's important not to go looking for the Gap. If you spend your meditation wondering if you are near the Gap, if you've slipped in yet, or if you'll ever slip in, then you'll keep your awareness in activity, and this will inhibit you from having the experience.

SCRIPT: SLIPPING INTO THE GAP

The important thing to remember is that as long as you are meditating easily and effortlessly, the experiences you have during meditation are always appropriate for you at that time. If you are tired, you may fall asleep. If you have a lot of stress ready to be released, you may have lots of thoughts and feel restless. If you are alert and settled, you may experience slipping into the Gap.

There is no such thing as a bad meditation. Every meditation is a good meditation because it gives you what your physiology needs at that time.

Expectations of meditation

Often, new meditators have unrealistic expectations about meditation. They may put undue pressure on themselves to have a specific experience—and feel like a failure if they don't. They may not understand that meditations vary from morning to evening and day to day.

Make sure your students know to approach each meditation without expectations—and to embrace whatever experience they have, knowing it's exactly what they need at that time.

Create your own script

Use or modify this script to help students learn to meditate without expectations that limit their experience.

SCRIPT: EXPECTATIONS DURING MEDITATION

Looking for a specific experience in meditation keeps your awareness at the level of the mind, preventing the benefits of meditation from unfolding. Approach each meditation with the same innocence you had when you first learned to meditate. Follow the process gently, without seeking any particular result.

Your meditations will vary from morning to evening and from day to day. Whatever meditation experience you have in the moment is the one that's best for you at that time.

Know how long you plan to meditate when you sit down, and stick with that time—no matter what experience you have. Don't look for an experience to repeat itself, and don't expect to have someone else's experiences. What matters is that you are effortless with the process.

Expectations of the breath

Use or modify this script to describe the role of the breath in meditation.

SCRIPT: THE BREATH

The movement of your breath mirrors the activity of your mind. When your mind is unusually active and your thoughts are racing, your breathing will usually speed up. The opposite is also true—as your mind settles down, so too will your breath.

In meditation, have a neutral attitude toward your breathing. If you notice that you’re consciously thinking about it, gently return your attention to the mantra.

It’s OK if your mantra seems to match your breathing spontaneously, but this isn’t necessary.

Suddenly needing to take a deep breath during meditation means your body is in a state of deep rest where the breathing has become very shallow. As your body isn’t used to being at such a rested level, it may suddenly feel that it needs more air. This should pass with regular meditation, as your body adjusts to this new experience.

Since the breath mirrors thought, when you slip beyond thought, you also slip beyond the breath. Therefore, feeling that your breath has stopped completely is 1 way of experiencing having slipped into the Gap. Again, you only become aware of this just after it’s happened. But don’t worry—the body will take in oxygen as it needs to.

Expectations of rhythm

By now, your students should feel ready to take on many experiences in meditation with awareness and a sense of ease. But they may have questions about how the mantra might interact with rhythmic sounds they hear. You’ll want to emphasize that the mantra has no rhythm of its own and shouldn’t be forced into one. Still, there’s no need to force it away from a rhythm it’s spontaneously chosen to follow.

Use or modify the script on the next page to explain the mantra and other rhythmic sounds.

SCRIPT: RHYTHMIC SOUNDS

There may be times during meditation when you notice that the rhythm of your mantra seems to be in step with another internal sound, such as your heartbeat or breath. Or it might align with an external sound, such as the ticking of a clock or the hum of an appliance.

SCRIPT: RHYTHMIC SOUNDS

Remember, the mantra itself has no particular rhythm. Don't try to make it follow any rhythm, but also don't try to force it away from one it has spontaneously chosen to follow. And as always, continue to gently favor the mantra with your attention.

Expectations about disturbances

All of your students will experience some sort of disturbance in meditation at some point in their practice. These might come from their children, pets, job, home, or other surroundings. Some disturbances won't require their immediate attention, while others will pull them back into activity.

Use or modify this script to guide your students on dealing with disturbances during meditation.

SCRIPT: DISTURBANCES

No matter how peaceful a meditation environment you've created for yourself, there will be times when you're disturbed by external demands. If the disturbance is minor, gently return to your mantra and continue your meditation.

If it requires your attention, take a moment—if possible—before getting up to deal with the situation. Once you've taken care of things, return to your meditation and complete the remaining time.

Completing a meditation

Once your student's timer—or body—has alerted them to the end of their meditation time, they'll need to slowly return their consciousness to the level of activity. You can share tips on slowly and gently coming out of the meditative state.

Create your own script

Use or modify this script to teach students how to complete a meditation session.

SCRIPT: COMPLETING A MEDITATION

When it's time to finish your meditation, stop repeating your mantra. Remain comfortably seated with your eyes closed for 3-5 minutes before getting up and resuming activity.

SCRIPT: COMPLETING A MEDITATION

During these few minutes at the end of meditation, you can stretch, massage your neck, deepen your breath, and move gently as you bring your awareness back into activity. Don't stand up too quickly—and if you feel lightheaded upon getting up, sit down again and rest a little longer.

During meditation, you moved in the direction of silence. Now, it's time to move back into activity. You want the transition to be smooth and comfortable. Always allow enough time to come out of meditation slowly and gently.

The mechanics of stress release

After your students have completed their meditation, they'll notice that some stress has been released. With a consistent practice, they'll also see this effect extend into other areas of their lives.



Topics to share about the mechanics of stress release:



- Well-documented benefits of meditation include the release of stress and the elimination of toxins.
- Stress inhibits the free flow of energy and information through the physiology.
- When the mind settles down, so does the body.
- When stress is released, activity in the body increases.
- When the body increases in activity, so does the mind.
- Thoughts in meditation are the result of toxins being released.

Stress release is one of meditation's most obvious benefits, and the fact that your students are taking this class shows that they already see value in meditation. Still, they might not be fully aware of the practice's other benefits.

The mechanics of stress release

Use or modify this script to expand on the mechanics of stress release in meditation.

SCRIPT: THE MECHANICS OF STRESS RELEASE

Although meditation's main purpose is a spiritual one, the release of stress and elimination of toxins are important and well-documented side benefits. Stress and other impurities hamper the free flow of energy and information through your physiology. It's useful to have a basic understanding of how meditation helps remove them.

You begin your meditation by thinking your mantra. Automatically, your mind starts to settle down.

Because the mind and body are closely related, when the mind settles down, so does the body—reaching a deep level of rest. Rest is nature's way of allowing your body to heal and rebalance itself.

As you know, stress is associated with many chronic health conditions. However, it often expresses itself most immediately as knots of tension in the shoulders or physical discomfort in other areas of the body. The release of stress, therefore, causes increased physical activity in the body. And because the mind and body are part of 1 system, this increase in physical activity can cause a corresponding increase in mental activity.

Mental activity takes the form of thoughts, so when stress is released, your mind may become more active. When this release subsides, you may go back to the mantra, and the mind and body will settle down again—until additional stress is released and the process repeats itself.

Don't worry about or analyze the thoughts you have in meditation—they're just the result of toxins being released. If a thought or idea is important, it will be there waiting for you after meditation.

Your attention's natural tendency is to reach toward pleasurable experiences, and your body's natural tendency is to regain balance. In meditation, the natural tendency of your awareness takes you inward, and the natural tendency of your body brings you outward.

The value of meditation

The value in daily life

Some of meditation’s greatest effects manifest outside the twice-daily practice. Use or modify this script to help your students understand the value of meditation in their daily lives.

SCRIPT: THE VALUE IN DAILY LIFE

Don’t judge your meditation by the experiences you have while meditating. If you want to know if your practice is “working,” look for changes in your life. Are your desires being fulfilled more easily? Is your intuition stronger? Are your relationships healthier? Are you happier and more relaxed?

While the physiological effects you experience in meditation are a wonderful benefit, the larger purpose of the practice is to enrich your daily life—bringing you greater clarity, calm, healing, and overall well-being.

Through regularly reconnecting with your true self in meditation, you’ll begin experiencing the qualities of silence and infinite possibilities in your life. Changes will happen naturally and comfortably.

Some people notice the shifts immediately, while it takes others more time. It may even be friends or family who first notice the changes in you. As long as you’re meditating regularly, the benefits will grow little by little each day.

The value of keeping the mantra private

The Primordial Sound Meditation mantra is special and should be kept to oneself. When your students are new to Primordial Sound Meditation, they may not yet fully understand the importance of keeping their personal mantras private. You’ll need to explain why it’s best to keep their mantra in the sacred space of silence.

Use or modify this script to explain the importance of keeping one’s Primordial Sound Meditation mantra private.

SCRIPT: KEEPING THE MANTRA PRIVATE

Whenever you speak your mantra out loud—even in private—you bring it out into activity. Because the mantra’s purpose is to take your awareness away from activity and into silence, it’s best to use it silently—and only during your meditation practice.

SCRIPT: KEEPING THE MANTRA PRIVATE

Keeping your mantra private will also help to personalize it. After all, it's a seed planted in your consciousness. If left to grow with tending twice a day, it will—over time—blossom and bear fruit just for you.

The strength of your Primordial Sound Meditation mantra comes from its basis in the time, date, and location of your birth. It's not recommended that you teach your mantra to others, as it will probably not be the most appropriate sound for them.

In the Personal Mantra Instruction ceremony, you received a mantra card to help you learn your mantra's spelling and pronunciation. Once you're confident you won't forget the mantra, discard this card. Traditionally, we set fire to the card and release the ashes into the elements—such as the wind or a river.

This is because when spiritual items and things used in sacred ceremonies are no longer needed, it is traditional to release them into nature. Since the mantra is written on paper, it's thought best to burn it first, rather than releasing it as is. Of course, you can dispose of your mantra card in whatever way feels best.

Class summary

At the end of this class, you'll need to summarize what your students have learned so far. Keep it simple, but remember to touch on all the key points:

- The mantra should be repeated gently and effortlessly—without forcing or concentrating on it.
- Thoughts are a part of the process. Whenever we notice we have drifted away from the mantra, we gently come back to it.
- It's important to let go of any expectations you have about the practice—every meditation is a good meditation. Look for the benefits in your life.

TIP

**Give them
a break.**

After reviewing the key points, give your students a short break—or at least a chance to stand and stretch a bit—before moving into the group Primordial Sound Meditation.

Explaining the group meditation

The group Primordial Sound Meditation is a pivotal piece of the Chopra Meditation program. There are 6 parts to this essential meditation:

- 01 *Vipassana*: Observing the breath
- 02 Reflective self-inquiry: The 4 soul questions
- 03 The *I am* sequence
- 04 Primordial Sound Meditation mantra practice
- 05 Resting in being
- 06 Setting subtle intentions

When leading a group meditation for new students, it's helpful to say a few words about the value of each part. You may choose to prepare your students by explaining the relevance of each group meditation component beforehand. Alternatively, you might ask your students to follow your meditation instructions without judgment or evaluation—with a promise that you'll explain the parts at the end.

Regardless of when you choose to explain the parts of the group meditation, you'll share the same information. Let's look first at how you might explain the 4 soul questions.

The 4 soul questions

Use or modify this script to explain the 4 soul questions.

SCRIPT: THE 4 SOUL QUESTIONS

The first soul question is, "Who am I?"

When we first ask this question, sensations, images, feelings, and thoughts may arise, and we may attach an experience to our response. However, the question "Who am I?" is not an experience, and as our questioning becomes more refined, the experiences fade and we rest in being. We ask the question and then simply rest in being.

The second soul question is, "What do I want?"

Once again, when we ask this question, we allow any sensations, images, feelings, and thoughts to arise. These are all experiences in consciousness, and they will arise and then subside. Simply notice what comes, without forcing anything. As our consciousness evolves – which is the whole intention of this practice – what we want will also change and evolve. For now, we simply ask the question and pay attention.

The third soul question is, "What is my purpose?"

SCRIPT: THE 4 SOUL QUESTIONS

Ask the question and allow any sensations, images, feelings, and thoughts to arise, without forcing anything. This question and the responses you receive are in the realm of experience, which is ever changing. Again, as our consciousness evolves, our purpose will also evolve.

The final soul question is, "What am I grateful for?"

Ask the question and allow any sensations, images, feelings, and thoughts to come to you.

By asking these soul questions and listening to the answers without judgment or evaluation, we begin to explore the deeper levels of our being. Over time, the process becomes more refined, taking us beyond the superficial aspects of our life and opening us to the most fundamental levels of our soul. We begin to rediscover who we really are.

The *I am* sequence

Use or modify this script to explain the function of the *I am* sequence.

SCRIPT: THE "I AM" SEQUENCE

We start by repeating the words *I am*, followed by your full name. With this practice, we slowly begin to realize that what we are referring to as "I" is an experience in time. The entity that we call ourselves is not a fixed entity; it's constantly changing, evolving, and moving into higher states of consciousness. Again, we don't do anything except repeat the words. We repeat our full name, which is our assumed identity.

Then we leave off our last name and just repeat *I am* and our first name. This is also an assumed identity, but the first name is a more innocent, less conditioned, assumed identity. This is the name you were given when you were born.

This process is called "*neti, neti*" in Sanskrit. You are slowly discarding every assumed identity, which is the conditioning of your consciousness, not who you are. It's all the things you attach yourself to and identify as yourself.

Then we discard off our first name and what we are left with is "I am." "I am" is not in time. We cannot have an experience without "I am." No matter what experience we have, "I am" gets attached to that experience. "I am" is the light of awareness, because that light of awareness attaches itself to an idea and then becomes that idea.

Finally, we drop the "I am" and repeat only the sound vibration of "I am," which is "*ahum*."

The personal mantra

Use or modify this script to explain the transition into one's personal Primordial Sound Meditation mantra.

SCRIPT: THE PRIMODIAL SOUND MEDITATION MANTRA

Next, we begin meditating with our Primordial Sound Meditation mantra, which is the vibration that brought us from the unmanifest into the manifest. We use the mantra to take us back into the unmanifest.

At the end of the silent meditation with the mantra, we let go of the mantra and rest in existence, awareness, and being (*sat chit ananda*). We are simply being.

This is the ground state, which has 2 components. One is the individual ground state called *jiva*. The other is the universal ground state called *Atman Brahman*. *Jiva* is the ground state carrying our *karma*, memories, and desires. This is where yesterday's memories are. *Atman Brahman* is the ground state of the entire universe.

The 4 subtle intentions

Use or modify this script to explain the 4 intentions.

SCRIPT: THE 4 INTENTIONS

Then we finish the group meditation by setting the intentions for our body, heart, mind, and soul:

- Joyful, energetic body
- Loving, compassionate heart
- Reflective, alert mind
- Lightness of being

The intention of the entire meditation process is to take us back to "I," and from there, to manifest into the world. As it says in the *Bhagavad Gita*, "Be established in being and then experience the world. Established in being, perform action. Established in being, think, feel, do, and speak."



Leading the group meditation

As an instructor, you'll lead your students in the group Primordial Sound Meditation at the end of Class 3. It will show up as part of Class 4, too. At some point, you may also be asked—or inspired—to lead a group meditation unexpectedly. You'll want to be prepared for this anytime, anywhere—so it's a good idea to memorize the group meditation script.

You may practice leading a group meditation by gathering family members, friends, or classmates. Lead the meditation, then ask for feedback. With the feedback in mind, reflect on what you learned, what you would do again, and what you would do differently.

The group Primordial Sound Meditation script

To preserve the integrity of the group Primordial Sound Meditation, please stay as close to this script as you can. If you're presenting to a group that does not yet have their personal Primordial Sound Meditation mantra, you may replace the personal mantra with “*So hum.*” This is the universal mantra, which reflects the sound or vibration of the breath, and it's suitable for everyone.

SCRIPT: THE GROUP PRIMORDIAL SOUND MEDITATION

Let's begin our meditation.

Please sit comfortably and close your eyes.

Take a few long deep breaths, allowing your body to settle into wherever you are sitting.

[wait 10 seconds]

Let go of everything that doesn't concern you right now.

[15 seconds]

Allow your breathing to be normal, not controlling it in any way.

Be aware of the breath, not focusing or concentrating, just simply observing the breath as it naturally flows in and flows out.

[10 seconds]

Bring your awareness to your heart center. Be aware of the breath here.

[10 seconds]

We'll silently ask ourselves the 4 soul questions.

Just ask the question and listen to whatever answer arises.

SCRIPT: THE GROUP PRIMORDIAL SOUND MEDITATION

It may be a sensation, image, feeling or thought.
Just be open without judging or evaluating.

Who am I?
Who am I?
Who am I?

[20 seconds]

What do I want?
What is my deepest desire? What do I want?
Allow any sensation, image, feeling, or thought to come to you.
What do I want?

[20 seconds]

What is my purpose?
How can I help, how can I serve?
What is my purpose?
What is my purpose?

[20 seconds]

What am I grateful for?
What am I grateful for?
What am I grateful for?

[20 seconds]

Let go of all those questions and answers.
Now silently begin saying *I am* followed by your first name and last name.

[15 seconds]

Now drop your last name and just repeat *I am* and your first name.

[15 seconds]

Now drop your first name and just repeat *I am, I am, I am.*

SCRIPT: THE GROUP PRIMORDIAL SOUND MEDITATION

[15 seconds]

And now, silently repeat *Ahum, Ahum, Ahum*, which is the vibration of *I am*.

Ahum

Ahum

Ahum

[1 minute]

Letting go of *Ahum*, now begin silently repeating your Primordial Sound Meditation mantra, which is the unique vibration of your soul.

[5 seconds]

Remember that the repetition of the primordial sound is gentle and relaxed; there is no need to force or concentrate.

[5 seconds]

As you repeat your primordial sound, you may notice that it changes. It may become faster or slower, louder or fainter, or even distorted. However your primordial sound changes, continue repeating it effortlessly, without resisting or anticipating changes. It's more like listening to it than saying it.

[5 seconds]

From time to time, you may notice that your attention has drifted away from your mantra to other thoughts in your mind, a noise in the environment, or a sensation in your body. Whenever you notice that your attention has drifted away from your mantra, gently come back to it.

[5 seconds]

Remember to let go of any expectations you may have during the practice. If you notice that you are focusing on a feeling, mood, or emotion, or if you are waiting for some experience to happen, treat this as you would any other thought and gently bring your attention back to the mantra.

Innocently going with the flow.

[5 seconds]

Please continue meditating. I'll watch the time and let you know when to stop repeating your mantra.

SCRIPT: THE GROUP PRIMORDIAL SOUND MEDITATION

[15–30 minutes]

Please keep your eyes closed. Leave the mantra and just continue resting easily.

[10 seconds]

Resting in existence.

[10 seconds]

Resting in awareness.

[10 seconds]

Resting in being.

[10 seconds]

Just rest.

Existence. Awareness. Being.

Sat chit ananda.

[10 seconds]

Resting in existence, awareness, being. Resting in presence, resting in *I*.

[2–3 minutes]

Now resting in being, resting in *I*, resting in existence, awareness, presence. They are all the same thing. We will introduce 4 intentions. As I pronounce them, repeat them silently and release them in being.

Joyful, energetic body. Joyful, energetic body.

[15 seconds]

Loving, compassionate heart. Loving, compassionate heart.

[15 seconds]

Reflective, alert mind. Reflective, alert mind.

[15 seconds]

SCRIPT: THE GROUP PRIMORDIAL SOUND MEDITATION

Lightness of being. Lightness of being.

[15 seconds]

Continue to rest in being.

[Wait 1 minute]

Now take a few deeper breaths, move, and stretch gently. Please bring your palms together in front of your heart center. Bowing with gratitude to your soul.

[5 seconds]

Please open your eyes gracefully and bow soul to soul to those around you, as we say the blessing, *Namaste*.

[Wait 15–30 seconds. If anyone still has their eyes closed, repeat, “Please open your eyes.”]

Was your meditation comfortable?

[Look around the room and repeat the question if the group is large. Get a response from at least a few people in the group.]

We think the mantra effortlessly. If we notice we’ve drifted away from it, we gently come back to it and we let go of any expectations about the practice.

See how simple it is? This is how easily we meditate.

Any questions?

Group meditation tips

To help you make the most of your group Primordial Sound Meditation practice, keep these tips in mind:

Students will look to you as an example of how to meditate. When leading a group meditation, it’s best to sit in a chair with your feet on the floor and your hands in your lap. Even if you usually meditate sitting cross-legged on the floor at home, students who choose to sit in a chair will feel more comfortable seeing you do the same. That said, you may encourage anyone who prefers sitting on the floor to do so.

During the meditation, ***it’s a good idea to glance around the group once or twice to see how everyone is doing.*** If you notice anyone with their eyes open, just smile and silently gesture for them to close their eyes. Once you’re

sure everyone is settled, be sure to set the example by keeping your eyes closed for the rest of the meditation time.

Do your best to **lead the meditation with a clear, even, and soothing voice**—but be sure to speak loudly enough that everyone can hear you.

You're keeping time for the whole group, so **take care not to get lost in your own meditation or fall asleep**. Allow time for at least 15 minutes of group meditation and, if time permits, meditate for a full 30 minutes. However, take into consideration whether there are children or others present who have been recommended to meditate for a shorter time. (These considerations will be discussed later in this course.)

When it's time to bring your students out of meditation, **speak loudly enough that they can hear you**. It's also nice to use a soft chime here, if you can—but not one that it is jarring.

When you ask your students to stop thinking their mantra and sit easily with their eyes closed, **set the example by keeping your eyes closed until you tell them to open theirs**. Often, students become restless during these minutes and peek to see what you're doing. If your eyes are open, they might feel it isn't necessary for them to keep their eyes closed either.

You may end the meditation by having your students bring their hands together at heart center and chant Om. If this doesn't feel comfortable for you or it isn't appropriate for the group you're instructing, you may skip this step. Another option for closing the meditation is reading an inspiring quote or sharing the day's Spiritual Law of Success.

You might also close by simply saying, "Namaste." This word is derived from Sanskrit and literally means "I bow to you." It's more commonly translated as "The divine light in me honors the divine light in you" or "The god within me greets the god within you." *Namaste* is the recognition that we are all equal and share a common divinity.

Wrapping up Class 3

After the group meditation, remind your students to meditate for 30 minutes each morning and afternoon. Share that in the next class, you'll talk about the higher states of consciousness and the experiences that may unfold as your students continue meditating regularly. If you overlooked any key points earlier in the class, or if it feels appropriate to expand on any, bring them up now.

Always allow time following the class to take any questions you haven't already answered. You might also offer to stay after class if anyone has questions they'd like to ask in private.



CLASS 4:

Higher States of Consciousness

Teaching Class 4

At this point, your students understand the benefits of meditation, have received their Primordial Sound Meditation mantras, and have begun to practice meditation regularly. They've had the opportunity to learn tips and tricks and receive guidance from you to help them perfect their practice.

Now, you'll provide your students with the knowledge to better understand their past experiences—while also preparing them for the new and inspiring ones that will unfold with regular meditation practice.

This class is intended to be scheduled 1-7 days after Class 3. By giving your students the opportunity to build some meditation experience on their own between classes, you'll prepare them to ask more detailed, informed questions during your final class together.

Topics covered in Class 4

- 01 Introduction to the class
- 02 The waking, sleeping, and deep sleep states
- 03 The 4 higher states of consciousness
- 04 Program summary
- 05 Q&A

**Begin
(or end) with
the group
meditation.**

Now that your students have been introduced to the group meditation, you may choose to either open or close your final class together with this meditation.

Introduction to the class

Some of your students may have picked up their regular meditation practice right away. Some may have struggled a little bit. Ask your students if they've been able to meditate regularly at home since your last meeting. If they've struggled, see if you can uncover the reason. It may be an opportunity to reinforce some key points from Class 3:

- Remember to think the mantra effortlessly.
- When you realize you're not thinking your mantra, gently come back to it.
- Let go of any expectations about the practice.

Encourage your students to have an open discussion. You may encourage them to ask questions and share their own experiences as you go along. This final class can feel especially abstract for many people, so be sure to check in with your students as needed.

By meditating regularly, your students will gain an experiential understanding of the higher states of consciousness that is far more valuable than anything they can glean from a lecture. And by discussing the higher states of consciousness, you'll inspire your students to continue with their practice of meditation.

Create your own script

Use or modify this script to introduce the higher states of consciousness.

SCRIPT: INTRODUCTION TO THE HIGHER STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS

In today's class, we will discuss the 7 different states of consciousness recognized in the Vedic tradition and how you can begin to unfold them fully in your daily life through regular meditation.

The content of today's class may feel challenging. But you don't have to immediately understand everything I say in order to experience higher levels of consciousness. They will unfold naturally with regular meditation.

Everything in creation is evolving. This is the nature of life. Some things appear to be moving very slowly, others much faster. Now that you are practicing meditation, you have started to really accelerate the process.

There are 7 different levels of consciousness, each with its own physiological functioning and quality of experience. Some of these you experience regularly in your daily life, some you may have glimpsed, and others may be completely new to you.

Today's class will give you a good overall understanding of these levels of consciousness—helping you recognize the different experiences as they appear in your own life.

Knowledge and experience go hand in hand; knowledge without direct experience is just an intellectual exercise. Experience without adequate understanding can sometimes create confusion and doubt. Now that you are cultivating a regular meditation practice, you are having new experiences—and today, you will gain the knowledge to go along with them.

Although we refer to these as “higher states” of consciousness, they are really our true state of consciousness—our birthright. What most people experience in their daily lives, and what society has accepted as normal, is just a fraction of what we are capable of experiencing. Today, you will get a vision of what is possible.

What is consciousness?

Use or modify this script to describe consciousness.

SCRIPT: WHAT IS CONSCIOUSNESS?

But before we can learn about higher states of consciousness, we must first ask, “What is consciousness?”

Consciousness is awareness, spirit, or soul.

Consciousness is the source of all experience—including our thoughts, emotions, perceptions, and sensations.

Consciousness is that in which experience occurs.

Consciousness is that in which experience is known.

Consciousness is that out of which all experience is made.

Our consciousness can expand from more constricted states to higher states. Since consciousness is the basis of all experience, as we move into higher levels of consciousness, all of our experiences change. This includes our thoughts, our emotions, and our perception of the world. Our biology also changes because our physical body is a modified form of consciousness.

All experiences are space-time events. Everything you perceive with your senses has a location in space and an existence in time. This is even true of thoughts and emotions.

The experiencer—the one who is having the experience—is beyond space and time. All experiences are local, or limited.

The one who is having the experience, the soul, the YOU, is nonlocal, or beyond limitations. When we slip into the space between thoughts, the Gap, we step into the field of nonlocal, pure awareness. We meet the experiencer, the soul. This is awareness not of anything in particular, but of everything in general—of pure potential.

Experiences constantly change, yet the experiencer is beyond the field of change. You are not your thoughts, mind, or body.

When the mind and body are filled with stress and fatigue, memories and desires, our lives become a distorted picture of spirit, the true reality. When—through meditation—we release the stresses, fatigue, and toxins from our mind and body, spirit shines fully in our lives. The sun is always shining—we just need to remove the clouds.

The waking, dreaming, and deep sleep states

Even before receiving their personal mantras and beginning a regular meditation practice, your students were familiar with the first 3 states of consciousness. But the wisdom of Vedanta offers perspectives on waking, dreaming, and deep sleep that your students may not have yet considered.

In this part of Class 4, you'll describe the first 3 levels of consciousness to your students.

Create your own script

Use or modify this script to introduce the first 3 states of consciousness.

SCRIPT: THE WAKING, DREAMING, AND DEEP SLEEP STATES

As we move through the states of consciousness, we realize that reality is different in different states. It is also true that no state is more “real” or “unreal” than another.

The first 3 states of consciousness are often referred to as “normal” or everyday states. But they are only considered “normal” because they are what the majority of people experience on a regular basis. With a regular meditation practice, we can not only experience these 3 states with greater awareness, but expand far beyond them.

Waking is the everyday local state of consciousness in which the world appears solid, structured, and bound by space and time. In this relatively dull state, we perceive ourselves as separate from everyone and everything.

Dreaming is a state in which there is less subject-object split, less localization of experience, and more flexibility of space-time than in the waking state. In the dream state, we experience the subtle body—mind, intellect, and ego—which ultimately projects as the physical body. We release mental and emotional stress.

Deep sleep is a profound level of beingness in which we experience no separation between ourselves and everything else. In deep sleep, we consolidate memories, our body renews itself, and our immune system is strengthened.

You have been experiencing the first 3 states of consciousness—waking, dreaming, and deep sleep—every day of your life, but as you continue your regular meditation practice, you'll begin to get glimpses of the higher states.

As you're describing the first 3 states, you may want to include these additional notes:

Waking state

- In this state, you're a spiritual being having a human experience.
- This is the dullest, most disturbed state of consciousness.
- It's an experience of external physical reality, localized through the selection of attention.
- The senses experience things as solid and structured with defined rules, impermanence, and decay.
- Localized experiences are seen as space-time events.
- Linear time, logic, and stress exist.
- This state is like a “waking dream” in which you dream of a future and past.

- You only think it's real because you are in it.
- Our spiritual journey is to “wake up” from this state.

Dreaming state

- This state predominates during the second part of the sleep period.
- In this state, the creation of a seemingly real internal world occurs—with you in it.
- Mental and emotional stress from the day is released in this state.
- The mind is rejuvenated.
- You're closer to the vibration of being—you're dimensionless.
- This state is a little more subtle—not as localized or clear as waking.
- In this state, there are mental images and vague memories over which we have no control.
- Our personality is reflected in this state—the truth comes out.
- Prophetic dreams come directly from the source when the mind is empty.

Deep sleep state

- This state predominates in the early sleep period.
- Restful sleep is one of the pillars of health.
- The body rejuvenates, releasing the day's physical stress.
- There is awareness in this state, but no thought.
- This state is a spiritual experience—being in touch with the soul, feeling peace and bliss.
- There is no subject-object split, no separation—all is in potential.
- This state takes us back to our nonlocal ground state.
- Thoughts have settled into being, returned to their source.
- Consciousness is there, but there's no awareness of “me.”
- At a deep level, we know we exist.
- It's difficult to become fully alert immediately after waking from this state.
- When we awaken, we're not exactly the same person—we have been back to our divine being.
- After awakening, we recreate our universe.
- This state is a similar experience to transcending.

The higher states of consciousness

Once your students understand the Vedic perspective on the first 3 states of consciousness, it's time to move on to the more expanded states of consciousness. These states may be a little more difficult for your students to understand, especially if they have not had much time between Class 3 and Class 4 to practice meditating on their own. When talking about the higher states of consciousness, try to relate them to experiences your students may have already had in their lives.

Create your own script

Use or modify the scripts provided below for each of the 6 talking points used to describe the higher states of consciousness.

01. Begin by talking about *Atma Darshan* and meditation.

SCRIPT: ATMA DARSHAN

Every time you meditate and slip into the Gap, you experience the fourth state of consciousness, also known as *Atma Darshan*. This is the direct experience of the soul.

The first 3 levels of consciousness are localized; they exist in space and time. *Atma Darshan*, however, is nonlocal; it exists beyond space and time. This is why you are only aware of it after you come out of it. To experience anything, it must exist in space and time.

As you continue to meditate, going back and forth from local to nonlocal awareness, the nonlocal aspect of spirit gradually begins to become established in your sleeping, dreaming, and waking states of consciousness. As this happens, new levels of consciousness start to unfold.

02. Explain that *Atma Darshan* is also known as transcendental consciousness.

SCRIPT: TRANSCENDENTAL CONSCIOUSNESS

The state of transcendental consciousness is a state of being, wherein consciousness is conscious of being conscious; we are in the field of all possibilities, synchronicity, creativity, correlation, and unpredictability. Our intentions become very powerful. We are in a state of pure connection, love, compassion, joy, goodness, and peace.

The integration of silence and infinite possibilities into waking, dreaming, and sleeping opens the door to this state of consciousness—and the other higher states.

03. Next, tell your students about cosmic consciousness.

SCRIPT: COSMIC CONSCIOUSNESS

Cosmic consciousness is the experience of witnessing awareness, which is who we are. We begin to experience this witnessing awareness in the waking, dreaming, and deep sleep states. We are in a state of grace, being taken care of by our innermost being. We are slowly detaching from the roles we play, realizing that we are the role player in the midst of all roles. We still play our roles and enjoy the performance, without being overwhelmed by the good and bad scenes.

04. Explain the next state, divine consciousness.

SCRIPT: DIVINE CONSCIOUSNESS

Divine consciousness also involves the experience of witnessing awareness in waking, dreaming, and sleeping—not only in the subject of experience, but also in all objects of experience. We begin to see everything in its most refined state, and a celestial world opens for us. We can truly feel the presence of spirit in all objects of experience—it is now recognizable in everyone and everything. We realize *Tat tvam asi*: "I am that, thou art that."

The divinity we recognized in ourselves in cosmic consciousness is now recognizable in everyone and everything. The heart fully opens, and there's a deep sense of unconditional love and compassion. The whole universe becomes like a single cell in the fully expanded heart.

05. Finally, talk about unity consciousness.

SCRIPT: UNITY CONSCIOUSNESS

Unity consciousness is the state in which we realize the ever-present witnessing awareness that we've experienced in our bodymind isn't just in all bodyminds, but is actually the same witness. There is only 1 witness, and the entire universe is a manifestation of that 1 witness; moreover, that 1 witness is us.

The memory of wholeness returns. There is only one, without separation on any level. You still function in the localized world but realize you have an individual and a universal body.

Everything is yourself in different disguises. You are in the world but not of the world. The self is fully awake within its true self. There is nothing to know, only to be. This is enlightenment.

06. Wrap up the higher states of consciousness.

SCRIPT: WRAP UP

Just by going back and forth between local and nonlocal awareness through Primordial Sound Meditation, you explore all the layers of your existence. The higher states of consciousness then unfold naturally and spontaneously.

The Sanskrit expression for this realization is *Ahum Brahmasmi*: "I am the Totality." This is achieved with regular meditation and regular activity. So, consistency is very important. You slip into nonlocal awareness in meditation and, through regular activity, integrate it into your life.

In cosmic consciousness, you experience miracles. In divine consciousness, you create miracles. And in unity consciousness, everything is miraculous.

Program summary

By now, your students have learned about the benefits of meditation, received their personal Primordial Sound Meditation mantras, practiced meditating on their own, and learned about the higher states of consciousness. They know what's possible with regular meditation, and they're inspired to grow in their practice.

The final Chopra Meditation class is an opportunity to hold a small celebration with your students. Think of it as a graduation. If teaching in person, you may want to provide refreshments for a small gathering after class.

During this time, you might encourage your students to network and share contact information with one another if they're comfortable doing so. You may also let them know how they can contact you if questions arise in the future.

Before sending your students off to continue practicing Primordial Sound Meditation, you'll want to leave them with a few closing thoughts, as well as a brief summary of what they've learned.

Create your own script

Use or modify this script to wrap up the program.

SCRIPT: COURSE SUMMARY

Meditation is a spiritual journey, of which the emergence of higher states of consciousness is a natural consequence.

Primordial Sound Meditation gives you a direct experience of your soul, who you really are, the thinker of your thoughts.

All experiences are space-time events. Everything you perceive through your senses has a location in space and an existence in time.

The experiencer, the one who is having the experience, is beyond space and time. This is why when you slip into the Gap and contact the experiencer, you are not aware of being there. All experiences are localized, but the one who is having the experience is nonlocal.

Experiences are constantly changing, but the experiencer is beyond the field of change.

You are not your thoughts, your mind, or your body. Your mind and body are the instruments that capture the nonlocal reality of the spirit and convert it into the local, space-time events of your everyday experiences.

Just as a radio traps a nonlocal radio signal, your physiology traps the nonlocal spirit. You localize the eternal possibility and make it your own reality.

SCRIPT: COURSE SUMMARY

The quality of spirit in your life is determined by the efficiency of your mind and body. As you remove stress and toxins from your system through meditation, the full value of spirit is able to shine through.

Don't waste time wondering what state of consciousness you are in—or which one someone else is in. Simply enjoy the practice and its benefits, knowing that the rest is just labels.

The main way to know if meditation is working for you is by the benefits you begin to experience in your life. Are your desires more easily fulfilled? Do you experience moments of joy for no reason? Is there more synchronicity, peace, harmony, and abundance at all levels?

In the higher states of consciousness, your desires are spontaneously fulfilled. At this level, all your desires can only be correct for you and your environment; the whole of nature is there to support you.

Remember not to judge a person's level of evolution by their actions; you can only judge anything or anyone from your own level of consciousness. Also, don't try to pretend to be something or someone you are not.

You are surrounded by infinite treasures, but because the scope of your attention is very limited, you are only aware of a fraction of them. As you evolve to glimpse higher states of consciousness, your awareness will open to the infinite storehouse of wonder and magnificence. Wherever you turn your attention, a whole new realm will open up.

Although meditation is a powerful tool for restoring balance and wholeness to your life, it is important to lead as healthy a lifestyle as is possible and comfortable for you. Learn to listen to your body, and trust the signals it sends.

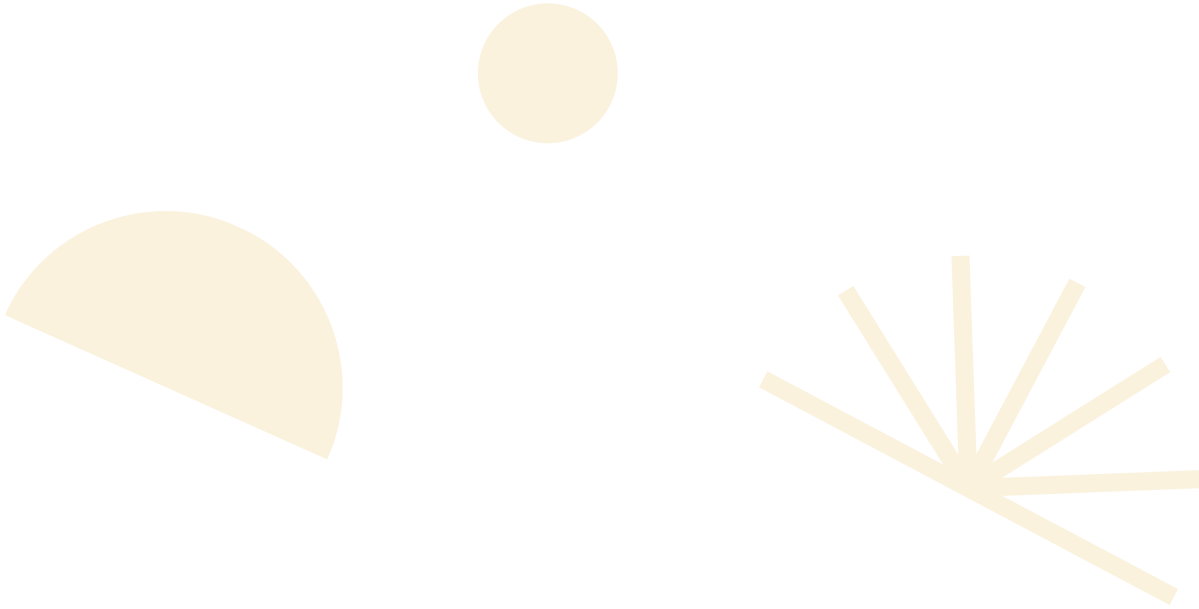
The body only has 2 signals: comfort and discomfort. Look for these signals in everything—including the food you eat, your job, your relationships, and even the car you drive. How do these things make you feel? Choose to move in the direction of greater comfort.

When we meditate regularly, we are able to define comfort from the perspective of spirit, rather than ego, and can make more evolved choices.

Now that you have this wonderful tool, it is up to you to use it. You can think, read, and talk about meditation, but unless you sit down and do it, it's unlikely you will see many of its benefits. You've made the commitment to come this far; please now make a commitment to be consistent in your practice.

Finally, remember that enlightenment means to lighten up. Don't take yourself too seriously, and please don't be too serious about your meditation. Don't make it a chore, or you'll soon stop. Do the best you can, and enjoy yourself.

Thank you for attending the course!



Q&A

Take final questions and offer to stay after class if anyone has questions they want to ask privately. Below is a quick list of commonly asked questions, as well as answers you might share.

Q: Is Primordial Sound Meditation the best meditation technique?

A: The best technique is the one that works best for you. We are happy to offer Primordial Sound Meditation as a technique that can be easily learned and practiced, and which has proven to be effective for thousands of people.

Q: When I meditate, is it possible that I will be opening myself up to negative forces or negative energies?

A: When you are meditating, you are in the safest place because when you meditate, you get in touch with yourself. You are spending time getting to know who you really are. It is like coming home to the safest place you could ever be.

What we may be interpreting as negative may simply be the temporary release of stress that appears or *feels* “negative.” This is part of the process of letting go of stress. It can be a normal part of meditation.

Q: I am not sure that I have ever slipped into the Gap during meditation. How will I know if I am experiencing the space between thoughts?

A: We’re actually slipping into the Gap all the time. Between every thought and the next, we have contact with the Gap. Remember, the Gap is an experience that exists outside space and time. Therefore, you cannot know when you are there, nor for how long—until you come out.

Worrying about whether you have slipped into the Gap holds your mind at the level of activity, which will decrease your chances of getting there. So, it’s best not to spend your time wondering whether you’ve been in the Gap. Simply practice meditation without seeking any particular experience, and let things unfold naturally.

Q: Will I need another mantra or a new mantra sometime in the future?

A: Not necessarily. Your Primordial Sound Meditation mantra is something you can use as long as you wish. There are certain advanced techniques and mantras used for specific purposes that you can look into learning at some point in the future when you are ready.

Q: What if I slip into the Gap and never come out?

A: The nature of the mind is to take us within to quieter levels, but the nature of the body is to purify itself—which will always bring us back out.

Q: In meditation, we're instructed to have an intention and take it to the level of the Gap. How do we do this, since we don't have any thoughts when in the Gap?

A: We plant the intention of a desire *before* we meditate. We then trust that the seeds have been planted and that the universe will orchestrate the fulfillment of our desires. You can write down your intentions and try to forget them before you meditate.

The faint memory of those desires will stay with you as you go to more refined levels of the thinking process. They will be planted at the finest and most powerful level—the level of the Gap. At the end of your meditation, when you are sitting quietly with your eyes closed, having stopped thinking the mantra, you can also have those desires easily in your awareness. This is still a very powerful state. Have the desires, but just let them go—let nature handle the details for you.

Q: How do we know when we are evolving? What are the indicators in our lives?

A: As we evolve, we find that our desires become fulfilled much more easily. Our actions become spontaneously right for our environment and ourselves. We start to live in balance and harmony—with ourselves and with our whole environment. Although we still have choices to make, the answers seem more obvious, more spontaneous.

We never judge our progress by the experiences we have in meditation. We judge our progress by the results we experience in our activity. When we meditate regularly, our lives become easier, happier, and healthier.

Q: When I reach unity consciousness, will I lose my individuality?

A: In unity consciousness, we still maintain our individuality but are also aware of our universality.

Q: Since I have been meditating, I seem to have a greater clarity of awareness. Sometimes I can see light or energy around people and objects, and I can hear things that I could not hear before. How is this happening?

A: As we meditate and release stress and tension, we start being able to perceive and appreciate everything at its fullest value. Refined perception is also an indication of the unfoldment of the sixth state of consciousness: divine consciousness. In this state of consciousness, we start to appreciate the nonlocal, universal quality in everything around us. We start to perceive things at a much more refined and subtle level.





Chopra Meditation Teacher's Manual

PART 4

Customizing Your Classes



Understanding your students

The classes you've learned to teach have been designed to be suitable for the widest possible array of learners. But sometimes, a new teaching situation will require you to customize the 4 core classes of the Chopra Meditation program for a specific audience.

This section of the Teacher's Manual provides approaches and techniques for teaching meditation to different groups, such as children, teenagers, and people in the workplace. You'll also learn various tips for addressing situations that can come up when people meditate. Finally, you'll look deeper into the science of meditation—and how sharing it with students can help you maximize your teaching.

When you're teaching specific groups, the first thing you'll need to know is who your students are, where they're coming from, and where they hope to go.

What to ask about your students

If you're teaching a large and diverse group, it's often best to keep things general. However, if your students share similar backgrounds, motivations, and goals, orienting your teaching style around these can facilitate greater connection between students, cultivate a better understanding of how to incorporate meditation, and—at the individual level—prompt deeper spiritual exploration.

Here are some questions to consider.

How many students will there be?

Knowing the size of the group will help you structure the class effectively. If it's a small group, you might facilitate greater interaction between students and more individualized instruction. If it's a larger group, you might allot extra time for questions.

Who is your audience?

Schoolchildren, college students, professionals, and nursing home residents usually have different ideas about what makes an engaging class, and teaching is rarely one-size-fits-all. Having some basic knowledge of your students will help you tailor the instruction to their interests and needs—as well as determining which presentation style will be most effective.

Why are they taking the class? What will they do with their new knowledge?

Knowing your students' motivations will help you decide which teaching points to emphasize, and which ones can be briefly touched upon. It may also help you set the right tone and ensure they feel as comfortable as possible.

What experience with meditation—or preconceptions about it—do they have?

It's likely that many of your students will be entirely new to Primordial Sound Meditation, or meditation in general, and they may have some erroneous ideas about it. Knowing their level of prior meditation knowledge—as well as any misplaced assumptions they may hold—can help you spend the right amount of time on the right topics, while clarifying misconceptions from the start.

What are their work, life, and relationship goals? What challenges do they face?

No matter what your students' goals are, meditation can help them get there. If you can anticipate their priorities ahead of class, you'll be more prepared to communicate meditation's role in the fulfillment of desire. Similarly, knowing what might challenge or limit your students' practice can help you set them up for success.

Why these questions matter

It's important to ask these questions because how you handle the answers will impact the effectiveness of your instruction. Having some basic information on your students can help you decide:

- How best to prepare to teach your students.
- How to time and pace the instruction.
- How to communicate the relevance of the content.
- How to engage learners and hold their attention.
- What learning guidance, cues, and prompts to offer.
- How to handle especially technical or abstract concepts.
- The type and amount of feedback and reinforcement to offer.
- The language and vocabulary to use while delivering the instruction.
- How much control can be given to learners.
- How structured to make the class.
- How collaborative to make the class.
- What media or technologies are appropriate.

How to get the information

Ask your contacts.

If you're invited to teach a class at a school, business, health care facility, or other organization, talk to the leaders. If they work with your students every day, they can probably give you an overview of their basic characteristics. And if they know your students individually, they might even have some ideas for personalizing the instruction a bit.

Read the research.

Different people learn in different ways. Whether you're teaching kindergarteners, professionals, or anyone in between, it can be worth seeking out peer-reviewed research about common characteristics and learning needs among these groups.

Send out a survey or questionnaire.

If you're preparing to teach one-on-one and it feels appropriate, you might send out an optional survey or questionnaire asking basic questions about the student's background, meditation experience, and motivations for taking the class. Explain that their answers will help you make sure they get the most they possibly can out of your class.

Observe other teachers.

If you know that another meditation instructor will soon teach students with a similar background to your students, you might ask to sit in. Note any questions, challenges, or insights that arise among these students. Consider how you might emulate this teacher—and what you'd do differently. These details may help you plan classes for a similar group. For help finding other teachers who teach students like yours, contact the Chopra Certifications team.

Additional considerations

If you have access to more detailed data, you might also consider some more specific attributes:

Demographic characteristics

These could include gender, religion, primary language, socioeconomic status, and geographic location.

Physiological characteristics

Consider sensory challenges, physical limitations, general health and environmental sensitivities.

Cognitive characteristics

Think about reading level, verbal abilities, attention span, ability to focus, learning disabilities, metacognition, and preferred learning style.

Prior knowledge

Consider your students' experience with other meditation practices, comfort with mantras and chanting, knowledge of Vedanta, familiarity with mindful awareness concepts, and prior exposure to Ayurveda and yoga.

Regardless of who you're teaching, remember that your students' needs come first. Be aware of what they need to learn, rather than what you're excited to teach.

Teaching children and teens

Sharing the practice of meditation with children and teens can benefit their physical health, emotional well-being, and relationships for years to come. It helps them develop focus, self-confidence, self-control, creativity, empathy, and present moment awareness. It provides a means of releasing stress, worry, and frustration—and experiencing feelings of relaxation and joy. At the deepest level, it helps kids discover who they really are.

Children start to show individual personality traits early in life. Yet no matter how different they are, all kids experience a need to feel worthy and loved. It's also important for them to feel a sense of personal autonomy. Meditation practice can benefit a child's sense of self-worth and personal power because it's an activity that belongs just to them.

Meditation is most beneficial for young children when they express enjoyment, nothing is forced, and it feels like fun. If given the freedom to choose, a child will view meditation as something they have control over. But meditation should never feel like a way for them to be controlled, forced to settle down, or made to “be good.”

When to teach children and teens

Others—even those growing up in homes where both parents meditate—may not feel drawn to the practice until they're in their late teens. But starting at age 6 or 7, most children who are interested in meditation will be ready for a simple technique.

In general, we teach children 10 and under to meditate using only the *bija*, or personal sound, rather than teaching them their full Primordial Sound Meditation mantra (*Om [bija] namaha*). You can have children under age 5 simply focus on their breath.



Keep it short. In general, it's suggested that children between the ages of 5 and 12 meditate 1 minute for each year of their life. For example, a 7-year-old would meditate for 7 minutes, and a 12-year-old would meditate for 12 minutes.

For support and as an example, children under 10 should have at least 1 parent or guardian in their household who meditates.

Make sure the experience feels relaxing and enjoyable, rather than like a chore. Don't ask a young child to meditate for more than a few minutes. Make it clear that if they stop enjoying the meditation, they are free to get up and go play.

Children look to their parents as role models. So, if you're teaching a child

in a one-on-one setting, encourage 1 or both of their parents to meditate as well.

It's important that kids don't feel pressured to meditate just because their parents, their teachers, or other adults want them to—if this is the case, they'll be less likely to stick with the practice and enjoy its long-term benefits. The best indication that a child is ready to start meditating is when they express their own curiosity and desire to learn.

Here are some guidelines for determining how long a teenager should meditate:

Ages 13-14
15 minutes

Ages 15-17
20 minutes

Ages 18+
30 minutes
(As adults)

When teaching children and teenagers, it's important to tailor each lesson to their individual needs—keeping the content manageable, relatable, and easy to understand.

It's also important that kids of all ages know how to listen to their body and honor its needs. If a 12-year-old needs to stop meditating after 7 minutes, that's OK. And if a 15-year-old is ready to sit for the full half-hour, that's fine too.

Special considerations for children and teens

Let them choose what to do with their eyes.

Some younger children may not want to close their eyes during meditation. You can invite them to close their eyes or keep them open—whichever they prefer.

To help cultivate attention and focus, you might invite them to look at an object or other point of interest while listening to a meditation or silently repeating a mantra. This might be something like a candle, or simply a chosen spot on the wall.

Let them move.

Many children and teens respond well to moving meditations and other mindful movement practices. Practicing present moment awareness is also great for all age groups. You might introduce kids to mindful nature walks, tai chi, or yoga.

Again, meditation is not a forced practice—let children move around if needed. Create a vibrant environment that will inspire them to continue the practice.

Offer guided meditations.

Some guided meditations are created specifically for children and teens. These include several pre-recorded meditations available in the Chopra App. And, of course, you're welcome to guide children in meditation yourself.

Whether you're sharing a recording or leading a live meditation yourself, be aware of the duration. If you're teaching a large group of kids with varying attention spans, it's often best to err on the shorter side—especially if many are new to meditation.

Teach the 7 Spiritual Laws of Success.

Teaching the Spiritual Laws to children and teens helps them to create daily affirmations and develop greater self-awareness. If you'd like in-depth guidance on teaching the Laws to children, you might choose to read Deepak's books *The Seven Spiritual Laws for Parents* or *On My Way to a Happy Life*.

Make learning in school fun.

If you're teaching in schools or other educational settings, your class may be your students' first experience with meditation. You'll want to make sure the experience is interesting, fun, and comfortable. It's also important to express the value of meditation by setting an example.

When teaching in schools, it's often advisable to use terms like "mindful relaxation" or "stress management," rather than "meditation." It can also be best to teach students a "special phrase," rather than a mantra. When working with children or teens who've never meditated before, you may simply have them follow their breath or silently repeat "*I am*".

It's fine to teach meditation in schools using the breath or the *So hum* mantra, as long as the teacher has OK'd the activity. Individual Primordial Sound Meditation mantras, however, should only be given to children with a parent or guardian's permission.

Additional resources for teaching kids

Many resources exist for teaching children and teens about meditation—including books, podcasts, YouTube videos, formal trainings, and apps. If you believe your passion is for teaching children meditation, we encourage you to explore all that's out there. You might start by reading *Just Breathe* by Mallika Chopra, reading relevant articles on Chopra.com, or exploring the Chopra app. Another good resource is *Meditating with Children* by psychologist Deborah Rozman.

Kid-friendly meditations

Try these practices to introduce children to meditation and mindful awareness in a fun, exciting way.

The Balloon

This guided meditation adds a visual component to a simple deep breathing exercise. It can be done standing or seated. Give your students instructions by using or modifying this script:

SCRIPT: THE BALLOON

Relax your body. Begin breathing deeply and slowly, in and out the nose. Start taking a slow, deep breath to fill your belly up with air—as if you’re trying to blow up a big balloon.

Expand your belly as much as you can.

Slowly let the air out of the balloon, through the nose, as you release the breath from the belly.

Encourage the kids to feel their entire body relax each time they exhale—as they slowly release air from the balloon. You can hiss like a deflating balloon to encourage them to slow down the exhale even more. Continue for several minutes.

If you’re teaching an especially young group of children, you might add fun details to keep them engaged. Young kids, especially those under age 6, love extra movement when they’re learning to develop breath awareness. Encourage them to stand in a relaxed way, then use or modify this script:

SCRIPT: BALLOON BREATHING

Think of your favorite color. Is it red? Blue? Yellow? Picture a GIANT balloon of that color in your mind!

[Blow a raspberry to imitate the sound of a balloon losing its air.] Oh, no—it looks like your balloon has lost all its air! Let’s fix it!

Breathe in deeply and slowly through your nose. In... in... in. Fill up your tummy with air, like you’re trying to blow up your balloon. Make it giant! Reach your arms up, and stretch them out as your balloon gets bigger.

It looks like your balloon is full! Now, hold your breath. When I pop your balloon, let all the air out and fall down! [Now you can “pop” their balloon by pointing to their belly. This will probably elicit lots of giggles—and heightened awareness of their breath.]

Guided relaxation

This practice is based on the progressive muscle relaxation technique developed by physician Edmund Jacobson in the 1920s. This technique alleviates tension through the sequenced tightening and relaxing of specific muscle groups. Use or modify this script to lead kids in a guided relaxation:

SCRIPT: GUIDED RELAXATION

Sit down or lie down comfortably and close your eyes. You can use pillows or blankets to make yourself as comfortable as you can be.

Take a few deep, cleansing breaths as you begin to relax.

Bring all of your attention to your right foot, noticing how it feels. Squeeze the right foot, making a fist with your entire right foot and all 5 toes; tighten and squeeze it tightly. Hold this tightness for 2 deep breaths.

Now, release all tightness in the right foot suddenly. Relax it completely, and notice the tightness release. You may feel a tingling sensation in the foot.

Take a deep breath in, and then move on...

Move your attention to your left foot, noticing how it feels. Squeeze the left foot, making a fist with your entire left foot and all 5 toes; tighten and squeeze it tightly. Hold this tightness for 2 deep breaths.

Now, release all tightness in the left foot suddenly. Relax it completely, and notice the tightness release.

[Move slowly up and around the body, squeezing 1 body part at a time to create tightness, immediately followed by release and ease. Follow each part with a deep, cleansing breath.]

As you lead your students in the guided relaxation exercise, you might follow a progression like this:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 01 Right foot, left foot | 09 Entire lower body, from the tummy down |
| 02 Right ankle and calf, left ankle and calf | 10 Chest and heart |
| 03 Right knee, left knee | 11 Right arm, left arm |
| 04 Right thigh, left thigh | 12 Right hand, left hand |
| 05 All feet and legs | 13 Shoulders |
| 06 Hips | 14 Neck |
| 07 Backside | 15 Face |
| 08 Belly | 16 Whole body at once [do this twice] |

When you've finished guiding the children through the relaxation technique, make sure they spend at least a few minutes in quiet. Encourage them to keep their breathing slow and steady.

Teaching the Chopra Meditation classes to children

If you're teaching the full, 4-part Chopra Meditation course to children, you'll want to present the content in an age-appropriate way. Here are some guidelines for teaching each class to different age ranges:

Class 1: Introduction to Chopra Meditation

AGES 5-9

Keep it simple. Explain that meditation helps keep you healthy and happy. Talk about the activities the child enjoys, and tell them meditation will make them even more fun. Use or modify this script:

SCRIPT: CLASS 1, AGES 5-9

I'm going to give you a special word that will help you feel relaxation, peace, and comfort. This word is called a *mantra*. It doesn't mean anything. It is the sound the universe was making when you were born. This word is just for you and should be kept quiet. So, it's important not to share your special word with anyone except your parents. It's a secret!

Explain that they will sit down, close their eyes, and think this word silently to themselves for a few minutes in the morning after they wake up, and again in the afternoon when they get home from school. Ask if they think they can do this. Then, offer to teach them how.

It's OK to tell the parent their child's mantra so they can remind the child if they forget.

AGES 10-12

Discuss stress and how it affects the mind and body. Explain that meditation helps keep the mind-body system healthy. Talk to the child about where and when they feel stress or tension in their body. Briefly explain the mind-body connection. Tell them that we practice meditation to be happy and healthy. Explain some of meditation's benefits in terms they can relate to—for example, it can give them energy, help them focus on schoolwork, and help them play sports better.

When working with children around this age, you may draw on characters from movies and books, as well as historical figures, to tell stories about the value of meditation, expanded awareness, and a peaceful, quiet mind. You might also inspire them by mentioning successful, well-known people who practice meditation.

Class 2: Personal Mantra Instruction

AGES 5-9

Explain that you're going to recite a chant and tell them their special word, and then meditate together for a few minutes. Follow the standard meditation instruction procedure, but modify the language if necessary to make sure the child understands your directions. Children younger than 10 should only be instructed in the *bija*, or personal sound, of the mantra. Write down the mantra and tell them to keep it in a safe place in case they need to look at it again.

After the meditation, tell them they did a great job. You might give them a small token—such as a rock, poem, or special coin—by which to remember their experience, anchoring them to the memory of learning to meditate for the first time. Have them meditate on their own for their prescribed time, then come back and see you again before leaving. This will help you make sure they're fully prepared to meditate at home.

Always tell the parents how long their child should meditate and when. Share that it's a good idea for them to meditate with their child. That way, the parent can indicate when the time is up and help their child ease out of meditation.

Explain to the parents that that they can increase the meditation time by a few minutes as they get older. Encourage them to bring the child back for further instruction at age 10, when they may receive their full mantra. Make sure the parents understand that while it is fine to encourage meditation, they should never force their child.

AGES 10-12

Explain that you're going to recite a chant and tell them their special word, or mantra. Then, meditate together for a few minutes. Follow the standard meditation instruction procedure, but modify the language if necessary to make sure the child understands your directions. Instruct them in the full mantra. If this is a child who has been practicing Primordial Sound Meditation using only the *bija* sound, explain that now that they are older, they are going to learn their full mantra.

After meditation, tell them how well they did. As with younger children, you might give them a small token by which to remember their experience. After they've meditated on their own for their prescribed time, make sure they're ready before sending them home.

Always tell the parents how long their child should meditate and when, explaining that they can increase the meditation time as the child get older. Share that it's a good idea for them to meditate with their child. That way, the parents can indicate when the time is up and help their child ease out of meditation.

As with younger children, make sure the parents know not to force their child into an unwanted meditation.



Class 3: Perfecting the Practice

AGES 5-9

This class should take place the day after the Personal Mantra Instruction. Remind the child to think their special word very gently, sitting quietly with their eyes closed. Explain that it's OK to have other thoughts, but they can gently come back to the special word. Check their pronunciation. Then, explain that there are 4 experiences they can have in meditation: repeating the mantra, lots of thoughts, the Gap, or sleep. You can explain the Gap as just silence, or a quiet mind without any thoughts.

Tell them each experience is correct—there's no such thing as a bad meditation. Encourage them not to jump up too quickly after meditation.

Ask the child about their meditation experience. Use questions like:

- What did you notice?
- Did the time seem short or long?
- Did you meditate in the morning and afternoon?

Encourage the child to keep a regular and consistent meditation practice. Use stories and metaphors to discuss the experiences they may have as they continue to meditate. Share that meditation can help them to:

- Have new ideas and thoughts they've never had before, which can help them solve problems better.
- Feel happier with who they are.
- Have more energy when playing.
- Focus better when learning.
- Feel more thankful.
- Feel more love and joy.

End this class with the group meditation. Remember that students this age will focus only on their *bija*, not the entire "*Om [bija] namaha*" sequence.

AGES 10-12

This class should take place the day after the Personal Mantra Instruction. Make sure the child feels comfortable with everything in their meditation, and ask about their experience so far. As with younger children, remind them to think the mantra very gently and that it's OK to have other thoughts—but to always come back to the mantra.

Check their pronunciation of the mantra. As with younger children, explain that there are 4 experiences they can have in meditation: repeating the mantra, lots of thoughts, the Gap, or sleep. Explain that the Gap is a silent mind. Tell them each experience is correct—there's no such thing as a bad meditation. Ask if they've had any of these experiences during their meditations. Encourage them to come out of meditation slowly.

Ask them questions about their meditation like, *What did you notice? Did the time seem short or long? Did you meditate in the morning and afternoon?* As with the 5-9 age group, encourage them to keep a regular and consistent meditation practice. To ensure comfort for them as they continue on their personal journey in

meditation, use stories and metaphors to discuss the experiences they may have as they progress in their practice.

Share that meditation can help them to:

- Get what they want or need with less effort.
- Be more creative and have new ideas.
- Feel more confident and comfortable with who they are.
- Enjoy more energy.
- Focus better when studying and doing other activities.
- Feel more love and gratitude—and the desire to express these feelings.
- Experience life becoming more effortless and joyful.

These children won't always meditate with their parents, so you can also share some of the other information—such as where to meditate, how to sit, or how to keep time. End this class with the group meditation.

Class 4: Higher States of Consciousness

AGES 5-9

With young children, you may explain that although everything looks different, it is all connected. You might use the example of their 2 hands, which seem separate but are really just parts of their single, complete body.

This is also an opportunity to talk about the love your students have for other children, animals, and nature.

AGES 10-12

For children in this age group, you may touch broadly on the higher states of consciousness. Explain that although everything looks different, it is all connected. You might say, "As we continue to meditate regularly, we learn to understand ourselves better. We also recognize that everyone is connected in some way. We start to see that there are miracles all around us, and we feel love for the whole of creation."

You might use the example of your students' 2 hands to illustrate the interconnectedness of all things. This is also an opportunity to talk about the love they have for other children, animals, and nature.

End this class with the group meditation. Students this age will focus only on their *bija*, not the entire "Om [*bija*] *namaha*" sequence.

Teaching the Chopra Meditation classes to teens

Teenagers can join adults in the regular Chopra Meditation program. Spend a few extra minutes with them during or after the instruction to answer any questions they may have. Or if you're teaching a group of just teenagers, you may modify some of the material accordingly.

During the Chopra Meditation course, you may choose to introduce a very simple and modified version of the 7 Spiritual Laws of Success. This part of the teachings can also be reserved for a follow-up meeting.



When teaching the laws to teenagers, explain that they're 7 simple sayings or principles that can have a profound impact on their lives. Describe them like this:

- 01 Everything is possible. (The Law of Pure Potentiality)
- 02 If you want to get something, give something. (The Law of Giving)
- 03 When you make a choice, you change the future. (The Law of *Karma*)
- 04 Go with the flow. (The Law of Least Effort)
- 05 Every time you wish or want, you plant a seed. (The Law of Intention and Desire)
- 06 Enjoy the journey. (The Law of Detachment)
- 07 You are here for a reason. (The Law of *Dharma*/Purpose)

For more on sharing the laws with children and teens, read Deepak's book *The Seven Spiritual Laws for Parents*.

Teaching people in the workplace

It's no secret that stress thrives in the workplace. Meditation's stress-relieving benefits make it an obvious choice for employers seeking to provide their employees with a calmer environment. But meditation also leads to heightened vitality, creativity, and compassion. Together, these attributes can lead to better collaboration, greater compassion, and heightened productivity in the workplace.

Offering to lead a simple *So hum* meditation is a good way to introduce workers to meditation. Then, for those interested in going further, you might offer more detailed instruction in Primordial Sound Meditation. Let's look at some ways to get student buy-in when teaching meditation in the workplace.

Make it relevant.

When teaching meditation to people in the workplace, you can make the class especially relevant by highlighting 7 ways meditation can help employees prevent burnout, feel happier, and experience greater fulfillment at work.

Ideally, employees should attend the meditation classes voluntarily, not as a requirement.

Use or modify the 7-part script below to explain meditation's value in the workplace. You may want to customize 2 versions of the script: 1 for presenting to management teams and another for teaching employees.

01. Meditation reduces stress.

SCRIPT: STRESS REDUCTION

Research shows that people with higher natural levels of mindful awareness feel less stressed, anxious, and depressed—but more joyful, inspired, hopeful, content, grateful, vital, and satisfied with life. Studies have also linked mindfulness training to greater neural activity in brain regions believed to promote self-awareness and emotional regulation.

Deep states of rest prompt the brain to release dopamine, serotonin, oxytocin, and endorphins. These neurotransmitters are linked to different aspects of happiness, and meditation choreographs their simultaneous release. So by meditating, you choose bliss over stress.

02. Meditation cultivates harmonious relationships.

SCRIPT: HARMONIOUS RELATIONSHIPS

Meditation cultivates healthy relationships. When you feel balanced and centered, it's much easier to be present with clients or co-workers—really listening to their needs. It's also easier to respond to conflicts with awareness and compassion—rather than reacting in an unproductive, hurtful way.

Being present and aware can benefit every relationship, in the workplace and outside it. As you meditate regularly, you will develop witnessing awareness—the ability to calmly observe a situation, notice your triggers, and choose the right response.

03. Meditation sharpens the mind.

SCRIPT: MEDITATION FOR THE MIND

Meditation will help you tap into your brain's incredible ability to learn and adapt. While scientists used to believe that beyond a certain age, the brain couldn't change or grow, we now know about neuroplasticity—the brain's ability to grow new neurons and transform throughout our lives.

According to a growing body of research, meditation is a powerful tool for awakening new neural connections and even transforming regions of the brain. By meditating, you can tap into your brain's deepest potential to focus, learn, and adapt. And eventually, you'll accomplish more with effortless ease.



04. Meditation improves focus and concentration.

SCRIPT: FOCUS AND CONCENTRATION

Neuroscientists have discovered that the conscious brain cannot multitask. Meditation helps us train our brain to stay focused on the task at hand, rather than letting our attention be pulled away by every passing thought and distraction. Research shows that focused, concentrative meditation practices can increase one's ability to maintain steady attention on a chosen object, whereas open awareness meditation practices can increase one's ability to flexibly monitor and redirect attention. This focused yet flexible attention makes us more productive and less stressed.

05. Meditation enhances creativity.

SCRIPT: CREATIVITY

Meditation is a powerful practice for journeying beyond conditioned thought patterns into a state of expanded awareness. We connect to the field of infinite possibilities—of pure potentiality—and open to new insights, intuition, and ideas.

Meditation helps you achieve a flow state: you do less and accomplish more. You aren't burdened by the past or worried about the future—you're flowing in the eternal now. This higher state of consciousness is the birthplace of all creativity; the mind is open to fresh perspectives, receptive to new ideas, and prepared to receive flashes of insight.

06. Meditation promotes relaxation and restful sleep.

SCRIPT: RELAXATION AND SLEEP

Many of us live in a state of chronic sleep deprivation, which makes it difficult for us to be our most balanced, creative, and inspired selves at work. And in the long term, lack of sleep is associated with poorer health outcomes and diminished longevity. Meditation brings the mind and body into a state of deep rest, relaxation, and restoration. It brings our body back into balance, which is the optimal state for healing and repair.

07. Meditation improves health and vitality.

SCRIPT: HEALTH AND VITALITY

When we're feeling healthy and energetic, it is much easier to stay focused and meet the daily demands of work. Meditation is now recognized as a healing tool with numerous benefits for the mind-body system. It helps your body release stress, reverse fight-or-flight damage, and improve healing processes. Studies have even shown that mindfulness training, such as meditation practice, can change the brain and immune system in a way that may bolster resistance to disease. And in addition to meditation's many physiological healing benefits, the deep state of rest it produces triggers the brain to release neurotransmitters that enhance feelings of well-being, focus, and equanimity.

Work-friendly meditations

If you're teaching busy professionals with hectic schedules, they may be reluctant to set aside time to meditate. Encourage them to squeeze in their practice wherever it fits—even in the office—by reminding them that meditation can be done anytime, anywhere. You might share a few simple meditation techniques which can easily be practiced between meetings or on a lunch break.

Many adults who haven't meditated before may be uncomfortable sitting in a traditional meditation posture or closing their eyes during meditation. Make sure your students know they won't have to adopt a difficult meditation posture—it's OK to meditate sitting comfortably in a chair. If they feel the need, they can open their eyes, look around, and then close them again when they feel comfortable.

Use or modify these 5 scripts to introduce meditation in the workplace:

So hum mantra meditation

SCRIPT: SO HUM MANTRA MEDITATION

Close your eyes and take a few deep, cleansing breaths. Breathing naturally, have awareness of the breath.

Now we'll introduce the mantra *So hum*. As you inhale, silently repeat the word *So*; as you exhale, silently repeat the word *hum*. Just a faint awareness of *So* as you breathe in and *hum* as you breathe out.

Continue breathing slowly and aligning the mantra to your breath. Be careful not to rush your breath if you notice the mantra speeding up. Each time you notice your mind wandering, simply draw your attention back to the breath and the mantra.

When your time is up, gently release your repetition of the mantra, taking a moment to sit quietly before opening your eyes.



Body awareness meditation

SCRIPT: BODY AWARENESS MEDITATION

Close your eyes. Place 1 hand on your belly and the other on your chest, breathing in and out naturally. Observe the belly and the chest moving in response to the breath.

Notice how you feel. Spend about 2 minutes here.

Place your hands gently on your lap or beside you. Bring your awareness to your feet. Hold it there. Now start to work your way up your legs, observing without judging.

Continue up the back and to the shoulders. Notice any places of tension or discomfort. Take a deep breath and visualize any tension leaving the body. Do this as many times as needed.

Go down each arm all the way, sensing the tips of your fingers.

Continue going up the back of the neck and to the top of the head.

Move your awareness to your face—sensing your eyes, nose, cheeks, and lips. Allow any tension to dissolve.

Gently shift your awareness down your chest and into your stomach, becoming aware of your organs—especially the heart, most often felt energetically in the middle of your chest. Take deep breaths as needed.

Now start to become aware of the body as a whole for the remaining few minutes.

Slowly open your eyes and notice any changes in how you feel.

4-7-8 breathing meditation

SCRIPT: 4-7-8 BREATHING

Close your eyes and take a few deep, cleansing breaths.

Press the tip of your tongue to the roof of your mouth, just behind your top teeth. Keep your mouth slightly open. Exhale until you reach the bottom of the breath.

Close your mouth and inhale through the nose for 4 counts. Hold your breath for 7 counts. Exhale through the mouth for 8 counts, keeping the tongue in place.

Repeat 4 times. Eventually, you can work your way up to 8 complete breaths.

If you feel dizzy while performing this exercise, stop for a moment. You may then ease your way back into it, slowly and gently.

Mindful eating meditation

SCRIPT: MINDFUL EATING

The next time you have lunch, rather than rushing through each bite, take time to savor your food. Notice the colors and aromas. Bring awareness to the sensations of chewing and swallowing. You'll naturally start to eat more slowly and notice the signals of your body telling you you've eaten enough. In addition, eating when you're relaxed—rather than stressed out or distracted—may benefit your digestion, helping you fully assimilate the nutrients of your meal. Focus on being fully present as you eat and engage in conversation with those around you. This practice of mindful eating will help you reset and stay focused for the second half of your day.

Walking meditation

SCRIPT: WALKING MEDITATION

Get outside for a refreshing walk. This is a chance to go deep within yourself, let go of stress, and replenish your energy. As you walk, bring awareness to your stride and your body's motions. Notice how the earth feels underneath your feet—you might even remove your shoes. Look around you. Notice the sight, smell, and sound of everything around you—trees, flowers, leaves, sky, dirt, birds, squirrels, and anything else that calls to your senses. Nature has the power to calm the mind and relax the body. Any time you can devote to walking outside is well worth it.

Special considerations

As a certified instructor, you'll get to share the gifts of meditation with people of diverse life histories and backgrounds. Many of your students will be focused on discovering their higher purpose, grounding themselves in universal connection, or tapping into their own inner wisdom.

You may be familiar with these reasons for seeking meditation instruction—perhaps they're what brought you to the practice yourself. Sharing a similar background and goals to your students may help you connect with them on a deeper level.

But what about students who don't share your background, or who are experiencing challenges you've never known?

It's important to remember that when we embrace stillness in meditation, the practice creates powerful shifts in our mind-body physiology. As we slip into the Gap, we release stored stress and emotional pain. This is a



healing response, but it can feel intense—even overwhelming—for those who have experienced trauma or live with mental health issues.

For this reason, it's important that you be mindful of the specialized needs of specific groups—such as people with mental health conditions, veterans and active-duty military members, people living or working in prisons, people who work in health care settings, or people in recovery from addiction. Even if you aren't teaching specifically to these groups, whenever you teach, you may come across people with a history of some type of trauma.

The word *trauma* is used in different ways. In our context, we're talking about both physical and emotional trauma, which may have occurred recently or in the distant past. Physical trauma is a serious injury to the body. Emotional trauma results from an individual's experience of a distressing or disturbing life event. It can be acute, chronic, or—in the case of repetitive traumatic events—complex.

Often, both types of trauma go together, as they are both expressions of our past experiences, and sometimes a physical trauma can affect an emotional experience and vice versa. The trauma can show up differently in the body and mind—yet both can be addressed with mind-body practices.

If you don't have a background in social work, mental health, or a related field, you may not be equipped to fully serve these groups of students—and that's OK.

If you feel especially moved to teach meditation to one of these groups, you might consider pursuing additional training specific to serving that population. And, of course, you can always reach out to the Chopra Meditation Certification team directly if you need support teaching a specific group.


If you spot an opportunity for trauma-informed meditation teaching but know you aren't the person for the job, reach out to your Chopra teacher network. There may be someone better prepared to take on the class.

If you're teaching someone who you know is under a doctor's guidance for a severe or uncontrolled medical or mental health condition, it's generally a good idea to reduce the meditation time and allow extra time for follow-up afterwards. However, always make sure such students have received permission or guidance from their health practitioner before beginning this program. Additionally, make sure students understand that they should not reduce any prescribed medications without their health care provider's approval.

Teaching students with physical pain

If you are teaching meditation to someone who has experienced a physical trauma, they may be dealing with physical pain. In this situation, when one begins to meditate, they may become more aware of their pain—which can cause distress.

If a student experiences this during meditation, guide them to shorten the meditation time. You may want to recommend a breath meditation in which they bring attention to the pain without any judgment, trying to simply observe the experience and send their breath to the area of pain. If the meditation becomes overwhelming, let them know they can open their eyes and end it.



Let these students know that **it's OK** to change positions during meditation—or even cut the meditation short if they feel especially uncomfortable. You might also recommend a few minutes of gentle stretching beforehand—often, this makes for a more **comfortable meditation**.

When teaching students dealing with physical pain, be flexible with the instructions—give them permission to meditate in whatever position feels best. For example, someone with severe back pain may feel most comfortable lying down with their legs elevated. Encourage your students to find what works for them.

Because the body and mind are both expressions of our life experiences, it is common for people with physical pain to also release emotions related to the pain. It may also be release of stories that occurred at the time of their physical trauma. Meditation will help them heal at all levels.

Over time, your students may notice their response to the pain lessening. In fact, several studies show meditation can be a useful tool for reducing the experience of pain.

Teaching students with mental health conditions

Meditation is an excellent tool for promoting and maintaining good mental health, and it's been life changing for many people in this regard. As a Chopra-certified teacher, you'll have the honor of sharing this powerful practice with people of all backgrounds—including those dealing with various mental health conditions.

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, 1 in 4 U.S. adults has a diagnosable mental disorder. The National Alliance on Mental Illness also shares that 1 in 5 U.S. teens lives with a mental health condition. So, it's likely that you'll teach someone with a mental health condition at some point—whether they disclose this information to you or not. So, it's a good idea to be generally aware of the ways meditation can affect students living with mental health conditions.



Mental illness can manifest in many ways—and in varying presentations, severities, and time frames.

Sometimes, mental illness is brought on by a traumatic experience, but often it has a genetic component or otherwise emerges with no discernible trigger.



Examples of well-known psychiatric conditions include generalized anxiety and major depression, bipolar disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, schizophrenia, and eating disorders. Many people with these diagnoses may desire to learn meditation, and it can be of significant benefit to them.

That said, it's important to be aware of the unique experiences they can have while meditating. Let's look at some general considerations for teaching to groups or individuals living with severe psychiatric conditions.

Considerations for teaching students with severe psychiatric conditions

Just as meditation can bring increased awareness to sensations in the body, it can also increase awareness of thoughts in the mind. When someone has uncomfortable thoughts—or thoughts that bring guilt or shame—they can become more distressed. During meditation, thoughts may come to the surface as they are being released.

In students with certain conditions, this can sometimes trigger a panic response. Because these experiences can be overwhelming, it's important to keep your eyes on this type of student while they meditate—so you can observe any early signs of distress.

In addition to the symptoms of their specific diagnosis, people with severe mental health conditions often experience emotional traumas related to living with their illness. Each individual is different, and assessing their experiences frequently will help you guide them in their practice. When it comes down to it, the most important thing is to make sure your student feels comfortable.

Students living with a mental health diagnosis may or may not be taking medication or undergoing other treatment for their condition. While it's true that meditation can be a powerful tool for enhancing mental health, never make recommendations regarding a student's treatment plan. Avoid contradicting any guidance they've received from their doctor.

Teaching students dealing with general trauma

Now, let's consider some recommendations for teaching to people who have experienced trauma. These guidelines may be relevant to students dealing with ongoing mental health challenges, but they can also apply to those who have experienced a specific traumatic event.

People who have experienced trauma or have severe anxiety may feel uncomfortable closing their eyes during meditation. When teaching groups with trauma or mental health conditions, adjust your instruction to say, "If you are uncomfortable closing your eyes, it's OK to keep them slightly open. Simply keep a soft gaze just in front of you."

Some people with trauma may also feel uncomfortable having their back to the door. In situations where someone has been under physical threat, they may need to face the door to feel safe.

If you notice someone looking around the room or toward the doors, this may be an indication that they don't feel safe. You can open your session by saying, "If anyone is uncomfortable where you are seated, please feel free to adjust your position to feel comfortable." Or, if you notice this behavior before class begins, you might approach them ahead of time to ask them how they are doing.

If someone has a history of trauma, meditation may bring on negative experiences such as:

- An increase in pain or muscle tension, due to increased awareness of areas of the body that are holding onto the memory of trauma.
- Exacerbation of anxiety, depression, or obsessive-compulsive behaviors in response to heightened awareness of negative thoughts.
- Anxiety or panic attacks induced by the triggering of the body's survival mode as the mind and body start to relax.
- Self-judgment as their distressing thoughts worsen or they develop a stronger attachment to those thoughts.
- Feeling "spaced out" or experiencing dissociation as the memory of traumatic events arises.

When to consider other mindful awareness practices

During meditation, it isn't unusual to experience alternate realities or out-of-body experiences that can then be integrated into our common waking reality. We experience a loss of ego boundaries and are able to bring a more expansive state into our day-to-day lives. However, there are times when these experiences cannot be integrated—and can even worsen underlying conditions. For those with severe depression or symptoms of extreme withdrawal, meditation may not be appropriate.

Several psychiatric conditions can lead a person to experience *depersonalization*. In this state, they don't identify with—or are not grounded in—their body. This loss of ego boundary can be scary—or even exacerbate their condition. These students may also feel uncomfortably "spaced out" or foggy after meditating.

In addition, people with certain conditions, such as schizophrenia, sometimes have trouble integrating their experiences of alternate realities. In these situations, meditation may exacerbate their condition.



When asked to teach meditation to any group or individual who may require special considerations, be prepared to offer a simple introduction and group instruction in the *So hum* meditation practice. You can also use simple breath meditations, body awareness, or yoga to help them stay grounded in their bodies. Have them practice for a week or 2. This will help you evaluate their level of interest in and comfort with mindful awareness practices before you proceed with the Primordial Sound Meditation instruction.

Sharing the science

No matter which class you're teaching in the Primordial Sound Meditation course, there's science to back you up. Sharing the science of meditation can help you contextualize its benefits for your students and help them feel confident in the value of their practice.


In the past few decades, the field of meditation research has expanded exponentially. Researchers are eagerly studying meditation's benefits for our physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being and overall quality of life.

However, if you aren't comfortable speaking about the science, don't worry. It's best to bring in the research only to the level at which you are comfortable. If a student asks a question and you're not sure of the science behind the answer, it's OK to say, "I'm not an expert, but this is how I understand it" or "I don't know, but I can direct you toward finding more information."

One way to learn more about meditation research is to visit the [Explore the Science](#) page at [Chopra.com](#). In collaboration with biomedical scientists and clinicians, Chopra has conducted scientific research examining the effects of mind-body practices, including Primordial Sound Meditation, on health and well-being. Also available online are many peer-reviewed studies into other mantra meditation and mindful awareness practices.

Let's take a look at some Primordial Sound Meditation research done by Chopra, as well as a few other key studies and reviews.

NOTE: No matter who you're teaching, what you're saying, or what science backs it up, be mindful of your phrasing. Unless you're a doctor, clarify that you're offering information—not medical advice.



We encourage you to **continue exploring** this rapidly growing body of research. Staying up-to-date on the latest findings will help you enliven your teaching, better serve your students, and make the most of your own meditation practice.

Meditation research by Chopra

Chopra isn't just a leader in the wellness sphere. We are also an advocate for peer-reviewed research into the mechanics and benefits of meditation. Chopra has partnered with multiple universities and other research teams to complete several meditation-related studies. Let's look at a few.

Meditation and disease-associated molecular phenotypes

Study name: Meditation and vacation effects have an impact on disease-associated molecular phenotypes

Publication date: April 2013

Conducted by: The University of California San Francisco, Harvard Medical School, Mount Sinai School of Medicine, the University of California San Diego School of Medicine, The Chopra Center for Well-being

Published in: Translational Psychiatry

Summary of findings: Regular meditators showed a reduced expression of genes related to chronic inflammation, improvement in markers related to brain health, and an increase in telomerase activity, which is associated with healthier aging.

Cardiovascular and nervous system changes during meditation

Study name: Cardiovascular and nervous system changes during meditation

Publication date: October 2013

Conducted by: Scripps Translational Science Institute, The Chopra Center for Well-being, Emotiv Research Pty Ltd., Emotiv, Inc.

Published in: Frontiers in Human Neuroscience

Summary of findings: Using the Primordial Sound Meditation technique led to a statistically significant reduction in mean arterial blood pressure after a single meditation.

Self-directed biological transformation

Study name: The self-directed biological transformation initiative and well-being

Publication date: June 2016

Conducted by: Department of Family Medicine and Public Health, University of California San Diego; Department of Psychiatry, University of California San Diego; Samueli Institute; The Chopra Center for Well-being; Duke Institute for Brain Sciences, Duke University; Mount Sinai Hospital; Massachusetts General Hospital, Harvard Medical School

Published in: The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine



Summary of findings: Participating in Chopra's Perfect Health program, which includes meditation in its Ayurvedic approach to well-being, has helped lessen depression and increase mindful awareness.

Nondual awareness and spiritual awakening

Study name: Change in sense of nondual awareness and spiritual awakening in response to a multidimensional well-being program

Publication date: April 2018

Conducted by: Department of Family Medicine and Public Health, University of California San Diego; The Chopra Foundation; Mind-Body Medical Group, The Chopra Center for Wellbeing; Department of Psychiatry and Duke Institute for Brain Sciences, Duke University; Sophia University, Transformative Technology Laboratory; Department of Neurology at Harvard University and Genetics and Aging Research Unit, Harvard Medical School

Published in: The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine

Summary of findings: Participation in Chopra programs that included PSM resulted in a heightened sense of spirituality, which is associated with a better ability to cope with stress.

External meditation research

Over the last decade, thousands of studies—beyond those in which Chopra has been involved—have documented the benefits of meditation. Let's look at some studies and reviews.

Relaxation response

Study name: Relaxation response induces temporal transcriptome changes in energy metabolism, insulin secretion and inflammatory pathways

Publication date: May 2013

Conducted by: Benson-Henry Institute for Mind Body Medicine at Massachusetts General Hospital

Published in: PLoS ONE

Summary of findings: Practices that induce the relaxation response, including meditation, enhanced the expression of genes associated with energy metabolism, mitochondrial function, insulin secretion, and telomere maintenance, and reduced the expression of genes linked to inflammatory response and stress-related pathways.

Changes in inflammatory gene expression

Study name: Rapid changes in histone deacetylases and inflammatory gene expression in expert meditators

Publication date: November 2013

Conducted by: Instituto de Investigaciones Biomédicas de Barcelona; Faculty of Pharmacy, University of Barcelona; Waisman Laboratory for Brain Imaging and Behavior, University of Wisconsin–Madison; Center for Investigating Healthy Minds, University of Wisconsin-Madison; Lyon Neuroscience Research Center

Published in: Psych neuroendocrinology

Summary of findings: Compared to a control group, meditation decreased the expression of the pro-inflammatory genes RIPK2 and COX2.

Gene expression changes

Study name: What is the molecular signature of mind-body interventions? A systematic review of gene expression changes induced by meditation and related practices

Publication date: June 2017

Conducted by: Brain, Belief, and Behaviour Lab, Centre for Psychology, Behaviour, and Achievement, Faculty of Health and Life Sciences, Coventry University; Donders Institute for Brain, Cognition and Behaviour, Radboud University; Centre for Applied Biological and Exercise Sciences, Faculty of Health and Life Sciences, Coventry University; Forensic Psychiatric Centre Pompestichting; Collaborative Antwerp Psychiatric Research Institute, Antwerp University

Published in: Frontiers in Immunology

Summary of findings: Overall, the studies indicate that well-being practices, including meditation, are associated with downregulation of the inflammatory NFκB pathway. This is the opposite of the gene expression in chronic stress and suggests that these mind-body interventions may lead to a reduced risk of inflammation-related diseases.

Transcendental meditation for veterans

Study name: Transcendental meditation for veterans with post-traumatic stress

Publication date: July 2019

Conducted by: Department of Psychiatry, University of Missouri–Kansas City; Minneapolis Veterans Affairs Health Care System; University of Maine Counseling Center; Department of Psychiatry, University of Minnesota–Twin Cities

Published in: Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy

Summary of findings: Mantra meditation appears to be effective for treating PTSD and depression symptoms.

Effects of the transcendental meditation technique

Study name: Effects of the transcendental meditation technique on trait anxiety: A meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials



Publication date: May 2014

Conducted by: David W. Orme-Johnson, Vernon A. Barnes

Published in: The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine

Summary of findings: Overall, transcendental meditation practice is more effective than treatment as usual or other alternative therapies on anxiety, especially in people with high anxiety.

Cognitive and emotional control of pain and disruption

Study name: Cognitive and emotional control of pain and its disruption in chronic pain

Publication date: July 2013

Conducted by: National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine, National Institutes of Health

Published in: Nature Reviews Neuroscience

Summary of findings: Meditation has benefits on treatment of chronic pain via multiple effects on the brain, including increased control over sensory processing, decreased anticipation of pain, decreased negative emotions in response to pain, and reduced pain sensitivity.

Functional neuroanatomy of meditation

Study name: Functional neuroanatomy of meditation: A review and meta-analysis of 78 functional neuroimaging investigations

Publication date: June 2016

Conducted by: Department of Psychology, University of British Columbia; Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology, and Special Education, University of British Columbia; Integrated Program in Neuroscience, McGill University; Neuroanatomy and Connectivity Research Group, Max Planck Institute for Human Cognitive and Brain Sciences; Institut für Psychologie, Technische Universität Chemnitz

Published in: Neuroscience & Biobehavioral Reviews

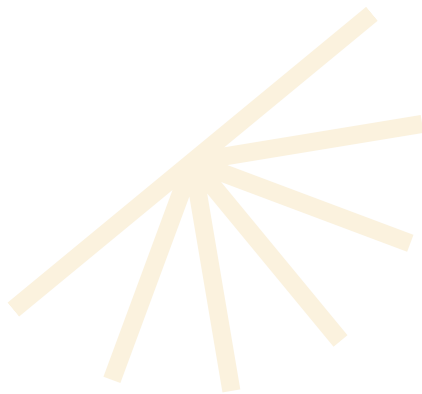
Summary of findings: Meditation leads to increased density in areas of the brain associated with memory, cognition, self-awareness, compassion, and introspection—and reduced density in areas associated with anxiety and stress.

TIP**Do your research.**

The scientific community is constantly expanding its knowledge of meditation's benefits. For further reading on the most up-to-date integrative medicine research, you may want to explore these websites:

- Google Scholar
- PubMed
- Web of Science
- Embase

NOTE: Some of these websites may require a subscription for full access.







Chopra Meditation Teacher's Manual

PART 5

The Lifelong Learner



The best teachers are lifelong learners.

Just because you're nearing completion of Chopra Meditation Certification doesn't mean it's time to stop learning—in fact, your journey as a learner has just begun. As you begin sharing the lifechanging practice of Primordial Sound Meditation with students, we encourage you to be a lifelong learner—someone who stays curious, quests after knowledge, and seeks out new skills in an ongoing, voluntary, and self-motivated way.

Keep challenging yourself and expanding your knowledge by engaging with as many Vedic texts and thinkers as possible. By studying Vedanta in depth, you'll enrich your understanding of its teachings and get more out of your meditation practice.

The *Upanishads*, the *Bhagavad Gita*, the 4 paths of yoga, and the *Yoga Sutras* are essential to the Vedic tradition. It is from them that the practice of Primordial Sound Meditation has arisen. Throughout your Meditation Certification journey, you've read bits and pieces of these ancient texts, but this is only a starting point.

You won't teach these texts in your Chopra Meditation classes—unless, perhaps, you have more advanced students who show an interest in Vedic philosophy. However, we encourage you to read them yourself—along with texts from other traditions that speak to you.

Stay open to what the teachings wish to tell you, and integrate their wisdom into your meditation practice and daily life.

Introduction to the *Upanishads*

The *Upanishads* are the most essential teachings of Vedanta. They discuss the soul, reality, and the inner meaning of life. These texts are the basis of today's meditation practices. They come from ancient dialogues between the great sages or seers, called *rishis*, and their disciples.

Originally, the *Upanishads* were considered special knowledge reserved for advanced students, who received these higher teachings directly from a Vedic scholar. In fact, *Upanishad* literally means "to sit near" or "sitting next to," reflecting how a student sits near a teacher as they learn.

The *Upanishads* place great value on self-inquiry, inviting us to contemplate life's most fundamental questions. They seek the answers not from outward sources, but through inner observation and meditation. They teach us that the highest truth resides within—helping us discover our true nature, pure consciousness.

The *Mukhya Upanishads*

Of the 108 *Upanishads*, between 10 and 13 are considered especially important. These are the oldest and most widely studied *Upanishads*—known as the *Mukhya Upanishads*. These main texts, which are found mostly in the concluding *Brahmanas* and *Aranyakas*, are considered the "main" or "principal" *Upanishads*.

For centuries, the *Upanishads* were memorized and passed on orally from generation to generation. There's no scholarly consensus on when the *Mukhya Upanishads* were composed, but they definitely predate the Common Era. Other *Upanishads* of the 108 were written between the last century of the first millennium B.C.E. and around the 15th century C.E. Newer *Upanishads* exist beyond the 108, but they are not usually referred to.

The knowledge of being

The *Upanishads* reveal to us the knowledge of the self—which is also the knowledge of all existence. Self-realization means the self knowing itself—with the "self" being awareness. So, it means awareness knowing itself as awareness, pure consciousness, and the infinite potential of all that was, is, and will ever be.

Sadvidya means "eternal knowledge." It is the knowledge of being as *satchitananda*. It also states that the unmanifest begins to manifest as vibration. The unmanifest vibrates as *shakti*, the divine feminine, to manifest all of existence—that is, to make all things known and visible. This is how *satchitananda* becomes all of existence.

Atma vidya means "knowledge of the self." It can also be called *Brahma vidya*, or universal consciousness—because *atma* and *Brahma* are one and the same.

You are the essence of all existence. You are *satchitananda*: eternal existence, pure awareness, and pure bliss. This is your fundamental reality as *atman*, the self.

The Vedic teachings on mantras

The word *mantra* is frequently found in the Vedic writings and teachings, including the *Upanishads*. It comes from the Sanskrit roots *man*, meaning "mind," and *tra*, which means "instrument." So, a mantra is an **instrument of the mind** which can take us beyond the mind, into the transcendent realm of experience.

Mantras exist in all the Vedas. They are important in rituals going back to the most ancient Vedic text, the *Rig Veda*.

Thousands of mantras exist, but some are especially powerful. For example, the *Gayatri* mantra that you learned in Meditation Enrichment is considered the "mother of all mantras." In Primordial Sound Meditation, we focus on the single mantra—among 108—that corresponds to the vibration that brought us from the nonlocal into the local.

The great mantra Om

Om is the essence of the *Upanishads*—and of ultimate reality. It is the most primordial sound revealed in the Vedas and the most important of spiritual sounds. It is first mentioned in the *Upanishads* but also appears throughout other Vedic texts. It is a part of nearly every ritual that deals with how the unmanifest becomes manifest.



Om is the sound of the self and the inner energy behind all that we do. It has many meanings: “to affirm,” “to assent,” “to ascend,” “to expand,” “to arise,” and “to transform.” The 4 components of its sound are *ah*, *oo*, *mm*, and the basic silence behind. These relate to the states of waking, dreaming, deep sleep, and transcendence.

Om refers to *atman*, the self, and *Brahman*, ultimate reality. It is the universal sound of truth, divinity, supreme spirit, the cosmic principle, and knowledge. It is also referred to as *pranava*, that which precedes sound, or *omkara*, which denotes the source of the sound. It is sometimes called *akshara*, which means "imperishable" or "immutable."

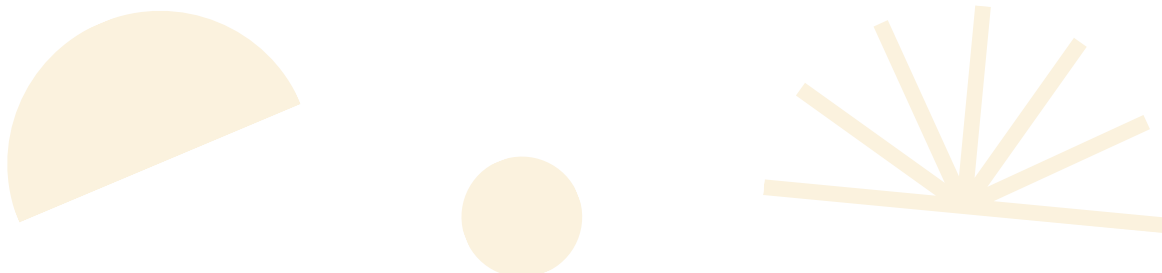
Om is an essential part of many mantras. For example, it is the first syllable in the *Gayatri* and *Shanti* mantras, as well as all 108 Primordial Sound Meditation mantras.

The symbol for Om is ॐ. This is a sacred spiritual symbol which signifies the essence of *Para Brahman*—the ultimate reality which is beyond consciousness.

Integrating the *Upanishads*

The *Upanishads* can benefit you at all levels of awareness. Here are some ways to integrate their wisdom into your daily spiritual practice:

- **Connect with the inner self through mantra meditation.** This will help you release your limiting outer knowledge and open up to infinity within and around you.
- **Learn to communicate with the inner being.** This means moving your awareness beyond mind and body, into your eternal and unchanging awareness. You're then able to approach yourself—and your students—with a sense of oneness, calling your inner being forth so you can receive and share true knowledge.
- **Learn to recognize *Brahman*, the cosmic reality behind nature.** Looking at nature, you can see an outer formation of an unlimited creative power. Shifting your awareness beyond this, you're able to feel the unlimited energy of being that exists behind the natural world surrounding us.
- **Develop your meditation as a practice of self-inquiry.** Meditation awakens your inner intelligence. By cultivating direct knowledge and the ability to see things as they are, you'll draw closer to your true nature of pure presence and consciousness.
- **Dialogue and ask questions.** Because the *Upanishads* are rooted in questioning, it's important to find other teachers with whom you can dialogue. If this isn't possible, you can at least maintain that dialogue within yourself.



Introduction to the *Bhagavad Gita*

The *Bhagavad Gita* is among the most famous texts in the Vedic tradition. It's considered the highest teaching of Vedanta, and its wisdom is available to anyone. It takes us beyond the confusion, ignorance, and despair of our limited, small self. Its teachings open us to the wisdom and expanded awareness of our true, unlimited self.

The *Bhagavad Gita* is commonly called the "Song of the Lord." It is part of the *Mahabharata*, an epic poem that tells the story of a great battle between the Pandavas and the Kauravas—2 sides of the same family.

The *Gita* recounts the pre-battle conversations that take place between Arjuna, leader of the Pandava army, and Lord Krishna, who serves as his charioteer.

Krishna also narrates the *Gita*. It is believed that the story's words emanate directly from God—and that those who follow and share its instructions will achieve liberation and enlightenment.

In the exchanges between Arjuna and Krishna, we see an overarching theme: *The divine is always present to help us when we need it.* Arjuna represents our small, unenlightened, individual self, while Krishna represents our supreme self or spirit. From Krishna's teachings, our smaller self learns the path to enlightenment.

The *Bhagavad Gita* has 18 chapters. Below, we've provided a summary of each.

Chapter 1: The Distress of Arjuna

In the first chapter of the *Gita*, Arjuna is filled with doubt and despair at the prospect of losing friends and relatives in battle. He can't decide whether he should fight or not. Overcome with grief and distress, he seeks Krishna's advice.

Chapter 2: The Way of Ultimate Reality

This chapter can be seen as a summary of the entire *Gita*. It's where Krishna begins his teachings. He instructs Arjuna in *karma yoga*, the yoga of action; *gyana yoga*, the yoga of knowledge; and the immortal nature of the soul.

Krishna explains that when we're in our *dharma* and established in our true self, our actions become pure and right. We're then able to effectively serve ourselves and humanity. According to Krishna, someone who has attained this level of wisdom is unperturbed by adversity and immune to longings for happiness. They're free from attachment, anger, and fear. This state is called *satchitananda*. It's a state of pure existence, being, awareness, and joy.

Famous verses from this chapter

- "In that which is night to all beings, the man of self-control is awake."
- "The unreal never is. The real never ceases to be."
- "The self is never born, nor does it ever die, nor having once been does it again cease to be."



- "Weapons cut it not. Fire burns it not. Water wets it not. The wind does not dry or wither it. The self cannot be cut or burned or wetted or withered. Eternal, all-pervading, unchanging, immovable, the self is the same forever."
- "On the path of yoga, no effort is ever lost, no harm is ever done."
- "Be free, O Arjuna, from the three *gunas*. Be free from duality. Be ever established in *sattva* [purity]. Be independent of possessions. Be established in the self."
- "Being established in yoga, perform your actions, casting off attachment and remaining even-minded both in success and in failure."

Chapter 3: The Way of Action

Krishna tells Arjuna that he should perform his prescribed duties without attachment to results. This, he explains, is the path of *karma yoga*. We must find our own purpose, then follow that path—even when it's hard or we make mistakes.

This chapter also discusses the importance of selfless service, or what we call *seva*. Krishna explains that when we perform actions as an offering to the divine, the divine will repay us over and over.

Famous verses from this chapter

- "He who retracts his senses with his mind and directs his organs of action to work with no feeling of attachment, he is indeed superior."
- "Do your allotted action, for action is superior to inaction."
- "By action alone, wise men attained perfection. You should perform work with a view to guiding people along the right path."
- "Better one's own *dharma* though imperfectly performed than the *dharma* of another well performed."

Chapter 4: The Way of Knowledge

Krishna explains that when we release attachment to the fruits of our actions—and to the expectations of others—our work becomes effortless. Meditation practice helps us reach and live at this level of ease.

He also emphasizes the importance of accepting a guru. Great teachers have come to us in every age, sharing the divine teachings of truth and pure wisdom—yet this knowledge has largely been lost over time.

Krishna reminds us that the deepest level of knowledge is the knowledge of who we are. Through inner reflection, we answer the questions, "*Who am I?*" and "*What do I want?*" The answers then take us wherever we need to go on our spiritual journey.

Famous verses from this chapter

- "Giving up attachment to the fruit of action, ever content and dependent on none, though engaged in work, he does no work at all."
- "There exists no purifier on earth equal to knowledge. A man who becomes perfect in yoga finds it within himself."

Chapter 5: The Way of Renouncing the Fruits of Work

Arjuna asks Krishna if “renunciation of action” or “discipline of action” is better. He wants to know if it’s better to forgo action by becoming a monk or to act in *karma yoga*. Krishna explains that while both are ways to the same goal, acting in *karma yoga* is the appropriate course for Arjuna.

Krishna also describes how by taking our awareness inward, meditation helps us release the external, commune with the self, and become free.

Famous verses from this chapter

- “A selfless man who has renounced the fruit of his action attains peace born of steadfastness. But the man who is not selfless and who is led by desire is attached to the fruit and therefore bound.”
- “He is a yogi, a happy man. Shutting out all external objects, fixing the gaze of his eyes between his brows, equalizing the outward and inward breath, controlling his senses, mind, and understanding, being ever focused on liberation, ridding himself of desire, fear, and anger, such a man is indeed always free.”

Chapter 6: The Way of Meditation

Krishna describes *dhyana yoga*, the limb of yoga dedicated to meditation. He expands on the difficulties of the mind, as well as the techniques by which mastery of the mind might be gained.

Rather than prescribing stringent rules for living, Krishna encourages us to consistently move within through regular meditation practice. This is a practical approach to achieving greater knowledge, restfulness, and serenity. Ultimately, it will lead us to higher states of consciousness.

Famous verses from this chapter

- “For the sage who wants to attain yoga, action is said to be the means, but when he has attained yoga, serenity is said to be the means.”
- “The yogi is greater than men of austerities, greater than men of knowledge, greater than men of action. Therefore, be a yogi.”
- “Supreme bliss comes to the yogi whose mind is completely tranquil and whose passions are quieted, who is free from stain and has become one with *Brahman*.”
- “With heart concentrated by yoga, viewing all things with equal regard, he beholds himself in all beings and all beings in himself.”
- “Let a man be lifted up by his own self, let him not lower himself, for he himself is his friend and he himself is his enemy.”

Chapter 7: The Way of Realization

Krishna describes the absolute reality—that is, himself as the divine—and its illusory energy, *maya*. In order to access the divine, we must step out of the *maya*—which is only possible if we trust in the divine. He explains



that although we may become distracted or deluded along the way, if we continue seeking this supreme knowledge, we will eventually reach our goal.

Famous verses from this chapter

- "I am the origin of the entire universe and also its dissolution. There exists nothing whatsoever higher than I am. All is strung on me as a row of gems on a thread."
- "Those who know me as the one that underlies all material things, all the gods and sustains all, will know me even at the hour of death."

Chapter 8: The Way to the Imperishable Brahman

Krishna talks about the knowledge of the end of ordinary reality and reunion with the divine. He discusses the importance of the last thought had before death, the differences between material and spiritual worlds, and the paths that a soul may take after death.

He explains that what brings about our birth and keeps us in the cycle of reincarnation, birth, and death is our *karma*—the memories and desires we've accumulated throughout lifetimes. He notes that the immortal soul isn't subject to this cycle—it's unmanifest and imperishable. When we reach this ultimate goal, the cycle ends.

Famous verses from this chapter

- "Whosoever at the time of death leaves his body remembering me alone and goes forth, he attains my being. For whatever object a man thinks of at the final moment when he leaves the body, that alone does he attain, being ever absorbed in the thought. Therefore, at all times, constantly remember me."
- "He who at the time of passing away, steady in mind, filled with love and armed with the strength of yoga, fixes his *prana* between his brows and meditates on the omniscient and primal being, reaches the resplendent supreme person."
- "Beyond this unmanifest, there is yet another unmanifest, eternal being who does not perish when all beings perish."

Chapter 9: The Way of the Kingly Wisdom and the Kingly Mystery

Krishna explains how his eternal energy pervades, creates, preserves, and destroys the entire universe. He explains that wherever we keep our attention in our lives is where we'll go in the future. He explains that most of us are helpless, lost in a state of delusion from the moment we're born. Illusion keeps us in the world, but selfless service is the way to emancipation. Thus, we should perform all our actions as an offering to the divine.

Famous verses from this chapter

- "At the end of the cycle, all beings enter the seed state, and at the beginning of a cycle, I generate them again."
- "Under my guidance, *maya* gives birth to all things moving and unmoving; and because of this, the world revolves."

- “Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer in sacrifice, whatever you give away and whatever you practice in the form of austerities, do it as an offering to me.”

Chapter 10: The Divine Manifestations

Krishna describes himself as the ultimate cause of all material and spiritual existence, and Arjuna accepts him as the supreme being. According to Krishna, there is nothing in which the divine doesn't exist, nor is there anything which the divine doesn't permeate.

Famous verses from this chapter

- "I am the origin of all. From me, all things evolve. The wise know this and worship me with all their heart. Solely out of compassion for them, I, dwelling in their hearts, dispel with a shining lamp of wisdom the darkness of ignorance."
- "I am the self seated in the hearts of all creatures. I am the beginning, middle, and end of all beings."
- "Whatever glorious or beautiful or mighty being exists anywhere, know that it has sprung from but a spark of my splendor."

Chapter 11: The Vision of the Universal Form (*Darsana Yoga*)

At Arjuna's request, Krishna displays his universal form—a being facing every way and emitting the radiance of a thousand suns, containing all other beings and material in existence. Receiving this vision of the whole universe, Arjuna bows in gratitude. He's just now realizing who Krishna truly is. He asks Arjuna to return to his human form so they may converse more easily.

We, too, can reach this understanding and realization of the divine. We do so by raising our level of consciousness through devoted meditation practice.

Famous verses from this chapter

- "With these eyes of yours, you cannot see me. Therefore, I give you a divine eye. Behold now my sovereign yoga power."
- "If the radiance of a thousand suns were to burst forth at once in the sky, that would be like the splendor of the mighty one."
- "There in the person of god of gods, Arjuna beheld the whole universe with its manifold divisions all gathered together in one."

Chapter 12: The Way of Divine Love

Krishna describes the process of devotional service and explains different spiritual disciplines, focusing on *bhakti yoga*. He explains that *bhakti yoga* requires only that you surrender and be devoted.

Due to its simplicity amid chaos, *bhakti yoga*—the way of divine love—is the easiest path for most people in today's world to follow.



Famous verses from this chapter

- "Fix your mind on me alone. Rest your thoughts on me alone, and in me alone you will live hereafter."
- "He by whom the world is not afflicted and whom the world cannot afflict, he who is free from joy and anger, fear and anxiety—he is dear to me."
- "He who rejoices not and hates not, who grieves not and desires not, who has renounced both good and evil and is full of devotion—he is dear to me."
- "He who is alike to foe and friend, unaltered in honor and dishonor; who is the same in cold and heat, in pleasure and pain; who is free from attachment, who is unchanged by praise and blame; who is silent, content with whatever he has, homeless, firm of mind, and full of devotion—that man is dear to me."

Chapter 13: The Discrimination Between Matter and Spirit

Krishna discusses the difference between the transient physical body and the immutable eternal soul, then clarifies the difference between individual and universal consciousness. He explains that the divine is always within us. While we should practice devotion and selfless service, what we're truly seeking is already within us. Through meditation, we may clear the mind and find this truth within our being.

Famous verses from this chapter

- "Some by meditation perceive the self in themselves through the mind, others by devotion to work, and some by devotion to knowledge. As the sun illumines the whole world, so does he who dwells in the body illumine the whole body."
- "Whatever is born, whether animate or inanimate, know that it is through the union of the field and the knower of the field."
- "He who sees the supreme lord abiding alike in all beings and not perishing when they perish, he alone sees."

Chapter 14: The Discrimination of the 3 Gunas

Krishna explains the 3 modes, or *gunas*, of material nature: *sattva*, which is goodness; *rajas*, which is passion; and *tamas*, which is ignorance. *Sattva* makes us feel happy amid grief or suffering. *Rajas* makes us act out in spite of happiness. *Tamas* eliminates discrimination and removes us from our path. When we transcend into higher states of consciousness, we go beyond these modes completely.

Famous verses from this chapter

- "Whatever form is produced in any womb, the great nature is its womb and I am the seed-giving father."
- "The three *gunas*, *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*, born of *prakriti*, bind fast in the body the immortal embodied soul."
- "*Sattva*, being stainless, is luminous and healthy; it binds by creating attachment to happiness and knowledge. *Rajas* is the essence of passion and binds fast the embodied soul by attachment to action. *Tamas* is born of ignorance and deludes all embodied creatures. It binds by lack of attention, indolence, and sleep."

- “And he who worships me with the yoga of undeviating love rises above the *gunas* and becomes fit to be one with *Brahman*.”

Chapter 15: The Way to the Supreme Self

Krishna identifies the transcendental characteristics of the divine—such as omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence. He also describes a tree, representing material existence, which has roots in the heavens and foliage on the earth. Krishna explains that this tree should be felled with the “axe of detachment,” after which one can go beyond to the supreme abode.

Famous verses from this chapter

- “Those who strive with yoga behold him dwelling in themselves, but the undisciplined and thoughtless do not perceive him even though they strive.”
- “The light that is in the sun and illumines the whole universe, the light that is in the moon and likewise in fire, know that light to be mine. Entering the earth, I sustain all beings by my energy, and becoming the moon, I nourish all plants.”
- “I am seated in the hearts of all. From me are memory and knowledge and their loss as well. It is I alone who am to be known through all the Vedas. I am the author and knower of Vedanta.”

Chapter 16: The Division of Divine and Demonic Treasures

Krishna describes the divine and demonic traits that are part of human nature. He explains that if we wish to attain the supreme destination, we must give up lust, anger, and greed. We must also discern between right and wrong action through *buddhi*—the aspect of the mind that makes wisdom possible—and the scriptures.

Famous verses from this chapter

- “The divine treasures are said to be for the purpose of liberation, while the heritage of demons is for bondage.”
- “There are two types of beings created in this world, the divine and the demonic. Men of demonic nature know not what to do and what to refrain from doing. Purity is not in them, nor good conduct and truth.”
- “Three are the gateways of this hell leading to the ruin of the self. These gateways are lust, anger, and greed. Therefore, renounce these.”
- “The man who has escaped the gates of darkness practices what is good for himself and attains the supreme goal.”

Chapter 17: The Threefold Division of Faith

Krishna discusses how we can cultivate faith by making conscious choices about the food we eat, the actions we perform, and the attitude with which we perform them. He describes how these aspects correspond to the 3 *gunas*, as well as how they lead us in 1 direction or another.



Krishna emphasizes that we should be moderate in our actions, shifting our awareness in such a way that we may live with greater love, compassion, and health.

Famous verses from this chapter

- “Men in whom *sattva* prevails worship the gods; men in whom *rajas* prevails worship demigods and demons; and men in whom *tamas* prevails worship ghosts and disembodied spirits.”
- “Food that promotes longevity, vitality, strength, health, pleasure, appetite, and that is succulent, unctuous, and agreeable is favored by people with *sattva*.”
- “Food that is excessively bitter, sour, salty, hot, acrid, dry, and burning is liked by people endowed with *rajas*.”
- “Food that is ill-cooked, tasteless, putrid, stale, unclean, and left over is favored by people with *tamas*.”

Chapter 18: The Way to Liberation Through Renunciation

Krishna sums up the conclusions of the previous 17 chapters, then explains that by abandoning all forms of *dharma* and surrendering to the divine, we may find ultimate perfection in life. He calls us to lose all desires—even the desire for liberation—and settle instead into the divine.

Finally, Arjuna says, "My delusion is gone. I have regained my memory through your grace, O Krishna. I am firm. I am free from doubt. I will act according to your word."

Famous verses from this chapter

- "Having become *Brahman*, he neither grieves nor desires. He treats alike all beings and attains supreme devotion to me. By that devotion, he knows me, knows what in truth I am and who I am. Then, having known me in truth, he forthwith enters into me and reaches by my grace the eternal and imperishable abode."
- "Even though engaged in all kinds of action, a man who has taken refuge in me reaches by my grace the eternal and imperishable abode."
- "Fix your heart on me, give your love to me, worship me, bow down before me, so shall you come to me. This is my pledge to you, for you are dear to me."
- "He who with supreme devotion to me teaches this deeply profound philosophy to those who are devoted to me shall without question come to me."

The 4 paths of yoga

Vedanta tells us that there are 5 causes of suffering:

- Not knowing who we are
- Attachment—clinging to impermanent things or having expectations
- Aversion—trying to avoid things that are not real
- Identifying with the ego and creating separate realities
- Fear of death

If we can learn and understand who we are, all 5 causes of suffering disappear. So, the true path of yoga is to discover who we are. In the Vedic tradition, there are 4 paths to this discovery:

- *Bhakti yoga*—the path of love and devotion
- *Karma yoga*—the path of action and selfless service
- *Gyana yoga*—the path of knowledge and wisdom
- *Raja yoga*—the path of meditation, mantras, and other techniques

These paths are described in the *Bhagavad Gita* and other ancient texts. Although they appear different, they complement one another.

There's ultimately just 1 yoga, and it's all about surrender to the divine. In order to fully surrender to the divine, we must remain aware and dwell in gratitude, forgiveness, and acceptance. **Let's learn about each of the 4 paths in a little more depth.**

Bhakti yoga

Bhakti yoga is the path of love and devotion. It is love for love's sake—it has no motive except to recognize the divinity in others. It involves no selfish expectations.

Because love is our true nature, there are no rigid rules to *bhakti yoga*. The power of devotion happens spontaneously, releasing us from illusions of separation as our hearts expand and surrender. *Bhakti* is simple, natural, and accessible to everyone. It helps us surrender to the divine within us.

Vedanta tells us of *prema*, a fine thread of pure love which connects our heart with the divine. This thread can never be broken—our connection to the divine is always there. Once we've surrendered to that connection, we have nothing to fear. *Bhakti* then becomes our path to enlightenment, and we're released from the karmic cycle of memories and desires.

Although *bhakti yoga* is its own path, love and devotion are also essential to the other paths.

Karma yoga

Karma yoga is the path of action and selfless service. In the context of the 4 paths, *karma* means “action” and is the path of selfless service. It involves acting without attachment to results—living with passion but being dispassionate toward outcomes.

This path is the process of achieving perfection in action. It develops our concentration and willpower, turning action into meditation. While we might not always perform an action perfectly, the most important thing is that we act based on our own *dharma*—not the expectations of others.

Karma also refers to the consequences of our past actions. Living consciously helps us to avoid future karmic ramifications. Meditation helps free us from the burden of our past actions.



The highest goal of *karma yoga* is to serve others. Selfless service is its own reward, effortlessly taking us toward enlightenment. By doing selfless service, we spontaneously begin to purify the heart. Our senses of separation and selfishness are diminished.

Gyana yoga

Gyana yoga is the path of knowledge, wisdom, and self-inquiry. It involves seeking the miracles and wonder in everyday events. It's a difficult path because it uses the mind to go beyond the mind—to realize our oneness with the divine. It's a path to enlightenment, a journey through reason, and a process of discernment.

According to Adi Shankara's philosophy of *Advaita Vedanta*, everything in the universe shares a universal soul. Consciousness flows through everything in this state of being. The ultimate spiritual aim of *gyana yoga* is to attain knowledge of this divine state—to recognize oneself in that absolute truth, the 1 essence of everything.

Discernment is the ability to dispassionately distinguish between the real and unreal. It involves purifying the mind and improving its steadiness. Eventually, liberation becomes our only desire—and the final desire we must release is our desire to be enlightened.

Raja yoga

Raja yoga is often called the “royal path.” It's the path of techniques, including meditation and mantras. Patanjali's 8 Limbs of Yoga describe this path.

Central to *raja yoga* is the premise that disturbances in the mind obscure our perception of the divine. So, if our mind can become still and pure, the self will spontaneously shine forth.

Raja yoga doesn't require blind belief or faith. Instead, on this path, we must base our beliefs on direct experience. But what matters isn't the experience itself—it's where that experience takes us. In this way, *raja yoga* is a stepping stone of experiences to expand our level of consciousness.

According to this path, if we can master our internal forces, we can master our own universe. Bringing these internal forces under our control requires constant practice and training of the mind. We must balance our sleep, diet, lifestyle, and work—finding harmony with nature's rhythms.

Raja yoga requires purity, nonjudgment, responsibility, emotional control, and spiritual maturity. It calls us to free ourselves from worries, cares, and distractions. The most powerful tool we have to reach the end stage of this path is meditation, which grants us direct experience of who we truly are. The mantras that we use in meditation are the vibration to awaken the divine within us.

As you continue on your spiritual journey, favor whichever path feels most appropriate for you—but don't neglect the others. While some practices may come more naturally to you, all are important. Remember that your sadhana, or spiritual practice, should encompass all aspects of life.

Introduction to the *Yoga Sutras*

The *Yoga Sutras* are 195 aphorisms attributed to Patanjali, a Vedic sage who lived between 400 B.C.E and 300 C.E. Patanjali's sutras are short phrases which carry the essence of a meaning. They are like keys to unlock a much greater teaching.

Patanjali adhered to the *Sankhya* philosophy, which states that knowledge is the path to liberation. The *Yoga Sutras* are a practical handbook for enlightenment based on this philosophy.

Central to the *Yoga Sutras* is the idea that we all have a spark of divine light or wisdom within us. However, for most of us, this divine light has been obscured by stress, doubts, and conditioned beliefs. The *Yoga Sutras* are a tool to help us awaken to our divine light.

The Vedas tell us that our thoughts, speech, and actions should always promote harmony. They also tell us that harmony is made and maintained through sacred ritual and yoga—through the union of mind, body, and spirit. This is what Patanjali gives us.

The *Yoga Sutras* are divided into 4 *padas*, or chapters:

- **Chapter 1:** *Samadhi Pada* focuses on the aims of yoga.
- **Chapter 2:** *Sadhana Pada* focuses on the practice of yoga and the first 5 limbs of yoga.
- **Chapter 3:** *Vibhuti Pada* focuses on the last 3 limbs and the yogic powers.
- **Chapter 4:** *Kaivalya Pada* focuses on the final goal of yoga, which is liberation and enlightenment.

The *Yoga Sutras* of Patanjali offer a beautiful path that can help us return to a state of knowingness—the awareness that who we really are is eternal love, joy, and consciousness. As you continue to meditate, you can use the teachings of the *Yoga Sutras* to guide and enrich your own spiritual journey.

Chapter 1: *Samadhi Pada*

Samadhi Pada focuses on the aims of yoga. In this chapter, Patanjali explains our essential nature.

“Yoga is the settling of the mind into silence,” he says. “When the mind has settled, we are established in our essential nature, which is unbounded consciousness.” Through meditation, we quiet and settle the mind. We then move into our essential self, transcending thought and moving into this state of unbounded consciousness. However, he tells us, “our essential nature is usually overshadowed by the activity of the mind.”

Patanjali promises that if we’re committed and consistent in our practice over time, we’ll be rewarded. “Freedom is that triumphant state of consciousness that is beyond the influence of desire,” he says. “The mind ceases to thirst for anything that is seen or heard of.” To awaken the divine light within us, he says, we must practice detachment from our personal desires.



Patanjali then introduces us to *samadhi*. This is a multi-level state of meditative absorption attained through the practice of *dharana*, focused attention, and *dhyana*, effortless meditation. He tells us that elevated states of *samadhi* come and go. When we experience them deep in meditation, they last for a short time, but we must come down to function in the world.

According to Patanjali, *Brahman* "is expressed through the sound of the sacred syllable *Om*. It should be repeated and its essence realized. Then the mind will turn inwards, and obstacles that stand in the way of progress will disappear."

Patanjali talks about the obstacles that can impede our progress toward enlightenment. He promises that "the mind becomes clear and serene when the qualities of the heart are activated." He goes on to talk about *ritambhara*, the realization of truth. In this state, everything we speak is true, and we can't say anything that's untrue. We can't create new *karma* for ourselves, because everything we do is spontaneously correct. At this level, everything we do supports our evolution.

Chapter 2: *Sadhana Pada*

Sadhana Pada focuses on the practice of yoga and the first 5 limbs of yoga. In this second chapter of the *Yoga Sutras*, Patanjali offers practical advice on moving from suffering and ignorance to liberation and enlightenment. He explains that we must practice purification, refinement, and surrender. This will help us nourish the state of *samadhi*, weaken the causes of suffering, and step out of the fear of death.

In discussing *karma*, Patanjali says, "As long as the action leaves its seed in the mind, the seed will grow, generating more births, more lives, and more action. In these two, the fruit of wrong action is sorrow. The fruit of right action is joy." He emphasizes that we must make conscious choices and take responsibility for our actions.

He states, "The self is obscured by the world in order that the reality of both may be discovered." He then explains that the growth of wisdom includes 7 stages:

- 01 The realization that our spiritual source is within us
- 02 The end of suffering
- 03 A taste of *samadhi*
- 04 The loss of external desires
- 05 Transcending the mind
- 06 The end of delusion and knowledge of the true self
- 07 Integrating pure consciousness into activity

He also describes the first 5 limbs of yoga:

- 01 **The yamas:** Correct social behavior
- 02 **The niyamas:** Correct personal behavior
- 03 **Asana:** The seat of consciousness and postures

04 Pranayama: Expansion of the life force through breathing techniques

05 Pratyahara: Turning the senses inward

Chapter 3: *Vibhuti Pada*

Vibhuti Pada discusses the last 3 limbs of yoga:

06 Dharana: Focused attention and preparation to meditate

07 Dhyana: The practice of meditation

08 Samadhi: Absorption in the state of being

It also discusses the *siddhis*, or yogic powers. *Siddhis* result from practicing *sanyama*, or coherence, which is the result of *dharana*, *dhyana*, and *samadhi* practiced together. "When *sanyama* is mastered, the light of supreme knowledge dawns," Patanjali tells us.

The *siddhis* include such powers as shrinking one's size, intuitive clarity, and mastery over the elements. Patanjali warns that these powers should never be used for material gain or selfish reasons, but only to benefit humanity and the world.

He also tells us, "Each object carries its past, present, and future qualities with it." When we delve into an object, we can release its secrets. And once we understand the laws of nature within it, we can change it. In this way, we may realize yogic powers.

Chapter 4: *Kaivalya Pada*

Kaivalya Pada focuses on the final goal of yoga, which is liberation and enlightenment. Patanjali explains that while some people are born enlightened, most must use tools and practices to awaken. These practices include meditation, which helps us release accumulated *karma* and open ourselves to higher states of consciousness.

Although teachers can help us along the way, no one can achieve enlightenment for us; we must make the spiritual journey on our own. This is what we are doing each day as we sit in the silence of meditation.





Chopra Meditation Teacher's Manual

PART 6

The Primordial Sound Meditation Mantras



Uncover the gift inside the ceremony.

The Personal Mantra Instruction ceremony is the packaging that encapsulates the mantra. It's the wrapping paper on the birthday present—calling attention and adding ritual to the gift inside. Without the packaging of the mantra instruction ceremony, your students may not grasp the value of what's inside.

The gift inside the ceremony—your student's personal mantra—is what holds the most value.

While the ceremony is a one-time experience, the mantra is the piece your students will use every day for the rest of their lives. So, even if the wrapping of the ceremony is impeccable, the gift of the mantra inside must be treated with just as much attention—if not more.

As a student of Primordial Sound Meditation, you learned that your mantra may begin to evolve throughout your meditation practice. The vibrations may change. The vowel sounds may become stretched out or shortened.

At its core, the mantra is a tool to access the space between thoughts. For students, the focus shouldn't be on reciting it perfectly every time or concentrating deeply on the way it sounds. But for the teacher, the accurate pronunciation of the student's Primordial Sound Meditation mantra is essential to providing an authentic and transformational mantra instruction experience.

But as a teacher, the accurate pronunciation of your student's Primordial Sound mantra is essential in providing the authentic and transformational experience of the mantra instruction.

Introduction to the Sanskrit language

The mantras are derived from Sanskrit sounds. You don't need to be a Sanskrit scholar to teach students their mantras, but knowing a few basics will help you get the pronunciations right.

Sanskrit is one of humankind's oldest languages—the mother of all Indo-European languages. The word *Sanskrit* comes from *sam*, meaning "good," "auspicious," or "perfect," and *krta*, meaning "created" or "perfection."

Just by reading a Sanskrit word, you'll know how to pronounce it. Similarly, you'll know how to write a Sanskrit word just from hearing it.

There is a huge significance and meaning behind every Sanskrit word. When you utter the word, it creates sound, which creates a vibration—which has power. The vibrations that arise from repeatedly saying or reading a word or mantra create balance in your mind-body physiology.

As a Primordial Sound Meditation teacher, you don't need to be able to read and translate Sanskrit into English or your native language. That could take years of intense study—and wouldn't necessarily help you teach meditation to your students.

But accurately communicating the sounds and vibrations is an important aspect of being a Chopra Meditation teacher. The first time your students hear their Primordial Sound Meditation mantra, it needs to be an accurate representation of the vibration of the universe at the date, time, and location of their birth.

While each of the 108 Primordial Sound Meditation mantras is unique, some recurring sounds appear in many of them. By understanding just a few of the common Sanskrit sounds, you'll have the foundation you need to pronounce them all.

Pronouncing Sanskrit sounds

Sanskrit is difficult to pronounce—it's like "doing yoga with your tongue." You can strengthen your tongue, though, and become comfortable with the pronunciations.

Each sound is uttered from a specific location in your mouth. It's important to utter each sound from the correct place, as the vibration from that site transfers to your physiology. Remember that the tongue takes a different position to make each of the 5 sounds:



The 5 sounds

1. Guttural
2. Palatal
3. Cerebral
4. Dental
5. Labial



It's also important to keep your mouth and tongue clean and free of *ama*. You might try practices such as oil pulling, tongue scraping, and some simple gargling.



NOTE: Many interpretations and iterations of the Sanskrit alphabet exist. For example, different sources don't always agree on how many distinct consonants and vowels exist. What matters most in your teaching practice, though, is that you correctly pronounce the sounds within the Primordial Sound Meditation mantras.

Long vowel sounds

When you utter any Sanskrit sound, you should remember its position in your mouth, its duration, and its soft or hard quality.

The Primordial Sound Meditation mantras use the vowels A, E, I, O, and U. There are short and long vowels. When pronouncing long vowels, you draw out the length of the sound.

Just as the strings on a musical instrument create harmony, the Sanskrit sounds create harmony when pronounced as they are written.

All of the Primordial Sound Meditation mantras include long vowel sounds. Long vowel sounds have a stronger resonance and vibrational quality, or *shakti*, and they better represent the Sanskrit sounds in translation.

The 5 long vowel sounds present in the Primordial Sound Meditation mantras are:

TRANSLITERATION	PHONETIC EQUIVALENT	AS IN...
ā	aa	father
ī	ee	deep
ū	oo	mood
e	ay	cave
o	o	open

When you're reading a mantra and you see a vowel, use the long vowel sound.

NOTE: A macron (ˉ) is the straight line that appears above some letters to indicate a long vowel sound. It's a standard tool in transliterating words of Sanskrit origin to more modern languages.

The anusvara

In the 108 mantras, you'll notice that every *bija* ends in an **ṁ**. The dot over the letter *M* is called an *anusvara*, which means "after sound."

The **ṁ** is not simply an *M* sound. Because of its vibratory force, it can turn any sound into a mantra.

When pronouncing **ṁ**, you draw the sound in and up. You hold the vibratory resonance, then close your lips at the end. This is a nasal sound that comes from the upper palate and nasal passages. It's the "mmm" sound we make when we say the mantra *Om*. To make this sound, we draw up the soft palate (the back part of the roof of the mouth) before closing the lips.

Cerebral and dental sounds

Sanskrit involves both *cerebral* and *dental* sounds. These pronunciations are nuanced—especially to the Western ear. Although it can be tricky to tell the difference between these sounds at first, paying attention to the location of your tongue can help you pronounce them correctly.

The cerebral sound

You'll notice that in Sanskrit, some consonants have a dot (.) underneath them. This is usually an indication that the letter should be pronounced using the *cerebral sound*.

Cerebral *T* and *D* sounds are pronounced with the tongue at the roof of the mouth, as in the English words *trip* and *drip*. The cerebral *N* also shows up in some mantras. To produce this sound, think of the dot as a reminder to enunciate through the nose, like when you pronounce the *-ng* in *sing*.

TRANSLITERATION	ENUNCIATION	AS IN...
ṭ	tongue at roof of mouth	trip
ḍ	tongue at roof of mouth	drip
ṇ	enunciated through the nose	sing

NOTE: The dot underneath the letter has a technical name, too. It's called an **underdot**.



The dental sound

When a **T** or **D** doesn't have a marking, you can pronounce it using the **dental sound**. Dental **T** and **D** sounds are pronounced with the tongue behind the teeth—think of the English words *top* and *soda*.

The dental **N** sound is pronounced with the tongue against the roof of the mouth (similarly to the cerebral **T** and **D** sounds). This is the more common English pronunciation of **N**, as used in words like *notebook*, *name*, and *nice*.

TRANSLITERATION	ENUNCIATION	AS IN...
t	tongue behind teeth	t op
d	tongue behind teeth	s d a
n	tongue at roof of mouth	n ame

Additional Sanskrit sounds

The 2 *sh-* sounds

Sanskrit has 2 *sh-* sounds. There's a subtle difference in how these sounds come out of your mouth.

In the **palatal *sh-*** sound, the lips are more pursed, as in the word *Shiva*. In the **cerebral *sh-*** sound, the tongue is flatter against your lower teeth, and your lips almost form a smile—as in *Krishna*.

Because this difference is so subtle, both transliterations are typically expressed using the English phonetic equivalent **sh-**.

SH- SOUND	TRANSLITERATION	AS IN...
<i>Palatal</i>	ś	Sh iva
<i>Cerebral</i>	ṣ	Kr sh na

Aspirated sounds

Sanskrit aspirated sounds add additional air, or an **h**- sound—like in *kha* and *gha*. There is no transliterated symbol for these, but they can be identified by the added **H** before the vowel.

ASPIRATED SOUND	AS IN...
<i>kh</i>	kh aki
<i>gh</i>	gh erkin

The transliterated C

The transliterated **C** is pronounced **ch**, as in *batch*. As you read through the mantras, any time you see the letter **C**, you'll pronounce it as **ch**.

TRANSLITERATION	PHONETIC EQUIVALENT	AS IN...
C	ch	bat ch

The mantras

Why are there 108 mantras?

If you've ever used a string of *mala* beads during meditation, you may have already experienced the significance of the number 108. There are 108 main *marma* points, or intersections of *prana* in the body. In the Sanskrit language, there are 54 letters, each with a masculine and feminine association, for a total of—you guessed it—108.

In Vedic numerology,

- 1 represents the universe;
- 0 represents the Gap you experience during meditation; and
- 8 represents the infinity of time.

108 is also important in Vedic astrology, which recognizes 27 constellations of the moon. Each of these is further separated into 4 quarters—totaling 108 astrological divisions of the zodiac. Each of the 108 parts of the lunar cycle is associated with a universal *sound* and *vibration*—giving way to the 108 Primordial Sound Meditation mantras.



The structure of the mantras

In Sanskrit, the term for "primordial sound" is *pranava*. This word also means "prior vibration" or "universal vibration."

Pranava refers primarily to the mantra *Om*. This is because *Om* is the **cosmic *pranava***—the primordial sound behind all primordial sounds. It's the basis of the vibration within consciousness itself, which both sustains and transcends the universe.

Your Primordial Sound Meditation mantra is your personal *pranava*. Whereas *Om* embodies the vibratory power of the universe as a whole, your personal primordial sound is specifically attuned to you and your singular essence. It connects you to the inner guru and the universal intelligence.

Your primordial sound reflects itself through *nada*—the inner sound of the subtle body. The inner sounds of the subtle body connect us to the universal sound—the cosmic vibration.

Pranava is also a manifestation of *prana*—the life force energy. The power of your mantra is related to the energetics of the sounds involved.

Sounds project *prana*. They have certain capacities to help our energy focus, expand, contract, ground, and ascend. Your primordial sound makes your mind a mirror and helps you achieve *ekagra chitta*, or "one-pointed mind"—the unified state reached in meditation. By unifying the mind, the Primordial Sound Meditation mantras energize awareness.

The Primordial Sound Meditation Mantras are **complete mantras**. This means they take our awareness from universality to individuality and then reconnect us with the unmanifest—or timeless—aspect of life. They emerge from silence, explore all the activity of creation, and then take us back home again.

Each of the 108 Primordial Sound Meditation mantras is comprised of 3 parts representing this journey.

<i>Om</i>	<i>[personal sound]</i>	<i>namaha</i>
<i>Om</i> is the universal sound of creation, which represents the collective sound of all the vibrations in the universe. When we repeat our mantra, we start from this fully expanded, unbounded level.	The <i>bija</i> —or seed—is the middle part of the Primordial Sound Meditation mantra. It's a placeholder for the the personal sound that was given to each of us based on the vibration of the universe at the time and place of our birth.	<i>Namaha</i> represents the true self, expressed as all the infinite aspects of creation, then curves back within itself to the unmanifest.

More on the *bija*

All Primordial Sound Meditation mantras begin with *Om* and end with *namaha*. The *bija*—or seed—is in the middle. It's the part of the mantra that expresses your student's individuality. It's an important tool which leads to one-pointedness, singularity, and inner transformation.

Your student's *bija* is their own unique signature in the domain of primordial sound. It is their personal power connection to:

- **Pranava**—the divine word or cosmic creative vibration.
- **Prakasha**—your reflection, ray, or light.
- **Prana**—your portion or energy of the cosmic breath and divine light.
- **Purusha**—your portion or connection of the divine self-awareness or self-being.

As your student repeats their mantra, the vibration will gradually carry their awareness deeper into the mind—eventually reaching the *samskaras*, or karmic patterns. Here, the light of the mantra can illumine even the deepest, darkest portions of the mind—releasing any blocked energy within it.

A regular Primordial Sound Meditation practice is one of the best tools for psychological healing. It releases the mental energy and *prana* trapped within, helping dissolve negative emotional patterns—even those forgotten by the conscious mind. It does not require that we analyze the unconscious, relive our traumas, or dig up old memories.

The Primordial Sound Meditation mantra brings peace and harmony to the mind so that negative patterns have no place to develop or remain.

Pronouncing the mantras

Use the list in the coming pages to practice pronouncing the 108 Primordial Sound Meditation mantras. You can consult the list again whenever you're preparing to present a student's personal mantra.

The list includes Sanskrit letters that have been transliterated into the Roman alphabet. This transliterated Sanskrit is precise to allow for correct pronunciation. But to make it a little easier for you, an American English phonetic equivalent has also been provided beneath each transliteration.

DISCLAIMER: Please honor the sacred nature of these sounds and teachings by keeping this information private for your own personal use and teaching purposes. See Chopra's Terms of Use for more details.



No.	Transliterated mantra	Phonetic equivalent
001	om cūṁ namaha	(choom)
002	om ceṁ namaha	(chaym)
003	om coṁ namaha	(chome)
004	om lām namaha	(laam)
005	om līm namaha	(leem)
006	om lūṁ namaha	(loom)
007	om leṁ namaha	(laym)
008	om loṁ namaha	(lome)
009	om ām namaha	(aam)
010	om īm namaha	(eem)
011	om ūṁ namaha	(oom)
012	om eṁ namaha	(aym)
013	om oṁ namaha	(om)
014	om vām namaha	(vaam)
015	om vīm namaha	(veem)

No.	Transliterated mantra	Phonetic equivalent
016	om vūm namaha	(voom)
017	om ver̄m namaha	(vaym)
018	om vor̄m namaha	(vome)
019	om kām namaha	(kaam)
020	om kīm namaha	(keem)
021	om kūm namaha	(koom)
022	om khām namaha	(khaam) (kh as in khaki)
023	om ṅām namaha	(ngaam) (ng as in sing)
024	om chām namaha	(tchaam) (ch as in batch)
025	om kem̄ namaha	(kaym)
026	om kom̄ namaha	(kome)
027	om hām namaha	(haam)
028	om hīm namaha	(heem)
029	om hūm namaha	(hoom)
030	om hem̄ namaha	(haym)



No.	Transliterated mantra	Phonetic equivalent
O31	om hōm namaha	(home)
O32	om ḍām namaha	(daam) (d as in drip)
O33	om ḍīm namaha	(deem) (d as in drip)
O34	om ḍūm namaha	(doom) (d as in drip)
O35	om ḍem namaha	(daym) (d as in drip)
O36	om ḍom namaha	(dome) (d as in drip)
O37	om mām namaha	(maam)
O38	om mīm namaha	(meem)
O39	om mūm namaha	(mome)
O40	om mem namaha	(maym)
O41	om mom namaha	(mome)
O42	om ṭām namaha	(taam) (t as in top)
O43	om ṭīm namaha	(teem) (t as in top)
O44	om ṭūm namaha	(toom) (t as in top)

No.	Transliterated mantra	Phonetic equivalent
045	om ṭem namaha	(taym) (t as in top)
046	om ṭom namaha	(tome) (t as in top)
047	om pām namaha	(paam)
048	om pīm namaha	(peem)
049	om pūm namaha	(poom)
050	om ṣām namaha	(shaam) (sh as in share)
051	om ṇām namaha	(naam)
052	om thām namaha	(thaam) (th as in arthouse)
053	om peṃ namaha	(paym)
054	om poṃ namaha	(pome)
055	om rām namaha	(raam)
056	om rīm namaha	(reem)
057	om rūm namaha	(room)
058	om reṃ namaha	(raym)
059	om roṃ namaha	(rome)



No.	Transliterated mantra	Phonetic equivalent
060	om tām namaha	(taam) (t as in top)
061	om tīm namaha	(teem) (t as in top)
062	om tūm namaha	(toom) (t as in top)
063	om tem namaha	(taym) (t as in top)
064	om tom namaha	(tome) (t as in top)
065	om nām namaha	(naam)
066	om nīm namaha	(neem)
067	om nūm namaha	(noom)
068	om nem namaha	(naym)
069	om nom namaha	(nome)
070	om yām namaha	(yaam)
071	om yīm namaha	(yeem)
072	om yūm namaha	(yoom)
073	om yem namaha	(yaym)

No.	Transliterated mantra	Phonetic equivalent
074	om yom̐ namaha	(yome)
075	om bām̐ namaha	(baam)
076	om bīm̐ namaha	(beem)
077	om būm̐ namaha	(boom)
078	om dhām̐ namaha	(dhaam)
079	om bhām̐ namaha	(bhaam)
080	om dhām̐ namaha	(dhaam)
081	om beṃ̐ namaha	(baym)
082	om boṃ̐ namaha	(bome)
083	om jām̐ namaha	(jaam)
084	om jīm̐ namaha	(jeem)
085	om jūm̐ namaha	(joom)
086	om jeṃ̐ namaha	(jaym)
087	om joṃ̐ namaha	(jome)
088	om ghām̐ namaha	(ghaam)



No.	Transliterated mantra	Phonetic equivalent
089	om gām namaha	(gaam)
090	om gīm namaha	(geem)
091	om gūm namaha	(goom)
092	om gem namaha	(gaym)
093	om gom namaha	(gome)
094	om sām namaha	(saam)
095	om sīm namaha	(seem)
096	om sūm namaha	(soom)
097	om sem namaha	(saym)
098	om som namaha	(soam)
099	om dām namaha	(daam) (d as in soda)
100	om dīm namaha	(deem) (d as in soda)
101	om dūm namaha	(doom) (d as in soda)
102	om śām namaha	(shaam) (sh as in ship)
103	om ñām namaha	(nyaam)

No.	Transliterated mantra	Phonetic equivalent
104	om thām namaha	(thaam) (t as in talk)
105	om deṁ namaha	(daym) (d as in soda)
106	om doṁ namaha	(dome) (d as in soda)
107	om cām namaha	(chaam)
108	om cīm namaha	(cheem)

Calculating the mantras

After you've graduated from Chopra Meditation Certification, you'll receive information on how to access Chopra's online mantra program—an easy and convenient way to calculate your students' Primordial Sound Meditation mantras. Detailed information on using and accessing the online mantra program per Chopra's Terms of Use are covered in the next chapter of this manual.





Chopra Meditation Teacher's Manual

PART 7

Teacher Tools and Resources & Business Best Practices



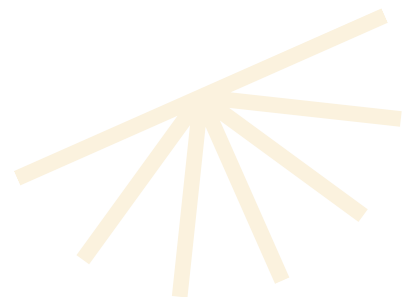
Explore your teacher resources.

The Chopra Teacher Resources Portal is a one-stop library provided exclusively to Chopra-certified instructors. As you plan your classes, organize events, and build your business, we encourage you to take advantage of this robust resource offering of information and materials.

The resources available in this portal include:

- A **bulletin board** offering the latest Chopra news, upcoming Chopra events, and certified teacher announcements.
- **Articles** on advanced Vedic philosophy, business development, marketing, best teaching practices, and more.
- **Teaching materials** including forms, slideshow presentations, sample scripts, and student handouts.
- **Marketing templates** for brochures and flyers—as well as **promotional materials** such as images, business cards, and the Certified Chopra Teacher logo.
- A **referral program** that offers you commissions and bonuses for referring guests to Chopra programs and teacher trainings—sometimes at discounted rates.
- Previously recorded **all-instructor webinars** exploring yoga, meditation, Ayurveda, marketing, and business development practices.
- **Research studies and reviews** on meditation, yoga, Ayurveda, and related topics.
- Discounted **teacher pricing** on Chopra events, programs, teacher trainings, and services.
- **Sacred chants** to elevate your consciousness, shared by Chopra educators in audio and written formats.
- **Scheduling resources** to help you plan out your classes.
- **Best practices** to help you grow your business.
- The **Online Mantra Program**, which will help you calculate your students' Primordial Sound Meditation mantras.

The information, content, and availability of the Chopra Teacher Resources Portal are subject to change.



About the Chopra Teacher Directory

The Chopra Teacher Directory connects you with students worldwide. It's where potential students can view your public profile and contact you to learn more about your business and classes. There are 2 directory membership categories to choose from:

Certified teacher	Featured teacher
Name	Name
Email address	Email address
Phone number(s)	Phone number(s)
Location(s) and map option	Location(s) and map option
Certification(s)	Certification(s)
This service is free.	Bio
	Photo gallery
	Website link
	Testimonials
	Custom URL
	@choprateachers.com email
	Teaching calendar
	File upload abilities
	Chopra events you've attended
	Increased visibility
	There is a membership fee for this service.

If you choose to participate in this public directory, please only include business-related information.



Discover and nurture the teacher within.

The path of a meditation teacher is a powerful journey of self-discovery. The world needs your special brand of teaching—and it's up to you to unleash it. By discovering and nurturing the teacher within, you may begin answering that call—and, ultimately, fulfilling your dharma.

Let's look at 7 ways to nurture the teacher within.

01. Go back to the basics.

Now is a great time to check in on your own spiritual practice. Consider whether you're truly making your *sadhana* a priority. Take a moment to ask yourself these questions:

- Am I meditating consistently?
- Am I living consciously?
- What intentions am I setting?
- Am I living in alignment with my *dharma*?
- How am I serving the world?

A strong spiritual practice is essential for any meditation teacher. As your connection to the self deepens, so will your ability to connect and share with others. You'll also gain clarity and create space for the teacher within.

02. Ask the 4 soul questions.

Include the soul questions in your meditation practice:

- Who am I?
- What do I want?
- What is my dharma or purpose in life?
- What am I grateful for?

These questions will help you tune into your core, expand your sense of purpose, and align with your true self. Release each question into the field of infinite possibilities, whether or not an answer arises. You're simply planting seeds—and the answers may spring forth in unexpected places.

03. Feed your curiosity.

You probably didn't begin meditating because you wanted to become a meditation teacher. No, your journey likely started with a spark of curiosity—about yoga, perhaps, or mindful awareness. This curiosity led to inquiry, which led to exploration and, eventually, commitment.

Don't drop this curiosity. Keep learning new things, seeking new experiences, and pushing your limits. Ask questions, explore new perspectives, and embrace uncertainty. Stay humble. Then, watch your knowledge, awareness, creativity, and teaching skills expand.

04. Believe in yourself.

It can be tempting to compare yourself to more experienced teachers, then find yourself doubting your own abilities. But while it's true that time and practice will help you find your teaching flow, you already have everything you need to be an effective meditation instructor.

Remember that no one shares your special brand of teaching—it's completely new. Instead of comparing yourself to other teachers, consider what you might learn from them, and acknowledge the strengths that you share. Trust your knowledge, experience, and training.

Regardless of how many teachers exist in your community—or even the world—there will always be room for you, your teaching, and your way of serving others. If you stay true to yourself and embrace the light you have to offer, the right students will find you.

05. Teach by example.

Even when you're not leading a formal meditation class, you can still teach by example. Consider what your students might learn from simply observing your actions. Here are some tips for setting an example they'll want to follow:

- Be humble and lighthearted.
- Express gratitude to the teachings, your teachers, and your students.
- Be regular with your own practice.
- Be willing to help and share at every opportunity.
- Let your light shine.
- Never stop learning.

As a teacher, who you *are* will have a bigger effect on people than what you say or do. You must inspire others not only through your words and actions, but by your way of being.

06. Embrace growing pains.

There may come a time when your desire to teach becomes obscured by some challenge or obstruction. The bright light of passion which motivated you to begin this journey may begin to flicker. The path ahead may become harder to see, and you may begin to forget why you chose it in the first place. But although the light may flicker, now that you have ignited it, it will never fade completely.



If, someday, you sense your passion beginning to dwindle, listen for the inner voice telling you not to give up. Be gentle with yourself, and know that what you're feeling is honest and real. Embrace this phase as preparation for your next stage of growth. Remember, the lamp turns down as the dawn arrives.

07. Look to the future.

As you transition into your teaching role, you may have unexpected obstacles and challenges. At one point or another, you may feel doubt, frustration, confusion, or overwhelm. But whenever these feelings arise, remember that the universe has your back.

Forget what happened yesterday, and embrace the field of infinite possibilities today. Lean into discomfort, knowing you'll find growth within it. Shift from fear of the unknown to excitement for what's to come.

Business best practices

Scheduling recommendations

It's generally preferable to teach the 4 Chopra Meditation classes over 3 or 4 days. However, they may be taught in as few as 2 days, or even spread out over 4 weeks. As you know, the classes may be taught in person or online.

Sample format: Teaching the Chopra Meditation classes in 2 days

This format is typically offered over a weekend.

- **Day 1:** Teach Classes 1 and 2. Lead a group meditation or ask students to meditate on their own.
- **Day 2:** Teach Classes 3 and 4, separated by a group meditation.

Sample format: Teaching the Chopra Meditation classes in 3 days

- **Day 1:** Teach Classes 1 and 2. Lead a group meditation or ask students to meditate on their own.
- **Day 2:** Teach Class 3 and lead a group meditation.
- **Day 3:** Teach Class 4 and lead a group meditation.

If you are teaching a large group using the 3-day format, it is better to schedule Classes 1 and 2 on different days.

Once you've completed Class 4, your students will look to you as their meditation guide. They may have further questions or simply want to stay connected with you. Be sure to schedule a group meditation or call with your students 3 to 4 weeks after your last class together. You might also stay connected with them through social media, email newsletters, a blog, or other means.

Pricing and payment

As an independent business, you'll set your own pricing and determine your own payment policies. Let's look at suggestions for both.

Pricing background

Pricing strategies vary widely based on factors such as instructional offerings, delivery method, audience, geographic region, and overhead costs.

We recommend that you base your pricing mostly on the value of your service, but it's a good idea to research comparable offerings that serve a similar audience.

You may choose to offer a pricing structure based on a full course or per-session rate. You might also incentivize students to purchase more sessions by offering package rates, membership options, or bundles. You may even offer different levels of service at different price points.

Keep in mind that depending on where you live, what your business structure is, and how much you are earning, you may be required to pay taxes on your earnings as a meditation teacher. We recommend contacting an accountant for detailed guidance on this.

Suggested class pricing

We recommend charging \$250 USD for the full program, which includes all 4 classes.

Potential students may inquire about discounted pricing options. It's up to you to decide whether you offer discounts or not. If you decide to offer discounts, some common ones include those for seniors, students, military personnel, children, and teens.

Payment Policies

It's important to establish a payment and cancelation policy. We recommend that you receive payment in full at least 2 weeks before your scheduled class.

If someone is unable to attend a class they've paid for, they should be able to attend the next scheduled class.

Many payment methods are available to your students, but it's often simplest to only accept a few. You might ask students to prepay through your website using a credit card or PayPal, or you might have them pay by card in person using Square or Stripe. They might even pay through an app such as Venmo, Cash App, or Zelle. Other easy payment options include Google Pay, Apple Pay, Velo, and Shopify.



The online mantra program

Once you've completed all certification requirements and become a Chopra-certified meditation teacher, you will have access to unlimited mantra calculations through Chopra's online mantra program. Information on how to access the program will be emailed to you once you have fulfilled all certification requirements.

The online mantra program is an easy-to-use, specialized resource just for Chopra-certified meditation teachers. You'll use it to calculate each student's personal mantra. This tool is meant to be used for students taking all four Primordial Sound Meditation classes from you.

Tips for teaching virtually

There's no need to let geography limit your reach. Teaching online is a great way to expand your student base and spread Primordial Sound Meditation across regions and time zones. Here are some tips for teaching online:

- Use a videoconferencing tool such as Zoom, Google Meet, or Cisco.
- Make sure your face is well-lit and your background is clean and welcoming. Dress as if you were meeting with your students in person.
- Try not to place your camera too close, too far away, too high, or too low—it's best to keep it at a comfortable distance, angled slightly downward at you.
- Encourage a sense of social presence by inviting students to ask questions, use the chat function, and keep their cameras on if they feel comfortable doing so.
- Cultivate a safe space where learners feel comfortable asking questions and communicating their needs.
- Encourage your students to create a dedicated learning space for attending their classes and group meditations—but be flexible and patient when external distractions arise.
- Be aware of time zone differences when scheduling class meetings.
- Make sure any written materials you provide are compatible with screen readers. Similarly, make sure pre-recorded videos are equipped with closed captions.
- Provide timely feedback to any students who contact you between classes—but set boundaries around when you'll respond.
- If they're comfortable doing so, encourage students to interact with one another outside of class through email, social media, or messaging apps.
- Test your tech ahead of time, especially if you plan to share your screen and audio—and always have a backup plan, just in case.

The basics of self-marketing

You've most likely chosen to become a certified meditation teacher because you want to help others experience the benefits you've experienced from Primordial Sound Meditation. But how will you find students with whom to share this gift?

You can't just set up a classroom and wait for students to show up—you've got to actively and consistently market your services. If you've never marketed yourself before, you may not know where to start. Let's explore 5 tips to set you up for self-marketing success.

01. Know thyself.

A huge part of marketing is explaining why someone needs a product or service—and why a particular option is the best choice. In this case, you are the product and service. You're really selling yourself—so it's important to *know* yourself.

Take a moment to ask yourself these questions:

- What are my values?
- What am I really good at?
- What am I *not* good at?
- What is my end goal?

The purpose of these questions is to help determine what motivates you. You may think you already know the answers, but it's still good to revisit them. Try to explore the questions a little more deeply. Once you're confident in your answers, you can start forming a vision of how you'll market yourself—what you'll shine at, what you'll need help with, and how best to express what learners will gain from your classes.

Many entrepreneurs are uncomfortable marketing themselves at first. Remember, though, that you're selling a life-changing practice that's well worth sharing. Try to recognize any limiting beliefs you hold around your abilities and the value of your classes. If it's helpful, create statements of affirmation that bolster your confidence and remind you of your strengths. Get comfortable with the idea of selling to those who know you and those who don't—and get excited about leaving your comfort zone.

Once you're clear on your motivations, embrace the Spiritual Law of Intention and Desire.

02. Get tech-savvy.

Every business needs an internet presence—including yours. Business cards and cold calls still have their place occasionally, but online marketing is an absolute must for every modern business owner.

If you're not a computer whiz, don't fret—you don't need to spend a lot of money or learn how to code. These days, it's easy, accessible, and inexpensive to create a stunning website and engaging social media presence.

03. Partner with others.

Often, business owners are great at what they do, but not so good at the business side of things. They might feel overwhelmed or bored by tasks like branding, bookkeeping, scheduling, and sales. If this sounds like you, consider outsourcing some work or delegating tasks to an assistant. And if you don't have the means to secure



outside help, maximize your productivity and creative energy by doing the least pleasant tasks first. That way, they're out of the way sooner, and you can focus your full energy on what you do best.

You can also get marketing help from your Chopra resources and teacher network. Reach out to your network for ideas, inspiration, and support. Be open to collaborating with and learning from other meditation instructors. This can help you gain insight into your own teaching, pull off bigger events than you could handle alone, make meaningful connections, and expand your audience.

04. Offer free classes.

When you're just starting out, consider offering free or reduced-rate classes to family and friends. Teaching in this sort of low-stakes environment can be great practice as you hone your skills, figuring out what does and doesn't work. Get feedback from these students, and use it to improve your future classes.

You may also find opportunities to teach for free in your community. You might even see if you can work out a mutually beneficial, nonmonetary exchange with a local business in need of your services. These actions will help you build your reputation as a teacher while benefitting the people around you.

05. Keep learning.

You've learned about the importance of being a lifelong learner. A commitment to continuing education can help you stay stimulated, motivated, curious, and informed. By deepening your study of Vedanta and staying apprised of meditation-related research developments, you'll always have something new to share with your students. You'll also avoid slipping into a state of boredom or complacency.

Consider making a simple commitment to yourself—or a few—around lifelong learning. You might start with one of these:

- I commit to learning as much as I can, for as long as I can.
- I commit to challenging my mind and expanding my awareness.
- I commit to broadening my perspectives and enriching my understanding.
- I commit to staying up to date on meditation and mindful awareness research.
- I commit to serving my students as a channel for Vedanta's ancient wisdom.

Remember that sharing Primordial Sound Meditation is—at its core—an act of service. If your teaching business exists only for your own gain, you will not find lasting fulfillment in it. But if you consistently put your students' needs first, you will find success.

At the end of each day, ask yourself, "Did I do my best today to serve my students and myself?"

Introduction to social media marketing

You can leverage social media to engage potential students, spread the word about your services, and drive traffic to your business. This is a low-cost, high-impact way to promote your website, events, classes, and products—but it must be done well. Building a social media following—and converting that following into business gains—requires time, creativity, consistency, and commitment.

When deciding which apps you'll be active on, we recommend asking yourself these questions:

- What is my purpose in using social media as a business owner?
- What social media apps do I already use, and what do I like about them?
- What apps are most popular among my target audience?
- Am I inspired and ready to engage with others on this app?
- Can I commit to consistently posting engaging content on this app?

Before launching a social media campaign, make sure you have the time and energy needed to produce consistent, high-quality content. Creating a social media account won't help your marketing efforts if you don't invest time into developing it.

General tips for using social media

- Keep your business and personal accounts separate.
- Include your business name, URL, and description in your profile or bio.
- Consistently post original, high-quality, and compelling content.
- Tell a clear message, and stay on topic.
- Be your authentic self, giving your followers a window into your life.
- Try to include a visual component in every post—video typically performs especially well.
- Occasionally repost relevant content from other accounts—just be sure to get permission and credit the creator.
- Engage with followers—respond to comments on your posts, and comment on posts you connect with too.
- Stay informed about software updates, new feature releases, and algorithm changes that may affect your post performance.
- Don't throw your wallet at paid ads just yet—research the platform and experiment a little before deciding if ads are worth the commitment.
- If you maintain a presence on multiple apps, take advantage of any cross-posting features that are available. You might also consider investing in a social media management tool to help you plan your feed, schedule posts, manage ads, and review analytics.

You don't have to be active on every single social media platform—in fact, it's better to be consistently active on one or two channels than to post irregularly to several.

Creating a website



A business without a website is invisible to most customers. Don't worry, though—creating a site doesn't take thousands of dollars or years of coding experience. *Website builders* make it easy for anyone to create a high-quality site at a low cost. Most of these services offer design templates, mobile responsiveness, search engine optimization options, and social media integration. Many also offer online store builders.

Your domain name is the part of your website's address that comes after "www." It's the URL that people will use to find your site. Choose your domain carefully—it will represent your name and business. In addition to fitting your brand, it should be short, memorable, and easy to spell.

Some website builders allow you to purchase a domain as part of the setup process, but others require you to purchase one ahead of time.

Once you've chosen your domain name and website builder, you can get to work creating your site. Most builders will walk you through the process, but if you feel especially unprepared, you might read a few articles or watch a video on the subject. And if creating a website just seems too daunting, you can always pay a company or freelancer to do it for you—just be sure to do your research before hiring someone.

Regardless of how you build your site, don't get stuck in the details or expect perfection right away. If people can find your services and connect with you, your website is doing its job.

Once your website is built, plan to update it as you have new events, services, and business developments to share. When possible, opt for "evergreen" content that will stay relevant a few weeks, months, or even years from its publication date.

The key elements of a website

Building your site should be a fun experience—a creative exploration of your personal aesthetic, voice, and storytelling power. The end result should feel authentic to your brand and values. But while individuality is welcome here, it's essential to include some key characteristics and content.

Key characteristics of a website

- **Good visual design:** It's usually best to keep it simple. Include complementary colors, easy-to-read fonts, and a sensible layout. Use logos, graphics, and images in an intentional way.
- **Intuitive navigation:** It should be easy for users to find the information they want. One way of approaching this is to try minimizing the number of clicks it takes a user to find what they're looking for.
- **Mobile responsiveness:** Make sure your website is easy to view and navigate on smartphone, tablets, and other mobile devices. Fortunately, most website builders take care of this for you.
- **Accessibility:** Do your best to make sure your site's content is accessible to as many learners as possible. For example:
 - Use high-contrast font and background colors.
 - Ensure that all written content is compatible with screen readers.
 - Make sure any videos include closed captions.

- Avoid using fonts smaller than 12px.
- Use alt text for images.
- Offer written transcripts for any audio-only content.

Key content in a website

- **Bio:** This is where you introduce yourself, your background, your credentials, and your experience. It's your chance to explain why you're the best teacher for the job. You might include this information on the site's homepage or a separate About page.
- **Social media:** Include links to your social media profiles in a prominent place on your site, such as the homepage. Even better, embed your feed directly onto the page.
- **Contact form:** This is where potential students can contact you with questions about your classes, services, products, and policies. You might also include a separate sign-up form where they can register to attend a class on a specific date.
- **Call to action:** What do you want visitors to do before they leave your site? Prompt them to sign up for your newsletter, read your blog, opt into emails, purchase a product, attend a group meditation, or register for a class.

Want your students to register for classes and purchase your services through your website? Consider a website builder which offers a secure e-commerce tool for receiving payments. If your builder doesn't allow direct integration of a sales tool into your site, you might redirect visitors to an external platform or app instead.

Outline: Teaching a standalone Introduction to Meditation class

Although all 4 Chopra Meditation classes offer immense value, it's important that you be prepared to introduce students to meditation in a more basic, general way. A modified Introduction to Meditation class may be taught as a standalone introduction to the practice. This class is appropriate for many purposes, such as:

- Speaking about meditation on a general level.
- Gauging or building interest in the full Chopra Meditation program.
- Sharing the practice with people who have never meditated before.
- Taking advantage of an impromptu teaching opportunity.
- Performing an act of service to benefit your community.

You might charge an hourly or per-session rate for this standalone class. You may occasionally choose to offer it free of charge, on a donation basis, or for a per-person fee—depending on the setting and audience. Decide how you would like these students to connect with you for more information on future offerings—ask for their contact information, have them follow your social media accounts, or invite them to sign up for a newsletter through your website.



Consult this outline as you plan to deliver this learning experience. Keep in mind that as with other classes, you may customize this lesson to suit your students' needs and interests. Plan for it to take 30-60 minutes.

01. Gathering materials

Make sure you have all the materials you need. Depending on how you'll be teaching, these may include:

- A sign-in sheet to collect student names and email addresses.
- Brochures or flyers for future classes.
- Business cards or other materials listing your website and social media details.
- Chairs.
- Tables, if needed.
- Visual aids, such as a whiteboard or flip chart.
- Writing aids, such as dry-erase markers or pens.
- Projection equipment.
- Audio equipment.
- A water station.

02. Teacher introduction

Greet your students and tell them about yourself. You might include information on:

- Your background and credentials.
- How long you've been meditating.
- What drew you to meditation.
- The benefits you've experienced from maintaining a regular meditation practice.
- Why you chose to become a Chopra-certified meditation instructor.
- How you're using your talents and special gifts to serve others.

03. Student introductions

Ask participants to introduce themselves and share:

- If they've meditated before.
- Why they are participating in today's class.
- What new knowledge or skills they hope to take home.

These questions will help you gauge the group's experience, motivations, and enthusiasm. If the group is small, have every student share. If it's large, call on just a few people.

Briefly discuss what your students have shared. Then, explain that while all meditation practices are beneficial, in this class, they'll practice the technique of silently repeating a mantra.

04. The antidote to stress

Explain what meditation is, then briefly discuss it as the antidote to stress. Be sure to address these topics:

- The fight-flight-freeze response
- The physiological effects of stress
- How stress impacts the brain
- How meditation creates restful awareness and reverses fight-flight-freeze
- How meditation works
- Thoughts and the Gap
- What a mantra is

Keep your students engaged by asking questions.

05. The basics of meditation

Review the basics of meditation:

- How to be comfortable and effortless
- When, where, and for how long to meditate
- Ways to keep time

06. Group meditation

Explain that mantras exist in many cultures and traditions. Share that in meditation, it can serve as a tool to take us from activity into silence. Introduce the *So hum* mantra.

Next, lead a meditation using the *So hum* mantra or simply following the breath. This should last 10-15 minutes. After bringing your students out of their meditation, ask what they experienced.

07. Experiences in meditation

Discuss the experiences your students may have in meditation:

- Repeating the mantra
- Thinking thoughts
- Falling asleep
- Slipping into the Gap—the silent space between thoughts

Explain that we meditate for the benefits that arise in our day-to-day lives—not for the experiences we have while meditating. Then, briefly discuss how your students may integrate meditation into their daily routines.

At this point, you may also discuss any other meditation wisdom that you wish to share. Make the instruction more personal by using your own experiences and examples.



08. Further learning opportunities

Tell your students they may use the *So hum* mantra to meditate at home. Explain that if they'd like to deepen their meditation knowledge and learn a personalized mantra, the full, 4-part Chopra Meditation program may be appropriate for them. Give a brief description of the 4 classes, and explain how interested students may sign up to study with you.

09. Class recap and conclusion

Briefly summarize the information you discussed in today's class, and answer any remaining student questions. Let the group know about any upcoming courses, free classes, workshops, and group meditations.

If time allows, provide recommendations on books, websites, and apps that have helped you in your meditation journey. You might mention the works of Deepak Chopra, the articles available at Chopra.com, and the guided meditations offered in the Chopra App.

Thank your students for coming, and tell them they can contact you if they're interested in learning more. Provide your website, email address, social media handles, and any other contact information you wish to share. If you can, remain after class in case any students wish to ask questions in private. If you don't have time or don't know an answer right away, promise to contact the student via email or another means—and be sure to follow through.

You are entering into a new relationship with your inner self, the universe, and everyone around you.

You've awakened to new possibilities that will become certainties as you meditate regularly and take the Vedic teachings to heart—cultivating a moment-by-moment awareness, infused with the mantra, that reflects your *dharma* and deepest intentions.