

The Power of Concentration

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The subject this morning: The Power of Concentration - the power of concentration.

What is concentration? Paramhansa Yogananda has said about concentration, "Concentration denotes the art of withdrawing attention from the objects of distraction and then placing that withdrawn attention on any one thing at a time."

And so you can see that the important factor in concentration is attention – withdrawing the scattered attention, and then placing that on whatever we wish to place it upon. Attention is scattered throughout the body on many things, seldom on the one thing upon which we want to learn knowledge. Attention must be controlled. Attention must be withdrawn from those objects which keep it diverted.

Now, just what does this withdrawing of the attention mean? It means this: that the attention must be controlled, because that attention is what loosens the will – directs the will – and that in turn controls Life Force in the body. This is the important point to remember about concentration. Attention plays an important part, because it is the attention that loosens the will. If you want to do something and your attention is far away there'll be no will, but when your attention is on what you do, then the will is activated, so to speak, and you apply the Life Force through the agency of will. Attention is very important, because it is that which directs the will to control Life Force.

Life Force is what? Life Force is Cosmic Energy in the body, that's all. Life Force is the Power of God in us. It is the same Life Force that we find in all of our functions, from the most gross function of bodily movement, to the finest function of thought, and emotion, and feeling – all different vibrations of what – Life Force. And so, you can see, if we can control the Life Force then we can apply the power which is behind that Life Force to do with it what we will. Attention, remember, attention is what controls will – and will is what directs Life Force.

If the attention is diffused then the concentration is weak because the Life Force is not one-pointed. If the attention is controlled then your concentration is strong, because the Life Force is one-pointed on what you want to do. It is as simple as that – and that’s why the great problem is to control that diffused attention and one-point it. Then by the power of will you can put that power, that Cosmic Energy, which is within you, on whatever you wish. Therein lies the power of concentration.

Take, for instance, a magnifying glass. We have all about us the sun’s rays, but you see, they are diffused, like our attention. But by holding the magnifying glass we gather together that diffused attention, corresponding to the rays of the sun, and we one-point it. And what’s the result? Terrific power in that one-pointed area through the magnifying glass. So our attention is diffused all throughout the body and also throughout our consciousness. We gather it together. One-point it. Then we can direct the Great Cosmic Energy within us as Life Force to do with it what we will.

Remember the illustration of the magnifying glass as that gathers together the sun’s rays which in a diffused, condition, do not, we do not feel, and notice them. But when they are gathered together, by that magnifying glass, and one-pointed, then we know about it. You’ve all been burned by a magnifying glass, no doubt. Why? Because the rays of the sun have been one-pointed. So the Life Force within us, which is nothing but the Cosmic Energy of God more or less diffused, is one-pointed by our attention, and directed by will. Those are a few simple laws of concentration.

Now, what are the enemies of concentration? Well, there are three great enemies. They are: sensation – sensations, you know, which, for instance you go to do something and some sensation hits you, or, and where is your concentration? It’s gone. So the first enemy is sensation.

The next great enemy are thoughts rising from those sensations. In your concentration may be coming along nicely, and the thought will come in – where is it? We all have those illustrations of this in meditation. Perhaps you feel the chair against your body, or somebody drops a pan out in the kitchen, oh, well there are many things - and that disturbs our concentration. So that’s another enemy.

And then things may be nice and still, and you think, “Now I’m getting along fine with my concentration in meditation.” Then will come those memory

thought. Things that happened ages ago it seems. Things which you thought you'd forgotten long ago, and which you wish would stay away. That's the third enemy.

And so remember those three enemies to your concentration: sensations, thoughts arising from sensations, and memory thoughts – deep-seated, unconscious things – deep-seated desires, things which you thought had... you had buried long ago. You had forgotten them but they don't forget you. Those are the things which interfere with our concentration.

Now, there are three great enemies, of which I have spoken. Then there are four factors of concentration. These things you must know, because if you are to concentrate, you've got to know what's going on. And the four factors are: consciousness, breath, heart, and finally, Life Force. Consciousness, breath, heart, and Life Force.

Consciousness is important, because all you or I am is a matter of consciousness. Our daily states of consciousness are the results of the different states of consciousness in which we have indulged gathered together as an entity of "so-and-so." Nothing but states of consciousness – that's what we *are*. And so, we must realize that our concentration depends on the state of consciousness in which we are as we apply the power of that concentration. For instance, one of the greatest things to remember is this: "an alert state of consciousness at the Christ Center right here [Doctor points to the place between the eyebrows] – remember that - an alert state – that means with the mind not wandering all over the place, not mixed up with thoughts and sensations and other things and worldly happenings, but concentrated here. That's the alerted consciousness at the Christ Center. That's the greatest state – why? Because when your consciousness is at that point, which you are, and which I am – a matter of consciousness, an entity of consciousness; ideas, thoughts all sorts of things – when that consciousness, that state of being is concentrated at the Christ Center, you are in tune with the Consciousness of God, and the power within you as Life Force is in tune with the Cosmic Energy of God.

Now don't you see – there is the key to concentration. Recall your diverted attention. Keep your consciousness intact – one-pointed at the Christ Center – you are in tune with the consciousness of your Father. Through your will your will becomes one with His Will, and the Life Force in you becomes one with the great reservoir of Life Force – Cosmic Energy. You surely will have sufficient power for concentration.

Now remember that about your consciousness – that’s the first factor. Keep it attuned – keep it tuned, alerted – alerted is better – keep it alerted at the Christ Center; thereby you are in tune with God’s Presence there, and also the Life Force in your body is joined, so to speak, with the Wisdom-Guided Will and Life Force of God as Cosmic Energy. God, with His Great Consciousness, using Cosmic Energy, created universe upon universe. If we unite our consciousness with His – if you, we unite our Life Force with His as Cosmic Energy, surely we will have the power to use our concentration for our daily needs, and especially to use that concentration to know God, from whence we came. So much for consciousness.

The next is breath. Breath is the most deep-seated diverter of concentration. Why? Because it is breath which ties our soul to the body. We read in the scripture, “God breathed into man the breath of life, and he became a living soul.” A Soul is living in this outward consciousness through breath. Now you can easily prove that. If you are concentrated on anything, and you concentrated and your brows are knit, and the, your going good and suddenly – uhhhhah ([Dr. takes a breath](#)) – where’s your concentration? Breath ties this soul of ours, this consciousness to the body. That diverts our attention. So breath is the deepest diverter, so to speak, the most deep-seated diverter of attention. And that’s why, through the techniques of Self-Realization, the simple techniques, the highest art of concentration, we learn – we learn to know the breathless state, and then we can keep our consciousness alerted at the Christ Center and our Life Force joined with the Cosmic Energy of God. So much for the second factor – breath.

Now the heart – oh, this heart is a, a real bad thing at times. Why? Because it pumps eighteen tons of blood a day. Imagine it! Think what Life Force that takes. Also, the heart controls sensations. It controls your senses. So you can see, if you learn through the practices of Self-Realization to slow the heart down you’re going to, to release a tremendous amount of Life Force from the sensory nerves, but also from the heart itself. And with that extra Life Force at your command you can increase your concentration tremendously. Realize now – the heart, the heart utilizes a tremendous amount of Life Force in its own action, and through its control of sensation it also utilizes a lot of Life Force. If your heart is slowed down your senses will not bother you so much, and you’ll get rid of the first enemy of concentration – sensation. And so the heart is a very important thing.

But perhaps, the greatest factor is Life Force itself. As I have said, Life Force equals the Cosmic Energy in the body. It is Life Force which causes all our functions to operate. It is Life Force we utilize in thought. It is Life Force that goes on within the involuntary nerves of which we know nothing of. Through the subconsciousness - the different functions of the body not known to will, and voluntary nerves. Those functions all operate because of Life Force. Now you can see that if we control this Life Force in all the functions of our body, from the deep-seated functions to the superficial movement of sensation and muscular movement, if we control that Life Force, being an important factor in concentration, we will immediately have within our grasp, within our hands, the power to utilize that Life Force in concentration. So Life Force, the last, fourth factor, is very important.

Now our Master has said these words, which I would like to give you at this time: "By control of Life Force in the sensory nerves," pranayama it's called - don't get alarmed or discouraged at the word. It's simply "yama," I think, means "control"; "prana" means Life Force - pranayama. "By control of Life Force," the Master says, "by proper breathing exercises and attaining of breath calmness" - by doing these two things - "one can attain great concentration."

There you have the key to concentration, the power of concentration right there. Control the Life Force by controlling the attention, withdrawing it from the sensory nerves through pranayama, and also, as he has said, in other... others of his writings: "Join your will with the wisdom-guided will of God." Do this, and then your breath will slow down and you will attain, as he says, "the breath calmness." You will not be "ahha-ahha-ahha" ([Dr. breathes hard and fast](#)) - how can you concentrate going like that, or running here and there, the mind running here and there? But by breath calmness. Then you can control the Life Force - and what's the result? Great concentration, the Master says. Calmness is very necessary, and calmness is attained by breath control.

Just think for a minute the tremendous amount of Life Force that it, will be eliminated as you practice these things of which I have spoken using even your human will. Think of the tremendous amount of Life Force - I spoke about the heart, I spoke about the sensations, I spoke about the breath, and other thing. Now just using your own human, little human will - how much power one will have.

But - and we come to the last point. The final point is this. If you want the most powerful concentration, what do you do? You use not your own little human

will. You use the full will within you, which is your human will united with God's Will. That's all it is. By doing that – by keeping your attention on God at this point (between the eyebrows) and not diffused throughout the body or throughout ordinary living conditions, and so forth, and all the troubles of this outside consciousness – if you keep your consciousness at this point, you keep it in tune with God's consciousness, therefore you unite your little human will with His Great Wisdom-Guided Will. You unite the Life Force in your body with the great Cosmic Energy. How? Because, by keeping your consciousness one with God you keep the channel open. The channel is open so that your Life Force is connected with God's Life Force – there are no obstructions. And when you concentrate – when you put your attention on anything and there are no obstructions, then you have the power of God in your concentration. Why? Because you have united your limited human will, which directs Life Force, which is the key to the power of concentration – you have united your little human will with God's Will and you are using, therefore, full will.

In your concentration whatever you do the will must not only be full and powerful, but it must be continuous will – continued will, steady will, the Master calls it. Therefore, when you concentrate on bringing about a condition in your life, the first and greatest thing is to connect your consciousness with God and also the Life Force in your body with His great Cosmic Energy. That's the first and greatest thing - then you have the power behind you. But the next and important thing is not to let up on it.

Steady will – stubbornness of will, if you want to call it that. Then the power of concentration is not interrupted and the result must surely come, because if God is with us – in concentration, why not? As well as any other condition of life – if God is with us, who can be against us? How can we fail? God is the Sole Doer.

And so finally, by uniting our own will with God's Will and our consciousness with Him – His Consciousness at the Christ Center – the channel is open – the channel is open to give us what: to give us, as I said in the beginning, "health and prosperity, through concentration, for the body, efficiency through concentration, for mind, and greatest of all, through concentration, God's Love for our Soul."