

The 12 Steps to Peace of mind

Step 1) Shift awareness from outside to inside

Step 2) Watch thoughts arise and subside as a witness, without becoming them

Step 3) Release attachment or aversion to outcomes

Step 4) Allow thoughts and feelings as they are, without resistance

Step 5) Accept “what is” with present moment, non-judgmental neutrality

Step 6) Turn attention upon itself realizing we are awareness

Step 7) Distinguish between the true Self and the created identity

Step 8) Practice compassion, disempower ego

Step 9) Replace dissonance with resonance

Step 10) Consume the highest vibrations

Step 11) Practice stillness

Step 12) Create absorption in pure awareness

Exploring the 12 Steps to Peace of Mind

Step 1) Shift awareness from outside to inside

We seek the things outside hoping for happiness inside.

Our senses are outwardly oriented. Our conditioning constantly whispers in our ear that the person, the place, the thing or the circumstance will make us happy. So, we create endless desires for the things outside expecting them to make us happy inside. Happiness is Self-arising. The thing outside can offer a temporary rush, a moment of relief, a glimpse of satisfaction, but happiness that relies upon a changing thing will be fleeting and disappoint. Happiness and peace of mind are siblings. Both reside inside.

Every day make time to sit and shift the awareness from outside to inside. Explore the inner world, release desires with attachment to outcomes and go within.

Step 2) Watch thoughts arise and subside as a witness, without becoming them

Happiness is not a thing or circumstance. It is a state of mind.

The outside world can be in disarray and tumultuous, but the mind can be at peace. The mind can be on chaos when the outside circumstances are peaceful. Peace of mind and happiness can be temporarily triggered by an outside thing - nature, love, kindness - but permanent peace and happiness remain Self-arising. Our state of mind and our state of consciousness determine our happiness and peace.

Watch the thoughts arising and subsiding. Witness them. Thoughts are an activity in consciousness, superimposed upon consciousness. Thoughts are an impulse arising from the silence of our pure awareness, a wave arising from a still ocean of consciousness. We are not the thoughts. We are the watcher of our thoughts. We are the pure consciousness, the presence, the awareness. Watch thoughts arise and subside as a witness, without becoming them.

Step 3) Release attachment or aversion to outcomes

If we attach our happiness and peace to an outcome, we will live in disappointment.

Desire attached to an outcome means we are never comfortable with “what is”. We live our life with an undefined discomfort. Life feels disappointing. We seek happiness outside through an outcome. When the outcome is thwarted, we get angry. When the outcome arrives, the joy is either short lived or we want more or other. We might rejoice but then it quickly fades when the rush eases. Acceptance allows the mind to relax and release the grasping nature of desire with attachment. Acceptance is not judging as good or bad. It is seeing “what is” in present moment, non-judgmental neutrality. Put attention on the action, not the outcome.

As we witness our thoughts, see them in the present moment, without judgment, with acceptance. Watch without analysis. Just easily be with ‘what is’. Identify a) the thought, b) the process of thinking the thought, c) and the watcher of the thought. We are the watcher, the observer of the process playing out. Release attachment or aversion to outcomes.

Step 4) Allow thoughts and feelings as they are, without resistance

Resistance is our war with “what is”.

Resistance is a stance of grasping and pushing away. It is attachment and aversion. Resistance makes the mind chaotic because the present moment can't be appreciated or accepted. The present moment is all there is. It is “what is”. When we do not accept the present moment, our mind is filled with resistance and inner battles.

Words create thoughts, thoughts create ideas and ideas create feelings. Become aware of the feelings and allow them to be ‘what is’, exactly as it is. If resistance arises, if attachment or aversion arise, watch it all play out. Accept the present feeling and remember that we are not the body, not the thoughts and not the feelings - and they are always changing. We are the witnessing consciousness. Allow thoughts and feelings as they are, without resistance.

Step 5) Accept “what is” with present moment, non-judgmental neutrality

Our resistance disallows receiving, limits flow and causes lack.

Lack is the inability to receive. Limitation is the disconnection to the intelligence and power within. Both are the outcome of resistance. Lack and limitation disrupt our natural sense of well-being by choking off our connection to the momentum of expansion. Acceptance, allowing and harmony end resistance. When resistance goes, peace of mind comes.

Become aware of any resistance within the mind. Where is our attention going? Is the attention going to the past or future? Do we wish it was different? Are desires arising? Are judgments and justifications arising? See this all as a play of the mind and witness it. No fixing or changing. Accept “what is” with present moment, non-judgmental neutrality.

Step 6) Turn attention upon itself realizing we are awareness

Awareness is our greatest power.

Consciousness is our Self, our intelligence and our power. The expansion of consciousness increases intelligence and power. It reduces the sense of fear

and separation, the main causes of negativity in the mind. This expansion of awareness is the foundation and source of permanent peace and happiness. When awareness is allowed to rest upon what is inside of us in non-judgmental, compassionate, accepting neutrality, it has the power to resolve dissonance and fear. When separation and fear are unresolved, suppressed or distracted from, they become inharmonious energies within and destroy peace of mind. The darkness of chaos and resistance dissolves in the light of awareness.

Shift attention (directed awareness) away from the thoughts and feelings and turn the awareness upon itself. Turn attention from the play of thoughts, feelings, stories and desires and turn attention upon itself realizing we are awareness. We are the one who is conscious. We are the one who is present. Awareness ends fear. Awareness is bliss that emerges as love.

Step 7) Distinguish between the true Self and the created identity

Separation is fundamental suffering on the level of Self.

In separation from our true Self, we feel unworthy, unlovable and insufficient. This is the core of human wounding and the basis of disturbance in the mind. Extreme Self-acceptance and honoring the Self begin the process of resolution. Going within and knowing the Self (pure consciousness) reveals peace, connection, power and joy.

We think we are our body, our thoughts and our feelings. We have forgotten we are consciousness. In forgetting, fear arises and fear creates separation. In separation and fear, the ego creates a false, inauthentic self, a created identity that we believe will fit in, be loved, be sufficient, be worthy, be safe and be pain free. Distinguish between the true Self and the created identity. The witness is pure consciousness, the true Self. The created image we live in is ego.

Step 8) Practice compassion, disempower ego

Personalization and egoic outlook create a self-grasping mind.

A life that is self-absorbed and all about 'me' and 'mine' locks the mind into a mode of grasping for everything. Grasping is attachment in action. A mind caught in personalization - all about 'me' - cements separation. Attachment, aversion, judgment and justification fill a mind that holds an egoic outlook. Selflessness, compassion and kindness restore peace of mind.

The grasping of desire with attachment and aversion increases ego. Compassion and kindness replace self with other and shift awareness from the egoic self to the happiness of others, decreasing ego. Practice compassion, disempower ego.

Step 9) Replace dissonance with resonance

The stories in our mind are unnecessary.

The mind is constantly creating good and bad stories filled with our outlook. Some are happy, some sad, some judgmental, some negative and some crazy. True or false, all of them add to the monkey mind and cover over the stillness within. When we end the stories and give the mind a rest we can experience peace of mind.

Peace of mind is equated with stillness and resonance. Replace stories with the highest energy, the highest thought, the purest attention. Chaining the mind to achieve stillness is almost impossible. Give the mind something beautiful, resonant, expanding, virtuous and uplifting. Replace dissonance with resonance.

Step 10) Consume the highest vibrations

What we place our attention upon is what we become.

We take in the quality of whatever we place our attention upon. We impress that quality, that energy within us. The memory and vibration of what we place our attention upon, be it positive, neutral or negative, become part of us, affecting our state of consciousness and determining our peace or lack of peace. These impressions determine our state of mind and state of consciousness.

We have filled our mind with so much. Train the mind to consume the highest vibrations, the most selfless actions and the kindest thoughts. Give the mind a rest from overstimulation and feed it the highest.

Step 11) Practice stillness

Resolution is not about fixing or changing. It arises from revealing, from uncovering the essential nature of our Self.

Resolution is shining the light of awareness and allowing the power of consciousness to bring dissonance into resonance. Illumination, realization and revelation are knowing our true Self, our essential being and presence.

Peace of mind allows us to experience stillness, and in stillness we reveal our true Self. Self-love, Self-acceptance and Self-compassion arise in Self-realization.

Desires, attachment to outcomes and distraction seem never-ending and the mind never has a chance to stop and experience stillness. Peace of mind is possible when there is a degree of stillness. Practice stillness. In stillness comes revelation of the true Self. In revelation comes resolution.

Step 12) Create absorption in pure awareness

Practices of kindness, virtue, meditation and service release us from resistance, selfishness and grasping, revealing peace.

Our lives are a result of the kindness of others. Compassion is exchanging self with other. Service is the act of loving other. Meditation in realizing Self is one with other. In this mindset, absorbed in this quality, peace of mind dawns. Let peace of mind be our constant measure; does this thought, does this action bring peace of mind.

There are pure thoughts, feelings and actions that create absorption in pure awareness, the Self. They allow us to relax, be at ease, let go and experience silence. Peace of mind is the result. The cause is our understanding, our outlook, our attention and our practices.