

Mind Your Own Business

What is Mind?

Mind is truly a wonderful creation designed from the most *satvvic* (pure) qualities of the *Pancha Tattvas* (five nascent elements). It is a continuous flow of thought. We've been gifted with the best internal equipment. However, we use it like a trash collector. Garbage in - Garbage out! So why complain that mind is agitated?

Function of Mind

Texture of thought classifies it one of the internal equipments. When texture is *sankalpa* (to decide) - *vikalpa* (not to decide), we find ourselves in a serious wobbly confused state. We constantly debate whether to be or not to be? Until that decision is reached, the texture of thought during that indecisive period is called mind. That tentativeness of swinging is called mind. Mind has another aspect, divided into two parts. The default setting cannot change - the agency to gather and collect experiences through sense organs of perceptions. It reads and records everything. All data is forwarded to intellect that analyzes and conveys the decision back to the mind. The mind executes this decision through the organs of action. All this is done within fraction of a second. We gather information from many channels (eyes, ears, etc.) and stream it as an experience into the mind. We can eliminate the fluctuating part of the mind and reduce the agitations. There can be moments of fluctuation, but channelizing it through the mind, we can annihilate the wobbliness. The part of synchronizing and executing decisions should not be destroyed.

Quality of Mind

Mind goes through the onslaught of being influenced by many environmental factors (e.g., parents, families, communities, friends, coworkers, etc.) and genetic factors. You can plant ideas as seeds in the mind. These ideas can build or destroy you. This is psychologically deep concept. Conditionings that we grow in, build our convictions and ideas. We convince ourselves that we are good or bad at things, and then start behaving accordingly. We can become efficient at what we do if we make an effort to understand the logic of our action plan, analyze it properly and act accordingly.

Creating a Mindset

Idea is resilient like a virus. It can build you or destroy you. We form a sense of identity that is strongly shaped and influenced by our teachers, friends, parents and environment. There was once a Brahmin who purchased a goat in the village. Four pranksters wanted to steal the goat from him and came up with a unique plan as he went through the forested area. One by one, each one commented on the "donkey" that the Brahmin seemingly carried. They totally convinced and confused him that the animal he had was a donkey! The Brahmin eventually gave away the goat because he didn't want the "donkey". He got mixed messages from the pranksters – What donkey was he carrying? Which donkey did he buy? What are people thinking? Eventually he was thoroughly convinced that he himself mistook a donkey for a goat and that the shopkeeper tricked him. Based on what other people thought of the animal, the Brahmin gave away the goat!

That is exactly how mindsets are molded. An idea is planted in the mind. These ideas become strong rooted and eventually start shaping our personality. As parents or teachers, we create mindsets and sometimes disturbing patterns of mindsets with comparative analyses. When kids can't complete the tasks, they compare the individual to the rest of them. "Are you THAT dumb?" These ideas are repeatedly ingrained in their minds and kids live with the convictions that I must be dumb. Then they start stepping into side tracks to compensate for their dumbness. Get into wrong things – not because of their inherent nature to do bad things, but the mindset we create for them forces them to do so.

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This mindset doesn't change for a lifetime. So be conscious when you plant a seed or an idea into someone's mindset. That idea has to be so resourcefully positive such that it enforces growth rather than constrain the growth. On a personal level, have the courage NOT to believe what people say of you as truthful statements. Have the courage to experiment and investigate thoroughly before buying into people's opinions about you. Even scriptures encourage you to investigate and understand clearly before accepting what is said. Convictions have to be born from within; otherwise the knowledge is carried as a burden, not as wisdom. You can investigate thoroughly only when we have nothing at stake. Reason we are afraid to investigate or experiment with our own lives is because we lack courage. We dislike failures. What we have defined as a failure stops our growth. The moment we see potential failure – we have engrained in their minds – to not experience failure. Parents will go to any extent to ensure kid's success and a good grade. We cripple the kids and don't allow them to stand on their own feet. They haven't seen what is defeat or failure. Unless they go through these experiences, knowledge doesn't translate into wisdom. Once we know where we fail, then we can understand where we work better and improve. If we constantly work within our comfort-zone, an environment that avoids failure, we stick to this zone without expanding. Wherever there is stagnation, there is no growth or learning. Our personality starts stinking and eventually no one wants to interact with us. Then we complain "Why does this always happen with me?" The fault is incorrect understanding about ourselves because others have said so – depending on which we conduct our life. Before it becomes our conviction, investigate thoroughly and truly learn via these experiences. Else we claim "life sucks".

Choosing a Mindset

Observe young kids – they experiment so much with so little inhibition. Failures don't stop them from trying new ventures. They build on existing structures and try out new combinations. They find opportunities to use what they learn. But as we grow, we tightly hold on to our mindsets and refuse to let go. That inception has to be broken. If an idea/conviction is built, it can always be reconstructed. That is spirituality. It is the willingness to take a leap to understand that the convictions we are born with have constraints. We should be ready to reconstruct – tear the stagnating ideas down and rebuild with a fresh start – with scope for growth and learning.

Profitable Mindset

Being alert and vigilant every moment, analyze where the mind expends its energies. Is it dragging us in the quicksand of a fixed mindset characterized by pre conceived notions, denial, self-fulfilling prophecy? Where lack of clarity leads to utter chaos and confusion? Do our imbalanced expressions, judgmental attitudes, fearful of venturing beyond the comfort zone due to potential embarrassment prohibit our growth? Or are you willing to be a risk-taker in this economy on basis of love, faith, tolerance and patience? Sheer willingness to be brave enough opens up creative channels of constant learning and exponential growth. Fear of failure can be overcome by playing with constructive criticism (offering and receiving!). We must be willing to accept life experiences as they unfold. Just a slight change in the attitude itself will make man richer than he ever dreamed of. Whether you are business-minded or Minding Your Own Business, investing our energies in our Mind certainly promises to be lucrative venture. Invest in it and reap the returns on your investment (ROI). Prepare the mindset and execute the divine business plan to unfold the spiritual growth.