





ONEIRIC MONK

WORM MOON 2025

Chapter 1: On Relaxation

INTRODUCTION

The project Oneiric Monk is manyfold. In one fold, in one part, one objective of this project is to help me to motivate myself to create on a regular basis, but create something with a bit more quality. I'm used to improvising and creating radio shows and illustrations and music. Without any goals, it tends to wander off after a while. Oneiric Monk is a way for me to focus my creative energy into one place. It's also a way to bring the teachings of dream yoga or the dream yogi or yogini, to the mainstream.

Dream yoga, the yoga that I practice, brings different types of dream yoga into one place.

From the Buddhist perspective, from the shamanic perspective, from the yogic perspective, the yoga nidra perspective, I see it all as a continuum. And all of these practices have the one goal of awakening.

This is the purpose of Oneiric Monk, a monthly publication following the cycle of the moon.

The first season will start in March 2025 until April 2026.



WHAT IS THE DREAM YOGA PATH?

The path of the dream yogi is to awaken to the reality that is all around us. This is a bit metaphysical in a certain sense, so the first step is to use the dream state in order to realize that the awakened state is very similar to the dream state.

By practicing dreams at night, slowly one recognizes the dreamlike reality around us. By recognizing this dreamlike reality, one can start taking more control of their life, but also slowly awaken to their true selves. Similarly, when you wake up from a dream, you realize everything was a dream. It's like, oh it was all a dream and it was just a memory and it was self-created and there is another layer of that reality when you are awakening from the dream, you're like, oh yeah, there's this awakening state. But in this day-to-day state of being awakened from the dream, there's still yet another dream—the dream that we create at every moment. This is how we perceive reality.

For someone, nature could mean to be lost in the forest, to be afraid of wild animals, to be filled with concerns about survival, and bugs and being scared for their own life. While for somebody else, nature could mean freedom, protection, could mean beauty and purity. So, this is one example of a concept that could be very different from one person to another. We perceive all these different concepts in a very different way. If you ask one hundred people what love is, you'll have very different answers, and depending on people's experience of love, it'll be drastically different.

Now you have different languages that have different words that mean different things. Now everybody with a different language will have a different definition of the world as it is. Some languages have many words for one thing, while other languages might not even have a word for defining something. Studying

Sanskrit, you realize that there is a very deep definition of the process of the mind and the body and the energy and such that doesn't have any translation to French or English. So now if you speak one language, you're understanding of reality will be different than if you speak a different language. If you speak many languages, then your concept of reality might become a little different again.

It's important to refine these definitions of different words, different concepts, because we create that by ourselves and then we associate some sort of solidified reality. But there's no such thing as a very solid reality. We try to create a foundation of reality. We try to accept certain foundations in reality. You know, this is good, this is bad, this is what we should go for, this is what we should go away from. And then we have the news and different medias that are trying to create a certain reality around the physicality of things, creating a foundation around that, so that we all agree, and it's important that we do create that reality as a group so we can communicate and allow some sort of a continuity between the reality of each person, and that we can follow a certain set of rules. Yet, these are all things that we try to accept as reality. For some people, there would be a spirit or consciousness in trees, in animals and forests and mountains and lakes. But for other people, these are just resources; they're just wood and rocks and minerals and water. They don't have any spirit or mind or consciousness behind them.

You can see very quickly that everybody has a bit of a different perspective on reality, and to say that oh, the people who believe there are spirits in the trees don't know what they're talking about. Science hasn't proven anything about it because trees are just plants, and plants don't have a spirit, blah, blah, blah.... And then, therefore, these people don't understand reality. Well, this is where subjectivity happens. Even if science proved that there was no consciousness behind plants, it doesn't mean that the



reality that is proven by science is superior to the reality of people who believe there is consciousness in plants. Slowly, science, being kind of a pure technique, is slowly defining different realities, so that's something to keep in mind. Science is always changing. The scientific method by itself is not truth; it's a process by which we can define things. But that keeps on changing and keeps on contradicting itself and evolving, so it's important to look at science as a process of discovering reality, but it doesn't have all the answers. When you look at some civilizations that have had beliefs for thousands of years, it's important, as well, not to just throw it away because they didn't have science, therefore they didn't know. It's super important in this reality to understand that reality is subjective and depending on how you observe it, it will be different.

When you look at elements or effects like the observer effect, where if some scientist is observing an effect and expecting a result, it skews the results, so they had to create double-blind types of scientific research. Scientists understand that the observer has an effect what is being observed. When you understand this, you can't deny that we influence reality. You can't deny that reality is somewhat subjective. You can't deny that we are creating reality in a certain sense.

That's pointing toward this dream-like, this oneiric reality that we live in. Of course, it's not an easy concept to accept and realize because a lot of our culture is based in more of that scientific method that observes reality as a fact that cannot change, so it becomes very difficult to accept that. In the path of the dream yogi, the idea here is not to just believe things and just go with the belief system but to practice in order to explore, in order to realize reality, and because it's subjective, reality will be different for all of us.

So, the path is really to embody your body, relax, come back to

the now, come back to the here using the body, using the breath, using relaxation, awareness, and then to have a good sleep. So, relaxation to help sleeping in order to be dreaming better, in order to be able to remember your dreams. And from there, you can write your dreams, have a dream journal. Once you solidify your relaxation, your sleep and your dreams, then you can practice more awareness. The awareness is throughout the process from the beginning to the end, and it's really a foundational practice. At first, maybe a more forced awareness, and as we progress, that awareness becomes more and more subtle. I'll talk more about that in the future, the quality of awareness that can change as you're practicing.

So from being in the moment in your body, relaxing, sleeping well, starting to dream, and then writing in your dream journal, you can start analyzing your dreams, understanding more who you are. There's a lot of psychological benefit and creative benefit of working with your dreams. Once you know how to work with the dream like that, you can start, you can decide to start, or at one point, it will happen by itself, to have more awareness during the dreamtime. So by developing awareness in your daytime, at night you will become aware of your dreams and, therefore, you'll be able to interact with your dream in a different way. Instead of being passively observing your dream like a TV show (there's nothing wrong about that, there's a lot of benefits to bring from there), you become aware in your dreams and then other practices can come out of that. So, every step of the path of the dream yogi is very beneficial, and it doesn't matter if you only do a little bit or a lot or just the few first steps. All of it leads to this awakening. It will bring more power in your day and more power in your life in general.

From the awareness in your day, awareness in your dreams, you can start working with your dreams in a different way, whether you're practicing different things in your dream. You can also go



into a deeper psychological practice when you control your dream. Giving a quick example, if there are things that you would like to re-enact in your life, things that you didn't say to somebody that you loved in the past, and there's no way you can do it now, but in your dreams, you could do that. You can replay a scene of your life that you would like to bring more healing to, for example. In the dream, when you become aware, you can also start practicing different practices that you would do during the day: meditation and mantra, for example, or other practices that you would like to master, physical things, or learning to play chess, or things like that. Anything can be done in the dream. That's the beauty of it. And your imagination is there to really connect the dots, connect the different synapses in your brain to continue the learning. Each and every step is very powerful and can be developed for a long time. Lucid dreaming is a full-on experience of this world but with a full control about it. So you're kind of playing in a simulation of the world that you are in control of, so the affect, the possibilities, are quite infinite and very exciting.

From that perspective, there's many ways to go about it, continuing to be aware in your dreams or exploring reality. What becomes accessible in lucid dreaming is the out-of-body experience, by being able to be aware in your dream while the body is asleep, consciousness actually has more freedom to travel around the universe and, therefore, gives you this kind of expanded vision of reality. This is a more advanced practice but if you do some research, you'll see that a lot of people are able to do these out-of-body experiences, and it's scientifically provable that they can look, you know, move into different locations and observe some details in these locations and report back about it. By going into the dream and the lucid dreaming, you can go into these out-of-body experiences and start understanding this multi-faceted reality that we live in. All of that starts to move about the solidity of the reality that we live with.

OUR REALITY

So we are offered a reality. This is reality, you know: you go to school, you go to work, you make money, you buy a house, you make a family, then you die and then that's it. And within that confined reality of social norms, we define, you know, that the grass is green and the sky is blue and, you know, a car rolls in a different way, and we walk; there are all of these principles that we have to accept, and there's no denying of that. The process of liberation starts by being, well, maybe I don't want to go to school and then to have a job and then to have a normal life, (normal in brackets and big air quotes). And then that was my beginning of saying no, this is not the type of life I want to live. What else is there? And by asking that question, I started to look around for different answers. Then realizing that yeah, you can live your life however you want to live it. And then slowly realizing that different practices have different kinds of reality attached to them. Yoga (being a big part of the my awakening, with some techniques being explained as techniques that could bring about different powers of the mind and the body), was kind of a big step in loosening up the reality around me, like oh, there are people saying different things. So, by simply observing or researching or realizing that some other traditions have a different view of reality, it really helped me to liberate from the stronghold that reality or society had on my reality.

So culturally, we're trying to create a bit of a foundation of reality so that everything works together. By doing that, we deny some facts, some information, some wisdom that comes from previous societies and cultures so that we don't have too big of a playing field. And, you know, that makes sense to a certain degree where you don't want everybody to be exploring reality as a yogi or a yogini. At this point, it would make the society not work if everybody could realize that they can control their dreams, have any type of lucid dreaming, and have these



marvelous experiences. And if everybody was doing out-of-body experiences and traveling around the world, people will not go buy the next playing console. Maybe I'd rather just travel through space and see different things in this reality rather than look at a screen and play on this game pad of some sort. So, the way our culture is built is not around awakening; on the contrary, it's more about deepening our addiction to media and to be more and more asleep. So, it's understandable that a culture wants to keep people in line for a certain type of reality. And, therefore, it's hard to change the reality we live in because there's so many people who strongly believe in a certain way that the reality is that when you come in and say well, reality could be very subjective, you'll have a lot of people being like no, you're crazy. Get in line, go get a job and a haircut, and come back with some money and then we can talk. But there are people who truly believe that reality is subjective, spiritual people, scientists and other researchers that realize that reality is very fragile. It's very malleable, and psychologists that study human interaction and things like that start to see patterns of things happening that are really outside of what can be explained. Anyone who researches or explores reality in a deep way does realize that there are a lot of strange things that cannot be explained. And it's easy to just put it aside and say well, whatever and not research that. It's a lot easier, it's a lot more comforting. But there are some of us that say well, these weird events, how about we look further and see what happens there.

DREAMING OF THE FUTURE

I've often dreamt of the future. Very random events that I've dreamt about happened sometimes an hour after I woke up, sometime a day after I woke up. Sometimes, it happened to me, sometimes it happened to other people. And this has happened to me often enough to be in the place where I could say well, sometimes, I dream about the future. At first, I would think well, these are just the many possibilities and I just dreamt about one of them, or maybe I dreamt about many of them and then I just woke up and that event happened. But after many times of this happening in a very precise way, I realized that there is this fragility in the timeline, in my own timeline, that permits me to see the future for whatever reason. I don't control that, I wouldn't say this is a power of mine, that I can foresee the future. I wish I could have a handle on it, a more solid handle, seeing the future or being able to control that in a solid way (which is not the case), but I still sometimes dream about events and I'm like okay, this is going to happen. And to this day, I still hold it very lightly, where I'm like, I dreamt about that, and then I take precautions sometimes. If I dream of a car accident, for example, I will definitely be more aware in my car. I will sometimes take precaution. I would kind of stop at different places to be like okay, that's feels safer without knowing what's happening. I've just got to take a lot of my dreams seriously enough to change my habits a little bit and without knowing because there's still a lot of random dreams that don't make sense whatsoever. It's important for me to not be fully involved in, like, I dreamt about that, oh my god, this is going to happen and there's nothing I can do about it. I dreamt about that. Okay, that might be the future, maybe not. How about I take it as a maybe and just be careful and not become too crazy about it.

I do believe that if you believe in all your dreams and go very deep, very quickly it can become really neurotic. It can become



really hard to manage or live. I've seen people, spiritual practitioners going very crazy about the symbolism of everything and hinder their own well-being and their relationships because of that desire to make sense of everything that happens and every colour and every encounter and every symbol that might occur. I think it's important to not take things too seriously throughout the practices that you are doing, and if you're hearing the call of spirituality or awakening or dream yoga, it's important to take things lightly and enjoy the ride.

So this is a very general overview of dream yoga and where it can lead and how you can start it on it. Now, I often say that, but this will bring change in your life. If you start on the path of dream yoga, there will be changes, at first very gentle. You might be able to sleep better, focus better, be more creative, but the further you go, the more your life will change. If you really really really really love your life exactly how it is and you don't want to change anything, then it's important to question why you would start doing a practice like that. If you're like no, my life is perfect, I don't want to change anything. This is how I want to live the rest of my life. I have it all figured out, thank you. Well, don't do the dream yoga. Don't do any of the practices; just keep your life as it is. If you feel like you want to sleep better, you want to dream better, you want to be more creative, you want to resolve problems faster, you want to be more aware and present, you want to develop further intelligence in the sense of reflection, in the sense of problem-solving, creative thinking and all of that, well, dream yoga has a lot of tools for that.

Although I've explained the whole process of liberating the whole body—well, I haven't explained the whole process yet; I just gave the first few steps— but even if you don't feel like awakening completely to your own self, all the preliminary steps, all the steps within dream yoga are very helpful for a lot of things. So you don't need to become a person who is able to get

out of your body and travel the universe to benefit from dream yoga. Just the meditation that will be offered, a powerful meditation, can be used for many things. It's just interesting to see this path of the dreamer and see how it can be useful. It's a different path. I find that there are different dream yogas, in Shamanism, in Buddhism, in yoga, but I haven't seen a path just dedicated for dream yoga and having dream yoga be the foundation of the path and then you have all these practices around it, surrounding it. And because it's mostly done at night during the dream-time, it's also a yoga that makes it kind of a little easier because you don't need to schedule it in. It's just when you sleep, that's when you work the most. Of course, the practices that are done during the day, they can be done all day long or during the night. So it's not something that you have to schedule time every day for doing. A little bit, at the beginning, when you need to start writing your dreams, there are some practices that could help. But once you become more fluent in your dream world, then really the work can only happen at night. So it's also kind of an undercover yogi practice that you could do and nobody would know about. Not that it's important to hide your practices, but I just find it interesting that you actually don't need anything. For meditation, you would need a place to sit and meditate and time and space normally, although you can meditate everywhere and anywhere, you still kind of need that time. Well, during the dream yoga, you just need to dream which you kind of have to sleep at one point in your life; there's no way you cannot sleep. So, by the fact that we all need to sleep, then this practice can always happen. With meditation or yoga or other practices, you need to make the time for it, well, sleeping kind of happens naturally. And nobody can really stop you from sleeping at one point or another except if they're really trying to torture you or make you mentally ill or something. So most of the time and in most of the world, people are still allowed to sleep freely and have all the time at night to do whatever they need to do. So if you're in a country that you cannot practice



your religion or in a country where some practices would not be allowed, for example, well the dream yoga practice, it's something that nobody would know if you were doing it, apart from if you were talking about it or if you were reading about it. But once you know that practice, it's a beautiful and powerful practice that kind of goes in the background and becomes second nature.

So if you're interested in bringing more creativity and power into your life, I invite you to keep on listening to the different practices and the different chapters.



RELAXATION

For Episode 1 of Oneiric Monk, we will be focusing on relaxation.

I wanted to start with relaxation before anything else. I didn't know exactly which step to start with, but relaxation...I find that it's such a needed skill in this world.

It's such a stressful world, and just to relax has become a bit of a luxury in North America and probably in different places in the world. We're bombarded by stories and dramas, and medias and entertainment, and drugs and food and sugar, and everything that goes against relaxing.

And you know, we go on vacation, and we fly in planes that are overcrowded, with bad food, and we get into places that are a very different climate in order to take a couple weeks of a break in order to get away from what we do because it's too stressful. But then we're very stressed so we end up drinking a lot of booze while we're on vacation so we forget anything that is stressful for a moment. And then we go back to a stressful work environment, and like, yeah, we had a good vacation and, you know, a lot of people are allowed only a couple weeks of vacation per year. Yeah, it's really not a relaxed culture.

And I'm trying to relax as much as I can, however I can, with the work I have and the lifestyle I have. I'm part of the lucky ones who can make my own schedule and my own clients and my own work. And still, I could have a hard time relaxing. So, relaxation was really what's on my mind to start this process of Oneiric Monk.

SO, WHAT IS RELAXATION?

My own understanding of relaxation keeps on changing. The body can be relaxed, the mind can be relaxed, but there are many layers in all of this. There's the imagination, there's the emotions, there's the energy that we have. There's the circulation in the body. There's the digestion. There's the nervous system. There are all these layers, and then there's the relationship and how others also perceive us, which seems to also have an effect on our relaxation. If people are angry at us within our own home, within our home life, it's harder to relax, even if you're mentally, emotionally, physically, energetically relaxed. If there are people that are angry at us, or projecting anger or other emotions, or stress or concern or anxiety, then even that can affect our relaxation.

So, relaxation is a really multi-layered process. And, you know, if you just go and relax in the hot spring and get a massage, you know, there's only a couple of layers that might be affected. And even that might not even relax you because maybe it's too expensive, or maybe there's so much more happening. So, it's not easy to relax. And it doesn't mean that you cannot relax, but it means that it's important to look at many aspects. And by changing many aspects, then you can start having a deeper relaxation.

In order to embark on the journey to relax, it's nice to observe a few elements at least. Some people might say, well, I'm just trying to relax my body, so I just kind of lay down all the time. But then if you just lay down, and you let your mind wander around and spin around and bring a bit more anxiety to your life, lying down might not be relaxing; it might be easier to relax by doing a lot of things. So, some people have a very busy mind and doing things makes them relax. Your body also might need more movement in order to digest, to circulate, and by doing nothing

you might not be able to relax. So, some people need to do some sports, not just being active, but do some sports so that the body can then relax.

Relaxation often sounds like you're lying down and you're just doing nothing but that doesn't mean it's going to make people relax. I know it makes some people more anxious when they do that, when they lay down and do nothing. They might have that part of their mind starting to feel that they shouldn't be lying down and they should be doing something, and, therefore, there's anxiety coming up. There might be some trauma, as well, coming back when you're lying down, and the body goes into a bit of a trauma reaction to laying down for many reasons. So, you can see how relaxation can be very different for different people.

I'll be leading a relaxation a little later in this practice, in this chapter, and we'll go through different movements, as well as tension relaxation and breathing. Now, this is one way to relax, but it might not work for everyone.

WHAT ARE THE LAYERS OF RELAXATION?

Well, like I said, the mind is a big part of relaxation. The body is a big part of relaxation. Within the body, there's different layers. So, you have the circulation. If you have bad circulation, it's harder for the body just to relax if there's constriction. And if the blood doesn't flow naturally, or if the lymph is not pumped properly, it creates tension within the body and it becomes harder to relax. If your nervous system is quite overused, then it becomes really almost impossible to relax. If your breathing is not deep enough, then also relaxation might be hard to reach. And if your body is sore, if there's tension in the body because of physical activity, again, it might also be hard to relax.

Just with the body, now we have a few layers that you have to think about: the nervous system, the circulation system, digestive system. If you're not eating properly, the body gets stuck with that food in the body. There might be acid reflux within the stomach that creates more tension. If your body has a hard time draining lymph, then, again, there's some tension there, and that will make the body hard to relax if you're lying down or if you're trying not to do anything.

Instead of focusing only on one thing in the body, being like, “Okay, if I do this, I should be relaxed”, it's good to be “Okay, so how is my digestion? Digestion is actually pretty good right now. I had a meal a few hours ago, so it doesn't feel like I'm processing anything. How's my nervous system?” Well, that's a hard one to ask about, although there's some things that you can do to check on your nervous system. It's a complete subject in itself of what triggers the nervous system and how it feels when you're nervous system is working overtime.

How is your circulation in the body? Do you feel there's some tension within your body or do you need to put your legs up, for

example, when you're lying down? Is there any pain in the body so that it would require you to stretch or do a bit of yoga or get some massage done or take a hot bath in order to work with that? If you want to relax, is there any discomfort with what you are wearing or where you are sitting or lying down? So, these are all questions that you can ask yourself and observe in order to bring about more relaxation in your day. This is just the physical layer that you have to work with. And then you have the mind and all the aspects of the mind, and that's a huge part of relaxation. So, you could do everything for your body, but if the mind is creating a lot of stress, the body will take that on anyway. So, the mind has to also be able to relax. Sometimes, it's easier to start with the body and then see how the mind reacts to it. But sometimes, you have to start with the mind to relax so that the body can then relax.

What are the signs of a mind that is not relaxed? Well, a mind that's always thinking and cannot stop thinking will create some sort of tension. Thoughts are not too bad, but when thoughts become emotions, that creates more sensation in the body and might create more anxiety.

You can think about a thought being just words or images or memories in your mind. If you think one plus one equals two, you're thinking about that, you're reflecting on the logic of it. Now, this is your thought process: one plus one equals two, that's good. Now, if you say one plus one equals two, and then you see a white board that you're writing on, which reminds you of school, and that brings about some tension in your stomach because school wasn't a good experience, for example, now an emotion is created from a thought. And the emotions are really what I find will create more relaxation or more tension.

Now we're talking about one aspect of the mind, of the mind-thinking mind, the visualizing mind, and then you have the emotional mind, as well. The idea is not to stop the emotion but

to observe what type of emotion is coming up. You can use emotion to relax, as well. You can use emotion to get stressed. But it's important to observe what's happening in the mind and when a thought becomes an emotion and when an emotion becomes stressful for the mind and for the body.

Being aware of the body becomes really important because if you feel the emotions—and really, emotions are normally these sensations in the body as well as in the mind—so if an image or something happens in the mind and the vibration of that creates more tension in the body, that's what I see as emotions. I mean, it's hard to define emotions for what they are really, but for me, there's a correlation between this kind of mind-body, a co-creation of something, and emotion normally will have a physicalness to it, and that physicalness can be very positive and can be very negative, as well. So in order to relax, the idea is to be able to observe the mind, observe the imagination, and observe the emotion that comes with it. Negative emotion will create stress that will affect the nervous system which will affect the body.

That's a bit of a key there: observing the mind, finding out about emotions, what type of emotion are being lived. It doesn't really need to be defined in a sense, like this is precisely the word for the emotion. At first, when you observe your emotions, it might feel like a very blurry spaghetti, like I don't know if it's fear or anger or anxiety; it doesn't matter. The words that we use for emotions are not very precise. They're very subjective. So, don't spend too much time defining emotions, but just be aware that they're there. Some of them will feel good, some of them will feel not so good. The ones that feel good normally help to relax, and the ones that feel not so good will often lead to more stress, more tension, and less relaxation.

The mind is very powerful. It can create anything: it can create images, sounds, words; can bring back memories from the past, and recreate these memories. And then, through this visualization, this recreation of reality in the mind, it can trigger different type of emotions. These emotions can create wellness or tension. This tension can translate into the body and further tension. And at one point, this tension will kind of stay there for a longer time.

Our facial expression is often created by these thoughts that keep coming back into our mind and, therefore, changes the way we smirk, the way our face is created. It's a very interesting thing to see when people lose consciousness, or, you know, at the moment of death, how there's this release of the facial muscles, and all of the life of the person leaves them, and all of the tension also leaves them. As a kid, I thought it was so interesting how some beautiful people could smirk or have their face in a very ugly way. And I thought it's not so much the body that is ugly. I would reflect that as a kid, and I would look at myself in the mirror, and I thought that the body can be beautiful or ugly, and people can make faces that are ugly or beautiful. And I could see these people were holding these tensions that made them very ugly. And I thought it was so interesting that the beauty, it wasn't so much physical, but it was like how the mind would twist or deform the body to make them more beautiful or more ugly. I thought, well, then beauty is not so much of a physicality, but more of what happens in the mind. I was very young, and I was observing that, and I was trying to see, you know, what will make me ugly or what will make me beautiful, and how do I want to, you know, get older. I think I might not have fulfilled my beauty goal, as tension in my life probably created a lot more creases in my face than I was expecting.

By observing the fact that the body is affected by how we think and all the emotions that we live, we really have to take into

consideration the relaxation that starts really with how we use our minds. By focusing on the body, often the mind will take a bit of a break from its usual patterns. At first, it might work. You might trick the mind a little bit by focusing on your breath and on the body, but as soon as you get used to a certain practice, the mind comes back in.

Even if you're doing the most complex meditation practice of chanting and visualizing and doing this and that, at one point, the mind gets used to it and can start back on some of these stories that are happening.

HOW DO WE BRING RELAXATION IN THE MIND?

Well, the mind is like a potter's wheel. It kind of spins and spins and spins, and then you add some spinning energy to it by adding some ideas and thinking and emotions, and then it keeps on spinning. And if we don't look at the mind, it just keeps on doing stuff, whatever that is.

I try to calm down and the mind will think about the future, the past, the this, the that. I'll try to plan and work around things, and if you're in discomfort, the mind will be darker and think about more negative things, and it will start or keep on telling a certain story in one way or another. And therefore, this spinning mind has to be calmed down in one way or another. So, the first step really is to become aware of that. And being like, oh, the mind keeps on doing something if I don't stop it.

And then you might say, well that's fine. I'm okay with that. Or you can say, well, that's bringing about some tension or a not enjoyable moment in my life because sometimes I'm afraid of the future, I'm annoyed by my past, or there's something that you don't like that the mind brings back to the surface. And for some people, taking medication or drugs or alcohol would be one of the ways to calm down the mind. So, by being inebriated, you might calm the functioning of the mind. For a lot of people, that's what they do, by taking drugs or alcohol or other consumptions, like media consumption, by listening to a lot of podcasts or watching a lot of television; we kind of shut down the mind for a while because sometimes, it's spinning too much.

And that works for a while...but it doesn't really help in the long run. If you drink alcohol to calm the mind so you don't need to think about or remember or hear the mind complain, then the alcohol's negative effect will bring a bit more depression, and, therefore, the mind might be even darker the next day, and then

you have to start all over again. That's just one example of a technique to calm down the mind using alcohol which will, in the long run, not be very efficient.

You have to work with your mind, and you have to start where you are with your mind.

You can't feel, you can't say, "Oh no, I can't do anything." That's not going to help. And you can't say, "Well, I'm not very good at it because this is what's happening." We all start at a different place, and if it's the first time that you're thinking about working with your mind, it's probably quite active. And it's probably hard to get started with that.

That's why when we do relaxation, we try to calm the mind by focusing on different things.

And we give some work to the mind to do this and to do that, then to do this and to breathe and to relax and to feel and to observe and to visualize so that the mind has a job. To completely stop the mind from doing anything, it's very hard. I mean, at one point, the mind gets tired and doesn't do anything anymore. But to forcefully stop the mind.... First, it's not very enjoyable, and second, because you apply force, it's actually spinning more but without kind of output. So, as soon as you release that force of pushing away all the ideas and everything that's happening in the mind, it kind of blows up in your face. So really the idea is to calm down the mind. And to calm down the mind, often, we have to take action, meaning that if I have a recurring thought about something that is unresolved in my life, well, the best way is to resolve it. So if I'm always afraid to lose my job because my boss is an asshole, well, finding a job where my boss is not an asshole might help my mind. Maybe not. The mind might just jump at a different thing and then start worrying about something else.

But it's good to listen to the mind and the things that are spinning in the mind and just not to say, "I don't want to hear that" but more "Can I resolve this?" Sometimes, I'm in a panic attack; I'm very prone to panic attacks. And then I wake up and then I don't know what to do. So then I asked myself, well what can I do right now? So often, I will write it down. My mind is worried about this and this and that. Can I resolve any of that right now? And often it's like no, not right now, maybe tomorrow. But right now, what can I do? And I often come back to the breathing. Well, right now, I can relax, and if I sleep good, then tomorrow, I'll be better at resolving these issues.

Sometimes, I can resolve the issue right there by making a decision, being like, this is on my mind and it's been on my mind for a long time, and I will decide right now this is the action I will take, and then I write it down. This is what I want to do tomorrow to resolve this issue.

So, you don't want to work against the mind; you want to work with it. The mind is a powerful tool and it's a positive powerful tool if you want it to be positive. It can become negative when you're fighting it all the time and it becomes, you know, harder and harder to control it or to listen to it.

There are many reflection techniques. There is writing it down, there is planning a strategy and all that, and to work with the mind, you become more acquainted with your own personal process. Of course, emotion gets mixed into the process. When there's anxiety and anxiety attacks, it's normally not just a thought process, but an emotion that makes the thought process spin. And these spins, I often observe them as some sort of a loop or recursions in my mind. So, these recursive processes are very important to catch. You could be afraid to be afraid. And then there's no way to stop that process in the mind. Because you're afraid to be afraid, you imagine what would happen if you were afraid and, therefore, you're afraid of that. So, you're afraid of everything but you're afraid to be afraid. So, there's no real

way to get out of that. And these recursive thoughts, they're like bugs in a computer or programming language, and you have to find them and find a way around that. It's like, well, let's at least remove one layer. Let's be okay to be afraid of things. And let's not be afraid to be afraid. Or loving to be in love. Sometimes they are in-bricked; it's not that you love or you want something, but it's just a sensation or a desire to desire. And sometimes, it's very subtle, this kind of looping system, and it's important to question these loops. For example, I remember at one point I wanted to want something. So, I kept on looking for something and it wasn't satisfying; nothing was satisfying. I just wanted to want, and there was nothing to get me out of that process. It was an interesting feeling because I was going through all the things: I have that, I have this, I have that. What is that sensation? And I realized I just wanted to want. And I was like, well, okay, how do I get out of that? And I don't have an answer for that, but I knew I was stuck in a loop and I think realizing it really helped me to step out of it a little bit and then feel these sensations that my mind was creating.

Relaxation: body and mind, these two big chapters of how to relax. Only relaxing the body might not work because the mind might be too busy. Maybe relaxing the body is all that you need, and that's really awesome. Once you relax the body sometimes, though, you'll see that there's still tension and it can be coming from the mind. The mind doesn't want to stress the body. It's not an evil thing that is there for your own demise, but the mind might be spinning in a certain way that creates tension. The mind will create images, memories, situations that create emotions, and then these emotions could be negative emotions that influence the nervous system by being stressful. The nervous system reacts, therefore, the body, as well, reacts.

In order to go further in your relaxation, you have to observe what's happening in the mind. You have to be aware and listening

to the mind and seeing what's really happening in the mind. And you have to make a decision if you want to quiet the mind, and to do so, there's different practices of reflection, different practices of observing the mind and taking notes and resolving what the mind brings to the surface.

You cannot just try to quiet the mind. That's often what people are trying through using and abusing substances or using media or using other activities, extreme sports, for example, so that the mind shuts down. It's all right, I think it's good to do sports and extreme sports, but sometimes people use that only to shut down the mind. Which would be a positive aspect of shutting down the mind, but it might not work in the long run if you really want to shut the mind down. It's to listen to the mind and act accordingly. Sometimes you need to take action, sometimes it's time to say no, this is not going to work, and sometimes the mind is stuck in certain loops that you could at least bring to the surface and realize that this will never be resolved if I think like that, and try to change the thinking pattern.

In the next section, I'll be leading a meditation on relaxation using different elements: the body, the mind, the breathing, and such. It's just one meditation, so I won't be able to cover all of these aspects, but it will get you started and give you a good relaxation.

This is the end of Episode 1 of Oneiric Monk. Thank you for listening. The next chapter will be the guided meditation.



