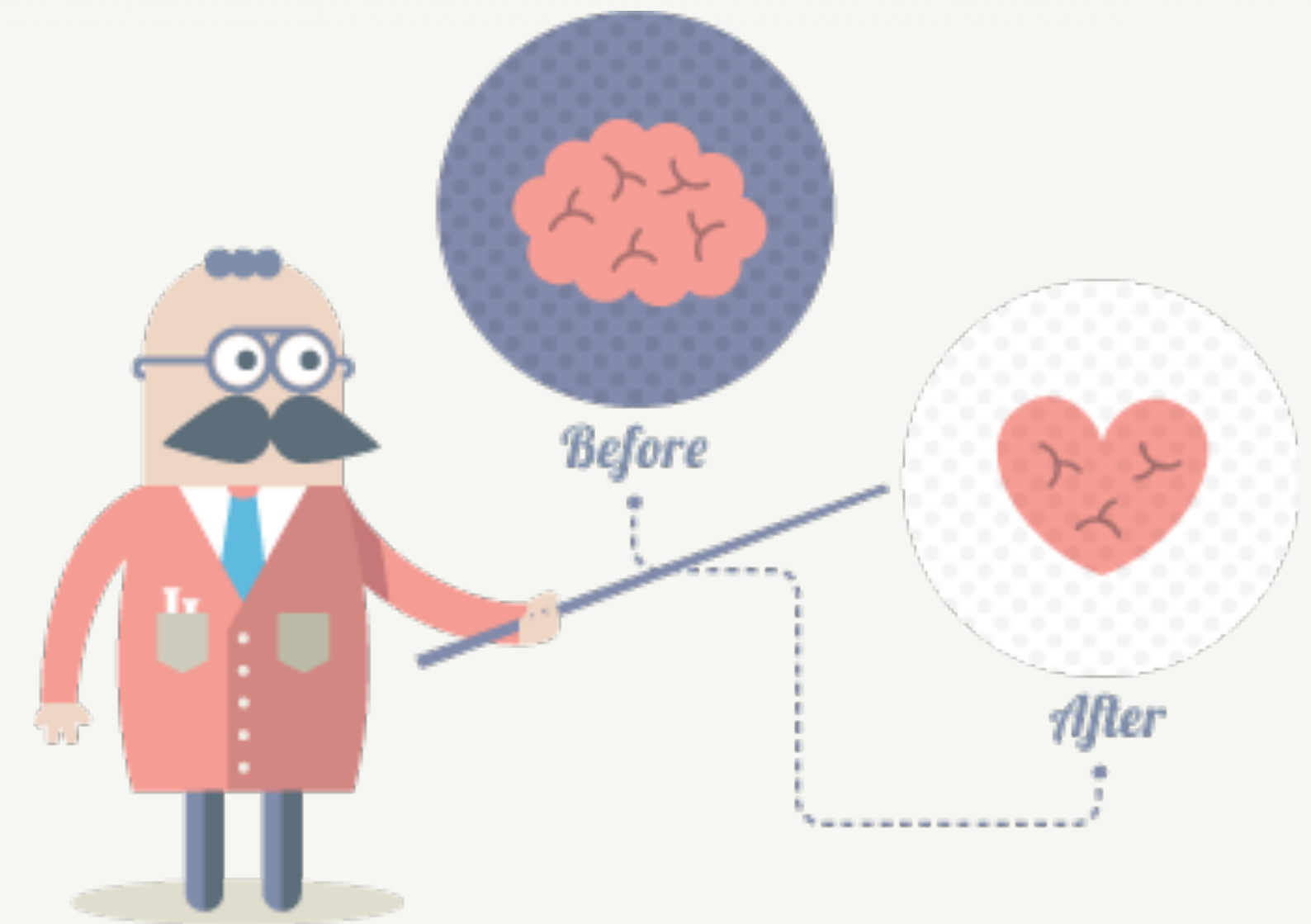
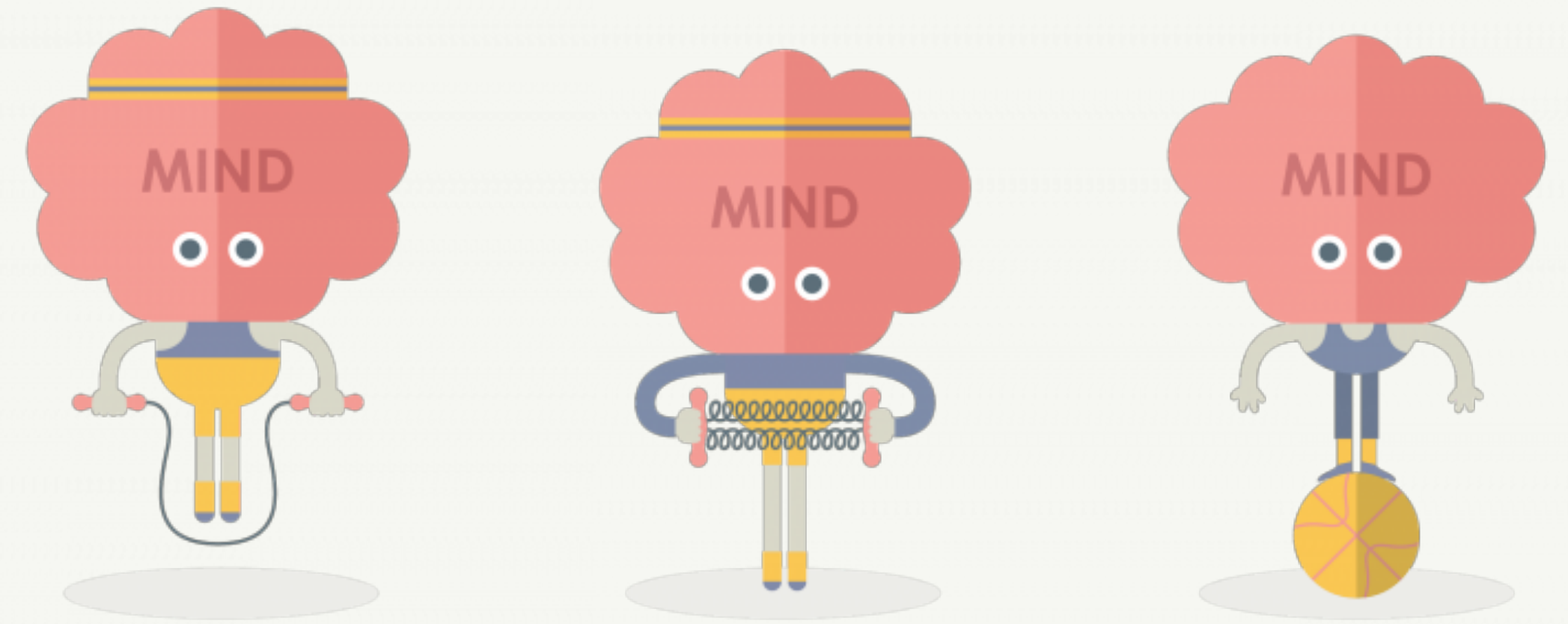


Meditation Essentials

BY BASIA NOWACKI

**meditation is training
and ultimately
transforming the mind**

definition of meditation



examining the mind

Internal | External

- We normally focus on the external world
- We will now dive deep into the internal world and look into it with curiosity to see the connections that are taking place
- See the relationship of how we relate to things internally reflects our experience in the external world



Looking at the human experience

Why meditate?

- “Although life has many pleasures and joys, it also contains considerable discomfort and sorrow”
- 1st Noble Truth. Life contains inevitable, unavoidable suffering
- This suffering encompasses the gross forms of pain, illness, and trauma we can all imagine, such as a broken leg, stomach flu, grappling with the devastation of fires, or the death of a loved one — or getting the diagnosis of a terminal disease.
- It also includes milder but common forms of discomfort and distress, like long hours of work, feeling let down by partner, a headache, feeling frustrated, disappointed, hurt, inadequate, depressed, upset, etc.
- And it includes the subtlest qualities of tension in the mind, restlessness, sense of contraction, preoccupation, unease, boredom, sense of being an isolated self, something missing in life, something just not fulfilling, etc.
- Dissatisfaction - Part of the human experience



Looking at the human experience

Why meditate?

- Looking deeper
- Seeing how suffering is caused from either grasping/clinging to something we don't have or having an aversion, pushing away, resisting what is.
- Holding attachments linked to suffering
- Has a lot to do with a sense of non-acceptance to what is
- Liberation from suffering is linked to how we relate to everything inside us and around us



Examine the mind

- We are usually fused in, absorbed, enmeshed, blended, with our thoughts
- We believe every thought to be true
- We see and experience life through those lenses and see ourselves as separate



What meditation is

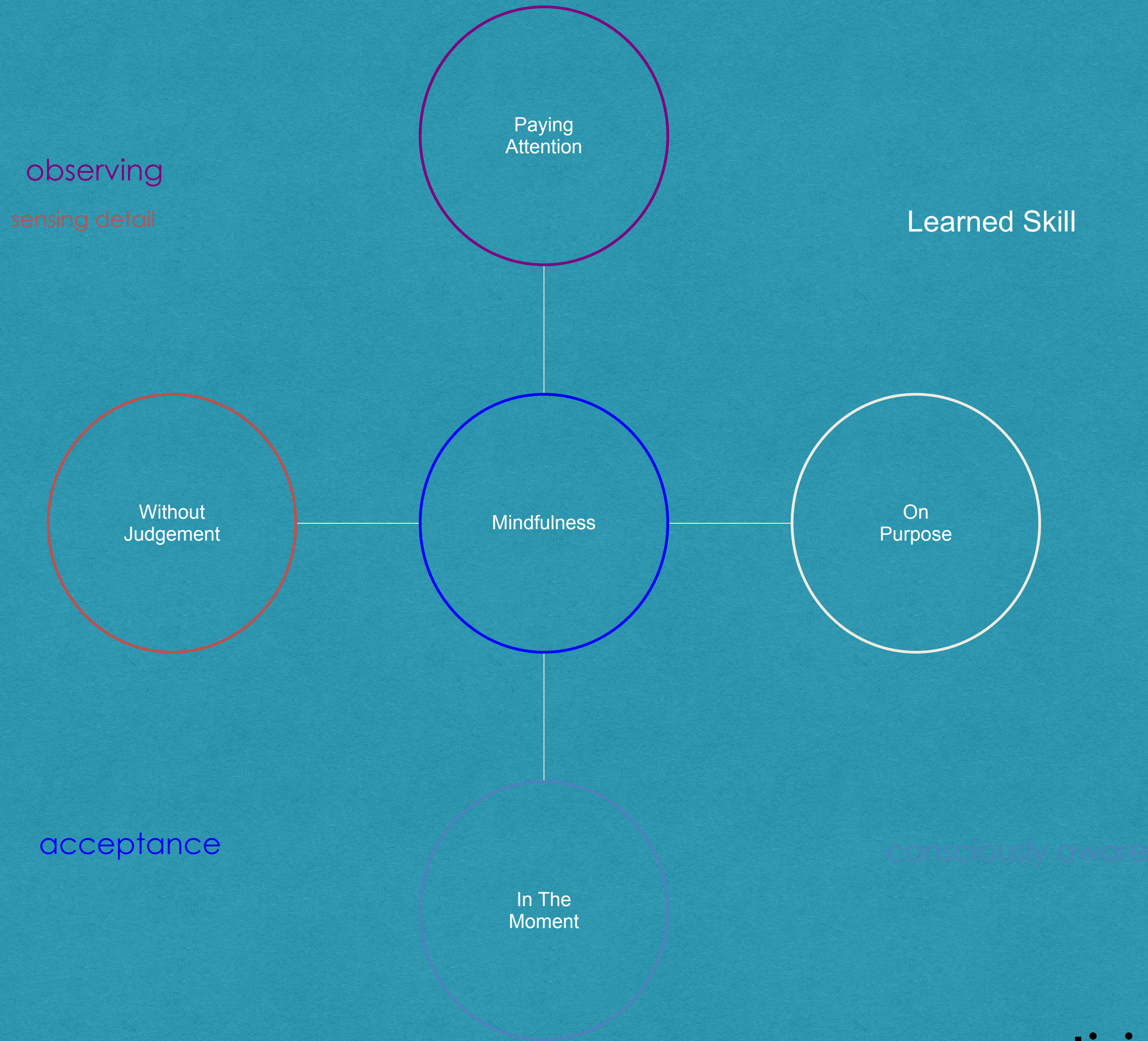
- Coming out of the fusion with your thoughts, with your mind
- First step - realising you are not your thoughts...if you are able to observe them.
- Separation from being enmeshed with our thoughts - moving thoughts from foreground to background
- Seeing how we relate to them
- And changing your relationship to your thoughts, sensations bringing compassion and love
- Practices are slowly reprogramming how we relate to our thoughts, our inner world and move us into liberation from suffering.



What meditation is

- There are various forms of meditation practices
- The way we do this can look differently
- A lot of the time (if there's certain components present) they can all be leading you to the same place
- But it is a process, a journey
- Some practices focus on a particular part of the journey
- Our main focus will be: Concentration / Calm Abiding & Awareness Practices (Deliberate Mindfulness & then Effortless Mindfulness)





practicing paying attention

**Spot light Consciousness
(Left Brain)**

attention/focus

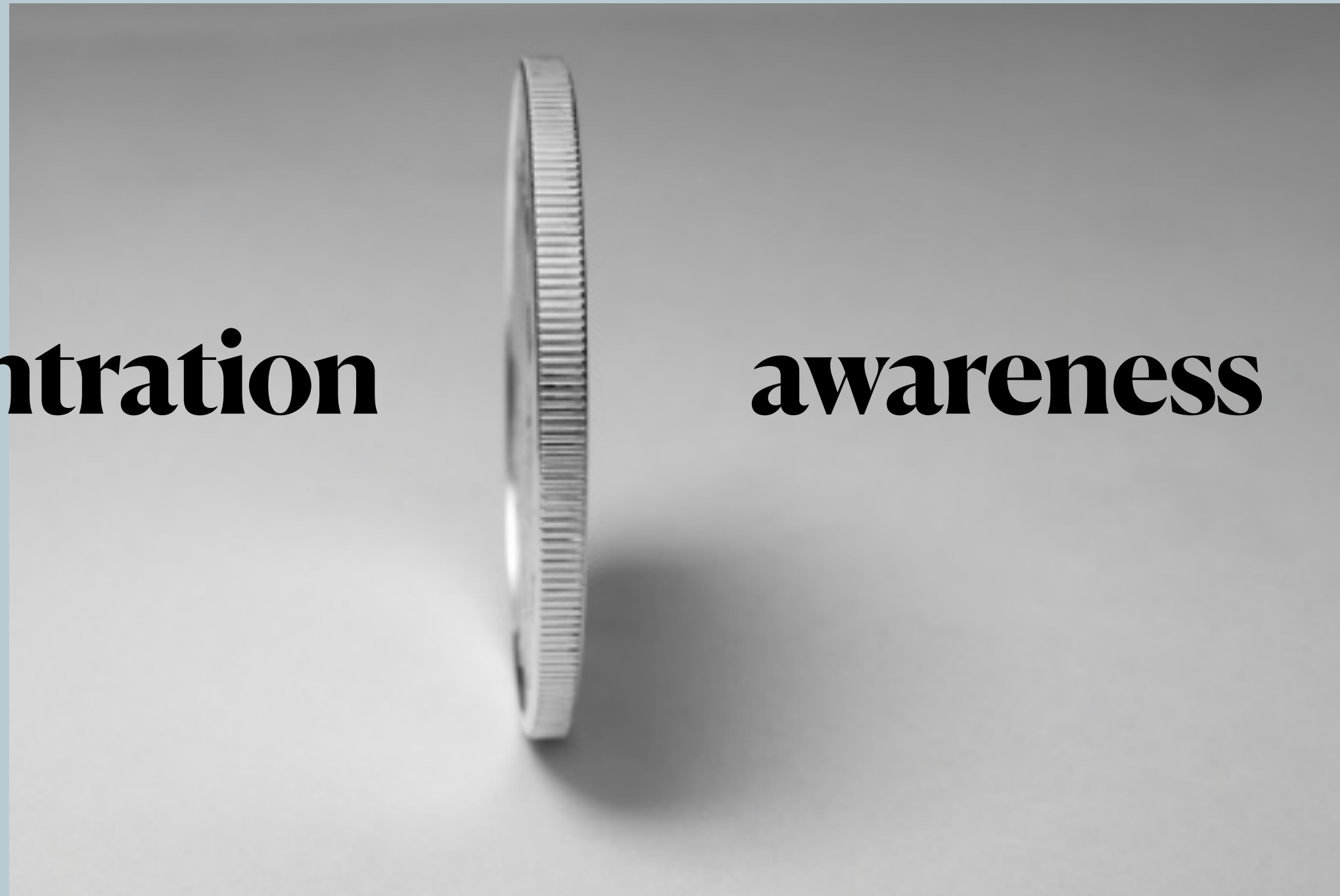


**Flood light Consciousness
(Right Brain)**

awareness



concentration



awareness

Concentration and awareness are distinctly different functions. They each have their role to play in meditation

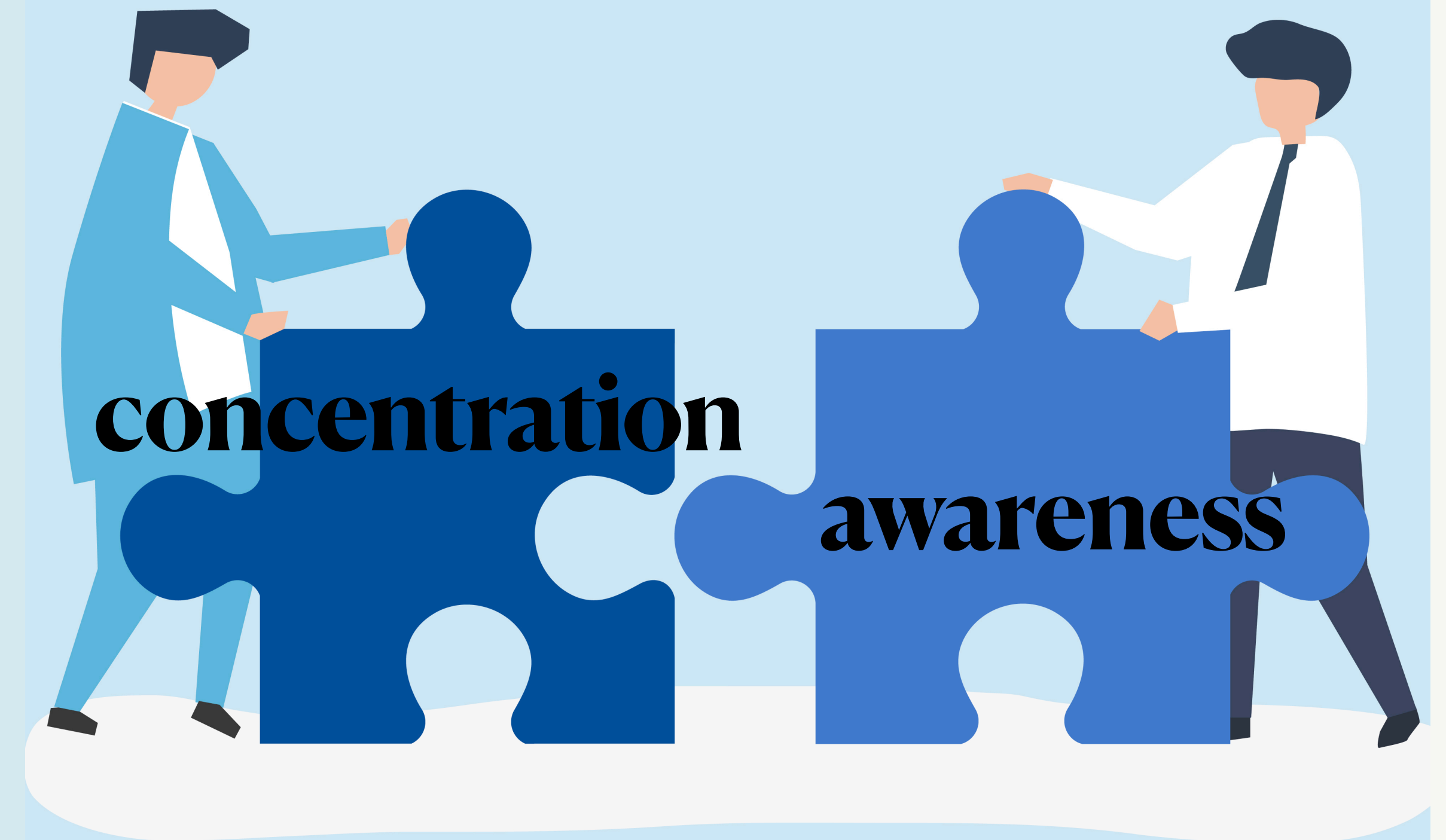
Concentration

- Concentration is often called one-pointedness of mind.
- It consists of keeping the mind on one static point.
- Concentration feels like work. It is more of a forced type of activity. It can be developed by willpower.
- Build that mind-muscle just like we build our other muscles at the gym.
- Train your mind gradually and gently- no straining or being too rigid and tight



Awareness

- Awareness, on the other hand, is a delicate function leading to refined sensibilities.
- Awareness is the sensitive one. It notices things. Concentration provides the power. It keeps the attention pinned down to one item.
- Concentration does the actual work of holding the attention steady on that chosen object, but awareness notices when the attention has gone astray. If either of these partners is weak, your meditation goes astray.



Starting with concentration

- When beginning meditation the first things you will notice is how incredibly active the mind really is.
- The 'monkey mind'. Or like a waterfall of thought.
- If you emphasize the awareness function at this point, there will be so much to be aware of that concentration will be impossible.
- So first step is to put most of your effort into one-pointedness at the beginning. Just keep calling the attention from wandering over and over again. Train to remain.



Starting with concentration

- And as you practice, with repetition you will develop concentration power. Then you can start putting your attention into awareness.
- With concentration practice you'll start to experience:
 - less mental phenomena
 - your mind becoming more still and peaceful
- And eventually experience calm abiding



meditation practice

Concentration - Calm Abiding

- Various ways to practice spot light focus - developing concentration: via the breath, changing how you breathe, a body scan such as yoga nidra, visualisation, mantra etc..
- Concentration of the breath
- Bringing about a sense of calmness to the mind
- Classically focused on the nostrils, but we will do it feeling the breath in the abdominal & chest.



Q

Questions?

Practice

Let's Meditate



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What meditation Isn't

Misconceptions about meditation

- “I’m not good at meditation because I have too many thoughts”
- It’s not about having no thoughts
- Its about firstly noticing your distracted, enmeshed and by doing so you break out of that fusion - break the pattern
- It’s then how you relate to your thoughts



Right attitude

Points to remember

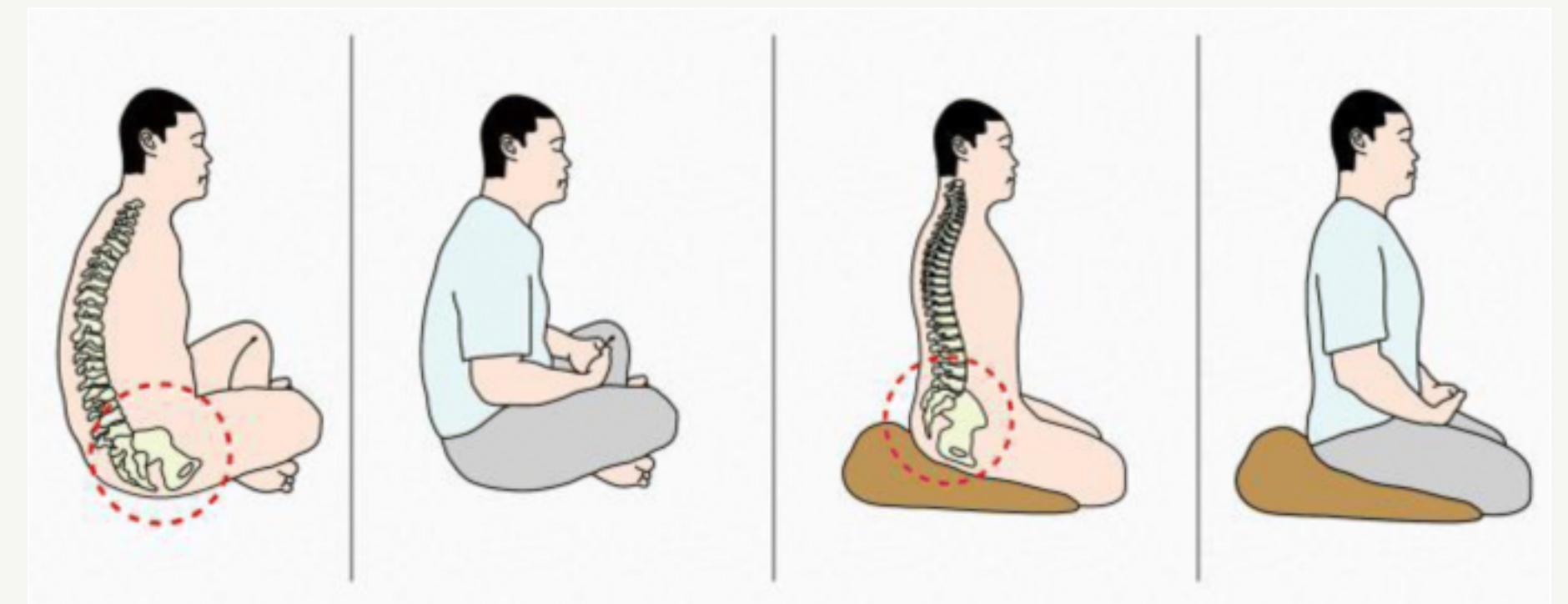
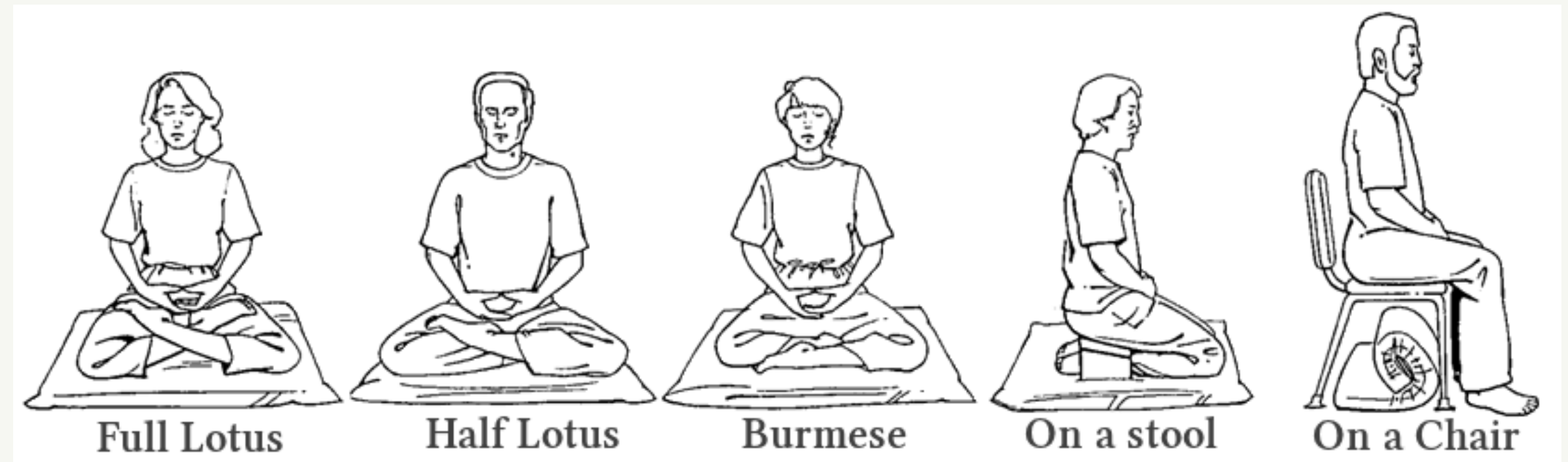
- Don't expect anything
- Be gentle with yourself
- Don't cling nor reject anything
- Be and welcome what arises



Right Posture

What to do with the body

- Right support for your body
- Spectrum - Dullness ————Excitation
- Comfortable and relaxed but focused and awake at the same time



Practice



inhale - 10

exhale 9

inhale 8

exhale 7

inhale 6

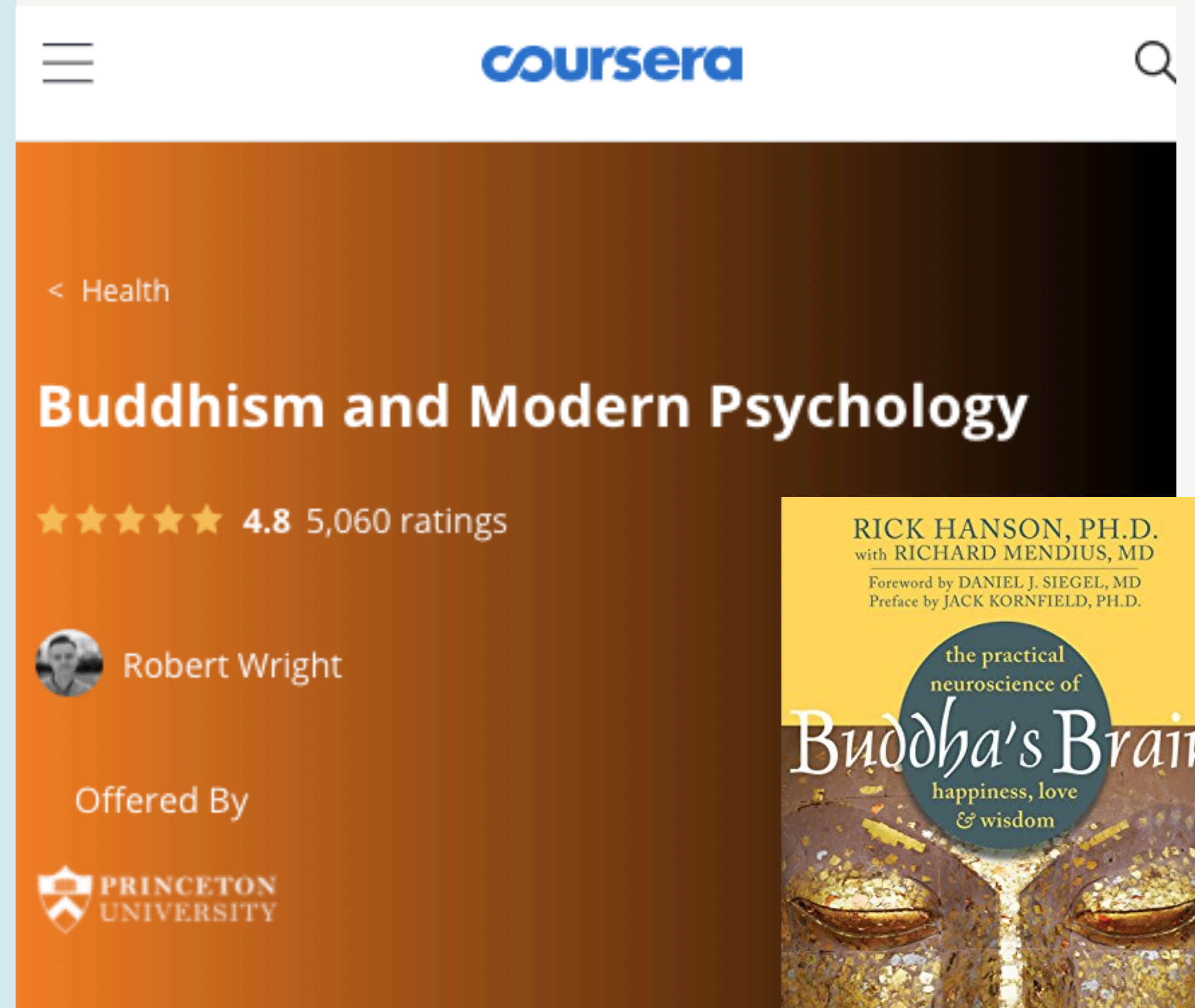
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Resources

Deepening Understanding

- <https://www.coursera.org/learn/science-of-meditation>
- Book - Buddha's Brain - Rick Hanson
- Book - Mindfulness in Plain English by Ven. Henepola Gunaratana



The screenshot shows the Coursera interface for the course 'Buddhism and Modern Psychology'. At the top, there is a navigation menu icon, the Coursera logo, and a search icon. Below the navigation, a breadcrumb trail shows '< Health'. The course title 'Buddhism and Modern Psychology' is prominently displayed in white text on a dark orange background. Below the title, there are five yellow stars representing a 4.8 rating from 5,060 users. The instructor's name, Robert Wright, is shown with a small profile picture. The course is offered by Princeton University, as indicated by the university's logo and name at the bottom of the course card.

