

[The Ocean of Mind: How to Redirect Your Mental Energy, Find Stillness and Peace](#)

At many classes I teach I am asked this question: "How can I stop my mind?" Instead of focusing on stopping the activity of the mind, I encourage people to redirect the energy of their mind to help them gain rather than deplete energy.

First, what is the natural function of the mind? One of my dear teachers, Cerridwen Fallingstar, points out that the mind was an important tool for helping our ancestors remember which plants heal and which plants cause illness or death. The mind helps us make choices by sorting through information we have gathered and stored.

When the mind is clear and working to serve us, it discerns out of love and care. When the mind is cloudy and unruly, the inner judge begins to taint the clearness of the mind, and we become numbingly repetitive and rigid in our thinking.

The judge sees things in terms of black and white. Instead of, "This plant will make me sick if I eat it," the judge says, "That plant is bad," simplifying and judging a plant that may be beneficial in other circumstances.

Judgment: "That person is bad." (often paired with, "Therefore I am good.")

Discernment: "I do not like that person's actions."

Judgment: "I am worthless and undesirable."

Discernment: "I am feeling vulnerable and weak today."

Judgment: "I am a terrible spiritual warrior, because I keep fighting with my boss. She is such a bitch and so uncaring."

Discernment: "I need to stay out of my boss's way when she is angry, or I tend to get angry myself and make things worse. She seems to get angry most often in the mornings."

When our minds are agitated we worry about how others will perceive us; if we have enough time, money, courage, stamina; if we did something right and if anyone noticed; if we did something wrong and anyone noticed. When the mind is chaotic, we look back over conversations and actions to find fault or victimize ourselves, or we creatively imagine worst-case scenarios and fears of what will happen in the future.

When the mind is at rest, it conserves energy and waits until it is needed. Imagine a dancer who dances constantly, without rest, day and night, and ends up missing his cue when it is his turn to perform. This is the mind: running without listening or pausing for a breath. When the mind is grounded in the moment, it is responsive to the needs of its human. When we are trapped in the chaotic dance of our thoughts and beliefs, we miss our cues for when the mind might actually be useful.

When we judge, we polarize what we perceive and do not leave space for magic and love. A beautiful Chinese quote reminds us of the power of being in the moment with no judgments: "Now that my barn has burned to the ground, I can more easily see the moon."

When you ground the mind in the wisdom of the body, the mind becomes a friend rather than an enemy dragging you deeper into chaos and self-destruction. We can try to heal the mind by cursing it, attempting to repress its thoughts, or stop it completely, but it is the mind's natural tendency to perceive and give the body information about its surroundings.

The problem comes when the judge or victim places a wedge between the mind and physical body's wisdom. Instead of relying on our body, heart, mind working together to perceive and make choices, the judge and victim get all the attention. They are great at hooking our attention, to the exclusion of all else, by manipulating our emotional body.

By shifting our perception and focusing on what our mind is up to, we can begin to retrain it to serve the greater whole rather than create suffering.

To see what the mind looks like energetically, sit in a quiet place and invite your mind to do its thing. Start by imagining yourself when you have self-doubt or judgment. What images come? What does your energy look like when your mind is wild? Now imagine yourself when you are calm, grounded, and in your center. Notice how you perceive things around you. What images come? What does your energy look like when your mind is calm?

For me, the busy mind (or "monkey mind" as the Buddhists call it, from our mind's ability to leap nonsensically from thing to thing) is like being caught in the waves and foam of a storm at sea, restless as the windy torrents. There is no place to rest, only a constant battering of the judge and the victim.

When we dive deeply into the ocean of our mind, we find silence and peace. We are aware of the waves and storm above, but our attention is on the vastness, which is connected to all things. When we learn to rest the mind in this place, the judge and victim dissolve into an underground current of love. When we need to make a choice then, our actions come from a wide perception of body, emotions, and life force in balance with the tool of the mind.

As multi-dimensional beings, we are composed of energy, emotions, thoughts, and creative force woven across time and space. Your mind is only a tiny fraction of your ability to perceive and know. It may be that your judge-mind has been lifting weights and your other methods of perceiving have atrophied, but by becoming aware on an energetic level how your mind uses energy you can change the energetic patterns that keep the judge held in place.

About the Author

Heather Ash Amara weaves powerful practices of shamanic traditions to help people reach their potential. She apprenticed and taught extensively with don Miguel Ruiz, author of *The Four Agreements*. She wrote *Four Elements of Change* and *Toltec Tarot*. She co-authored *Spiritual Integrity* and runs [Spiritual Integrity Coaching](#) with Raven Smith. Read more [ways to quiet your mind](#).

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