

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) about Mantram Repetition

1. Why do you call it a “mantram” instead of “mantra”?

We teach “mantram repetition” according to the guidelines of a spiritual teacher who uses the original Sanskrit spelling, which is “mantram.” It is a gender neutral term meaning “to cross the mind,” and refers to traditional, spiritually-based words or phrases. The term “mantra” has become secularized in our popular culture referring to almost anything that is repeated. We use “mantram” to make a distinction and honor the original usage of the word. If the word “mantram” is awkward or foreign to you, call it something else: cue word, rapid focus tool, prayer word, centering tool, comfort word.

2. Why do you call it “rapid” relaxation response?

We use the word “rapid” because mantram repetition is seconds away and can be accessed and applied immediately in any situation, anywhere, anytime. It is “rapidly” available.

3. Why do I have to choose a mantram from a list? Why can't I make up my own?

When you select a traditional mantram from our recommended list, you are assured that it has been used by many people in a special way. This is like having a concentrated product that has weathered the test of time. These spiritual mantram words come with “extra value” because of past associations with higher power/prayerful thinking/being.

Also, the purpose of mantram repetition is to get below the surface layers of consciousness to the depths of our inner most healing resources. Words that have been “consumer tested,” so to speak, save us from having to learn that some words (like the one's we make up or phrases that make us think of peaceful places) don't get us where we aim to go. Finally, research studies have found that spiritual words have greater benefits than secular or non-traditional words. But . . . the final choice is yours. We hope you will discover for yourself that secular or non-spiritual words or phrases have limitations.

4. What difference does it make if I just say “Peace, Peace” instead of “Om Shanti” which means peace in Sanskrit anyway?

“Peace, peace” in English can have lots of associations for us (i.e., the Vietnam war, a peace sign, the peace dove, etc.), so repeating it in English may make it more difficult to achieve one pointed focus while repeating the words and therefore, makes you more susceptible to distractions. The final choice is always yours.

5. When you say choose a word or a phrase that doesn't have any negative associations, I get confused. Is it the association that we are drawing from or the energy of the spiritually-infused word?

Mantrams are words that have an effect on the person who is repeating it. The more concentration you give to your mantram when repeating it, the greater the benefit. Any associations with mantram words are considered a distraction, even if pleasant. So when you repeat your mantram and you notice your mind drifting away, return your focused concentration completely on the mantram. You aren't drawing energy from the word itself, but by repeating the mantram, your mind becomes calm and allows you to connect to the inner resources and energy already within you.

**6. What if I use a mantram for a while and then find another one that works better for me?
Can I change it?**

In the beginning stage of choosing a mantram, it is okay to experiment with different words and phrases. However, after experimenting awhile, it is important to choose and stick with one mantram for the rest of your life. Unlike some teachings that recommend a different mantram for different situations, we recommend using only one mantram for everything. It is easier to remember making it easier to practice. With greater practice there is a greater benefit.

7. I think repeating a mantram is boring and mechanical. How do I know it is “working” for me?

In the initial stages of mantram repetition, your mind (and yourself) will find all sorts of reasons to resist repeating it: “this is too silly, too easy, it won’t work, etc.” You are learning to train attention, much like training a puppy, and therefore, will need gentle persistence and patience in repeating the mantram as much as possible throughout the day or before sleep in order to experience results. The best way to tell if it is “working” for you is to evaluate your reactivity to people and events that normally upset you. The changes are *very* subtle. After awhile, you’ll begin to notice an ability to “pause” before reacting, giving you more time to make choices about how to respond to annoying situations.

8. Isn’t mantram repetition a type of brainwashing?

Actually it is the opposite. Have you ever had a commercial jingle run through your mind even when you didn’t “think” about it, and yet you couldn’t stop it? The mantram is a tool that can only be repeated with your full attention. You will find that practicing mantram repetition helps you have more control over what you think. You learn to shift your thoughts when you choose.

9. Won’t I lose my ability to think what I want?

You don’t have the ability to think what you want now! You’ve already been brainwashed by years of conditioning and you don’t have the choices you want. Mantram repetition is “brain cleansing” or “clearing” so that you DO have a choice to think about what is most beneficial for your welfare.

10. Why do you say that mantram repetition strengthens your control and will power?

Mantram repetition is a form of “self-regulation” and “attention training.” Each time you bring your attention back to repeating the mantram, you strengthen your ability to focus. Strengthening your ability to focus on your mantram can then be transferred to other situations, such as focusing on a boring task or bringing your full attention to listening to others.