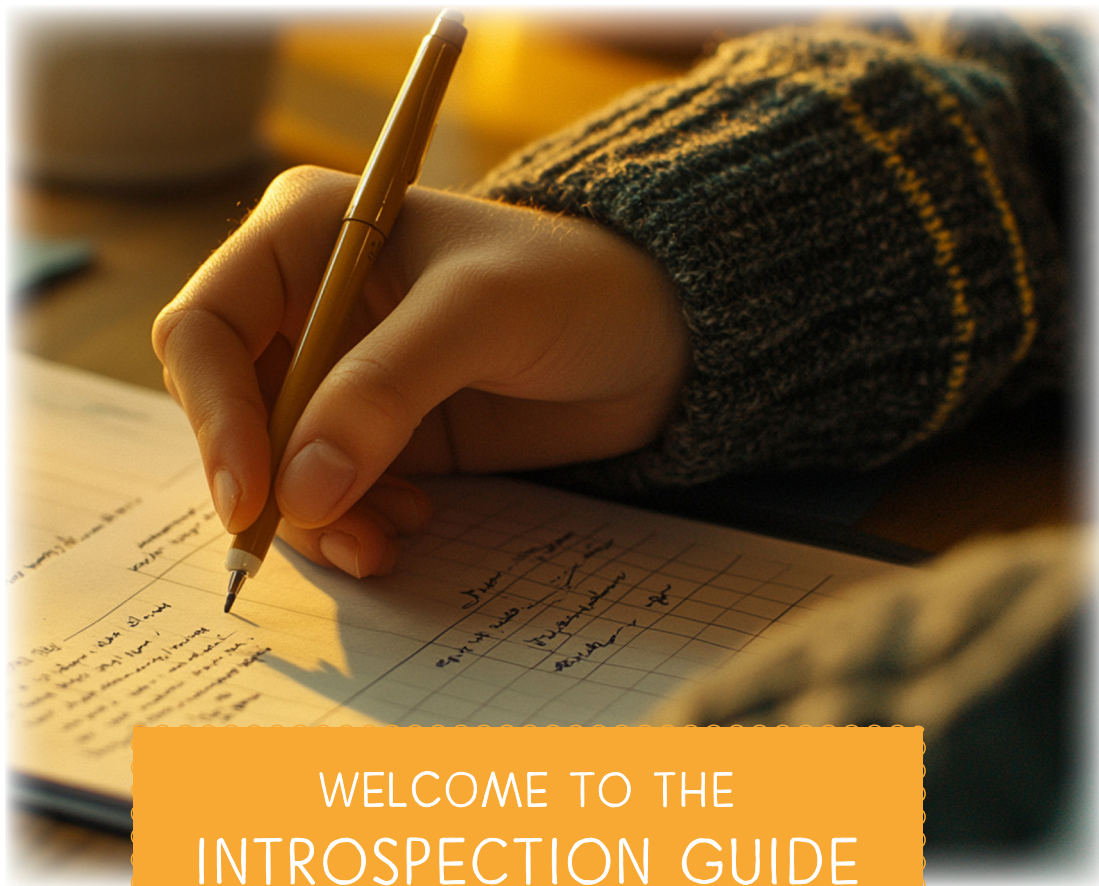




WELCOME TO THE INTROSPECTION GUIDE WORKBOOK

You will find here each of the introspection exercises in Parts II, III, IV, V, VI and VIII of the book. You can download them to your computer and work on them there or print them and work on them by hand.

You also find an audio recording of the Introspection Gateway which you can download and use to help you get calm and centered before you start any of the introspection exercises. There are also audio recordings of the daily, weekly, monthly and end-of the year journal exercises.

May your practice of introspection help you understand yourself and the direction and destiny of your life.

A Mirror New.

~ Swami Yogananda ~

A mirror new —
A glass of introspection clear,
That illusions shows and sooty fear
That spots thy mind.
Thou wilt find
This mirror new
Would also show all true
The “Inner You,”
That’s veiled in flesh
And doth ne’er appear.
Each night consult afresh
Thy mirror friend and clear away
The dust that gathers each day.



*To converse with oneself is the beginning of wisdom.**

~ Plato ~

Viewing ourselves impartially—just as Sanjaya observed the battlefield of Kurukshetra—depends largely on the inner state with which we approach introspection. For this reason it helps to set aside a period of uninterrupted time and to prepare ourselves to enter the role of the calm, centered observer.

Even after you have settled yourself, the mind may still be processing the day's events or reacting to recent conversations, and the body may carry residual tension from stress or physical activity.

These Introspection Gateway techniques are designed to create the right conditions for deeper insight: to relax your body, quiet your thoughts, and focus your attention. They help lift you out of mental restlessness into a more receptive state of awareness.

In the **Audio Materials** section you can also download the Gateway technique in audio format. Hearing the process guided step by step can make it easier to enter the calm, clear and intuitive frame of mind from which introspection is most effective.

Relaxing the Body

- Sit upright in a chair, or in a meditation posture on the floor.
- Raise the chest slightly, draw the shoulder blades slightly together, and relax the shoulders downward.
- Take a long, slow inhalation through the nose. Hold the breath and tense the whole body until it vibrates. Maintain the tension for at least five seconds.

* Plato, *Theaetetus* 189e–190a (paraphrase).

- Exhale completely through the mouth, relaxing all of the muscles.
- Pause briefly after the exhalation, and then repeat the exercise three to six times.

Calming the Mind

- With the mouth closed, use the diaphragm to inhale slowly and gently through the nose for five or more seconds.
- Hold the breath with the lungs full for five or more seconds.
- Exhale slowly and gently through the nose for five or more seconds.
- Repeat this three-part breathing exercise at least five times, or as many times as feels helpful.

While practicing, visualize the body's cells breathing in oxygen and life-giving prana during inhalation; while holding the breath, try to imagine the cells vibrating with vitality; during exhalation, imagine them releasing tension and toxins.

You may conclude your practice here and begin your introspection exercise, or proceed to the next phase, which focuses your attention at the point of inner awareness.

Opening to Higher Awareness

- Let the breath flow freely, with its own natural rhythm, and focus your attention on the delicate membrane inside the nostrils.
- Observe the breath as it calmly flows in and out. Feel the gentle sensation as each wave of breath passes in and out through the nostrils. Avoid controlling the rhythm of the breath: let it guide you.
- When the breath becomes calmer, transfer your attention slightly higher, to midpoint of the nasal passage, and notice the natural flow of the breath there as it moves in and out.
- Now bring your attention to the point midway between the eyebrows—the spiritual eye. With the eyelids gently closed, turn your gaze upward.
- Observe the natural flow of breath there for a few moments, as the breath becomes even calmer.
- Use your imagination to visualize at the spiritual eye a radiant sphere of light. With your feelings, embrace that light, allowing yourself merge into it.

When you feel ready to begin your introspection, open your eyes and take a few long, deep breaths—in through the nose and out through the mouth. Carry that calm and clarity with you throughout the exercises.