

THE EFFECTS OF SELF-INQUIRY ON MOOD STATES

by

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## **Certificate of Approval**

I certify that I have read THE EFFECTS OF SELF-INQUIRY ON MOOD STATES by Tamra C. Sattler, and that in my opinion this work meets the criteria for approving a dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Humanities in East-West Psychology at the California Institute of Integral Studies.

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### **Abstract**

This research study explored the effects of Self-inquiry on mood states. *Self-inquiry* is defined as the practice of asking simple but profound questions about the experience of and the nature of reality, such as, “Who/What am I?” These simple yet profound questions challenge the conceptual mind’s capacity to produce a logical answer. Self-inquiry questions direct the conceptual mind to the subjective awareness that is present in our thoughts, feelings, and sensations. This form of inquiry is practiced in many nondual Eastern traditions such as Zen Buddhism, Tibetan Dzogchen, and Advaita Vedanta. The term *nonduality* refers to the understanding that the appearance of separation or distinction in the world is, in fact, an illusion.

Total sample consisted of 34 participants consisting of adult men and women from a variety of ages and ethnicity/race. Twenty-four participants, randomly assigned to the experimental group, listened to a 20-minute recording of Adyashanti, a contemporary spiritual teacher. The other ten participants were randomly assigned to the control group, and they listened to a 20-minute recording of the sounds of nature. Adyashanti’s recording provided Self-Inquiry instruction in the realization of Self. The *Self*, as referenced throughout this study, is the *subjective awareness* that is present to everything in our experience and

cannot be objectified. Profile of Mood scales were administered to participants in both groups before and after they listened to the recording for their group. The main objective of this research was to determine whether the practice of Self-inquiry had a favorable effect on mood states. The results showed the following trend that Self-inquiry practice had a favorable effect on mood, primarily in decreasing anxiety and depression when compared to the control group. The results however were not statistically significant. A larger goal for the study was to further the dialogue in the field of psychology concerning the effects of nondual wisdom traditions in relieving human suffering.

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

All human beings wish to be happy. There are many ways to achieve happiness, and psychotherapy has become one conventional method for this pursuit. Within the therapeutic process, various methods may help clients gain greater self-understanding, improve emotional balance, and relieve suffering. Methods may address childhood bonding, behavior patterns, faulty beliefs, self-acceptance, or a healthy attitude. The general approach in psychotherapy is to work with clients to address their problems. In recent years, however, therapists influenced by nondual Eastern wisdom teachings such as Advaita Vedanta have been taking a radically different approach to psychotherapy—an approach of questioning the very notion of “self.”

The wisdom teachings suggest that only by knowing and experiencing who one truly is, beyond Western psychological constructs, can suffering end. Therapists with a nondual orientation ask clients, “Who is it that is suffering? Who and what is this self?” Without the realization of one’s true nature, the mind will continue to seek happiness from something or someone outside of oneself. “If only I had this, then I would be happy.”

### **Overview of Goals, Relevance, Conceptual Framework, Research Questions, and Methodology**

Many individuals will not pursue a spiritual path, nor will they have the opportunity to immerse themselves in well-established spiritual techniques; they may find value in the straightforward practice of Self-inquiry, however. As a

practicing psychotherapist with knowledge of nondual philosophy, I find Self-inquiry to be a particularly valuable tool for enhancing self-understanding and emotional balance.

**Goals.** Research on the effectiveness of Self-inquiry in psychotherapy is not available. Consequently, this study aimed to investigate the impact of Self-inquiry on feeling states. I hypothesized that participants would experience a significant and positive change in mood states after a single session of learning and practicing Self-inquiry. The results of this study have implications for the field of psychology: the addition of new knowledge and the potential to encourage dialogue among psychologists about applications for practices from the nondual wisdom traditions.

**Personal relevance.** While searching for personal happiness, I discovered a simple technique for understanding and practicing nonduality. That technique was the practice of Self-inquiry, which was my path to ending suffering. My experiences were profound and life-changing. I have been able to experience the joy inherent in my own essence while having greater comfort in experiencing all the volatility of life. I anticipate that others who practice Self-inquiry may have similar experiences and achieve similar benefits.

During my 20s and 30s, before I began practicing Self-inquiry, I pursued what I was told would bring me happiness—the “American Dream ” of owning a house, having a family, holding a well-paying job, and enjoying leisure time. The concept of the American Dream as a path to happiness was highly regarded by my family, and this is true of our culture in general. By my mid-30s, I had achieved

much of this dream, yet I was not happy. I came to the realization that no activity, attainment, or material wealth would give me true and lasting happiness. The impermanent nature of reality would never allow for lasting happiness, as permanence can't come from impermanence.

I pursued happiness through psychology, spirituality, and numerous self-help methods. Most of the options available to me in this culture had been exhausted when, by a few synchronistic experiences, I found what seemed to be my last hope for becoming happy. The ashram in Florida was named *Atma-Vichara*, which means Self-inquiry in Sanskrit. The teacher claimed to have had a spontaneous awakening through the practice of Self-inquiry meditation as taught by Ramana Maharshi. I meditated, sat in discourse, and read contemplative books by Ramana Maharshi and other Self-inquiry teachers. The most significant instruction I received at the ashram was to say "I" and "me" over and over again. I had never experienced myself, my sense of "I," so clearly. My sense of the experience of "I" was the background awareness that was present to the "me" that I had always taken myself to be. The realization, that I was held in something always present, reliable, and stable, comforted my mind.

*Personal response to Prendergast's protocol.* As John Prendergast's student in his course, the Art of Listening at the California Institute of Integral Studies graduate school, and as a member of his Self-inquiry group, I witnessed and experienced the effect of Self-Inquiry. Most often, I became less identified with my self-judgment, while also feeling an opening and an expansiveness in my experience of myself. Professionally, as a psychotherapist, I have experimented

with this technique with favorable results for my clients. The therapeutic power of Self-inquiry can have significant benefit for clients. Namely, clients can come to understand the relationship between the stories they create and the thoughts, beliefs, feelings, and sensations they experience, and subjective awareness.

**Relevance of topic.** For psychotherapists, the technique of Self-inquiry could be a valuable tool to help clients to shift from a negative mood state to a positive mood state. For the field of psychotherapy as a whole, the notion of challenging the construct of the Self as something beyond the ego is beginning to influence and shape the way psychotherapy itself is viewed and practiced. The experience of a Self that is constant and stable can provide new understanding for the foundation of living.

**Conceptual framework.** Great sages as well as contemporary teachers of subjective awareness form the conceptual foundation for this study. One of the awakened sages who experienced realization of the Self was Ramana Maharshi, and this study is rooted in Ramana's teachings. The goal of his teaching is to facilitate the experience of subjective awareness of experience and to reveal the nature of the Self through questions such as Who or What am I? Another awakened sage, Nisargadatta Maharaj, also taught Self-realization. To have a direct experience of the source, he taught, one must always abide in the "I am" of one's experience. Chapter 2 will provide greater detail of these and other teachers and contemporary psychotherapists, including Adyashanti, John Prendergast, Steven Bodian, and Peter Fenner.



**Research questions.** Based upon my knowledge and personal experience of nondual philosophies, I hypothesized that the participants in the present study would experience significant and positive changes in mood states after a single session of practicing Self-inquiry. To determine the validity of this hypothesis, the following research questions were asked:

1. Is there a difference within the experimental and within the control group's pre- and post-treatment mood scores?
2. Is there a difference between the experimental and control groups' mean scores. Is the difference significant?

**Methodology.** To understand the effects of Self-inquiry on feeling states, a random assignment, pretest-posttest experimental design was used. Thirty-four (34) participants were randomly assigned to an experimental or control group. Participants in both groups were administered pretests and posttests of their mood states, which was the outcome variable. Participants in the experimental group received training in Self-inquiry practice, which was the independent variable. Data were analyzed using pretest and posttest scores and t-tests to determine if the experimental group, as compared to the control group, experienced a significant increase in positive feelings or decrease in negative feelings. This study will be a foundation for researchers who conduct future studies of Self-inquiry.

**Summary**

This chapter introduced the concept of Self-Inquiry as a technique to relieve suffering. I asserted that Self-Inquiry had been personally beneficial as a spiritual practice, and, based on the experiences of a few psychotherapists, Self-inquiry might be beneficial as a psychotherapeutic tool. Relevance of the study was established by noting the absence of research that could inform the practice of Self-inquiry within psychotherapy. This study aimed, therefore, to investigate the effect of Self-inquiry on mood states. Chapter 1 concluded with the hypotheses and an overview of the experimental research design employed. Chapter 2 will review, first, the philosophical foundations of Self-inquiry from nondual, wisdom tradition literature and second, the existing knowledge of Self-inquiry and related practices from psychotherapeutic literature. The final Chapters will delineate the methodology and the results of the study.

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

This review will explore literature relevant to the practice of Self-inquiry in the context of psychotherapy. Within the fields of psychology and Eastern philosophy, I selected literature from the areas of Self-inquiry, meditation, and psychotherapy that addressed the concepts and practices that framed this study. Key concepts included Self-inquiry teaching and philosophy, subjective awareness, nondual psychotherapy, cognitive science, meditation, mood states, and single-session therapy. No peer-reviewed research literature was identified for Self-inquiry and mood states.

The first section of Chapter 2 encompasses the philosophy, teaching, and practice of Self-inquiry. Subsequent sections include Self-inquiry and psychotherapy, Self-inquiry and brain effects, meditation and mood, and one-session psychotherapy. In addition to my comments within each topic regarding relevance to this study, the literature review will conclude with a summary of existing and needed knowledge in the area of Self-inquiry and mood states.

#### **Self-Inquiry Teachings**

Self-inquiry, or *Atma-vichara*, is the primary practice of Jnana Yoga, and the most important teaching methodology in the Vedantic tradition. Jnana Yoga is the yoga of knowledge—the most direct path to liberation and the highest of the yogas. Self-inquiry practice allows an individual to shift the locus of identity beyond the body, mind, and senses and towards awareness and the realization of one's true Self. According to Frawley (2000), a shift of focus to the true Self

could be accomplished through the Self-inquiry practice of asking oneself repeatedly “Who am I?” until other thoughts and worries disappeared and a sense of peace and relief arose.

In this section, I will present the Self-inquiry teachings of Ramana Maharshi, Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj, Adyashanti, and Byron Katie. Spiritual teachers Maharshi and Maharaj reached their understanding of nonduality from personal experiences rather than formal traditions. Contemporary teachers like Adyashanti have each incorporated their unique perspective of awakening with their knowledge and practice of Advaita Vedanta and Buddhism. For each teacher, I will describe the philosophy that supports their practice, their teaching methods related to Self-inquiry, and how their philosophy and methods support the purpose of this study.

**Ramana Maharshi: Who am I? Self-realization.** Ramana Maharshi lived from 1879 to 1950 and has remained a highly regarded spiritual teacher of self-realization in modern India. From the philosophical traditions and practices of Advaita Vedanta and the Upanishads, Maharshi understood the nature of reality as nondual. Seekers have considered his teachings to be a direct path to the experience of Self (Katz, 2007). According to Greenblat (2003):

The teachings of Sri Ramana Maharshi help us see firsthand “who” and “what” our true identity is, revealing at the most profound level the very nature of such a search and its final outcome. Only when we have tasted the peace and joy of our essential Being does the nature of Reality become clear. (p. 11)

At age 16 and near death due to illness, Ramana had a profound experience of the Self. He reported later that his thoughts diminished and the

conscious activity relating to his body flowed into consciousness itself; Ramana realized that only the bodily form—not the Self—dies. Awakening, he declared, was “not knowing or becoming anything...The Real is ever as it is. All we have to do is give up regarding the unreal as real” (Maharshi, 1972, p. 10).

Spiritual seekers, attracted to Ramana’s peaceful presence, asked him for direction towards their own peace and happiness. His method for teaching Self-inquiry was to instruct the seekers to ask, “Who am I?” and to continue asking until they reached the source of the question itself. “All troubles that afflict human beings reduce only to one trouble and that is mistaken identity. If this wrong identification ceases then there will be peace and permanent indescribable bliss” (Greenblat, 2003, p. 16).

The technique of Self-inquiry is evident in Ramana’s exchange with a seeker. The seeker asked, “How is one to realize the Self?” Ramana responded, “Whose Self?” He asked the seeker to identify the “I” that doesn’t know, “Focus the entire mind at its Source. It is not, therefore, a case of one I searching for another I. It is the one infallible means, the only direct one, to realize the unconditioned, absolute Being that you really are” (Maharshi, 1972, p. 10). The seeker asked Ramana if realization of the Self could be possible when living a life of limitations. Ramana said, “You impose limitations on yourself and then make a vain struggle to transcend them. All unhappiness is due to the ego; with it comes all your trouble” (Maharshi, 1972, p. 70). He concluded the conversation by saying,

Know then that true Knowledge does not create a new Being for you; it only removes your “ignorant ignorance.” Bliss is not added to your nature;

it is merely revealed as your true and natural state, eternal and imperishable. The only way to be rid of your grief is to know and be the Self. (Maharshi, 1972, pp. 73-79)

Ramana's relevance to this examination of Self-inquiry and mood is evident in his instruction to the student seeking relief from suffering. The instruction, to know and be the Self, could be equally appropriate for a client seeking relief from grief in the context of psychotherapy with Self-inquiry.

**Nisargadatta Maharaj: I am. Self-knowledge.** Another respected spiritual teacher of nonduality, Maharaj, was from India. He came to be an important saint despite his modest background, limited education, and late life awakening. The philosophical foundation for his teaching is grounded in Advaita Vedanta and the Upanishads. Understanding human suffering and the nature of reality was, for Maharaj, the ultimate end to suffering. Believing that individuals had a particular path to realization of their true nature, Maharaj did not adhere to a specific method. He did, however, emphasize the importance of full attention to the "I Am."

In his treatise on Self-knowledge, *I Am That*, which spiritual groups with a nondual orientation consider to be core reading, Maharaj (1973) said:

The seeker is he who is in search of himself. Give up all questions except one: "Who am I?" After all, the only fact you are sure of is that you are. The "I am" is certain. The "I am this" is not. Struggle to find out what you are in reality. To know that you are not—body, feelings, thoughts, time, space, this or that—nothing, concrete or abstract, which you perceive can be you. The very act of perceiving shows that you are not what you perceive. The clearer you understand that on the level of mind you can be described in negative terms only, the quicker will you come to the end of your search and realize that you are the limitless being. (p. 1)

The truths that Maharaj, as well as Maharshi, taught to their students are relevant to psychotherapists and their clients: “Words are pointers, they show the direction but they will not come along with us. Truth is the fruit of earnest action, words merely point the way” (Maharaj, 1973, p. 538).

**Adyashanti: What/Who Am I? Self-Inquiry.** Adyashanti is a present-day teacher of Self-inquiry and nonduality in the United States. The philosophical foundation for his teaching is grounded in Zen Buddhism and Advaita Vedanta. For example, he advised his students that realization of the truth entailed attention and presence (Adyashanti, n.d.):

If you filter my words through any tradition or “-ism,” you will miss altogether what I am saying. The liberating truth is not static; it is alive. It cannot be put into concepts and be understood by the mind. The truth lies beyond all forms of conceptual fundamentalism. What you are is the beyond—awake and present, here and now already. I am simply helping you to realize that.

Adyashanti taught that believing and perceiving oneself to be separate from one’s experience is illusion; everything is connected, and everyone is everything in their awareness (Adyashanti, 2006, p. 10).

Adyashanti reminded his students that they could not have problems because they were the Source itself. When individuals pondered the same questions again and again, he continued to give pointers. Eventually, their questions started to fall away and the students realized that the questions were ridiculous. (p. 15)

In satsang sessions, Adyashanti directed students to their innermost experience of the Self, then he probed their assumptions and beliefs about who they were and what they wanted, and finally, he objectified everything in his students’ experiences in order to connect them to what could not be objectified (Adyashanti, 2006). According to Adyashanti, inquiry into something cared about

deeply will return the immediacy of oneself to one's experience (Adyashanti, 2007). His specific teaching method of authentic inquiry was to instruct students to ask themselves multiple times, "What am I?" Eventually, the questioning would erode the student's self-assumptions and their construct of self would disappear; what could not be objectified was an experience of being. Using teachings from Nisargadatta Maharaj to illustrate that authentic inquiry is empty of content and the constructed self, Adyashanti quoted, "The ultimate understanding is that there is no ultimate understanding" (Adyashanti, 2007).

Unlike Ramana and Maharaj who realized subjective awareness through insight following a critical event, Adyashanti experienced subjective awareness through deliberate practice of Self-inquiry (Adyashanti, 2006). His experience provides support for the expected outcome of this study. Specifically, Adyashanti demonstrated that Self-inquiry can be learned and its benefits for improved emotional balance can be realized through purposeful practice.

**Byron Katie. Four questions of The Work.** Byron Katie, another contemporary teacher in the United States, formulated four questions—*The Work*—to penetrate fixed beliefs and cognitions. She developed the questions as a result of a personal life crisis; the questions come from her realization of nonduality. The conceptual framework for Katie's questions is understanding the true cause of suffering as certain beliefs projected onto others. According to Bodian (2003), Katie realized that she was part of everything and that her mind was creating the separation of her experience. Bodian wrote, "The work of Byron Katie calls into question a client's identity of a separate substantial self and



challenges the very issues and problems of this substantial self” (Pendergast et al, 2003, p. 242).

Katie believed that the questions would help others to question their own thoughts so that they too could come to a deeper experience of life. Her teaching involves self-examination; the four questions (a) Is that true? (b) Can you absolutely know that that is true? (c) How do you react when you believe that thought? and (d) Who would you be without that thought? While using these four questions in working with an individual, Katie noticed that frequently the person’s cognition would shift in such a way that he or she would come to see the truth of a situation. The Work aimed to give individuals a new way to think about their stories and the cause of their suffering.

Application of The Work is illustrated in the case study of Peter (Katie, 2007). In the first step of The Work, Peter completed a “Judge-Your-Neighbor” worksheet (see Appendix B). Peter stated he was angry at his girlfriend Sheila because she had shut him out, abandoned him, and left their relationship. Peter’s belief was: “She shouldn’t have left me.” Katie asked Peter the four questions: (a) Is that true? (b) Can you absolutely know that that is true? (c) How do you react when you believe that thought? and (d) Who would you be without that thought? He said (a) Sheila did abandon him, (b) he knows that this is true, (c) he gets scared, angry, and defensive when he believes this thought, and (d) he would be less angry and not blame her so much if he didn’t have this thought. Katie pointed out that it was not the girlfriend but rather the thought, “She abandoned me” that was causing his pain. Peter was surprised by the realization.

In the second part of *The Work*, Katie asked Peter to turn around the thought “She abandoned me.” Peter replied that in reality, he had abandoned her. Through a process of further questions, Peter said he actually had abandoned himself. According to Katie, turn-arounds allow the person to explore the truth, to perceive anything missing, and to determine if another statement would be more true than the original statement. Peter concluded that for him to have accepted Shiela, he would have needed Sheila to be different from who she was. He understood that Sheila had not abandoned him because she was not someone he would have chosen for a partner.

Katie summarized, “Life on the other side of inquiry is so simple and obvious that it can’t be imagined beforehand. Everything is seen to be perfect, just the way it is” (Katie, 2007, p. 25). She continued:

The wonderful thing about knowing who you are is that you’re always in a state of grace, a state of gratitude for the abundance of the apparent world. I overflow with the splendor, the generosity of it all. And I didn’t do anything for it but notice. (p. 25)

Katie’s concept of state of grace—everything is perfect just as it is—can also be understood as subjective awareness. Katie’s teaching supports the use of Self-inquiry in psychotherapy to challenge thoughts and beliefs in order to experience a sense of peace and joy, also called subjective awareness.

### **Self-Inquiry and Psychotherapy**

The philosophy and therapeutic work of John Prendergast and Steven Bodian demonstrated the potential benefit of a nondual orientation in psychotherapy (Bodian, 2003; Prendergast, 2003). Prendergast cautioned that nondual wisdom could not be defined as a technique, but could be regarded as an

experience of the therapist and the way the therapist meets the client. However, for the purposes of this study, Self-inquiry was discussed as a technique in order to ascertain its benefits.

Psychotherapists interested in incorporating Eastern traditions into Western psychotherapy have begun to use nondual wisdom traditions (Prendergast et al., 2003). In *The Sacred Mirror* Prendergast et al. (2003) highlighted the healing effects of subjective awareness. An orientation towards nonduality refers to the capacity of the therapist to (a) reflect the client's essential nature and (b) hold or move their own locus of identity in or towards, respectively, an experience of subjective awareness. Prendergast et al (2003) described the psychotherapist with a nondual orientation as one who could allow whatever arose to be present without an agenda between the therapist and client; the therapist would demonstrate transparency, clarity, and warm acceptance. The therapist would direct the client's attention to awareness, and the client might then experience openness and awakening. In using Self-inquiry in a therapeutic context, Prendergast et al. (2003) stated:

To emphasize the insubstantial, non-locatable nature of these stories and cognitions, I also asked questions such as: Where is your depression right now? Can you show it to me? How do you know it exists? (p. 8)

The focus of therapy is usually on solving problems. However, in nondual therapy the therapist meets clients where they are with no agenda or goal of "solving" anything. Through an inquiry into the problem, clients discover that their problems are outcomes and compensatory expressions of their conditioning

throughout life. Individuals create suffering for themselves and others by thinking, feeling, and acting as if they were not worthy.

**Bodian's model.** Bodian (2003) offered a new model of using Self-inquiry in psychotherapy: "In the process they <clients> gradually 'deconstruct the self' they have spent their whole lives constructing. As they let go of old ideas of who they think they are, they have an opportunity to experience who they really are" (p. 229). Bodian's approach does not use a protocol or agenda; rather, the process unfolds spontaneously. He explained the purpose of inquiry in a nondual approach to psychotherapy as "revealing the concepts, stories, and beliefs that cause suffering, knowing that once they are recognized for what they are, rather than taken to be true, suffering and conflict will spontaneously disperse" (p. 238). The therapist, Bodian elaborated, often feels a discrepancy between a client's interpretation of a situation or event and the reality of that situation or event.

The client's discrepant beliefs, in Bodian's model, are rooted in a constructed self-image, which is the root of all suffering in nondual wisdom traditions. The truth of the situation or event is revealed when the client and therapist sit together, "opening to a shared resonant space." (Prendergast et al., 2003, p. 240). Bodian cautioned that although the nondual approach seemed gentle, a client's ego could resist in order to avoid the direct experience of emptiness. Once clients encountered emptiness, however, they often felt whole and had a "sense of laughter, relief, and gratitude" (Prendergast et al., 2003, p. 240).

*Rothberg's categories of inquiry.* Rothberg, as cited by Bodian (2003), developed three categories of inquiry: systematic contemplation, radical inquiry, and critical deconstruction. The first category of inquiry, systematic contemplation or “being with an experience” (p. 235), is the foundation of a nondual approach. The therapist guides the client away from interpretation of a feeling, event, or situation, and towards the bodily felt experience. ““Being with’ is the nature of reality itself, since as I mentioned earlier, consciousness, or awareness, and its object are one” (p. 241).

The second category of inquiry is radical inquiry. Direct questions are asked such as “Who are you?” and “Is there anything missing right now?” In this process, clients develop a sense that their problems are not as real as they originally appeared to be. The purpose of a radical inquiry question is to challenge the sense of a separate self and the existence of the problems that clients present in therapy sessions. These questions point to the background awareness that is the ultimate nature of the Self.

The third category of inquiry is critical deconstruction—issues are questioned as they arise. The Work is an example of critical deconstruction. A sense of identify is constructed from the core story; when the story is challenged, and its reality is questioned, “clients may feel at once extremely disoriented, profoundly liberated, and shaken to the ‘core’” (Prendergast et al., 2003, p. 243). When stories and beliefs lose their validity, the self-construct starts to disintegrate, and the client may experience subjective awareness.

*Bodian's case study of therapeutic Self-inquiry.* In *The Sacred Mirror*, therapist Stephen Bodian illustrated the process of Self-inquiry in a case study of Mary, a client who presented with depression and suicidal ideation. Mary, in her late 50s, was urged by her husband to see a therapist. In her 20s, she reported, she had an experience of her essential nature that remained for about 10 days; she described it as being accompanied by a sense of deep peace and joy. Mary was angry with everyone around her and with herself over her perception that her life was "such a mess." It appeared that in her childhood, with a father who berated her and a neglectful mother, she seemed to turn her anger against herself to try to win approval from others. Her self-hatred was intense, and she felt that her only solution was to kill herself. She attempted suicide but called her husband for help before succeeding.

Mary's therapist, Bodian, instead of working with the stories of self-hatred, guided Mary to be with her experience and notice how it felt in her body. He helped her to track her sensations, as one does in mindfulness meditation, and to articulate her thoughts and feelings. During this process, Mary began to regain the peace and joy she had experienced in her 20s. Bodian inquired into her stories: "Is it really true that you're such an awful person? Is it really true that nobody loves you? Who would you be without these stories?" He helped her discriminate between what she projected onto reality and reality itself. As the stories and beliefs started to dissolve, Mary experienced the sensation of a radiant presence.

Through Self-inquiry work, the beliefs that held Mary's self and world construct system together began to loosen their hold, and she realized that her

rigid beliefs were causing her suffering. She also believed that she would have to “work through” the anger of her unresolved issues in order to experience happiness. She had used suicidal ideation to deal with feeling overwhelmed by her belief that she needed to work through her unresolved problems.

Using the process of radical inquiry strengthened Mary’s realization that her problems were the constructions of her mind; her problems did not exist when she stopped investing them with psychic energy and identification. Within six months her symptoms had been stabilized and her feeling of agitated depression had changed into a feeling of calm.

Stephen Bodian summarized that once clients like Mary recognize and directly experience the deeper silence, spaciousness, and peace beyond the mind’s chatter, they have difficulty believing their old stories again. Psychotherapists may argue that this approach is “spiritual by-passing” (Prendergast et al., 2003, p. 235), but Bodian suggested problems may be compounded by over-indulgence in stories. Clients may construct stories about themselves without challenging the construct of the self. Self-inquiry has potential for therapeutic effect from the dismantling of the apparent, constructed self. A nondual approach to therapy offers clients the opportunity to wake up from the dream of being a separate self with problems and to recognize the presence and space wherein their problems may arise and pass way.

**Prendergast’s protocol for Self-inquiry.** John Prendergast, editor and an author of *The Sacred Mirror* (2003), works with the process of Self-inquiry in his psychotherapy practice. He has devised a protocol to be used with most clients

that gives them an experience of relief from suffering (Appendix D). The protocol includes the primary Self-inquiry question, “Who am I?” to point to the awareness and spaciousness of direct experience while also deconstructing self-judgment. The result is most often a felt experience in an individual’s constructed view of self and world. I will discuss Prendergast’s protocol for using Self-inquiry in therapy to illustrate the process.

A client is asked to identify a self-judgment and all associated feelings, sensations, and thoughts. The client identifies the judgment in one sentence by picturing it written on a billboard; many clients have not experienced an observer as part of their experience. At this point the question is asked, “Who is observing this judgment?” to enable the client to detach from the judgment along with having an experience of spaciousness. Prendergast et al. (2003) wrote “This is a powerful, delicate, surprising, and sometimes disorienting question for clients who have never turned their attention to the apparent ‘experiencer’” (p. 10). They added:

Sometimes the whole sense of there being a problem falls away at this point as the thought is seen to be what is it—a mental construct without any inherent validity. What is left is a sense of spacious openness. If there is a big opening, take your time and encourage your clients to relax into it before you go on. The rest of the inquiry process may become irrelevant at this point. (p. 11)

The therapist ends the protocol with the experience of the client. Many clients report a shift in their felt experience and a loosening of their mental construct of their self-judgment.

**Fenner’s Self-inquiry as deconstructive conversations.** Typically, when we listen to others we believe the stories they tell about themselves are true and



have meaning. Therapists can, however, break through the illusion that the stories are true. Fenner (2003) described Self-inquiry in terms of conversations.

“Deconstructive conversations dismantle the foundations of our conceptual constructions and thereby allow us to experience the unstructured mind. They penetrate the seeming reality of feelings, emotions, and sensations in a way that dissolves their existence” (p. 115). Such conversations reverse the process of linear, one-directional conversations.

Fenner proposed that the same analysis to conversations in the therapeutic context would also suggest the problems could not be real. Psychotherapists listen to a client’s story from conditioned awareness, and as a result, the client’s painful feelings may become held as a real and important part of that person’s story. However, if the therapist approaches the problem from a more expansive viewpoint, clients may begin to see their problems as more illusory and may find they can move through their feelings more easily.

The therapist’s role is to stay engaged but slightly detached from the story; in this way the therapist models the role of observer for clients to emulate. From the perspective of observer, clients can notice their own role in “constructing” the story; the story may begin to appear less credible.

**Psychosynthesis and Self-inquiry.** Dr. Roberto Assagiolo (1965), the founder of psychosynthesis in the field of psychology, promoted a natural way of achieving harmony in oneself and in the world. He said, “We are dominated by everything with which our self becomes identified. We can dominate, direct, and utilize everything from which we disidentify ourselves” (p. 5). Individuals can

experience the I or being self-conscious after first recognizing that the content of consciousness is not consciousness itself: “If we are to make self-consciousness explicit, clear, and vivid, we must first disidentify ourselves from the contents of our consciousness” (p. 10).

Some people are identified with their bodies, others with their feelings, and some with their minds. Most people identify with the roles they have in the world, such as mother, teacher, and intellectual. Over identification with one function or role leads to neglect of a full range of experience and the potential for an existential crisis. When the Self is neglected, the contents of awareness are veiled or clouded. Assagioli (1965) described an exercise that is helpful for developing awareness of all functions and for identifying or disidentifying with the functions as appropriate. (Adyashanti’s process of differentiation is similar to this exercise.) Assagioli’s exercise for disidentifying/identifying also facilitates an understanding of the true Self underlying all the functions.

Put your body in a relaxed position, and slowly take a few deep breaths. Then make the following affirmation thoughtfully: “I have a body but I am not my body. My body may find itself in different conditions of health or sickness, it may be rested or tired, but that has nothing to do with my self, my real I. I value my body as my precious instrument of experience and of action in the outer world, but it is only an instrument. I treat it well, I seek to keep it in good health, but it is not myself. I have a body but I am not my body.”

Close your eyes and recall this affirmation in your consciousness and realize, “I have a body but I am not my body” as an experienced fact. Open your eyes and proceed the same way with the next two stages: “I have emotions but I am not my emotions. My emotions are diversified, changing, sometimes contradictory. They may swing from love to hatred, from calm to anger, from joy to sorrow, and yet my essence—my true nature—does not change. ‘I’ remain. Though a wave of anger may temporarily submerge me, I know that it will pass in time; therefore I am not this anger. Since I can observe and understand my emotions, and then

gradually learn to direct, utilize and integrate them harmoniously, it is clear that they are not myself. I have emotions but I am not my emotions.”

“I have a mind but I am not my mind. My mind is valuable tool of discovery and expression, but is is not essence of my being. Its contents are constantly changing as it embraces new ideas, knowledge, and experience. Often it refuses to obey me! Therefore, it cannot be me my self. It is an organ of knowledge in regard to both the outer and inner worlds, it is not my self. I have a mind, but I am not my mind.”

Then comes identification: “After the dis-identification of myself, the ‘I’ from the contents of consciousness, such as sensations, emotions, thoughts, I recognize and affirm that I am a center of pure self-consciousness. I am a center of will, capable of observing, directing and using all my psychological processes and my physical body.”

Focus your attention on the central realization: “I am a center of pure self-consciousness and of will.” The exercise may be shortened after central themes of the experiential realization have been integrated.  
[paraphrased from pp. 150-152]

One should then consider the process of self-identification more deeply

Assagioli (1965):

Ask, “What am I then? What remains after having disidentified myself from my body, my sensations, my feelings, my desires, my mind, my actions? It is the essence of myself—a center of pure self-consciousness. It is the permanent factor in the ever varying flow of my personal life. It is that which gives me a sense of being, of permanence, of inner balance. I affirm my identity with this center and realize its permanency and its energy. Pause briefly. “I recognize and affirm myself as a center of pure self-awareness and of creative, dynamic energy. I realize that from this center of true identity I can learn to observe, direct, and harmonize all the psychological processes and the physical body. I will to achieve a constant awareness of this fact in the midst of my everyday life, and to use it to help me and give increasing meaning and direction to my life.” (pp. 150 – 152)

One can, at will, disidentify from anything in one’s experience and from the standpoint of a detached observer, gain a clearer understanding of the situation and its meaning.

### **Effects of Self-Inquiry on the Brain**

Hanson and Mendius, (2007), authors of Wisebrain.org, explored psychology, neurology, and contemplative practices to create skillful means for wisdom, happiness, effectiveness, and love. In an article called “The Buddha’s Brain: The Neuroscience and the Path of Awakening” the authors described the changes in brain activation from the mental activity of meditation. One change is an increase in serotonin and dopamine, the neurotransmitter that helps regulate mood and sleep.

Another article, “The Neurology of Awareness and Self” (Hanson & Mendius, 2007), discussed the effect of consciousness and awareness on the brain and nervous system. Consciousness is represented in neural structures resting in the brain stem and the neo-cortex, structures that are responsible for sensing the internal state of the body. The parasympathetic nervous system is activated by this awareness, which brings feelings of safety, calm, and a sense of well-being. The authors summarized that the brain is programmed to aid survival, but the survival structure inherently leads to suffering since it is meant to protect. The core programming involves a sense of separation between the organism and world, identification with body, anxiety concerning survival, a constant search for stability, the pursuit of pleasure, and avoidance of pain. All these genetic and biological reasons inherently keep us from witnessing ourselves as subjective awareness. By questioning these human tendencies we can open to something deeper that enables us to experience more peace and joy.

## **Meditation and Mood States**

As stated earlier, there has not been any formal research conducted on Self-inquiry. A technique similar to Self-inquiry is meditation, and the meditation research is extensive. Meditation “describes a state of concentrated attention on some object of thought or awareness. It usually involves turning the attention inward to a single point of reference” (Murphy & Donovan, 2004). Self-inquiry is the use of words to point to the experience of subjective awareness. Self-inquiry could be considered a practice of meditation, so the effects of meditation on feeling states may be inferred to have a similar outcome to that of Self-inquiry. There is extensive research on the effects of meditation on emotional states such as anxiety and depression. Meditation has been widely researched over the past few decades. A recent comprehensive book *The Physical and Psychological Effects of Meditation* published by the Institute of Noetic Sciences (IONS) (Murphy & Donovan, 2004) includes a review of the research pertaining to meditation. In reviewing the hundreds of studies on meditation, the authors determined that many of the studies resulted in positive psychological and physiological outcomes.

There has been significant interest in the value of meditation as a practice in the treatment of anxiety, as shown by many of the studies by Kabat-Zinn (Murphy & Donovan, 2004). In one study, the treatment groups showed a significant pretest to posttest decrease for both state and trait anxiety. When the treatment groups were compared relative to the efficacy of the follow-up practice sessions, it was found that the practice group continued to show a decrease in

state anxiety. The non-practice group returned toward baseline levels of state anxiety. However, trait anxiety continued to decrease for both groups (Murphy & Donovan, 2004). The study found significant reduction in anxiety and depression scores, and a reduction in panic symptoms after treatment for many of the subjects. We can infer that the effects of Self-inquiry may have a similar effect on depression and anxiety.

Kabat-Zinn (1992) conducted a similar study, researching the effectiveness of a meditation-based stress reduction program on the treatment of anxiety disorders with 22 participants with generalized anxiety disorder or panic disorder with or without agoraphobia. The results demonstrated significant reduction in anxiety and depression scores after treatment for 20 of the subjects. The changes were maintained after the follow-up period. The conclusion yielded that meditation reduced symptoms of anxiety and panic disorder and that the reduction of these symptoms were maintained..

In the study by Stern, 1997, (Murphy & Donovan, 2004), the Spielberger's Trait Anxiety Scale was administered to an experimental group of 37 subjects practicing the transcendental meditation technique, and the scale was given to 15 subjects in the control group. The meditation group was considerably less anxious than the non-meditation group. Another study by Shapiro 1976 (Murphy & Donovan, 2004) indicated a significant decrease in daily feelings of anxiety and stress during the intervention.

The feeling of bliss is another outcome resulting from the practice of meditation. A study by West, 1980 (Murphy & Donovan, 2004) said his subjects

used the following terms to describe their meditative state: feelings of quiet, calmness, peace, pleasant feelings, warm contentedness, and relaxation beyond thought, and a feeling of being suspended in deep warmth. Kornfield study, 1979 (Murphy & Donovan, 2004) said rapture and bliss states are common at insight meditation retreats and are usually related to increased concentration and tranquility. A study by Farrow, 1977 (Murphy & Donovan, 2004) said that during the deepest phases of meditation, his subjects reported that thinking settled down to a state of pure awareness or unbounded bliss accompanied by prolonged periods of almost no breathing. Self-inquiry is likely to evoke a similar experience, and the meditation research is the foundation for a similar hypothesis for the results of Self-inquiry.

### **One-Session Therapy**

Self-inquiry may be a useful technique in single-session psychotherapy. Some therapists have viewed a single session of psychotherapy as adequate for most people (Goleman, 1991). A client's motivation is typically highest at the first session. Bobele, a leading advocate of the technique and a professor of psychology at Our Lady of the Lake University in San Antonio, Texas, suggested that therapists capitalize on the first session therapeutically (Flora, 1998). Psychotherapists who use brief psychotherapy avoid discussing clients' past and present lives; instead, single-session therapists empower clients by generating a few simple solutions;

In recent research, 200 patients who had consulted a therapist once at a California prepaid medical plan were called several months later; 78% reported

satisfaction from the single session and felt better about their problem (Talmon, 1980). Another study (Talmon, 1980) suggested that two-thirds of clients completing a single therapy session were helped. Of those who consult a therapist, approximately 40% may never return after the initial session. A single session is most helpful when a person has faith that their issues can be addressed in a brief intervention.

### **Summary of Literature Review**

The literature review established the need for an experimental study concerning Self-inquiry and its effects on mood states; no peer-reviewed literature was found. In addition the review established: the relevance of nondual wisdom traditions to Self-inquiry and mood states, the potential of Self-inquiry practice as a psychotherapeutic tool, the relationship of meditation and Self-inquiry, and the positive effect of meditation on mood. Furthermore, the review established the benefits of single-session therapy and the potential of Self-inquiry as a single-session modality. Next, Chapter 3 will detail the methodology employed to examine the effects of a single session of Self-inquiry practice on mood states.



## Chapter 3

### Methods and Procedures

Chapter 1 introduced the concept of Self-inquiry as a practice from nondual wisdom traditions. Chapter 2 explored the topic of Self-inquiry as a psychotherapeutic tool to enhance emotional balance and self-understanding. Chapter 3 will present the methods used to collect, analyze, and interpret the data in this study. Topics will include participant characteristics, sampling procedures, setting, sample size considerations, measures, and the research design.

Philosophical literature has addressed Self-inquiry as a meditation practice, and psychological literature has described practitioners' experiences with Self-inquiry as a therapeutic tool. Researchers, however, have not addressed the effect of Self-inquiry on mood. Research has demonstrated the significant effect of meditation on mood, and inasmuch as Self-inquiry is a form of meditation, I expected similar, positive effects of Self-inquiry on mood.

*Hypothesis 1* is: Self-inquiry practice by participants will result in improved moods as measured by the Profile of Mood States (POMS) inventory.

*Hypothesis 2* is: Improvement in moods will be significantly greater for the treatment group, Self-inquiry, as compared to the control group.

The primary aim of this study was to investigate the potential for using Self-inquiry practice as an effective tool in psychotherapy. To determine whether the practice of Self-inquiry would have a favorable effect on mood states, this study employed a random assignment, two-group pretest-treatment-posttest design. The treatment was listening to a 20-minute recording of Self-inquiry

meditation led by a contemporary spiritual teacher, Adyashanti. The control condition was listening to a 20-minute recording of nature sounds. Selecting the participants was an important design aspect of this treatment effectiveness research.

## **Participants**

**Characteristics.** The 34 participants were community members ( $n = 18$ ) or university students ( $n = 16$ ) from a large, urban city located in the western United States. The Self-inquiry experimental group included 24 participants (11 females and 13 males, average age 39.58, age range 21–72, one African American, 1 Asian American, and 16 Caucasians). The Nature Sounds control group included 10 participants (3 females and 7 males, average age 43.4, age range 22–64, 1 African American, 8 Caucasians, and 2 Hispanics). The age, gender, and race/ethnicity data for each participant are in Table 1 in Chapter 4.

**Sample selection and setting.** Both self-selection and purposive sampling were used. Settings for data collection included a private office, public yoga studio, and university classrooms. Sessions were held evenings or afternoons.

In the first three trials, participants self-selected by responding to recruitment announcements posted at Craigslist, an online community website for specific urban areas. The only criteria for an individual to participate was the minimum required age of 18. In the first two trials, 60 individuals responded to the Craigslist notice, and 45 committed to participating. Only 6 participants arrived at each of the two sessions. In other words, approximately 70% of confirmed participants failed to keep their appointments. These initial 12

participants represented wide variations in age, race/ethnicity, and personal presentation. Both sessions were held in a private office. After I considered the size limitation of the private office and the advantages of a public venue, the setting protocol was modified to include a yoga studio and university classrooms.

In the third trial, which was held in a yoga studio, 6 individuals participated. Given that three consecutive trials had 25% or fewer of the expected participants, the need for a sample with higher turnout rates than Craigslist alone was evident. Accordingly, the sample selection protocol was modified to add a purposive sample of participants who were interested in Eastern wisdom traditions. I reasoned that participants with an interest in the topic of the study would have higher rates of follow through.

For the fourth, fifth, and sixth trials, a purposive sample was selected from respondents to the online or onsite recruitment announcements posted at a private university that emphasized Eastern philosophical studies. Of 40 individuals who responded, 30 were confirmed, and 16 participated. The sessions were held in university classrooms.

**Sample size and random assignment sequence.** A power analysis was used to determine the target sample size of 60 participants—30 in each group. Of 100 individuals who responded, 75 confirmed they would participate. The random assignment sequence for the seventy-five participants was alternating assignment to the experimental or control group in the same order in which they confirmed. Of 75 participants confirmed and assigned to experimental or control groups, 34

actually followed through and participated. As a result, the treatment and control groups were unequal sizes, 24 and 10, respectively.

### **Treatment**

The treatment variable was listening to a 20-minute recording of Self-inquiry meditation. The two criteria for selecting a recording were clarity of instruction and alignment of the instruction with my understanding of Self-inquiry as a nondual wisdom practice. I considered recordings of Self-inquiry instruction produced by numerous spiritual teachers and chose one from *True Meditation* by Adyashanti (2006). Among groups and individuals familiar with nondual wisdom traditions, Adyashanti is a well-regarded spiritual teacher.

In the recording, Adyashanti (2006) instructs listeners, “An attitude of open receptivity, free of any goal or anticipation, will facilitate the presence of silence and stillness to be revealed as your natural condition” (Adyashanti, 2006, track 3). Participants in the experimental group were guided through a process of differentiating the objects of their awareness—their thoughts, feelings, beliefs, sensations, personality—from awareness itself. To differentiate their experiences, participants asked themselves, “Who am I?” repeatedly. Adyashanti teaches that upon one’s realization that all experiences are separate from subjective awareness, all that remains is subjective awareness. He directs listeners to relax into and listen with the awareness so that “the mind’s compulsive contraction around objects will fade.” (Adyashanti, 2006)

### **Control Variable**

The control variable was listening to a 20-minute recording of nature sounds, such as birds, rain, and a light thunderstorm. The *Awakened Mind* by The Relaxation Company (Thompson, 2003) was engineered to produce a relaxing effect. The sounds were scored using alpha-theta brainwave pulses.

Two criteria were used to select the control variable: administration time equivalent to the experimental group, 20 minutes, and a neutral effect on mood. Other options considered but rejected were sitting in silence or listening to music for 20 minutes. Some participants may have had difficulty sitting in silence for 20 minutes, which could have resulted in an adverse effect on their mood. Listening to music could have had either a positive or negative effect on a participant's mood. Listening to a recording of nature sounds seemed unlikely to cause either a positive or negative effect on mood.

### **Instruments**

**Profile of Mood States (POMS).** The instrument used to measure the dependent variable, mood, was the Profile of Mood States (McNair, Lohr & Droppleman, 1971). The 65-item inventory, which is based on analytically derived factors, assesses six dimensions or subfactors of transient and identifiable mood or affective states. The subfactors grouping individual moods are tension-anxiety, depression-dejection, anger-hostility, vigor-activity, fatigue-inertia, and confusion-bewilderment. Items of each subfactor are included in Table 4 in Chapter 4. Since 1971, numerous research studies have provided evidence for the

predictive and construct validity of the POMS (McNair, Lohr & Droppleman, 1971).

To assure the POMS would be an accurate instrument for this study, statistical analyses were performed for test-retest reliability and internal consistency. Internal consistency for each subscale, pretest and posttest, was determined using Cronbach's alpha, which ranged from .87 to .96 (Table 2). Test-retest reliability for the six subscales ranged from .53 to .89 (Table 3, see Appendix A). Reliability of at least .70 is considered acceptable. The POMS is attached in Appendix D. Completion time for the paper-and-pencil inventory is approximately 10 minutes.

Participants completed the POMS before and after listening to the recording for their study condition. The instructions ask respondents to identify their present feeling by using a five-point Likert scale for each affective state: one as not at all, two as a little, three as moderate, four as quite a bit, and five as extremely.

**Qualitative questionnaire.** Another assessment of the dependent variable, mood, was a researcher-created questionnaire with four open-ended questions pretest and two open-ended question posttest. The self-report assessment was in a paper-and-pencil format and could be completed in approximately 5 minutes. The questions were designed to support the quantitative results as ancillary information. Three categories of qualitative data were collected from the questions. First, participants' responses provided additional description regarding their moods and feelings before and after listening to the recordings. Second,

participants' responses indicated if their mood during the study was consistent with their mood on most days. Lastly, participants described experiences they may have had with any type of Eastern practice (see Appendix G).

### **Procedures**

The study was conducted with a total of 34 participants who attended one of the six trials—four for the Self-inquiry experimental group and two for the control group. Trials were held on four dates between June and October 2009. Prior to each trial, recruitment announcements were posted, study applicants were qualified, and participants were confirmed. Trials were held afternoon or evening hours in a private practice office, yoga studio, or university classroom setting. Upon completing the study, participants received compensation of \$10.00 in the form of cash.

Sixty individuals in the self-select sample responded to recruitment announcements (see Appendix E) posted online at Craigslist within the part-time jobs and the events sections. I sent the respondents an email with details of the study, a request for them to verify they were age 18 or older, and a request for them to commit to the date and time of the study. Of 60 interested individuals, 45 committed to the first date and time of the study, June 2009.

Trials 1 and 2 in June 2009 were held at a private office during evening hours; six participants attended the experimental group, and six attended the control group. Trial 3 took place in September 2009 at a yoga studio during afternoon hours, and six participants attended the experimental group. After three trials with 18 participants, 12 in the experimental group and six in the control

group, the protocol for sample selection was modified to include a purposive sample from a private university with an Eastern studies emphasis. Subsequently, 40 individuals in the purposive sample responded to online or onsite recruitment announcements posted at the university, 30 confirmed, and 16 participated.

Trials 4 and 5 were held at a university classroom during the evening hours; 12 participants attended in the experimental group. Trial 6 in October 2009 was held at a university classroom during evening hours; four participants attended in the control group.

The agenda for each trial was consistent. First, participants were instructed to get into a comfortable seated position, either in chairs or on the floor depending on the study venue. Second, participants completed an informed consent document (Appendix H) after I reviewed the content and answered questions. The document described the study, the risks and benefits, the participant's right to leave the study at any time, and the contact information for the researcher. Third, each participant completed the POMS inventory of moods and the qualitative questionnaire, along with their demographic information. Fourth, experimental group participants listened to the 20-minute recording of Self-inquiry meditation, which was played through speakers on a small stereo; the control group participants listened to the 20-minute recording of nature, which was played through speakers on a small stereo. Fifth, after participants listened to the recording for their group, they completed the POMS inventory of moods again and the qualitative questionnaire to describe their moods in greater detail. Last,



participants were thanked and compensated for their time with \$10.00 in the form of cash.

### **Summary**

Chapter 3 presented the methods employed to collect, analyze, and interpret the data relevant to the study hypotheses. Namely, Self-inquiry practice would have a positive effect on mood, and that the effect would be statistically significant. I selected a research design—random assignment, pretest-posttest with a control group—that could demonstrate a causal relationship between a treatment (Self-inquiry) and its effect (mood). Nonetheless, the sensitivity of this design for detecting an effect is dependent, in large part, upon the sample: its size, composition, and distribution between groups, for example. Although modifications were made in the sample selection protocol part way through this study, sample issues remained an issue. Chapter 4 will present details of how the data were analyzed and interpreted. Chapter 5 will conclude this dissertation study with a discussion of the results and their implications.

## Chapter 4

### Results and Findings

The participants ( $n = 34$ ) in the study included 24 individuals in the Self-inquiry experimental group and 10 individuals in the Nature sounds control group. Their race/ethnicity, age, gender are included in Table 1. There were a total of six trials, four trials consisting of the Self-inquiry treatment, and two control trials.

Table 1

*Participant Characteristics*

Participant	Race	Age	Gender	Condition
1	C	56	F	Self-Inquiry
2	C	37	M	Self-Inquiry
3	C	31	F	Self-Inquiry
4	C	72	M	Self-Inquiry
5	H	22	M	Self-Inquiry
6	C	63	M	Self-Inquiry
7	C	38	F	Self-Inquiry
8	A	39	M	Self-Inquiry
9	Af	42	M	Self-Inquiry
10	H	44	F	Self-Inquiry
11	C	30	F	Self-Inquiry
12	C	25	M	Self-Inquiry
13	C	29	M	Self-Inquiry
14	C	39	M	Self-Inquiry
15	C	44	F	Self-Inquiry
16	C	32	M	Self-Inquiry
17	C	30	F	Self-Inquiry
18	A	46	M	Self-Inquiry

19	A	24	F	Self-Inquiry
20	A	21	M	Self-Inquiry
21	C	51	F	Self-Inquiry
22	C	42	F	Self-Inquiry
23	C	52	F	Self-Inquiry
24	H	41	M	Self-Inquiry
1	A	42	M	Nature/Control
2	H	28	M	Nature/Control
3	C	22	F	Nature/Control
4	C	40	M	Nature/Control
5	C	64	M	Nature/Control
6	C	51	M	Nature/Control
7	C	44	M	Nature/Control
8	C	55	M	Nature/Control
9	C	44	F	Nature/Control
10	C	44	F	Nature/Control

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*Note.* C = Caucasian; A = Asian; Af = African American; H = Hispanic.

### **Reliability Analysis: Profile of Mood States**

The Profile of Mood States inventory was used to measure the participant's mood state before and after the treatment. A reliability analysis was conducted to insure the instrument performed well for the present sample. Since every item in the scale is purported to measure the same underlying construct, I would expect the items to be positively correlated and strongly correlated.

**Cronbach's alpha for internal consistency.** Reliability was measured using Cronbach's alpha, a measure of reliability of the internal consistency of the scale based on raw scores (Table 2). Alpha is a function of the number of items in the scale and the average correlation between the items that make up the scale. Of

two scales with the same mean inter-item correlation, the scale with the largest number of items will have the larger alpha. The most commonly accepted minimum value of alpha to establish the reliability of a scale is an alpha of  $\alpha = .70$ ; all of the Cronbach alphas for this study exceed the traditional criterion of 0.70 (see Table 2 and Table 3; the latter is in Appendix A).

Table 2

*Cronbach alphas ( $\alpha$ ) for Each Subscale at Pretest and Posttest*

Emotional factor	Pretest	Posttest
Tension-Anxiety	0.87	0.92
Depression-Dejection	0.96	0.96
Anger-Hostility	0.90	0.92
Confusion-Bewilderment	0.81	0.75
Fatigue	0.89	0.90
Vigor	0.89	0.91

### **Quantitative Results**

The pretest and posttest mood states were analyzed in a few different ways while considering the individual mood states for both groups, and also looking at the six subfactors comprising the individual mood states for both groups. The first step was to compare the baseline scores for both groups. Then the scores within each group were compared, and the means between groups were compared after the treatment. The posttest is also reported. The t-tests are reported to determine the statistical significance of the various subfactors per group.

**Baseline group similarity.** The pretest results between the mean scores of Self-inquiry and control conditions are reported to be within a respectable range (Table 4). This is an important component for any design to demonstrate that the two groups at baseline are similar to each other, and meet a random selection before exposure to the treatment. The largest differences between groups, which are still very small comparatively, are between the following individual moods: “on-edge,” “restless,” “lonely,” and “deceived.” For example, the mean score for the mood “on-edge” is reported larger for the control than the Self-inquiry group. Again, this is the largest difference, with most of the other 60 individual moods rated much closer between the groups at baseline before the treatment and control.

Table 4

*Pre-Test Comparison Between Groups*

Factor	Pretest item	Mean Self-inquiry	Mean Control	Difference
Tension – Anxiety	Tense	2.13	2.50	0.37
	Shaky	1.71	1.50	0.09
	On Edge	1.79	2.30	0.51
	Panicky	1.50	1.50	0.00
	Uneasy	1.46	1.50	0.04
	Restless	1.79	2.30	0.51
	Nervous	1.83	1.60	0.20
	Anxious	2.17	2.10	0.07
	Uncertain	2.13	2.50	0.37
Fatigue	Terrified	1.21	1.50	0.29
	Worn Out	2.13	2.00	0.13
	Listless	1.52	1.40	0.12

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	Fatigued	1.92	2.30	0.38
	Exhausted	1.375	1.90	0.53
	Sluggish	1.79	1.90	0.11
	Bushed	1.54	1.80	0.26
Vigor	Lively	2.79	2.90	0.11
	Active	2.88	2.70	0.18
	Energetic	2.88	2.70	0.18
	Cheerful	3.04	2.70	0.34
	Alert	3.17	3.10	0.60
	Full of pep	2.33	2.50	0.17
	Carefree	2.40	2.70	0.30
	Vigorous	2.58	2.20	0.38
Depression – Dejection	Unhappy	1.48	1.60	0.12
	Sorry things	1.91	2.10	0.20
	Sad	1.54	1.70	0.16
	Blue	1.54	1.80	0.26
	Hopeless	1.54	1.40	0.14
	Unworthy	1.88	1.60	0.28
	Discouraged	1.63	1.90	0.27
	Lonely	1.83	2.30	0.47
	Miserable	1.42	1.40	0.02
	Gloomy	1.54	1.50	0.04
	Helpless	1.54	1.60	0.06
	Worthless	1.50	1.40	0.10
	Terrified	1.21	1.50	0.29
	Guilty	1.71	1.60	0.11
Anger – Hostility	Angry	1.25	1.20	0.05
	Peeved	1.43	1.30	0.13
	Grouchy	1.50	1.80	0.30
	Spiteful	1.29	1.40	0.11
	Annoyed	1.50	1.90	0.40
	Resentful	1.50	1.70	0.20
	Bitter	1.38	1.70	0.32
	Rebellious	1.87	1.80	0.07

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	Deceived	1.25	1.70	0.45
	Furious	1.17	1.30	0.13
	Bad Tempered	1.20	1.50	0.30
Confusion – Bewilderment	Confused	1.67	1.80	0.13
	Unable conc	1.71	1.60	0.11
	Muddled	1.63	1.40	0.23
	Bewildered	1.26	1.90	0.36
	Effacious	1.95	1.88	0.07

The scores of the subfactors, consisting of related words, were also compared for the pretests, and the scores are within a similar range. The subscales were computed by adding the ratings of each of the individual moods for each subscale. There is a higher score for the control group with the subfactor Tense-Anxiety showing a larger increase than the other subfactors. Most of the other subfactors indicate a small difference between the two pretest groups (Table 5).

Table 5

*Distribution Composite Scores–Pretest*

Subscale	Self-Inquiry			Control		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>95% CI</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>95% CI</i>
Tension– Anxiety	17.70	5.99	15.18- 20.24	19.30	8.18	13.45- 25.15
Depression- Dejection	21.82	11.70	16.63- 27.00	22.20	10.96	14.36- 30.04
Anger- Hostility	16.41	5.92	13.79- 19.03	18.40	8.82	12.09- 24.71
Confusion- Bewilderment	8.39	3.86	6.72- 10.06	8.30	3.77	5.60- 11.00
Fatigue	14.22	5.87	11.68- 16.76	14.60	7.14	9.49- 19.70
Vigor	51.23	10.24	46.69- 55.77	47.37	5.52	42.75- 52.00

*Note.* *M* = Mean; *SD* = Standard Deviation, *CI* = Confidence Interval

**Intragroup comparison.** The next comparison is the mean scores within each group from the pretest to posttest (Table 6). When comparing the changes in favorable mood, which is a decrease in negative moods and an increase in positive moods, there were 36 total favorable mood changes for Self-inquiry, and 17 for the control group.

***Self-inquiry experimental group.*** The mean score for the Self-inquiry group shows the largest decrease for the individual moods: “tense,” “nervous,” “anxious,” “unworthy,” “bad-tempered.” This reveals that Self-inquiry is associated with a stronger decrease in these moods more than other moods. The largest increase is in the individual moods “energetic,” “carefree,” “bewildered”. Self-inquiry is associated with a larger increase in these individual moods more than the other moods. When looking at the subfactor analysis, the largest decrease is in Depression-Dejection subscale, and the only increase is in the Vigor subscale.

***Nature sounds control group.*** The control group reveals the largest decrease from the pretest to posttest of the individual moods: “tense,” “on edge,” “fatigued,” “hopeless,” “discouraged.” The largest increase is for moods: “energetic,” “alert,” “peeved,” “rebellious.” In considering the control group, there is a decrease in the Depression-Dejection subscale, while the largest increase is in the Vigor subscale.

**Intergroup comparison.** In comparing the effects of the Self-inquiry group and the control group, the difference between the mean scores from pretest to posttest in Table 6. In considering the variation of the pretest and posttest means between the Self-inquiry and control group, only a few individual moods



demonstrate large differences. The moods “forgetful,” “carefree,” and “bewildered” also increased by a considerable amount in the Self-inquiry group, with virtually no change in the control group. The mood “anxious”, “nervous” and bad-tempered decreased by a large amount for the Self-inquiry group, and increased a little for “anxious” with no change for “nervous” for the control group, indicating Self-inquiry shows a significant decrease in “anxious” and “nervous.”.

Table 6

*Result of Mean Pretest to Posttest*

Factor	Item	Self-inquiry	Control
Tension–Anxiety	Tense	Decrease .80	Decrease 1.1
	Shaky	Decrease .33	Increase .1
	On Edge	Decrease .25	Decrease .4
	Panicky	Decrease .38	Decrease .1
	Uneasy	No Change	Decrease .04
	Restless	Decrease .33	Decrease .3
	Nervous	Decrease .62	No Change
	Anxious	Decrease .67	Increase .2
	Uncertain	Decrease .17	No Change
	Terrified	Increase .01	No Change
Fatigue	Worn Out	Decrease .46	Decrease .2
	Listless	Decrease .04	Increase .2
	Fatigued	Decrease .04	Decrease .4

	Exhausted	Decrease .21	Increase .2
	Sluggish	Increase .04	No Change
	Bushed	Increase .11	Increase .2
Vigor	Lively	Decrease .33	Increase .1
	Active	Decrease .38	Increase .3
	Energetic	Increase .83	Increase .4
	Cheerful	Decrease .41	Increase .3
	Alert	Increase .12	Increase .5
	Full of pep	Increase .24	No Change
	Carefree	Increase .56	Decrease .30
	Vigorous	Decrease .37	Increase .2
Depression – Dejection	Unhappy	Decrease .06	Decrease .1
	Sorry things	Decrease .33	Increase .1
	Sad	Decrease .16	Increase .3
	Blue	Decrease .16	Decrease .3
	Hopeless	Decrease .33	Decrease .4
	Unworthy	Decrease .59	Decrease .1
	Discouraged	Decrease .38	Decrease .4
	Lonely	Decrease .25	Increase .1
	Miserable	Increase .25	Increase .1
	Gloomy	No Change	Increase .1
	Helpless	Decrease .21	Increase .2
	Worthless	Decrease .25	No Change

	Terrified	Increase .01	Increase .10
	Guilty	Decrease .29	No Change
Anger–Hostility	Angry	Decrease .13	No Change
	Peeved	Decrease .08	Increase .5
	Grouchy	Decrease .29	Decrease 2
	Spiteful	Decrease .21	No Change
	Annoyed	Decrease .29	No Change
	Resentful	Decrease .42	Increase .2
	Bitter	Decrease .17	Decrease .3
	Rebellious	Increase .29	Increase .4
	Deceived	Decrease .13	No Change
	Furious	Decrease .05	Decrease .1
	Bad Tempered	Decrease 1.29	Decrease .3
Confusion– Bewilderment	Confused	0	Increase .1
	Unable Conc	Decrease .04	Decrease .31
	Muddled	Decrease .28	No Change
	Bewildered	Increase .64	Increase .1
	Effacious	Increase .19	Increase .25

**Subscale mean score differences.** The differences of the pretest and posttest scores per subscale were computed and reported (Table 7). The more items grouped together, like the subscale, the more informative the results can be in comparing the individual moods per scale. In comparing the mean scores, the Self-inquiry group demonstrates a decrease in Tension-Anxiety considerably more than the control group. The Depression-Dejection scale shows the largest decrease in the Self-inquiry group, as compared to the small decrease in the control group. For Anger-Hostility, the results show a small decrease for the treatment and a very small increase in the control. The mean score reveals that Self-inquiry decreases Confidence-Bewilderment in a small way, along with a small decrease in control group. The Fatigue subscale shows a small decrease for the Self-inquiry group and no change for the control group. The sixth subscale Vigor reveals a decrease in the Self-inquiry group and a large increase for the control.

Figures 1 through 6 represent the means per subscale from the comparison of the Self-inquiry group and the control group. It is shown graphically that the Depression-Dejection scale, Tension-Anxiety scale, and the Anger-Hostility scale show decreases in the Self-inquiry group versus the control group, while the others have little to almost no change from pre- to post-administration.

Table 7

*Result Subscale Mean from Pretest to Posttest*

Subscale	Self-Inquiry		Control	
		Mean change		Mean change
Tension–Anxiety	Decrease	3.37	Decrease	1.60
Depression-Dejection	Decrease	4.195	Decrease	.20
Anger-Hostility	Decrease	1.89	Increase	.40
Confusion-Bewilderment	Decrease	.67	Decrease	.20
Fatigue	Decrease	1.00	No Change	0
Vigor	Decrease	2.85	Increase	3.26

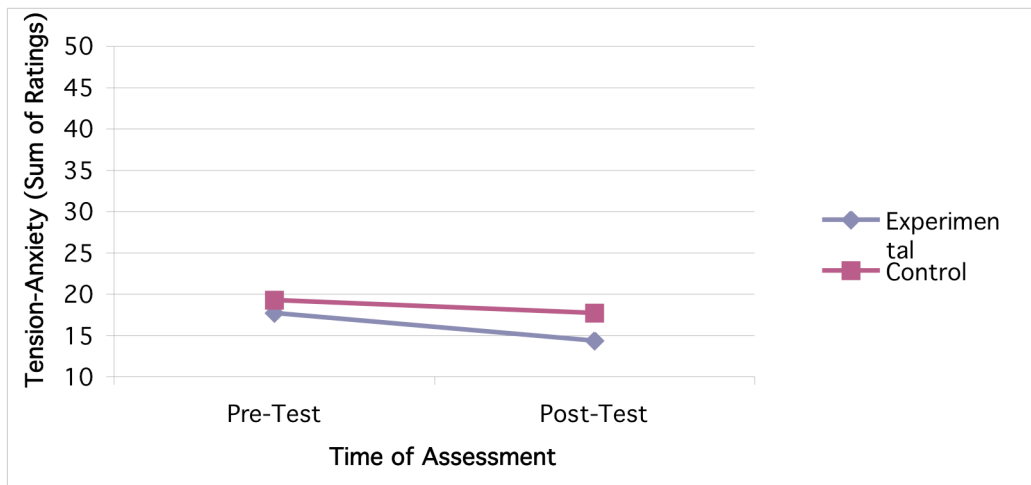
*Figure 1. Tension-Anxiety subscale. (Author's image)*



Figure 2. Depression-Dejection. (Author's image)



Figure 3. Anger-Hostility. (Author's image)

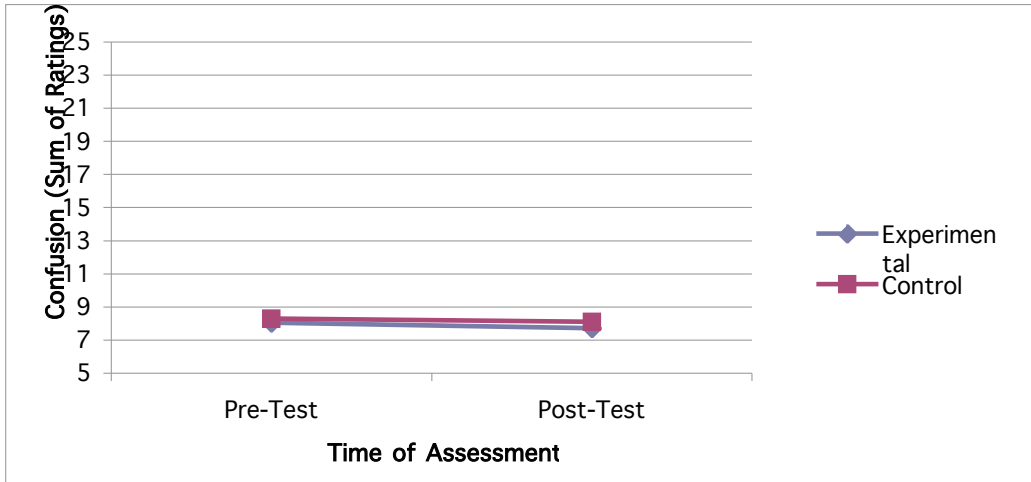


Figure 4. Confusion subscale. (Author's image)



Figure 5. Fatigue. (Author's image)



Figure 6. Vigor subscale. (Author's image)

**T-tests.** A t-test was used to compare the mean values of the two independent samples, namely the Self-inquiry experimental group and the nature sounds control group. The purpose of the *t*-test is to determine whether an observed difference is the result of a real effect or whether it is due to chance. Specifically, it-tests the hypothesis, known as the null hypothesis, that the results are due to chance. If it is found that the difference is unlikely to be the result of chance, the null hypothesis is rejected and it is concluded that the intervention has had a real effect. The statistical significance threshold is .05.

In Table 8 t-tests, the Tension-Anxiety subscale showed an observed difference in one direction from the two means but it was not determined to be statistically significant. The Depression-Dejection subscale is also not statistically significant but there is an observed difference in one direction. The Anger-Hostility is closest of the subscales to being statistically significant by an observed difference but still cannot be declared so. The Confusion-Bewilderment is not statistically significant, but there is an observed difference in one direction.



The Fatigue subscale is not statistically significant, but there is a difference in one direction. The final subscale Vigor is not statistically significant, but there is an observed difference in one direction.

Table 8

*T-test of Means for Both Groups*

Subscale	Self-Inquiry/Control
Tension–Anxiety	t=3.40, p<.16
Depression-Dejection	t=4.375, p<.16
Anger-Hostility	t=4.28, p<.07
Confusion-Bewilderment	t=.37, p<.76
Fatigue	t=1.38, p<.54
Vigor	t=2.24, p<.64

**Qualitative Questions**

Several qualitative questions (Appendix G) were asked in addition to the Profile of Mood State Inventory both before and after the recording. The intent was to explore if the answers to open-ended questions would reveal additional information to support the quantitative inventory results. Other questions addressed whether the participants had engaged in Eastern meditation practices prior to this experiment and whether their mood during the study was typical of their mood on most days.

Table 9

*Qualitative Responses Pretest and Posttests, Experimental and Control Groups*

	Pretest responses	Posttest responses
Self-inquiry Experimental Group	<p>Worried about job, relaxed warm room            Feel good            Relaxed, hopeful, nourished, questions about money            Calm, peaceful, grateful            Weary, anxious            Worried about parking meter, relaxed, happy, open            Tired after work, curiosity, gratitude            Headache, tired, fine            Shaky, spacey, tired, happy            Anxiety, unworthiness, worried about money            Fatigue, anxious to work out            Anxious, engaged, useful            Anxiety, frisky, contemplative            Clear, relaxed, calm            Nervous, sad, lonely, somewhat content            Intrigued and content            Edgy, hungry, shoulder pain            Anxious, stressed, annoyed            Tired and curious            Concern about cuts in HIV, worried, tired            Well centered, pondering too much            Happy, excited, energetic            Relaxed, easy            Rested, concerns finances, worried</p>	<p>Peaceful/complete within myself            Feel about the same            A little bored and relaxed            Refreshed, renewed, fulfilled            Relaxed, open, aware            Expansiveness in chest, relaxed, tired, delighted            Calm, relaxed, hopeful            Relaxed, peaceful, grateful            Relaxed, sleepy, hungry            Removed from ego, clear, equanimity, mentally quiet            Head more clear, relaxed, sleepy            Fatigue, wonder, annoyance, confused            Questioning beliefs, clearer, meditative            Relaxed, calm, excited            Tired, confused, annoyed            Relaxed, sleepy            At peace, alert            Tired, hungry            Centered and relaxed            Confused and anxious about thoughts of self            Peaceful, relaxed, sleepy            Physically excited, calm, relaxed            Calm and relaxed mentally and physically            Wonderful and relaxed</p>
Nature Sounds Control Group	<p>Irritated, fine            Over-exerted, stress and hope, apprehension            A bit tense            Impatient, hungry            Relaxed, sleepy            Tired, anxious, calm            Relaxed, trusting, curious            Cranky, sick, tired            Moderately okey dokey            Rushed, concerned</p>	<p>Annoyed, tired, and bored            A bit calmer, and clear-headed            Less focused on prior stressful situation            Better now than when I came            Relaxing and sleepy            Relaxed and clear-headed            Relaxed, tired, introspective            Calm, more peace            Meditative experience            Mindful and calm</p>

Overall, the general theme was that the Self-inquiry recording produced a feeling of relaxation and peace, and most individuals had an interest in learning more about the teaching of the recording. The responses in Table 9, synthesized from the four pretest questions and the two posttest questions, describe how participants felt the moment they responded in terms of sensations, thoughts, and emotions.

Before the experimental group participants listened to the Self-inquiry recording, they described their feeling state as relaxed, anxious, and tired; many noted practical concerns such as jobs, money, and health. After listening to the Self-inquiry recording, no participants described practical concerns; most reported feeling relaxed, peaceful, and calm. Overall, most of the Self-inquiry groups' responses were favorable and seemed consistent with the quantitative results.

Before control group participants listened to the nature recording, they described their feeling state with words such as anxiety, tiredness, and irritability, and did so more frequently than the Self-inquiry group had during the pretest. Unlike the pretest Self-inquiry group, however, no one in the pretest control group mentioned practical concerns. After listening to the nature recording, control group participants described their feelings more often as relaxed and calm when compared to their pretest responses.

Other qualitative responses were also interesting. Several participants from the experimental group expressed curiosity about or interest in Self-inquiry. A male Asian, age 22, was perplexed with the recording and curious about his concept of himself. A Caucasian male in his late 30s said Adyashanti sounded like

Kermit the Frog, but the recording helped him to put into words what he had been thinking about for awhile. A Caucasian female in her early 30s who follows Bhakti, a practice more devotional than Self-inquiry, felt the recording was dry and heady compared to her more heartfelt practice. A Latino female in her late 30s said the Adyashanti recording was her favorite meditation and that she listened to it all the time. Many participants inquired about purchasing the recording.

In contrast to participants from the purposive sample who were recruited from the university that emphasized Eastern spiritual traditions, the individuals from the self-select sample who were recruited from Craigslist seemed to have no interest in the Self-inquiry recording. Disinterested participants described their feeling state in terms of practical concerns such as employment, hunger, and entertainment. Conversely, individuals with an interest in Eastern philosophy commented about the state of their mind and their overall mood.

Responses to the qualitative question related to mood consistency were important for understanding participants' baseline mood profiles. Participants reported similarity between their moods at the time of the pretest and their moods on most other days. A few participants remarked that their mood was less positive than usual. Had their study moods and regular moods been dissimilar, the effects of the treatment might have been obscured.

## Summary of Findings

Self-inquiry is associated with a stronger decrease (than the control group) in five negative moods: tense, nervous, anxious, unworthy, and bad-tempered. In addition, Self-inquiry is associated with larger increase (than the control group) in three positive moods: energetic, carefree, and on bewildered. Also, Self-inquiry is associated with a larger increase in these individual moods more than the other moods. When looking at mood changes more globally on the subfactor scale, the largest decrease is in the Depression-Dejection subscale, and the only increase is in the Vigor subscale.

Several individual moods had large differences between treatment and control group mean changes, however, the differences were not statistically significant. Moods with increased scores were energetic, and bewildered. Moods with decreased scores were anxious, nervous, and bad-tempered. The mood “anxious” and “nervous” decreased by a large amount for the Self-inquiry group, and increased a little for “anxious” with no change for “nervous” for the control group, indicating Self-inquiry shows a considerable decrease in “anxious” and “nervous.”. Subscale moods with high variation were Tension-Anxiety, Depression-Dejection, and Vigor.

In addition to findings noted earlier, remaining data points that were relevant, if not statistically significant, concern relative magnitude of mood change when comparing Self-inquiry and the control condition. When comparing the changes in favorable mood, which is a decrease in negative moods and an

increase in positive moods, there were 36 total favorable mood changes for Self-inquiry, and 17 for the control group.

### **Summary**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of Self-inquiry meditation as a treatment intervention in psychotherapy. Regarding the first hypothesis that Self-inquiry practice for participants will result in improved moods as measured by the Profile of Mood States (POMS) inventory: Analyses of quantitative POMS data as well as qualitative questionnaire data suggest an association between Self-inquiry and improved mood, particularly less tension and depression as compared to the control group. Regarding the second hypothesis that improvement in moods will be significantly greater for the treatment group compared to the control group: Findings indicate the mood changes in the Self-inquiry group were not statistically significant when compared to the control group.

In Chapter 5 I will discuss the findings, limitations of the study, suggestions for future research, and implications of the results for psychotherapists interested in Self-inquiry as a therapeutic tool.

## Chapter 5

### Discussion

The aim of this study was to fill a gap in psychology literature as to the effectiveness of Self-inquiry practice for improving mood. Although Self-inquiry has been addressed in Eastern philosophy literature and in practitioner-oriented psychology literature, research evidence for the effect of Self-inquiry on mood has not been available. Research has demonstrated, however, the positive effect of meditation on mood. In this study, similar positive effects of Self-inquiry on mood were anticipated. Although the participants in the experimental group experienced improved moods, the results were not statistically significant when compared to the control group. Nonetheless, findings from this investigation may have practical implications for psychotherapists and psychotherapy researchers.

#### Discussion of Findings

The main finding of the study is that Self-inquiry practice is associated with decreases in anxiety, anger, and depression. Furthermore, when compared to the control group, Self-inquiry practice has more favorable effects on mood, although not significant. The findings are based on analyses of quantitative data from the POMS mood inventory. Specifically, cumulative results revealed the change of individual moods and the change of mood subscales on the POMS following Self-inquiry practice. Although these results are not statistically significant, the results do support the hypothesis in the right direction.

The findings are further supported by the qualitative data. First, responses to the qualitative questions for each group pretest and posttest were similar to

responses to the POMS. For example, an important element of research design is assuring the groups are similar at baseline. Similarity was confirmed by quantitative analysis of POMS pretest results between the mean scores of Self-inquiry and control conditions; similarity was further supported by qualitative data from question responses. Second, almost all of the participants responded to an open-ended question that their mood at the time of the experiment was similar to their general mood. The consistency of mood for the participants was important to the validity of the results. Consequently, qualitative data supported the baseline similarity between groups' moods and confirmed the self-reported consistency between each participants' baseline and typical moods.

### **Limitations**

*Personal bias.* The entire impetus of the study was based on my own self-realization through practicing self-inquiry. The understanding allows me to experience the impermanence of life with more peace and joy. Self-inquiry was the spiritual technique that specifically resulted in the realization of a greater self. It could be said the entire study was biased from my personal transformation and hoping others would have the same realization. The main way I controlled for my bias was to conduct a controlled study using an experimental design and let the statistical analyses determine the magnitude of the effect of the self-inquiry instruction. However, since I was the only researcher and I was part of the team in designing the experiment there is a lot of intangible bias inherent within the study. The designing team consisted of three outside consultants and an external reviewer so there was an attempt to control bias in the design. Another obvious



way to have more experimental control would have been to hire a researcher to conduct the trials. Unfortunately the budget did not allow for an outside researcher.

***Sample selection.*** Recruiting research participants was the most difficult part of the study, and there were a few surprises. First, regarding compensation and follow-through, I had limited resources to compensate participants and low percentages of people who followed through. Consequently, the sample group ( $N = 34$ ) was smaller than anticipated (expected  $N = 60$ ); the control group had 10, not 30, participants, and the experimental group had 24, not 30, participants. Furthermore, unequal group size occurred when confirmed participants, already randomly assigned to the experimental or control group, did not follow through.

Throughout the recruiting process, the respondents on Craigslist who had confirmed were extremely unreliable as compared to the participants who showed from the university responses. Another unexpected occurrence was many of the Craigslist respondents seemed to have little interest in the subject matter of the study. The only possible explanation of why they agreed to be part of the study was to be compensated. The incentive had been set at a low amount to avoid this issue so this would not be the sole reason for a participant attending the experiment.

After the first trial, I decided I would add additional criteria to the recruitment announcement: interest in Eastern philosophy. I reasoned that if participants were interested in Eastern philosophy, they would have further incentive to keep appointments for the study, and increasing the show rates for the

remaining trials would maximize the sample size. Another reason for the additional criteria was to attract an audience that might be more representative of individuals who would be likely use the technique in a natural setting. The qualitative answers of the participants without an interest in Eastern philosophy tended to be much less about the actual treatment and more about practical concerns in their life.

Contextual variables are important. Recruiting participants from a wide range of backgrounds may bring the possibility of outliers in the group. Group homogeneity, however, is important to assure that any actual effect can be detected. For example, a male participant who used an oxygen tank and was coughing was a disturbance to another male participant. The upset participant remarked after the study that the participant who was coughing should have been removed immediately. The upset participant's study results indicated he was experiencing extreme anger and dissatisfaction. Such contextual variables can influence the results of a study.

***Sample Size.*** Having a larger sample size is an important component in determining statistical significance between the experimental and the control group. The results showed the experimental group had more favorable effect on mood so with a greater size sample there is a chance the results would continue to show the same trend, and possibly result in statistical significance. Unfortunately due to budget and recruiting issues a larger sample size was not possible but in future studies the sample size should be planned for and achieved.

***Similarity of treatment and control.*** The similarity between the experimental and control treatment may have resulted in a more similar effect, then if the treatments were more different. The self-inquiry instruction and the nature sounds both elicited a feeling of relaxation for most participants. The purpose of choosing similar treatments was to uncover the nuances in moods changed through self-inquiry versus the nature recording. However, if for example, television was chosen as the control, versus nature sounds, the findings may have shown a larger difference. The choice of a different control variable may have resulted in higher statistical significance when comparing the two groups.

***Selection of inventory.*** The POMS inventory was chosen due to its measurement of transient mood states since the experimental design was a pre and post single session study. Because of the single session design, the inventory was more appropriate than inventories measuring a longer term state or trait of an emotion or mood. However, the inventory does not capture the more noetic experience that may be a potential effect of Self-Inquiry practice.

There are no spiritual inventories that were found to capture this noetic experience or an “ah ha” moment. There are a few spiritual inventories that could have been added but most look at long-term beliefs and moods, and are not appropriate for a single session design. Further research may include a few spiritual inventories to try to get closer to a noetic experience.

Another consideration was to use the Beck’s Depression and Anxiety inventory as a way to get at both these mood disorders. However, again these

measure for a longer-term mood state versus a transient mood state so they may not be suited for a single-session design. If there were multiple sessions the Beck inventories could be a viable measure. Multiple inventories could have been used but since this is the first research of its kind in this field we opted to make it as straight-forward as possible to build on the research at a later date.

***Equipment and setting.*** There are a few additional limitations to the study. Participants heard the recording through stereo speakers instead of headphones. Ideally, the research would have been conducted with participants individually. As there were 34 participants, individual sessions were not feasible.

Another limitation might be a natural setting versus an experimental setting. The motivation for someone to engage in Self-inquiry might be at the request of his or her therapist. It may also be part of certain spiritual retreats. There is also the possibility that someone may start asking the question based on an existential crisis. The main difference between a natural setting and an experimental one is the potential readiness and intention of the client to pursue this method.

***Data collection.*** Having only one treatment session is a significant limitation of the study. However, one session is aligned with the literature review citing positive treatment outcomes and client preferences for financial reasons. The reason for choosing a one-session study was to capture the effect a single treatment on a participant who may never try this method again, or a client who may be administered this method one-time in a therapy session.

**Personal Reflection**

As my introduction stated, I had a profound and life changing awakening due to the recognition of my Self. My recognition was cultivated by self-inquiry primarily so I will never be certain as to what else influenced this understanding. Since the time of beginning this dissertation, I have broadened my spiritual practice to include more body oriented practices, while also opening up to new teachers and authors. In addition, I have integrated my spiritual life much more into my day to day practice.

As far as self-inquiry itself I cannot say I learned much more through the study itself or the literature review since I was intimately familiar with all the authors and teachers I cited. I was also familiar with the meditation research that has been conducted over the last few years. But I did learn how unfamiliar most people are with the practice of self-inquiry, even those who have a spiritual practice.

Another one of the main ways I have grown is through the process of using my critical thinking while at the same time connecting to a more expansive experience of myself. I often found when working on my dissertation “it began working on me”, in the sense that I connected more deeply to awareness itself. The experience would in some way would make it difficult for me to utilize my thinking mind or at least this is how it felt.

With regards to my wisdom both personally and professionally I have further strengthened the process of this particular technique. I have also realized its limits, in that many individuals may never reacher a noetic experience but I still

believe that regardless the technique has a calming on the mind while at the same time challenging our own beliefs about our identity. I plan to continue my involvement with the non-dual wisdom and orientation community but remain open to more body-centered therapies and revisiting western psychodynamic theories and integrating them into my practice. I also feel like I am deepening in an awakening and hopefully this will continue as my life unfolds.

### **Future Research**

Further research is needed to better operationalize Self-inquiry. How can it be defined? What theoretical perspectives should guide the definition? How can Self-inquiry be measured most accurately? Also, could multiple inventories be added for depression and anxiety since these are the two dimensions that were most influenced? And could inventories measuring spirituality try to get closer to a more noetic experience? Self-inquiry could be incorporated into any orientation of therapy. An experiment could be designed within therapy sessions using Self-inquiry as a technique, and the results could be measured using process therapy.

Another idea for future research could be to analyze Self-inquiry across multiple sessions to determine the effect of time and practice on a participant's progress. This could be part of an existing Self-inquiry group or it could be set up as a newcomers group to Self-inquiry. Studying Self-inquiry over-time could reveal whether the learning is static, volatile, or dependent on the individual participant. The same multiple session research design could be conducted for participants who already have experience with Self-inquiry to see if the results are similar to those who have limited or no exposure.

A qualitative study would be interesting to understand, in depth, each participant's experience in using this technique. It would seem that analyzing data from a qualitative study would be a more inductive process for gaining insight into a participant's experience. In addition, qualitative research may illuminate key outcomes that an experiment would not be able to illicit.

Lastly, one way to gain a large sample is an online experiment. The same experiment could be conducted using the pretest and posttest inventory with an audio recording online. The only concern is controlling for whether the person actually did listen to the recording as they would not be observed. However, with design controls, such as a signed consent and a sufficient sample size, the study might be feasible.

### **Implications for Psychotherapists and Researchers**

**Psychotherapeutic implications.** This dissertation study examined nondual practices, such as Self-inquiry, as a tool and as a philosophy. In addition, the single-session design of the study may have implications for psychotherapists considering or practicing brief therapy.

***Nonduality practice as a tool.*** The original impetus of the study was to test the hypothesis that utilizing Self-inquiry, a nondual wisdom practice, is a valid means to relieve suffering, and therefore a useful psychotherapeutic tool. Therapists with an orientation towards nonduality might be interested in using Self-inquiry in their practices. Nonduality refers to the capacity of the therapist to (a) reflect the client's essential nature and (b) hold or move their own locus of

identity in or towards, respectively, an experience of subjective awareness.

Prendergast et al (2003) described a psychotherapist with a nondual orientation as one who could allow whatever arose to be present without an agenda between the therapist and client; the therapist would demonstrate transparency, clarity, and warm acceptance. The therapist would direct the client's attention to awareness, and the client might then experience openness and awakening.

Although the exact process by which a client might come to experience subjective awareness may be complex, and little is known about it, there may be a few possible explanations. First, Self-Inquiry relaxes the mind so that an individual may connect to their the essential nature, which is inherently peaceful. Second, Self-Inquiry instruction holds or moves an individual's locus of identity in or towards an experience of subjective awareness. Third, Self-Inquiry loosens one's judgment on whom they have taken themselves to be so there is greater openness.

There is potential for Self-inquiry to be utilized as a technique within psychotherapy. The Adyashanti recording used in this study could be played within the session or listened to outside of a session. One of the exercises in Appendix D could be used to introduce Self-inquiry to a client. There may be contraindications for certain populations, but more research is needed to ascertain what these are. Until further research is available, a therapist may want to exclude individuals who have personality disorders or those who exhibit phobic or psychotic symptoms. This technique may or may not be more effective than other appropriate techniques for an at-risk population.



There needs to be sensitivity on the part of the therapist when it comes to challenging a person's belief structure and identity. For example, a latino male participant said that the instruction left him feeling confused about his identity. He mentioned reading a lot about eastern spirituality so one session of self-inquiry had a greater impact on the fluidity of his concept of self. In an effort to do no harm there was contact information supplied on the informed consent if he or anyone felt the need to speak with someone following the session.

***Single-session therapy.*** As discussed in the case study from Chapter 2, Bodian's client, Mary, resolved her suicidal ideation and experienced improved mood as a result of her therapy sessions utilizing Self-inquiry. Whereas Mary had multiple sessions, this experiment used a single session. The research on single-session therapy has suggested that mood change can occur in a single session; participants in this study experienced mood change in one session.

**Research implications.** Meditation studies cited in the literature review as Kabat-Zinn, Kornfield, Shapiro, (Murphy & Donovan, 2004) showed decreases in depression and anxiety as well as an increase in feeling carefree and relaxed. This study also found decreases in anxiety and depression, and the intervening variable was Self-inquiry. As Self-inquiry can be said to be a form of meditation, this research brings further support to the link between meditation and improved mood by showing that Self-inquiry has similar effects to meditation practice.

## **Summary**

Chapter 1 introduced the concept of Self-inquiry, the relevance of Self-inquiry as a potential tool for psychotherapy, the need for research on the

therapeutic usefulness of Eastern techniques such as Self-inquiry, and the potential for the study to encourage additional research on nondual Eastern philosophical traditions. Chapter 2 described the literature relevant to the study's framework and identified gaps in the literature that the study aimed to address. Chapter 3 detailed the methods for collecting, analyzing, and interpreting the data. The study was designed to be a rigorous investigation; I used a random assignment, pretest and posttest, two-group design for finding effects. Although statistical significance was not achieved, Self-inquiry practice was associated with decreases in anxiety, anger, and depression. In addition, Self-inquiry practice had more favorable effects on mood compared to the control group.

I believe the effects of Self-inquiry on mood will become evident in future studies that have a sufficient number of participants and a more purposive sample. My additional hope for this study is to inform the field of psychology and psychotherapy about the effects of Eastern techniques in relieving suffering and to encourage practitioners and researchers to continue the dialogue.

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### Appendix A: Additional Tables

Table 3

*Test-Retest Reliability of Each POMS Subscale*

Emotional factor	Correlation ( <i>r</i> ) between pretest and posttest scores
Tension-Anxiety	0.71
Depression-Dejection	0.71
Anger-Hostility	0.53
Confusion-Bewilderment	0.66
Fatigue	0.89
Vigor	0.56

Table 10

*Pre-test Items for the Self-Inquiry Group*

Factor	Item	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	95% CI
Tension–Anxiety	Tense	24	2.13	0.95	1.73-5.52
	Shaky	24	1.71	1.08	1.25-2.17
	On Edge	24	1.79	0.93	1.70-2.19
	Panicky	24	1.50	1.02	1.07-1.93
	Uneasy	24	1.46	0.78	1.13-1.79
	Restless	24	1.79	0.83	1.44-2.14
	Nervous	24	1.83	0.87	1.47-2.20
	Anxious	24	2.17	1.13	1.70-2.64
	Uncertain	24	2.13	1.12	1.65-2.60
Fatigue	Terrified	24	1.21	0.59	0.96-1.46
	Worn Out	24	2.13	1.26	1.59-2.66
	Listless	24	1.52	0.85	1.16-1.89
	Fatigued	24	1.92	0.97	1.51-2.33
	Exhausted	24	1.38	1.08	1.42-2.33
	Sluggish	24	1.79	1.02	1.36-2.22

Vigor	Bushed	24	1.54	0.98	1.13-1.95
	Lively	24	2.79	0.83	2.43-3.14
	Active	24	2.88	0.85	2.52-3.23
	Energetic	24	2.88	0.95	2.48-3.27
	Cheerful	24	3.04	0.95	2.64-3.44
	Alert	24	3.17	0.82	2.82-3.51
	Full of pep	24	2.33	0.87	1.97-2.70
	Carefree	24	2.40	1.07	1.63-3.17
Depression – Dejection	Vigorous	24	2.58	1.02	2.15-3.01
	Unhappy	24	1.48	0.79	1.14-1.82
	Sorry things	24	1.91	1.28	1.36-2.46
	Sad	24	1.54	0.88	1.69-1.91
	Blue	24	1.54	0.93	1.15-1.94
	Hopeless	24	1.54	1.10	1.08-2.01
	Unworthy	24	1.88	1.23	1.36-2.39
	Discouraged	24	1.63	1.10	1.16-2.09
	Lonely	24	1.83	1.09	1.37-2.29
	Miserable	24	1.42	0.93	1.02-1.81
	Gloomy	24	1.54	0.98	1.13-1.95
	Helpless	24	1.54	1.10	1.08-2.01
	Worthless	24	1.50	0.97	0.80-2.20
	Terrified	24	1.21	0.59	0.96-1.46
	Guilty	24	1.71	1.04	1.27-2.15
	Anger– Hostility	Angry	24	1.25	0.61
Peeved		24	1.43	0.99	1.01-1.86
Grouchy		24	1.50	0.78	1.17-1.83
Spiteful		24	1.29	0.69	1.00-1.58
Annoyed		24	1.50	0.72	1.19-1.81
Resentful		24	1.50	0.93	1.11-1.89
Bitter		24	1.38	0.92	0.98-1.77
Rebellious		24	1.87	1.01	1.43-2.31
Deceived		24	1.25	0.61	0.99-1.51
Furious		24	1.17	0.56	0.92-1.41
Bad Tempered	24	1.20	0.50	0.99-1.42	

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Confusion– Bewilderment	Confused	24	1.67	1.09	1.21-2.13
	Unable conc	24	1.71	0.95	1.30-2.11
	Muddled	24	1.63	0.88	1.26-1.99
	Bewildered	24	1.26	0.62	0.99-1.58
	Effacious	24	1.95	1.00	1.51-2.40

*Note.* *M* = Mean; *SD* = Standard Deviation, *CI* = Confidence Interval

Table 11

*Pretest Items for the Control Group*

Factor	Item	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	95% <i>CI</i>
Tension– Anxiety	Tense	10	2.50	0.85	1.82-3.11
	Shaky	10	1.50	0.71	0.99-2.01
	On Edge	10	2.30	1.42	1.29-3.31
	Panicky	10	1.50	0.71	0.99-2.01
	Uneasy	10	1.50	0.53	1.12-1.88
	Restless	10	2.30	1.34	1.34-3.26
	Nervous	10	1.60	0.70	1.10-2.10
	Anxious	10	2.10	1.20	1.24-2.96
	Uncertain	10	2.50	1.58	1.37-3.63
Fatigue	Terrified	10	1.50	0.97	0.80-2.20
	Worn Out	10	2.00	0.82	1.42-2.58
	Listless	10	1.40	0.70	0.90-1.90
	Fatigued	10	2.30	1.06	1.54-3.06
	Exhausted	10	1.90	1.20	1.04-2.76
	Sluggish	10	1.90	1.20	1.04-2.76
	Bushed	10	1.80	1.48	0.74-2.86
Vigor	Lively	10	2.90	0.74	2.37-3.43
	Active	10	2.70	0.48	2.35-3.05
	Energetic	10	2.70	0.48	2.35-3.05
	Cheerful	10	2.70	0.95	2.02-3.38
	Alert	10	3.10	0.74	2.57-3.63
	Full of pep	10	2.50	0.71	2.00-3.01
	Carefree	10	2.70	0.95	2.02-3.38
	Vigorous	10	2.20	0.92	1.54-2.86
Depression – Dejection	Unhappy	10	1.60	0.84	1.00-2.20
	Sorry things	10	2.10	0.88	1.47-2.73
	Sad	10	1.70	0.95	1.02-2.38
	Blue	10	1.80	1.23	0.92-2.68
	Hopeless	10	1.40	0.52	1.03-1.77
	Unworthy	10	1.60	0.84	1.00-2.20

	Discouraged	10	1.90	1.20	1.04-2.76
	Lonely	10	2.30	1.34	1.34-3.26
	Miserable	10	1.40	0.84	0.80-2.00
	Gloomy	10	1.50	0.97	0.80-2.20
	Helpless	10	1.60	1.26	0.70-2.50
	Worthless	10	1.40	0.70	0.90-1.90
	Terrified	10	1.50	0.97	0.80-2.20
	Guilty	10	1.60	0.70	1.10-2.10
Anger–	Angry	10	1.20	0.42	0.90-1.50
Hostility	Peeved	10	1.30	0.48	0.95-1.64
	Grouchy	10	1.80	1.03	1.06-2.54
	Spiteful	10	1.40	0.52	1.03-1.77
	Annoyed	10	1.90	1.20	1.04-2.76
	Resentful	10	1.70	1.16	0.87-2.53
	Bitter	10	1.70	1.16	0.87-2.53
	Rebellious	10	1.80	1.23	0.92-2.68
	Deceived	10	1.70	1.34	0.74-2.66
	Furious	10	1.30	0.67	0.82-1.78
	Bad Tempered	10	1.50	1.27	0.59-2.41
Confusion–	Confused	10	1.80	1.03	1.06-2.54
Bewilderment	Unable conc	10	1.60	0.97	0.91-2.29
	Muddled	10	1.40	0.70	0.90-1.90
	Bewildered	10	1.90	1.29	0.98-2.82
	Effacious	10	1.88	0.99	1.05-2.70

*Note.*  $M$  = Mean;  $SD$  = Standard Deviation,  $CI$  = Confidence Interval

Table 12

*Posttest Items for the Self-Inquiry Group*

Factor	Item	$N$	$M$	$SD$	95% $CI$
Tension– Anxiety	Tense	24	1.33	0.48	1.13-1.54
	Shaky	24	1.38	0.72	1.07-1.68
	On Edge	24	1.54	0.83	1.19-1.89
	Panicky	24	1.12	0.45	0.94-1.31
	Uneasy	24	1.46	0.66	1.18-1.74
	Restless	24	1.63	0.77	1.30-1.95
	Nervous	24	1.21	0.41	1.03-1.38
	Anxious	24	1.50	5.90	1.25-1.75
	Uncertain	24	1.96	1.08	1.50-2.42
Fatigue	Terrified	24	1.21	0.59	0.96-1.46
	Worn Out	24	1.67	0.82	1.32-2.01
	Listless	24	1.48	0.73	1.16-1.79
	Fatigued	24	1.88	0.95	1.48-2.27



	Exhausted	24	1.67	1.09	1.21-2.13
	Sluggish	24	1.83	1.01	1.41-2.26
	Bushed	24	1.65	1.15	1.15-2.15
Vigor	Lively	24	2.46	0.93	2.06-2.85
	Active	24	2.50	0.93	2.11-2.89
	Energetic	24	2.38	0.97	1.97-2.78
	Cheerful	24	2.62	1.06	2.18-3.07
	Alert	24	3.29	1.00	2.87-3.71
	Full of pep	24	2.09	1.04	1.64-2.54
	Carefree	24	2.96	1.04	2.52-3.40
	Vigorous	24	2.21	1.02	1.78-2.64
Depression –	Unhappy	24	1.42	0.78	1.09-1.74
Dejection	Sorry things	24	1.58	0.88	1.21-1.96
	Sad	24	1.38	0.65	1.10-1.65
	Blue	24	1.38	0.58	1.32-1.62
	Hopeless	24	1.21	0.51	0.99-1.42
	Unworthy	24	1.29	0.75	0.97-1.61
	Discouraged	24	1.25	0.53	1.03-1.47
	Lonely	24	1.58	1.06	1.36-2.03
	Miserable	24	1.17	0.48	0.96-1.37
	Gloomy	24	1.25	0.61	0.99-1.51
	Helpless	24	1.21	0.51	0.99-1.42
	Worthless	24	1.25	0.61	0.99-1.51
	Terrified	24	1.21	0.59	0.96-1.46
	Guilty	24	1.42	0.72	1.11-1.72
Anger–	Angry	24	1.30	0.34	0.98-1.28
Hostility	Peeved	24	1.35	0.65	1.07-1.63
	Grouchy	24	1.21	0.51	0.99-1.42
	Spiteful	24	1.08	0.41	0.91-1.26
	Annoyed	24	1.21	0.51	0.99-1.42
	Resentful	24	1.08	0.28	0.96-1.20
	Bitter	24	1.21	0.51	0.99-1.42
	Rebellious	24	1.58	0.93	1.19-1.98
	Deceived	24	1.13	0.45	0.94-1.31
	Furious	24	1.13	0.45	0.94-1.31
	BadTempered	24	1.29	0.55	1.06-1.52
Confusion–	Confused	24	1.67	1.09	1.21-2.13
Bewilderment	Unable conc	24	1.67	0.82	1.32-2.01
	Muddled	24	1.35	0.71	1.39-1.66
	Bewildered	24	1.41	0.59	1.15-1.67
	Effacious	24	2.14	1.17	1.62-2.65

*Note.* *M* = Mean; *SD* = Standard Deviation, *CI* = Confidence Interval

Table 13

*Posttest Items for the Control Group*

Factor	Item	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	95% CI
Tension– Anxiety	Tense	10	1.40	0.52	1.03-1.77
	Shaky	10	1.60	1.07	0.83-2.37
	On Edge	10	1.90	1.20	1.04-2.76
	Panicky	10	1.40	0.97	0.71-2.09
	Uneasy	10	1.50	0.71	1.06-2.01
	Restless	10	2.00	1.25	1.11-2.89
	Nervous	10	1.60	1.07	0.83-2.37
	Anxious	10	2.30	1.50	1.23-3.37
	Uncertain	10	2.50	1.65	1.32-3.68
Fatigue	Terrified	10	1.50	0.97	0.80-2.20
	Worn Out	10	1.80	0.92	1.14-2.46
	Listless	10	1.60	0.70	1.10-2.10
	Fatigued	10	1.90	0.99	1.19-2.61
	Exhausted	10	2.10	1.37	1.12-3.08
	Sluggish	10	1.90	0.57	1.50-2.31
	Bushed	10	2.00	1.41	0.99-3.01
Vigor	Lively	10	3.00	0.82	2.42-3.58
	Active	10	3.00	0.94	2.33-3.67
	Energetic	10	3.10	0.99	2.38-3.81
	Cheerful	10	2.90	0.88	2.27-3.50
	Alert	10	3.60	0.97	2.91-4.29
	Full of pep	10	2.50	0.71	1.99-3.01
	Carefree	10	2.40	1.07	1.63-3.17
	Vigorous	10	2.40	0.84	1.80-3.00
	Depression – Dejection	Unhappy	10	1.60	0.84
Sorry things		10	2.20	0.92	1.54-2.86
Sad		10	1.90	0.99	1.89-2.61
Blue		10	1.40	0.52	1.03-1.77
Hopeless		10	1.40	0.70	0.90-1.90
Unworthy		10	1.30	0.48	0.95-1.65
Discouraged		10	1.50	0.85	0.89-2.11
Lonely		10	2.40	1.43	1.37-3.42
Miserable		10	1.50	0.85	0.89-2.11
Gloomy		10	1.70	1.25	0.80-2.60
Helpless		10	1.80	1.23	0.92-2.68
Worthless		10	1.40	0.70	0.90-1.90
Terrified		10	1.50	0.97	0.80-2.20
Anger– Hostility	Guilty	10	1.60	0.84	1.00-2.20
	Angry	10	1.20	0.42	0.90-1.50
	Peeved	10	1.80	1.48	0.74-2.86
	Grouchy	10	1.60	0.97	0.91-2.29

	Spiteful	10	1.40	0.70	0.90-1.90
	Annoyed	10	1.90	1.29	0.98-2.82
	Resentful	10	1.90	1.29	0.98-2.82
	Bitter	10	1.40	0.70	0.90-1.90
	Rebellious	10	2.20	1.40	1.20-3.20
	Deceived	10	1.70	1.34	0.74-2.66
	Furious	10	1.30	0.48	0.95-1.65
	BadTempered	10	1.20	0.63	0.75-1.65
Confusion–	Confused	10	1.90	1.00	1.19-2.61
Bewilderment	Unable conc	10	1.40	0.52	1.03-1.77
	Muddled	10	1.40	0.70	0.90-1.90
	Bewildered	10	1.80	1.32	0.86-2.74
	Effacious	10	2.13	0.99	1.30-2.95

*Note.* *M* = Mean; *SD* = Standard Deviation, *CI* = Confidence Interval

Table 14

*Distribution of Composite Scores–Posttest*

Subscale	Self-inquiry			Control		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	95% <i>CI</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	95% <i>CI</i>
Tension– Anxiety	14.33	4.32	12.51- 16.16	17.70	9.40	10.97- 24.43
Depression- Dejection	17.63	7.45	14.48- 20.77	22.00	9.78	15.01- 29.00
Anger- Hostility	14.52	4.21	12.70- 16.34	18.80	9.21	12.21- 25.39
Confusion- Bewilderment	7.72	3.09	6.36- 9.01	8.10	3.25	5.78- 10.42
Fatigue	13.22	5.59	10.80- 15.66	14.60	6.75	9.76- 19.43
Vigor	48.38	12.02	42.91- 53.85	50.63	9.72	42.50- 58.75

*Note.* *M* = Mean; *SD* = Standard Deviation, *CI* = Confidence Interval

Table 15

*Posttest Comparison*

Factor	Pretest item	Mean Self-inquiry	Mean Control	Difference
Tension– Anxiety	Tense	1.33	1.40	0.07
	Shaky	1.38	1.60	0.22
	On Edge	1.54	1.90	0.36
	Panicky	1.12	1.40	0.28
	Uneasy	1.46	1.50	0.04
	Restless	1.63	2.00	0.37
	Nervous	1.21	1.60	0.39
	Anxious	1.50	2.30	0.80
	Uncertain	1.96	2.50	0.54
Fatigue	Terrified	1.21	1.50	0.29
	Worn Out	1.67	1.80	0.13
	Listless	1.48	1.60	0.12
	Fatigued	1.88	1.90	0.02
	Exhausted		1.90	
	Sluggish	1.83	1.90	0.07
Vigor	Bushed	1.65	2.00	0.35
	Lively	2.46	3.00	0.54
	Active	2.50	3.00	0.50
	Energetic	2.38		
	Cheerful	2.62	2.90	0.28
	Alert	3.29	3.60	0.31
	Full of pep	2.09	2.50	0.41
	Carefree	2.96	2.70	0.26
	Vigorous	2.21	2.40	0.19
Depression – Dejection	Unhappy	1.42	1.50	0.08
	Sorry things	1.58	2.20	0.62
	Sad	1.38	1.90	0.52
	Blue	1.38	1.40	0.52
	Hopeless	1.21	1.40	0.19

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	Unworthy	1.29	1.30	0.01
	Discouraged	1.25	1.50	0.25
	Lonely	1.58	2.40	0.82
	Miserable		1.50	
	Gloomy	1.25	1.70	0.45
	Helpless	1.21	1.80	0.59
	Worthless	1.25	1.40	0.15
	Terrified	1.21	1.50	0.29
	Guilty	1.42	1.60	0.18
Anger– Hostility	Angry	1.13	1.20	0.07
	Peeved	1.35	1.80	0.45
	Grouchy	1.21	1.60	0.39
	Spiteful	1.08	1.40	0.32
	Annoyed	1.21	1.90	0.69
	Resentful	1.08	1.90	0.82
	Bitter	1.21	1.40	0.19
	Rebellious	1.58	2.20	0.62
	Deceived	1.13	1.70	0.57
	Furious	1.13	1.30	0.17
	BadTempered	1.29	1.20	0.09
Confusion– Bewilderment	Confused	1.67	1.90	0.77
	Unable conc	1.67	1.40	0.27
	Muddled	1.35	1.40	0.05
	Bewildered	1.41	1.80	0.39
	Effacious	2.14	2.13	0.01

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## Appendix B: Judge-Your-Neighbor Worksheet

### **Judge your neighbor • Write it down • Ask four questions • Turn it around**

Fill in the blanks below, writing about someone (dead or alive) you haven't yet forgiven one hundred percent. Use short, simple sentences. Don't censor yourself—try to fully experience the anger or pain as if the situation were occurring right now. Take this opportunity to express your judgments on paper.

#### **1. Who angers, confuses, saddens, or disappoints you, and why? What is it about them that you don't like?**

I am [*angry, confused, saddened or disappointed*] with \_\_\_\_\_  
(name) because \_\_\_\_\_.

(Example: I am *angry* at *Paul* because *he doesn't listen to me, he doesn't appreciate me, he argues with everything I say.*)

#### **2. How do you want them to change? What do you want them to do?**

I want \_\_\_\_\_ (name) to \_\_\_\_\_.

(Example: I want *Paul* to *see that he is wrong*. I want *him* to *apologize*.)

#### **3. What is it that they should or shouldn't do, be, think, or feel? What advice could you offer?**

\_\_\_\_\_ (name) should/shouldn't \_\_\_\_\_.

(Example: *Paul* should *take better care of himself*. He shouldn't *argue with me*.)

#### **4. What do they need to do in order for you to be happy?**

I need \_\_\_\_\_ (name) to \_\_\_\_\_.

(Example: I need *Paul* to *hear me and respect me*.)

#### **5. What do you think of them? Make a list.**

\_\_\_\_\_ (name) is \_\_\_\_\_.

(Example: *Paul* is *unfair, arrogant, loud, dishonest, way out of line, and unconscious*.)

#### **6. What is it that you don't want to experience with that person again?**

I don't ever want \_\_\_\_\_ (name)

to \_\_\_\_\_.

(Example: I don't ever want to *feel unappreciated by Paul again*. I don't ever want to *see him smoking and ruining his health again*.)

## Appendix C: The Four Questions

1. Is it true?
2. Can you absolutely know that it's true?
3. How do you react, what happens, when you believe that thought?
4. Who would you be without the thought?

**Turn the thought around** (original thought: *Paul doesn't listen to me.*)

a) to the opposite (*Paul does listen to me.*)

b) to the self (*I don't listen to me.*)

c) to the other (*I don't listen to Paul.*)

**And find three specific, genuine examples of how each turnaround is true in your life.**

**For information on how to do The Work or how to use the free *Do The Work* Helpline, go to [www.thework.com](http://www.thework.com).**



## Appendix D: The Protocol—John Prendergast 2007

### 1. “Notice a distressing self-judgment, feeling or sensation.”

Comment #1:

- a. If the client is aware of only the belief, invite him/her to also be aware of the feeling and the sensation that go with it.
- b. If the client is aware of only a feeling, invite him/her to be aware of the belief and the sensation.
- c. If the client is aware of only a sensation, invite him/her to be aware of the belief and the feeling.

Comment #2:

We are inviting clients to gather the basic elements of their experience - thoughts, feelings and sensations - with an emphasis on the thoughts. It is not necessary to have all of the elements, however, in this case we need at least the self-judgment in order to proceed. It is very helpful to sense the body while identifying a disturbing thought. We will return to the body sensing at the end of the protocol (step #8).

### 2. “Focus on the self-judgment. Just notice it as a thought.”

Comment: Here we invite clients to step back from their self judgments and to see them as objects. Some people call this stage the "observing ego." This can be a novel investigation for some clients, particularly non-meditators. Thoughts are not generally considered to be "things." You can coach clients by suggesting that they see the thought as a sentence projected on a screen or written on a blackboard in front of them or by hearing it spoken as a phrase.

### 3. “Notice that something is aware of this thought. What is your sense of this awareness?”

Comment: This "pointing out" instruction, inspired by Nisargadatta Maharaj's injunction to focus on the "I-sense" and Ramana Maharshi's self-inquiry (“Who am I?”), is designed to directly invoke that background awareness or openness that is the source of thought. This is a powerful, delicate, surprising, and sometimes disorienting question for clients who have never turned their attention to the apparent "experiencer.” More contemplative clients will quickly drop into a bigger sense of space. Others may not understand the question or report another image, thought, feeling or sensation. Example: "I see a little girl." If this happens, explain that this is an experiential rather than a mental inquiry. It is about their felt-sense, not some idea about their experience. Point out that something is aware

of this particular thought (or image, feeling or sensation) and ask again, "What is your felt sense of this awareness?" Take your time and go slowly. If clients become stuck or frustrated, let go, normalize that it can be a confusing question, and move to the next step (#4).

If clients say, "me" or "I am." Say, "Yes, and what is your sense of this me or this I am?"

If they say, "I don't know." Say, "Exactly! There is a sense of not knowing. Tell me more about that sense."

Sometimes the whole sense of there being a problem falls away at this point as the thought is seen to be what it is - a mental construct without any inherent validity. What is left is a sense of spacious openness. If there is a big opening; take your time and encourage your clients to relax into it before you go on. The rest of the inquiry process may become irrelevant at this point.

(I find that pointing attention to the sense of awareness is much more accessible than asking, "Who or what is aware?" which tends to invoke a more mental response.)

**4. "From this sense of (use client's description, i.e.: space, openness, not knowing) bring your attention to the original thought and innocently ask yourself, 'Is it true?' Let the question go, wait quietly, and notice what comes to you."**

Comment: Here, the normal protocol of Byron Katie's "The Work" begins (in a modified form), yet usually from a bigger sense of space and a more attuned heart wisdom than ordinarily practiced. We are inviting a different kind of knowing to emerge with this question, something other than the ordinary (conflicted, judging) rational mind. We are not looking for a particular answer. We are inviting genuine curiosity. Accept whatever comes. Once clients answer in a way that feels true to them encourage them to be with their answer and let it in. If clients answer that they believe their negative judgment, don't challenge or argue with them. Just say, "okay, fine" and go to the next step (#5).

**5. "What is the effect on yourself and others when you hold onto the belief that (restate their original belief)?"**

Comment: We are investigating the impact of the negative self judgment. Take your time to explore each facet of the question - the impact first on oneself and then on others. Very surprising insights can arise at this point. The effect of judgment will always be separation within one self and between one self and others. It is important to note that it is our attachment to beliefs, not the beliefs themselves, that is problematic. Once we no longer believe our story, it loses its power and eventually falls away. It is enough to see the false as false. The truth

takes care of itself. It does not need to be asserted and it cannot be ultimately denied, although the conditioned mind will try its best to do both!

#### 6. **“Who or how are you without this belief?”**

Comment: This is a variation of the classic question, "Who am I?" Take plenty of time here and allow the experience to sink in. Notice that this question is posed in the present tense, a change from Katie's "who would you be without this belief?"

You can make this question more specific by asking your clients to imagine themselves in a specific situation or with a specific person without their old story. For instance, "What is it like right now to be with David without holding the belief that..."

#### 7. **“What is the exact opposite of this belief? (pause) Is it as or more true?”**

Comment: This is what Byron Katie calls the "turnaround" or "reversal." Feel free to use those terms, if you prefer. I find that the above formulation ("exact opposite") works nicely. Keep it very simple. For example, "I am unlovable" becomes "I am lovable," or "I am ugly" becomes, "I am not ugly." But be flexible. "I am beautiful" may have more impact. If clients find that the opposite of their negative belief seems less true, don't argue. It usually means that there is an underlying belief at work (often around safety) that has yet to be examined

Since this inquiry assumes that no concept is ultimately true, we don't need to become attached to the opposite of a negative self-judgment. Affirmations may arise, but they are not emphasized. It is enough to see that a polarity of our cherished belief may well be as true as the original. This helps the mind to see its limits and to let go.

An additional interesting question to pose along these lines is: **“What happens when you allow both beliefs to be there at the same time?”** This can help catapult fixated attention into the background openness that is free of any polarized position. The ancient tantric practice of Yoga Nidra works with this principle.

#### 8. **“Notice how your body feels. What do you experience?”**

Comment: We come back to the body at the end of this process and offer clients a chance to compare their current felt-sense of themselves with their original feeling. It also helps them to feel the impact of their thinking. If there is continuing distress and time permits, you may begin another round of inquiry which will often focus on a related or even deeper negative self-judgment.

Sometimes an original self-judgment will give way to a deeper one mid-way through a cycle. I continue with the new one when this happens. Once you get the hang of this process, you can guide a client through these steps within 15-20 minutes. It is good to leave some time at the end of the session to debrief and get feedback. This inquiry usually is a gradual process of seeing through layers of the self-world view. Clients begin to internalize the various steps and spontaneously apply them to their experience as it arises in the moment.

**Appendix E: Recruitment Announcement for Participants**

Announcement

Subject Header: Participants Needed for a Psychology Study

Psychological Study

We are conducting a research study to measure the effects of an ancient wisdom tradition called self-inquiry, on feeling states. The study will consist of about 45 minutes on an evening or an afternoon at a place to be determined. You will be asked to fill out a questionnaire before and after listening to a 20-minute recording. There will be a few qualitative questions along with the inventory. You must at least 18 years old to participate, and have an interest in eastern philosophy (added after the first two trials). Each participant will receive \$10.00 for this study. Furthermore, you will be advancing the field of psychology and spirituality.

**Appendix F: Profile of Mood States**

Attached as a separate document for copyright purposes.

**Appendix G: Qualitative Mood Questions**

1. In your own words, describe how you are feeling right now?
2. Specifically describe any sensations, thoughts, and emotions you are experiencing right now?
3. Is your current mood similar to your general experience most often?  
Yes No
4. If not, what is your general mood most often?
5. Do you have any prior experience with any Eastern techniques such as yoga, meditation, or self-inquiry? Please describe briefly.

## Appendix H: Informed Consent Form

Tamra Sattler, a doctoral candidate at CIIS, is conducting research on the effects of an eastern technique called self-inquiry on mood states.

Participation involves filling out a questionnaire, and some questions about your experience. After listening to a 20-minute audio recording, you will be asked to fill another questionnaire and few more questions about your experience. No prior preparation on your part is required for this research.

You will be free to end your participation in the study at any time. Tamra Sattler will be available before, during, or after to talk about your concerns, and to facilitate referrals to supervisors, consultants, or therapists if such a need should arise. She can be contacted at 415-806-0673.

All information you contribute will be held in strict confidence within the limits of the law. In order to preserve your anonymity, all identifying information will be changed and the use of the pseudonym will be made in any future reports. The questionnaires will be kept in a locked cabinet to which only Tamra Sattler has access, and will be destroyed after completing this study. There will be no identifying information on any of the material.

There is an incentive of ten dollars offered to participate in the study, but there are no other guarantees. You may, however, find the process to be interesting and beneficial. The information you provide may benefit the field of psychology and psychotherapy.

If you have any concerns or questions regarding your rights as a participant in this research, or if you feel that you have been placed at risk, you may report them—anonously, if you wish to the Chair, Human Research Review Committee, CIIS, 1453 Mission Street, SF, CA 94103, 415-575-6100.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, consent to participate in the study on self-inquiry and mood states by Tamra Sattler of the CIIS. I have received a copy of this consent form and the Confidentiality Statement, and I understand that my confidentiality will be protected within the limits of the law.

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Signature

Date

If you would like to receive a written summary of the results of the study, please provide an address where it can be sent to you.



## **Appendix I: Confidentiality Statement**

Your privacy with respect to the information you disclose during participation in this study will be protected within the limits of the law. However, there are circumstances where a psychologist is required by law to reveal information, usually for the protection of a patient, research participant, or others. A report to the police department or to the appropriate protective agency is required in the following cases:

1. If, in the judgment of the psychotherapist, a patient or research participant becomes dangerous to himself or herself or others (or their property), and revealing the information is necessary to prevent the danger;
2. If there is suspected child abuse, in other words if a child under 16 has been a victim of a crime or neglect;
3. If there is suspected elder abuse, in other words if a woman or man age 60 or older has been victim of a crime or neglect.

If a report is required, the psychologist should discuss its contents and possible consequences with the patient or research participant.