

Tantra and the Yoga of Creativity



*Open Up to Your Authentic
Expression!*

*Author Adriana Attento, MA
www.CreationMeditation.com*

You Are the Power of Creation!

*Nature is your true nature.
Creation itself is your essential being.*



*For this reason, developing and deepening your relationship with the creative energy can lead to awakening.
It can lead to the overflowing heart of who you are.*

It sounds odd, I know, because anyone on the spiritual path has heard that if you want to become enlightened or awake from suffering, meditation is necessary. That is, you must practice Raja yoga, the method of focusing on a chosen object thereby controlling emotions and mental noise. At the very least, you should practice Karma yoga, the yoga of service to the world, or Bhakti yoga, the yoga of devotion. These ancient practices have led to self-realization for many spiritual masters and teachers. In fact, all of the yogas including Hatha yoga - the practice of balancing the mind and body through various physical poses, Jhana yoga - the yoga of cultivating wisdom, and Mantra yoga - the yoga of chanting spiritual words or phrases are meant to lead to awakening and liberation.

The word *yoga* is derived from the Sanskrit root *yuj*, which means “to yoke” or “to unite”. Essentially, yoga means to join the human soul with supreme

consciousness, or simply put, to unite human and divine. Like yoga, creativity is a union of personal and transpersonal aspects of oneself. To bring something out of the realm of what does not exist into the realm of what does exist requires a union of opposites. Known and unknown, fullness and nothingness, conscious and unconscious, male and female, human and divine must become one in order to produce the creative third.

In fact, any method of making art - writing, dancing, composing music, painting, sculpting, or story-telling- is a form of yoga too.



Trusting the Unknown

The yoga of creativity is the art of developing a relationship with and trusting the unknown. It is cultivating an inner state similar to that of the famous cinematographer, Ingmar Bergman, whenever he conceived of a new film. “It is a mental state,” he said, “abounding in fertile associations and images. Most of all, it is a brightly colored thread sticking out of the dark sack of the unconscious. If I begin to wind up this thread, and do it carefully, a complete film will emerge.”

The state of mind that Bergman describes is like sitting on the shoreline within. Imagine the shoreline, the place where the ocean and the land merge, as a

symbol for where the unconscious and conscious minds come together or where unknown and known meet. This is where awareness can rest while a creative endeavor unfolds. To cultivate this state of mind, that is to reach the inner shoreline, the artist becomes receptive and listens for the intelligent unfolding of the creative process. As inspiration appears, there may be a feeling of uneasiness and awkwardness because it is risky to follow the unknown. The artist never knows what will happen. Yet, by doing so, he or she becomes a vessel through which the divine can flow. The intelligence of the transpersonal becomes one with the personal, allowing what is new to unfold from the dark into the light of the world.



Begin!

If the flow of creativity feels far away, start by choosing a beginning point: a word, a brushstroke, a dance posture. Then let the creative process unfold from there. Even if the creative flow is barely present, the artist only needs two things: a starting point and attention. In writing, for example, one image combined with attention brings another image into being. While the hand moves across the page, another part of the writer keeps attention inward and listens. The creative process continues as the writer follows hints of guidance from within and pulls on the

brightly colored thread. Although it feels uncertain, trust deepens by recognizing that each inner impulse followed is important and necessary to receive the next piece of creative direction. Little by little trust in the unknown strengthens by listening and continuing to follow what the creative process is asking for. The yoga of creativity requires a letting go of the ego, giving up any plan or agenda that the mind might make up, and surrendering to the natural rhythm that is occurring within.



Supporting Guidelines

Just like all yogic disciplines, a practice of creativity has certain spiritual guidelines so that wisdom and purification of the mind can be reached. Giving non-judgmental expression to whatever arises, allowing anything at all to surface within, and becoming a witness to the inner experience are three pillars to a strong, spiritual practice of creativity. While practicing Hatha yoga, for example, students are often instructed to keep attention on the breath while the body stretches out in Adho Mukha Svanasana, or Down-facing dog pose. Similarly, in creativity, attention remains on the inner world while another part of the individual gives non-judgmental expression to whatever surfaces inside. Allowing anything at all to arise softens a judging mind, frees the creative process, and widens the boundaries of the limited ego. As inner experiences unfold and the practice of creativity

deepens, the artist learns to become a witness to the inner world versus being identified or attached to any part of it. As a result, the inner world rises up freely and effortlessly while the artist expresses the fullness that passes through her.

Yes, It Will be Hard! ...but it will be Healing too!



Of course, there is reason why some yogis would resist this kind of practice. They may know intuitively that it will lead to a dialogue with darkness. All the parts of oneself considered worthless or distasteful hide behind the wall of the ego and get buried in the dark. Opening up to whatever arises in creativity can lead to facing what was buried long ago. Like Raja yoga, which challenges the mind with concentration, leading to inner states of discomfort, the yoga of creativity challenges the individual sense of self by allowing all inner experiences to arise, no matter how distasteful they are to the ego. The word allow could be broken down to *all* and *ow*, meaning to receive *all* including the *ow* - including what is painful, including what is unsettling, including what hurts. The creativity of one's life embraces all experiences:

good and bad, pleasurable and painful, joyful and mournful.

Suffering at its deepest level comes from resisting or pushing parts of life away. Reversely, allowing anything to arise can lead to incredible healing, wholeness, and union.

Creation Meditation is a Tantric Practice



These are a few of the benefits to a spiritual practice of creativity, really another name for Tantra. Often when people hear or read Tantra, they think of sexuality. Sex can be a means to practice Tantra, though the yogic practice itself is not so much concerned with sexuality as it is with the creative force. The word *Tantra* comes from the two Sanskrit words *tanoti*, which means expansion, and *trayati*, which means liberation. Tantra yoga attempts to expand awareness to include all opposing aspects of oneself, such as male and female, dark and light, pleasurable and painful, thereby awakening to the wholeness of the universe as a creative expression of the supreme being.

This deep practice not only leads to wholeness; it can also lead to awakening, as I mentioned at the start. By awakening, I mean dropping one's belief in a separate self or ego. The continued practice of being a non-judgmental witness to all of life's experiences lays the foundation for union with the divine and self-realization. Being aware of experience versus identified with it leads to recognizing that all of form is temporary, simply appearing and disappearing, and pointing to a single source before and beyond reality. Just as in creativity where something emerges from nothing, all worlds of form, is the creative expression of a supreme being. Awakening to this truth can release the belief in being separate from the whole and lead to the eternal union of human and divine.

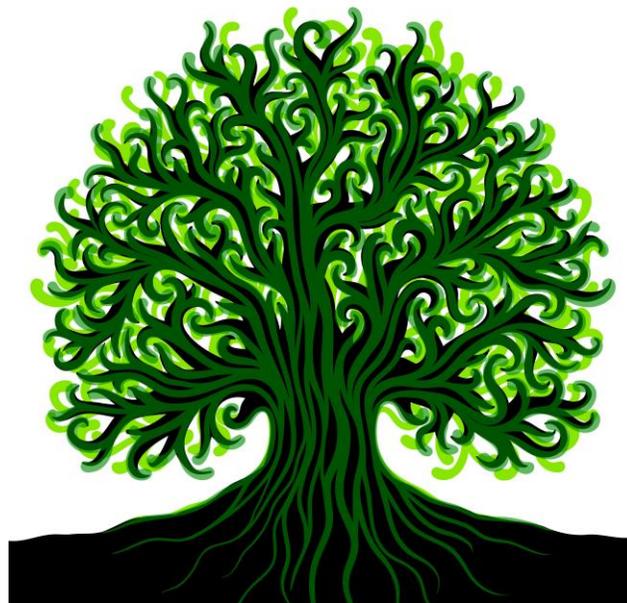
The beautiful Tantric practice of Creation Meditation is presented in the next section. It is a practice that returns you to your essential nature. It brings you back to the very way that Nature (Creation) is expressing itself through you.

“Everything which God created millions of years ago
and everything which will be created by God after millions of years - if the world
lasts that long - God is creating all that in the innermost and deepest realms of
the human soul.

Everything of the past
And everything of the present
And everything of the future
God creates in the innermost realms of the soul.”
- Meister Eckhart

Creation Meditation is a spiritual practice that combines
meditation (the cultivation of awareness and single vision) and
creativity (unrestrained outpouring of what is arising from within).
Combined, the practices of meditation and creativity help develop the ability to
express yourself from deeper and deeper places within, and in this way, encourages
authenticity and the expression of your true nature.

*Creation Meditation encourages deep expression
from the “innermost realms of the soul.”*



**Yes, Creation Meditation stimulates passion!
It can also help you find your purpose and make clear the unique
path you are meant to walk.**

**If you are just starting out and would like to begin right now, wonderful!
Here are some beginning guidelines:**

MEDITATION

If you can, take some time each week to meditate. Try to meditate each day and in the morning upon rising.

- **New to Meditation:** If you have never meditated before, take a short spiritual passage or mantra and use that as the focus of your attention throughout your meditation. I suggest using a spiritual passage for first time practitioners of meditation because words are easier for the mind to grasp and hold onto versus the breath. Simply repeat the passage or mantra again and again very slowly so that the words sink deep into your heart. When you find your attention straying, pick up where you left off. If you don't remember where you left off, start from the beginning. If this is your first time meditating, start with 10 minutes each day and, at your own pace, work your way up to 30 minutes daily. To learn more, here are some book suggestions:
 - *Meditation: A Simple Eight-Point Program for Translating Spiritual Ideals into Daily Life* by Eknath Easwaren
 - *Meditation for Beginners* by Jack Kornfield
 - *Mindfulness for Beginners* by Jon Kabat-Zinn
- **Familiar/Experienced with Meditation:** If you already practice another form of meditation, such as focusing on the breath, please use that. You want to continue to use the power of your attention to take your consciousness inwards.

In fact, cultivating awareness is both the path and the goal of this spiritual practice. As the spiritual journey unfolds, what the mind becomes aware of will change over time and you will experience the following five states of awareness:

**As you continue your practice of meditation, you will
eventually move through the five stages of awareness:**

Gross: At first, attention will become aware of the surface waves of the mind and notice just how untamed the mind really is. In other words, a practitioner will become aware of gross (versus subtle) inner experiences.

Subtle: As the waves of the mind begin to settle, subtle inner experiences take place. In this state, wisdom unfolds.

Bliss: The mind is becoming even more calm while wisdom continues to emerge. Subtler states are taking place and experiences of joy and bliss may accompany meditation and/or deep writing. In this state of mind, there is no self-identification with any of the gross or subtle experiences.

Sense of I: Awareness opens to an “I” doing something called experiencing. There is an experiencer experiencing. A practitioner becomes aware of this sense of I, which is even subtler, than all previous inner experiences. Awareness opens to the I-ness itself, consciousness as it is operating through the individual.

Eternal Awareness: Unlike the previous 4 states of awareness, at this level the mind has no object in its scope of awareness. Instead, awareness is objectless. It is eternal. It is the ground of being itself from which Creation (Nature) emerges.

Creation Meditation is the practice of...
**Cultivating and Remembering Eternal Awareness Through
Inquiry, Observation, and allowing Nature**



CREATIVITY / WRITING

If you don't think of yourself as an artist or as having creativity, writing is a wonderful way to begin. However, if you already have a practice of creativity, you can apply these principles. Making your writing or other creative practice a meditation will facilitate tapping into the river of creativity.

- **When to Write:** Choose a time of the day to write. Just like you would meditate for example from 6-6:30am every morning, craft a similar schedule for yourself with writing. If you do not already regularly write or journal, write for 10 minutes and, at your own pace, add 10 minutes daily until you are writing an hour a day.
- **Where to Write:** Write in the same place each time, as much as possible. It could be outside in a park or in your bedroom or at your desk or in front of the fireplace, wherever it is, allow that time and place to help create the container for you and your experience of going inward. You will find that after a while when you return to this same place, you will feel a softness in heart - a part of you knows you are there to sink inward.
- **What to Write:** Simply write out your inner experience. Whatever is happening within, that is what you want to write about, what you want to put down on paper. Your loneliness, your shame, your love, your abundance, your exuberance, whatever is happening within, that is what you want to write out.
- **Process versus Product:** When you write regularly, often ideas about poems, novels, or paintings come to you. This is beautiful - yes save and treasure these. At the same time, the focus for writing regularly is for your inner process. It is the journey that you go on when you consistently bring your attention inward and use writing to investigate your inner world. Bringing your attention inward is the most sacred gift you can give yourself.
- **Keep the pen moving:** As much as possible, keep your hand moving across the page, even if you're writing, "I don't know what to write." If you get stuck, use an inner detail of the present moment to get your writing process going again. When you notice yourself not writing (like looking out the window or playing with your fingernails), simply return yourself to the page, and continue to write. As you write, you will become more and more comfortable with writing absolutely anything and the fear that someone might find the notebook or the fear that somehow someone will read what you've written will no longer be there. You will simply write out what is going on inside. Simply allow anything to come through you and let it come out upon the page.
- **Witness:** An important step in all of this is becoming the witness. When you go within, you will want to become like a reporter. Simply document what is going on inside as though you were a scientist. Doing so helps to deepen the experience of being the witness to your inner world (a sense of nonattachment) versus identifying with any of it. There's no need to identify, no need to exacerbate, no need to make things bigger than they are, simply write out what exists inside you.

**May the practice of Creation Meditation lead you to
TRUTH and *INNER PEACE*.**

Over time, you'll find that this practice can indeed lift you from limitation and reveal the true nature of the universe, *which is none other than your true nature!* It can show you just how powerful you are!

***You are limitless!
Anything is possible!***

Just as in creativity where something emerges from nothing, all worlds of form, are the creative expression of one Source. As you become a hollow vessel through which the cosmos is born, come to know yourself as Creation, Creator, and the process of Creativity!



About the Author



Adriana Attento is the owner and founder of www.CreationMeditation.com, offering private sessions, online courses, *Weekly Wisdom*, and inspirational and thought-provoking articles.

Adriana is an advocate for developing a spiritual practice of creativity and facilitates in others a deep relationship with that place from which creative inspiration emerges. It is through being creative that the intelligence of the heart emerges, revealing one's life path, purpose, and passion.

Adriana works with individuals who want to deepen their relationship with creativity - from getting the creative juices flowing, to allowing inner experiences to creatively emerge, to caring for soul's images, to tending to the breakthrough process.

Adriana has been in the field of psychology for the last ten years, and has worked with adults, children, and adolescents in both group and individual therapy. Contact her at Adriana@CreationMeditation.com.

Offerings

Creation Meditation Website: www.CreationMeditation.com

Facebook: www.facebook.com/CreationMeditation

Hawaii Retreat: www.CreationMeditation.com/HawaiiRetreat
and www.facebook.com/HawaiiRetreat

Books: [A Holy Nothingness: Writing Towards God](#) (ctrl + click to open)
And Creativity: Its Glory, Its Splendor, and YOU! (link coming soon!)

Private Sessions: (these are deep and transformational!)

Laura will get you in my calendar!

602.492.7349

Contact: Adriana@CreationMeditation.com

Photo Credits: Gary Campbell – thank you!

©2013 Adriana Attento. All rights reserved.