



PROTECT THE PLANET

Study Circle



MENTAL ENERGY: THE MIND

This guide has been designed to help Centres/Groups of the Sathya Sai International Organisation (SSIO) facilitate a study circle on the topic of Mental Energy in relation to the human body. It has been developed as part of a series of study circle guides that looks into: physical, mental and spiritual energy – along with their impact on the environment. This is Part 2 of the Module 3 study guide series, with an estimated duration of one hour.

In the interest of time, facilitator may share all the quotes in this guide to participants as pre-read material and/or may opt to conduct more than one sessions, if required.

Part 2 will cover:

- What generates mental energy,
- The factors influencing the strength of our mental energy,
- Various means to preserve and cultivate our mental energy,
- Understanding how mental energy travels, and
- How a healthy mind can benefit the environment.

PART 2

OPENING AND INTRODUCTION			
ACTIVITY	NOTE TO FACILITATOR	RESOURCES	ESTIMATED DURATION
3 OMs or silent sitting followed by an opening prayer	Whether <i>Omkar</i> or a minute of silent sitting is used depends on the audience this study circle is being delivered to. Either way, the objective of this activity is to help settle the group and establish group dynamics. This objective is the same if a prayer or short reading is used as an alternative.		1 minute
Introduce today's topic	<p>This study circle is part of the 'Serve the Planet' (STP) initiative of the SSIO and is based on the theme 'Protect the Planet' with a focus on 'Energy.'</p> <p>The purpose of this study circle is to understand the importance of our mental energy in relation to factors influencing its strength, how it can be conserved and the impact it has on us and the environment.</p> <p>It is important to remain respectful and open at all times. Keep in mind that the Study Circle is about sharing and exploring the topic and inspiring each other rather than 'finding the right answers.'</p>		1 minute

TODAY'S DELIVERY			
ACTIVITY	NOTE TO FACILITATOR	RESOURCES	ESTIMATED DURATION
<p>Question 1: What is the definition of mental energy?</p>	<p>Pose this question to the group, using the information below to facilitate the discussions:</p> <p>What is mental energy (mind)?</p> <p>Mental energy is 'a mood, but can also be defined as the ability or willingness to engage in cognitive work'.¹</p> <p>Mental energy can be further explained as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ability to persist for long periods when thinking productively about a problem² • The ability to focus attention² • The ability to shut out distractions² • The ability to persist in search of a solution² • The power to listen, comprehend, understand, discriminate, assimilate and absorb² <p>Sathya Sai Baba defines mind as:</p> <p>"Mind is just like the cloth. Our thoughts are the cotton, the desires which they mould are the threads, and the intermingling and the interaction of these desires is the cloth i.e. the mind, made out of warp and woof. When the threads (desires) are removed one by one, the cloth (mind) disappears. It is best to have as few desires as possible." – Sathya Sai Baba (Summer Showers 1970.13: June 2, 1976 and SSS 10:33. November 24, 1970)</p>		<p>3 minutes</p>
<p>Question 2: What is the source of mental energy?</p>	<p>According to Sathya Sai Baba, the mind is the primary source of mental energy powered by the <i>buddhi</i> (intelligence).</p> <p>"The <i>buddhi</i> (intelligence) is very close to the <i>Atma</i> (Soul) and therefore, well situated to receive 90 percent of the <i>Atmic</i> (spiritual) energy and illumination. The mind derives its power from the <i>buddhi</i>, the senses from the mind, and the body from the senses. In this process of the flow of power from the <i>Atma</i> to the body in stages, there occurs a gradual quantitative and qualitative diminution of the power." – Sathya Sai Baba (SSS 23.16: May 26, 1990)</p> <p>The spiritual energy flows in this direction, from the soul all the way to the body, changing name and form and diminishing in power as it progresses.</p> <p>Soul > Intelligence > Mind > Senses > Body</p> <p>It is also interesting to note that the <i>buddhi</i> (or intelligence) which powers the mind, is derived from</p>		<p>10 minutes</p>

the Vedic Sanskrit root *Budh*, which literally means ‘to wake, be awake, observe, heed, attend, learn, become aware of, to know, be conscious again’.³

To be conscious of what exactly, we might ask? Conscious of the purpose for its existence here on earth.

So, in the same way that the soul is wired to seek God, the intelligence is wired to seek consciousness. i.e. to be aware of the divine source from which one comes and to use that knowledge, to seek the ultimate goal of self-realisation.

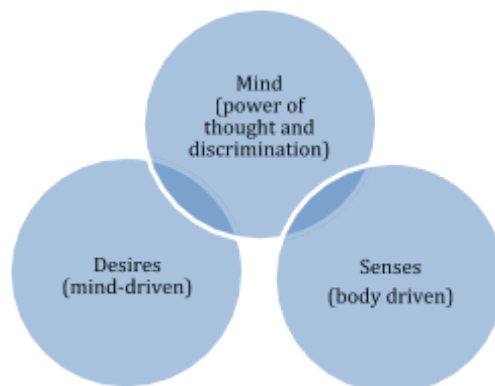
However, it is the mind positioned in between the soul and the body that often succumbs to its vagaries.

Soul > Intelligence < Mind > Senses > Body

INTERNAL WORLD < > EXTERNAL WORLD

On the one hand, the mind is pulled strongly towards the external world by the body and senses, and on the other is the gentle voice of the Soul and *Buddhi*, discerning and telling the mind ‘not this, not this.’

“It is in this reference that the *Vedanta* teaches the principle of “not this, not this (neti, neti).” The body, the mind, the intellect, the mind-stuff, and the senses—all these are mere instruments. You are the Divinity, which is beyond all these. It is Divinity that is responsible for their functioning.” – Sathya Sai Baba (SSS 26.40: September 4, 1996)



The power of thought and discrimination

It is the power of discrimination, which is perhaps the most useful tool in helping the mind to choose between:

- Right vs. wrong
- Internal vs. external
- The soul vs. the body and senses

- Long-term gain vs. immediate pleasure
- Self-realisation vs. worldly gains

“Before you undertake any task, always enquire, "Is this good or bad, is this right or wrong?" You will come up in life if you develop this one quality in you. This itself is self-realisation. So, it is important to have discrimination first. Unfortunately, people use their discrimination to suit their self-interest. This individual discrimination varies from person to person. The same thing is viewed by ten people in ten different ways. You must adopt fundamental discrimination which is beneficial to society at large. Only fundamental discrimination will give you self-satisfaction, which in turn will lead you to self-realisation. So, proper discrimination is of prime importance for self-realisation.” – Sathya Sai Baba (‘Discrimination is the means to self-realisation’ Discourse on August 22, 2007)

The power of the senses

The pull of the senses towards external objects is perhaps one of the most powerful forces preventing the mind from going within. The material world appears so real, that unless we are taught about the Body-Mind-Soul complex, we would never seek to know anything else, until we possibly accomplish everything in the outer world (money, success, good relations, spouse, children, etc.) and still find ourselves feeling empty.

“In order to purify the senses, you should make use of them in a sacred way. Purity of the senses is purity of the mind. The mind is the master of the senses. If the mind is to be pure, the senses have also to be pure.” – Sathya Sai Baba (SSS 31.34: September 29, 1998)

The power of desire

“Our life, when it is covered with the husk of desire, has rebirth. Once we remove this husk of desire, there is no birth. In this context, it has been said that man’s mind alone is responsible for his bondage as well as liberation. Thus, in the content of God (*Brahman*), life plus desire is man and life minus desire is God. How can it be possible to live without desires? It is not possible to eliminate all desires. If, however, we turn all our desires towards God and whatever we do, if we do it remembering that we do it for the pleasure of God, those desires will not bind us for rebirth. Whatever work we wish to undertake, we should do so without the desire to claim the fruit thereof. We have the right to do work, but we have no right to the fruit thereof. This is what the Gita also says. One may ask

	<p>what it matters if we desire to enjoy the fruits of work. It is possible to have peace in our life only if such desires are limited and kept under control.” – Sathya Sai Baba (Summer Showers Part I 1974.6: May–June 1974)</p>		
<p>Question 3: <i>What are the ways in which we waste our mental energy?</i></p>	<p>Posing the following question to the group, ask participants to share some examples of energy wasters:</p> <p>How do we waste mental energy?</p> <p>After finishing group discussion, read what Sathya Sai Baba gives as an answer to this question:</p> <p>“You might ask me, “How are we wasting our energies?” If you see bad things, your energy is wasted. Hearing bad things, speaking evil, thinking evil thoughts, and doing evil deeds wastes your energy. Conserve your energy in all these five areas and make your life more meaningful.</p> <p>The path of Divinity is not seeing, listening, speaking, thinking, or doing anything bad. If we are not following this path, we are wasting our energy. On account of this waste of energy, we are losing our memory power, intelligence, power of discrimination, and power of justice.</p> <p>Today’s man is not capable of discriminating between good and bad. Then how can he enter the path of right action? You might be wondering how this is possible; how are we wasting time? For example, when you turn on the radio to listen to a certain programme, whether you raise or lower the volume of the sound, as long as the radio is on, the current is being used.</p> <p>Our mind is like the radio. Whether you talk with others or only think within yourself, you are consuming energy. Your mind is working all the time. Since it is always turned on, you are consuming a lot of energy. Instead of wasting that power, energy, or force in mental meandering, isn’t it better to spend your time in thinking good thoughts?” – Sathya Sai Baba (Divine Discourse on Service and the Sai Organisation, November 21, 1988)</p> <p>We have a finite amount of physical and mental energy each day, so this energy needs to be used wisely and maximised where possible. In essence, anything that takes our attention and awareness away from the present moment and the task at hand, is a drain of our mental and often physical energy.</p> <p>Now ask each individual to undertake a short self-reflection exercise whereby each person focuses</p>		<p>15 minutes</p>

	<p>particularly on the activities/habits that are causing them to feel drained of mental energy. Encourage group sharing so that everyone can learn from each other. Support your discussions using the information below, which only represents a small fraction of the factors that drain our energy. The facilitator can read the quotes on the additional energy wasters provided in Appendix A.</p> <p>Greed:</p> <p>“As long as one is filled with insatiable desires. one cannot feel really wealthy. The moment man gives up desires, all riches will come to him. As long as man is greedy, he will be a stranger to happiness. When man gives up greed, he will feel endowed with all riches.” – Sathya Sai Baba (SSS 31.27: August 25, 1998)</p> <p>Refer to Appendix A for a quote in relation to greed and its impact on Nature.</p> <p>Delusion/Attachment:</p> <p>“One should do their duty in the world with detachment. If you go on doing with attachment to the object, you are acting under illusion. You must understand the principle of <i>tharakam</i>. Use the gifts of Nature to the maximum, but all the while do not forget that it is only temporary, and you cannot claim permanent ownership of any. Living in the mundane world, you should not become a slave of attachment, which will cause restlessness. All materials of creation belong to God. All beings are His belongings, as all are sparks of the Divine. With this attitude you have to discharge your duties.” – Sathya Sai Baba (SSS 31.19: April 26, 1998)</p> <p>Jealousy:</p> <p>“Jealousy is the source of great danger. No matter how great a scholar one may be or a man of authority and position or one may have acquired great virtues, when once one falls prey to jealousy, one loses everything in life. Here is a green tree full of blooming flowers. A pest enters this tree and destroys it in a short time. The pest is not visible as it eats away the roots of the tree. Jealousy is like the pest. A jealous man is not happy to see the happiness, health, wealth or higher performances of others. The feeling in a person that no one should excel him in life is the root of jealousy. Jealousy has three sons. They are desire, anger and hatred. However, in this world, jealousy is growing beyond limits. It is highly dangerous.</p> <p>It is jealousy that causes the fall of man. Therefore, one should eschew jealousy.” – Sathya Sai Baba (SSS 32.12</p>	<p>Appendix A</p>	
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Part 1, April 27, 1999)

Excessive desires:

“If a human being is to attain liberation, he has to cleanse his mind first. It is a serious mistake to desire for that which does not belong to them. Whenever the mind desires something, one has to enquire first whether the particular object belongs to one or someone else. When you know for sure that it belongs to someone else, you must be careful to divert your mind from that object.” – Sathya Sai Baba (SSS 39.2: February 23, 2006)

“Desire destroys devotion, anger destroys wisdom, greed destroys work. Hence these bad qualities must be sacrificed. With good and sweet words, keeping desires under check and control (for ultimate removal), one should start on the path of sacrifice.” – Sathya Sai Baba (SSS 1.50: October 23, 1974)

Technology:

A recent study published in the *Journal of the Association for Consumer Research*, finds that a smartphone can demand its user’s attention even when the person is not using it or consciously thinking about it. Even if a phone is out of sight in a bag, set to silent or powered off, its mere presence will reduce someone’s working memory and problem-solving skills.⁴

Television:

In particular, channels/programmes that have no value or are full of crime and violence.

“Television sets are installed in every room in the houses of the rich. From the moment television made its appearance, the mind of man has been polluted. Before the advent of TV, men’s minds were not as polluted. Acts of violence were not so rampant previously. Today TV is installed in every hut. People watch TV even while eating. The result is that all the foul things seen on TV are being consumed by the viewer. Concentration on TV affects one’s view of the world. The scenes, thoughts, and actions displayed on the TV set fill the minds of the viewers. Unknowingly, agitation and ill feelings enter their minds. In due course they take root and grow in their minds.

Hence, while eating, you should not discuss dreadful incidents. No room should be given to subjects that excite the mind. Silence should prevail during eating. Even sound waves enter into us and affect our minds. Hence people should avoid TV while eating.” – Sathya

Sai Baba (SSS 29.3, Jan 15, 1996)

Excessive mental chatter:

“You are unnecessarily struggling and planning several schemes, thinking about them day and night. In spite of all your struggles, what has to go out of your hands will go. The body is like a water bubble. The mind is like a mad monkey. If you follow this mad monkey, you will get into trouble. In the same manner, if you believe in the body, you do not know when this body, which is like a water bubble, will burst. Nothing is permanent. Only the *Atma* (Self) is eternal and immortal. ‘I’, ‘Self’, ‘God’ are all different names by which the *Atmaswarupa* is called.” – Sathya Sai Baba (Divine Discourse, Jan 1, 2009)

Anxiety:

“Because of unlimited desires, man is suffering from unnecessary anxiety and gets frustrated with disappointment due to unfulfilled desires.” – Sathya Sai Baba (SSS 31.12: April 18, 1998)

Worrying:

“One should cultivate patience, which is not commonly done in the present-day life. Haste makes waste; waste begets worry. So, one should develop patience to avoid worry. Our mind is compared to the moon; when thoughts arise, it is eclipsing the real Nature just as the moon is eclipsed by the shadow of the earth. If you keep the heart pure of the malaise of evil qualities, you will have no worry at all. You should not allow wicked thoughts to stick to you. In a pond, along with lotus flowers that bloom, you have leeches also thriving, which suck your blood. Lotus cannot sustain without water. So also, human life cannot sustain without love. But you should not let the leeches of worry breed in your heart of love. You can travel in a boat on the surface of water but should not allow water to enter into the boat. You should not allow attachment to worldly objects enter into your boat of life.” – Sathya Sai Baba (SSS 31.11: April 4, 1998)

Procrastinating:

Excessive procrastination can become a problem and impede normal functioning. When this happens, procrastination has been found to result in health problems, stress, anxiety, sense of guilt and crisis as well as loss of personal productivity and social disapproval for not meeting responsibilities or commitments.⁵

Criticising others:

	<p>“You should ask who is the one that criticises and who is the one that is criticised. If you consider that it is the body that is criticized, then there is no need to worry because you know body is ephemeral and is bound to perish one day or the other. It is the container of foul material like urine, fecal matter, etc. Why should you get affected by this? You are not the body. If it is <i>Atma</i> that is criticized, the same <i>Divine</i> is present in both - the person who is criticising and the one that is criticised. So, this means he is criticising himself!</p> <p>Both praise and blame pertain only to the body. If you respond to it, that means you are accepting the contents thereof. If he does not receive it, it goes back to the sender. So also, you do not react to the abuse or criticism leveled by someone else against you. Then it goes back to him.” – Sathya Sai Baba (SSS 31.18: April 25, 1998)</p> <p>Wasting time, money and energy on things that do not assist our spiritual growth is also a waste of mental energy.</p>		
<p>Group exercise: <i>To assist the understanding that mental energy comes from the mind, and derives its strength from our thoughts, which is in turn influenced by the outside world.</i></p>	<p>Divide the group into pairs and pose the following question to all:</p> <p>What are the things that did not go well this past week?</p> <p>Each of the two people gets 1.5 minutes to talk, while the other person listens. Basic acknowledgements are allowed. However, no advice is to be given to the speaker. This is more of a session for the people to express themselves and vent about their week’s frustrations, if any.</p> <p>After all the pairs have finished the discussions, the facilitator goes around the room and asks the participants how they are feeling after this exercise. Some of the leading questions could be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do you feel you have more to talk about? - Do you feel angry about how the week went? - Did you feel this way before the exercise started? - Did you feel better after sharing or felt it brought back your frustration? <p>In order to bring back the attention and focus, lead the whole group into chanting Gayatri Mantra three times. An audio clip of Sathya Sai Baba chanting the Gayatri Mantra may be played if resources permit. If tension in the audience from the discussion is high, additional repetitions may be done.</p>	<p>Audio: http://www.sathyasai.org/gayatri</p>	<p>10 minutes (10 minutes mini-exercise + 2 minutes for Gayatri mantra chanting)</p>

<p>Question 4: What influences our mental energy levels?</p>	<p>While the mind powered by the <i>Buddhi</i> is the only source of mental energy, there are a number of factors, both internal and external, that influence our mental energy levels.</p> <p>Using a whiteboard and marker, brainstorm the various factors that impact our mental energy levels. Use the information below to support your discussions:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="376 497 1042 1245"> <thead> <tr> <th>Internal</th> <th>External</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>State of physical health</td> <td>Food</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mindset – positive or negative</td> <td>Exercise</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Motivation to get something done</td> <td>People we spend time with</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Self confidence</td> <td>Environment</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ability</td> <td>Work we are engaged in</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mood</td> <td>Sleep/rest</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Worry/anxiety/depression</td> <td>Stress levels</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Criticising others through our words but also through our thoughts (being judgmental)</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Inner silence</td> <td>Outer silence</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Routine/discipline</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Prayer</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Meditation</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Yoga/<i>Pranayama</i></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Chanting/<i>Namasmarana</i></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>We will take a look at some of these factors here:</p> <p>Routine/Discipline:</p> <p>Set aside a specific time for each task, stay focused on one thing and avoid multitasking, including checking your phone while working. It turns out that switching back and forth between jobs burns more oxygenated glucose – your brain’s fuel – and leads to mental exhaustion more quickly than focusing on one task at a time.</p> <p>“Next comes Discipline. This is most essential for students. From the moment you wake up, you have to carry out your morning ablutions, meditate on God and then do your prescribed duties in an orderly manner without deviating from the regular routine. Variations in the routine from day to day are undesirable. You should not wake up at one hour on one day and at a different time on another day. The day's activities should be regulated by the same schedule. Immediately after finishing the morning chores, one should devote, in the calm and serene atmosphere of the morning, at least for a few minutes to loving</p>	Internal	External	State of physical health	Food	Mindset – positive or negative	Exercise	Motivation to get something done	People we spend time with	Self confidence	Environment	Ability	Work we are engaged in	Mood	Sleep/rest	Worry/anxiety/depression	Stress levels	Criticising others through our words but also through our thoughts (being judgmental)		Inner silence	Outer silence	Routine/discipline		Prayer		Meditation		Yoga/ <i>Pranayama</i>		Chanting/ <i>Namasmarana</i>			<p>10 minutes</p>
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meditation on God. The human estate is based upon regulation and self-control. These have to be strictly adhered to in daily life.” – Sathya Sai Baba (SSS 21.5: January 16, 1988)

Confidence:

People who have confidence in themselves are more likely to have a positive attitude, and their mental energy will be on a higher side.

"It is in this context it is said that one should essentially have faith in one's own *Atma* or have self-confidence. Only when one develops self-confidence will he be able to develop peace of mind and experience the satisfaction or *Ananda* of the *Atma*; and then he will sacrifice everything else. Experiencing *Ananda* and removal of sorrow are simultaneous events." – Sathya Sai Baba (Summer Showers Part II 1974.29: May–June 1974)

Silence:

“Silence. This is the first step in spiritual practice; it makes the other steps easy. It promotes self-control; it lessens chances of anger, hate, malice, greed, pride. Besides, you can hear His footsteps only when silence reigns in the mind.” – Sathya Sai Baba (SSS 10.16: July 19, 1970)

Prayer:

“Prayer is for the mind what food is for the body. Just as wholesome food gives health and strength to the body, prayer purifies the mind and strengthens the spirit.” – Sathya Sai Baba (SSS 17.6: March 11, 1984)

Meditation:

“Meditation is a process that takes place beyond the senses. Between the concentration at the sensory level and meditation that is above the senses there is a borderline where contemplation takes place. Contemplation is the second half of intelligence; whose other function is discrimination between right and wrong. Meditation means offering the flower of Love to the Divine. In the rose plant of our body, there is the rose of pure and sacred Love emitting the fragrance of good qualities. Below the rose, however, there are thorns in the form of sensual desires. The purpose of meditation is to separate the rose of selfless Love from the senses and offer it to the Lord.” – Sathya Sai Baba (SSS 17.6: March 11, 1984)

[See Study Guide 3 on Spiritual Energy for Sathya Sai Baba's teaching on meditation]

	<p>Chanting Divine's Name (Namasmarana):</p> <p>“The Divine, which is inherent in man, can be seen only when the ash of ego, anger, desire, and body attachment is blown away by chanting the name of the Lord.” – Sathya Sai Baba (SSS 31.44: November 24, 1998)</p> <p>Yoga:</p> <p>“The process of mixing the divine sugar and the worldly desires is called <i>Yoga</i>. The path of <i>Yoga</i> is to control the desires of the mind. Alternatively, we may take the divine sugar which is at the bottom of the cup and make it flow in all the organs and this is also the path of <i>Yoga</i>. In this context, you should believe that this act of making divine sweetness flow into all the work you do is <i>Yoga</i>. The physical exertion which you put in with your limbs will give you physical health but whatever exertion is there in the heart and mind will result in spiritual health and a combination of the two is <i>Yoga</i>.” – Sathya Sai Baba (Summer Showers Part II 1974.29: May–June 1974)</p>		
<p>Questions 5 and 6:</p> <p><i>How does the quality of our mental energy affect the world around us?</i></p> <p><i>How do our thoughts influence the world around us?</i></p>	<p>Pose these two questions to group, using the information below to support your discussions.</p> <p>Sathya Sai Baba reminds us that the external pollution is a reflection of internal pollution thus:</p> <p>“Because of man’s misconduct and immoral behaviour, there is pollution everywhere – in air, water, land, and food. All the five elements have been severely contaminated, consequent to man’s unbecoming behaviour. If man behaves properly, is pollution of the elements conceivable? It is all due to the extensive prevalence of immoral feelings and improper behaviour. The sharp decline of virtues like love, compassion, and forbearance is directly responsible for the widespread pollution that one sees today. In fact, one might even say that the five elements are afraid of man! The five elements as God created them are all pure and sacred. There is nothing wrong with them whatsoever. It is man’s misconduct that has caused them all to become polluted. Impurity within gets reflected as pollution without. Here is an example.</p> <p>The water of river Ganges is pure. However, if you fill a coloured bottle with the water of Ganges, it would appear coloured. If the bottle is red the water would seem red while if the bottle is blue the water too would appear blue. Where does the colour come from? From the water or the bottle? Ganges water is intrinsically pure; the colour is therefore due to the bottle holding the water.</p>		<p>5 minutes</p>

	<p>The human being is like a bottle. If evil thoughts dominate, the body indulges in bad actions; if good thoughts prevail, the body performs good actions. The body is not responsible for the actions; the thoughts that propel the body are. Bad feelings, bad thoughts and bad company provide the stimulus for bad actions.</p> <p>Recognising the five elements as God’s gifts, their sanctity must be preserved. They must be made use of in a proper and befitting manner. Why do you sing <i>bhajans</i> (devotional songs)? Enquire deeply into the meaning of this practice. <i>Bhajan</i> singing provides an opportunity to chant the Lord’s name in a sweet and pleasant manner. The vibrations associated with the divine Name then suffuse into the atmosphere and cleanse it; the pollution present is wiped out.” – Sathya Sai Baba (Summer Showers 2000.2: May 15, 2000)</p>		
<p>Discussion on: <i>The power of positive thinking and how to turn it into action that can help the environment</i></p>	<p>Ask the group to introspect on ways to tune our mind into positive thinking and encourage group sharing. Following information can be used to facilitate the discussion:</p> <p>Listen to your heart not your mind</p> <p>“What ensures from the heart is ‘positive’, while what comes from the mind is often ‘negative’.” – Sathya Sai Baba (SSS 31.4: February 15, 1998)</p> <p>Selfless activities</p> <p>“Today, very few people understand the difference between the "positive" and "negative" aspects of life. Whatever attracts the mind is "negative". Desireless actions are "positive". – Sathya Sai Baba (SSS 31.4: February 15, 1998)</p> <p>Act with love at all times</p> <p>“When man's heart is filled with love, all that he does will be “positive”. All good deeds come out of love. <i>Sath-Chith-Ananda</i> arises from love. Compassion and kindness are born out of love. All the sublime human values have their origin in love. When one is filled with love, he needs no other spiritual or ritualistic practices.” – Sathya Sai Baba (SSS 31.5: February 25, 1998)</p> <p>Pursue spiritual goals not worldly ones</p> <p>“Consciousness is uniformly present in all. It is “chaithanya”. When people turn toward worldly objects, which are transient, they pursue the negative path. When they turn toward the Self, it is positive path.” – Sathya Sai Baba (SSS 31.11: April 4, 1998)</p> <p>Do not identify yourself with the body; align yourself to the soul</p>		<p>5 minutes</p>

“Man will be caught up in "negative" behavior as long as he identifies himself with the body. The moment he considers himself the master of the senses, his actions will be ‘positive’.” – Sathya Sai Baba (SSS 31.4: April 4, 1998)

“The mind is an adroit substance. Its actions are strange. It assumes the form of the object in which it is present. The mind is responsible for happiness and sorrow: good and bad, and positive and negative attitudes. Hence, it is the foremost duty of human being to recognize the Nature of the mind. The mind is like the water that flows through a canal. Just like water, the mind also assumes the form of the objects it contemplates upon. The mind can be put to good or bad use. It is the duty of human being to channelise the mind in a proper way and thereby sanctify his life.” – Sathya Sai Baba (The Mind and Its Mysteries, October 2, 1976)

Pose this question to the group, using the information below to facilitate the discussions:

How can we use our mental energy to help serve the planet?

“Our mind is like the radio. Whether you talk with others or only think within yourself, you are consuming energy. Your mind is working all the time. Since it is always turned on, you are consuming a lot of energy. Instead of wasting that power, energy, or force in mental meandering, isn't it better to spend your time in thinking good thoughts?” – Sathya Sai Baba (Divine Discourse on Service and the Sai Organisation, November 21, 1988)

The energy that is conserved from limiting or eliminating behaviours and habits, as outlined in Question 3 section above, can be put to good use to help our planet, which needs as many people to support it as possible. Why not:

- Watch one hour less television every day and instead go for a walk while chanting the Gayatri mantra to impart positive vibrations to Nature?
- Direct the time spent on social media towards educating others on the environmental dangers currently facing our planet and the practical steps we can take to help?
- Resolve to worry less and instead plant some vegetables in the garden or help clear rubbish in a nearby park? Such activities can also be considered forms of meditation as well if we do these chanting the Lord's name.

	<p>As a group, you can come up with many more ideas that can help us direct our physical and mental energies towards positive actions to help the environment and staying connected with Nature.</p> <p>End the discussion by reading the quote below:</p> <p>“See Divinity in all and do sacred activities. Don't waste the elements or misuse them. Being bound to the world with attachment to worldly objects is the negative approach. Make the positive approach: turning toward Divinity. The difference lies only in turning your mind. Turn to world, you get bound; turn to God, you get liberated.” – Sathya Sai Baba (SSS 31.12: April 18, 1998)</p>		
Group introspection	<p>Knowing what you now know about mental energy in relation to the human body, how will you apply what you have learnt?</p> <p>Also, introspect on how the physical energy (previous study circle) and mental energy link and how one feeds the other or takes away from each other.</p>		2 minutes
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION			
Closing summary of today's session and what to expect at the next session	<p>In this study guide, we have covered the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What is mental energy in relation to the mind ● What generates mental energy ● The factors influencing the strength of our mental energy ● Various means to preserve and cultivate our mental energy ● Understanding how mental energy travels and ● How a healthy mind can be of benefit to the environment. <p>In PART 3 of this study circle series, we will cover spiritual energy i.e. energy relating to the soul/spirit.</p>		1 minute
CLOSE	<p>Closing prayer or reading. Prayer for universal peace – <i>Om Shanti, Shanti, Shantihi</i></p>		1 minute

Note: Ideally there should be two facilitators in groups of ten or more participants. The first facilitator conducts the study circle. The second facilitator observes the group's dynamics and informs the first facilitator of any lethargy and confusion from participants. The second facilitator also conducts the opening activity (e.g. *Omkar*) and shares insights at the end. This helps give variety to the participants, but also allows the first facilitator space to capture important feedback and learning points to share as insights.

Appendix A

Quotes on additional factors that affect our mind and drain our mental energy that can be used to facilitate further discussions for Question 3

Greed:

Additional quote in relation to greed and its impact on Nature:

“Not only the people of India but also the people of the entire world should strive to maintain balance. The five elements are nothing but manifestations of the Divine. Man’s life will be secure only when he realises this truth and acts accordingly. A few days ago, I sent lorry loads of rice, grams, etc., to the earthquake victims of Gujarat.

Man has to blame himself for the earthquakes. Due to excessive greed for wealth, he is disturbing the balance of the Earth. Hence the earthquake. That is the law of Nature.

You have to express your love for man by helping the needy. Love is your Nature. Just as balance is very much essential for Nature, so also love is very much needed for man. Know that whatever God has created is for your own welfare. You should enjoy Nature according to your need. You should not rob Nature of its resources to satisfy your greed.

Here is an example. Once a greedy person owned a duck, which used to lay a golden egg every day. One day, he ripped open the stomach of the duck thinking that he would get many golden eggs at a time. Today man also is indulging in such foolish and greedy acts. Instead of being satisfied with what Nature is giving him, he aspires for more and more, and in the process, he is creating imbalance in Nature.

Today scientists are interested in new inventions. The advancement in science and technology has also led to imbalance in Nature. As a result, there are earthquakes and no timely rains. Science should be utilised only to the extent needed. Science has its limitations, and crossing those limits leads to danger.

You have a long way to go. Adhere to truth and righteousness. Our ancient sages said, “Speak truth, speak pleasantly, and do not speak unpleasant truth.” Make proper use of natural resources, and do not put them to misuse. Help everybody and make them happy. Share all the good things you have learnt with others. This is your foremost duty.” – Sathya Sai Baba (SSS 34.3: February 21, 2001)

Lust:

“Having been born as a human, it is a pity that one does not realize these values. Anger, hatred, and lust are not human values at all. These are animal qualities unbecoming of a human being. With truthful thoughts one can become a good person. But one without thoughts becomes a wise person. He will always be in peace. Thoughts are the root cause of lack of peace.” – Sathya Sai Baba (SSS 31.11: April 4, 1998)

Anger:

“Do not, under any circumstances, cultivate anger and hatred. Anger should be controlled, and hatred given up. Your safety and welfare lie in controlling anger. It is common knowledge that when the controls in a railway station are not functioning properly, the trains moving on the track derail. In such a situation, the controller in the railway station is held responsible. Similarly, the mind is the controller for all thoughts and feelings arising in us. Hence, if the mind is kept in control, the entire body comes under our control.” – Sathya Sai Baba (SSS 39.2: February 23, 2006)

Pride:

“The Divine Name saves and liberates! It is armor against the onslaughts of pride and self-pity. When pious repetition of holy name is started by you in a systematic manner, fixing your inner eye on the Form, which illustrates the Name, you will meet with many obstacles, disquieting thoughts and enticements. They should be ignored, by-passed, treated lightly. Strengthen your habits, stick to your discipline, improve your inner administration; mix more in the company of the good and the Godly. The unruly bull has to be roped and

tamed, its nose bored and ringed, it has to be yoked and trained to drag heavy loads and become the docile servant of its master.” – Sathya Sai Baba (SSS 2.47: November 21, 1962)

Ego:

“Generally, all people are suffering from an incurable disease. It may be to a lesser degree in some while more severe in others. The difference is only in the severity, but all are suffering from this. It cannot be cured even by expert medical treatment by experienced doctors. This disease is “ego”.

Where is the need to be egoistic for an ordinary mortal? When you consider your position in comparison to the entire world you are just an infinitesimal speck. In the world map, India is a small country, and Tamil Nadu is a part of this. In Tamil Nadu, Kodaikanal can be spotted only as a tiny dot. In this, what is your position as an individual?

When you analyze in this manner, you will find you are one of no consequence at all. If you think you are so big, inflated with ego, it is only sheer ignorance. If one identifies oneself with divinity, there will be no room for ego. All are divine in this world, and you are also one of the several billions of people. When you realize this truth, where is the scope for ego? It is due to ignorance that one feels egoistic and faces lots of problems because of this.” – Sathya Sai Baba (SSS 31.15: April 21, 1998)

Depression:

“Students lack self-confidence. Confidence in the Self is very essential. Lack of confidence in Self will lead to depression. Today, 90% of the people are afflicted with depression. Depression will lead to weakness of mind. “A weak-minded one cannot realise the Divine.” If you have confidence in the Self, you will never be weak-minded.” – Sathya Sai Baba (SSS 31.42: November 22, 1998)

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