



Widening the Mind

A Study Programme: April 9th, 16th, 23rd & 30th

Facilitators: Ritika Goyal & Aditi

Age group: 16 to 25

This was the first programme offered by the Centre for age group 16-25. The Centre has worked with students and professionals of this age through sessions at schools and in-house workshops, but this was the first time that this age group was focused upon and a programme especially designed for them. The response was very enthusiastic. In fact, the programme has evoked requests from even older age groups for similar sessions for them as well. The entire series progressed chiefly through activities and worksheets, supported by conceptual inputs and discussions, that challenged the mind and induced it to expand, to recognise its rigidities of perception, to strike against its narrow walls.

STUDENTS' PROFILE: Chiefly students, ranging from class 12th to post-graduate level.

FOCUS AREAS:

- Conceptual clarity on what is mind, its role, myths about the mind and parts of the mind.
- Becoming aware of one's narrowness and inability to use imagination.
- Becoming aware of how one's mind works.
- Opening oneself to higher inspirations.
- Conceptual clarity on what is concentration, its importance, how to develop it.
- Tools to develop concentration.
- Meditation for peace and silence of the mind.
- Self-assessment (on the practice of widening).
- Tools (worksheets, exercises, meditations) for widening.
- Application of 'thesis-antithesis-synthesis' in one's own life.
- Accepting and learning from one's own mistakes.



STUDENTS' RESPONSE:

Q. How would you evaluate your experience during the course?

- "A great 'self-discovery'."
- "It was quite different from the daily mundane life we spend during our holidays. I enjoyed the classes a lot and also learned a lot. For me it was time very well spent."
- "The experience was very new and very nice. It helps to collect oneself and look beyond the obvious."
- "It was refreshing and gave me tools to overcome my rigidities and narrowness."
- "It was a really wonderful experience that I hope to pursue in my everyday life. It has helped me to follow a path, that I wasn't sure of till now, and to get to know myself better and deal with various situations, conflicts, etc. that I face all the time. It was an eye opener and once again got me back in touch with my lost self."
- "It was a great experience. It has quite a positive effect on my thinking, my attitude and my behaviour."





Q. What relevance does this workshop have for your daily life?

- “Was looking for some answers. Found some and have initiated search for some.”
- “It helps to widen your perspective and to think beyond your own self.”
- “In the field of human relationships, I think I need to really widen my consciousness and to comprehend the complexities of life as was taught in the workshop that the mind is the receiver and one can tune it the way one wants to as it is unlimited and vast.”
- “This workshop has made me realise and see life - my own and others - in a higher perspective and a different angle. It has helped my confused mind to make some better, rigid and correct decisions.”
- “It helps in having an optimistic view towards life.”
- “It gives basis to improve upon the present situation. It helps improving relationship and overcoming anxieties and strains.”
- “It helped me to develop my concentration power.”
- “It has brought out a new dimension in my life which was until now unexplored by me.”



A STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE:

The following is an account of the study programme by one of the participants.

“At this crossroads of life, when one has to make important decisions about personal as well as professional life, here I was standing absolutely directionless, trying to seek answers, mostly from the thoughts and ideas coming from others. Lack of satisfaction from ‘self’ further darkened the picture for me. At the same time, some valuable advice from the elders could not be ignored. In this traffic of advices, thoughts, ideas... the problem rather elevated and nothing seemed to mitigate it. Such traffic very often led to nothing but conflicts and deformed relationships; the ‘self’ was getting lost day by day and the limitations were becoming pronounced.

My understanding of the ‘Gnostic Centre’ and its activities has been quite old, but I never plunged into any major learning. I don’t know what possessed me to join the workshop ‘Widening the Mind’... destiny, perhaps. The workshop involving four sessions was a ‘real opener’ to the instrumentality of mind and the related ‘self’. Having learnt about this powerful instrument called ‘mind’ and its slavery effects through ‘limitations’, there initially arose a sense of self pity within me. How vulnerable we are to these limitations, most of which are self-imposed and we have no control over them. Thoughts go vagabonding the moment we try to concentrate and find answers or break any limitation. With every progressive session of the workshop, I started seeking answers through self-help, using effective tools being provided to me in the form of worksheets, meditation. Sharing, discussions and explanations reinforced the learning at every stage. The ‘Thesis-Antithesis-Synthesis’ of my beliefs and experiences led to the much-needed clarity of thought to a certain degree... and with every repeated effort it gets a shade better... and the effort still goes on as now I can use some effective tools to probe the ‘self’.”

✍️ **Rakhi Jain**

(In transit between post-graduation and beginning a career)