

THE FOUR MODES OF MINDFULNESS

“According to the teachings, there are four types of mindfulness of the essential nature of the path. The first entails distinguishing between stillness and movement, and by the power of familiarizing yourself with their different appearances, there is **single-pointed mindfulness** of the unification of the two. Then, even while resting without strenuously observing them like before, as its natural power manifests, there is **manifest mindfulness**. Abiding loosely without mindfulness in a vacuous, wide-open clarity, a spacious vacuity, constitutes lying down on a bed that is **devoid of mindfulness**, which is the substrate. Once coarse mindfulness has subsided, resting in a luminous vacuity is called **self-illuminating mindfulness**, or the substrate consciousness.

The former two kinds of mindfulness [single-pointed mindfulness and manifest mindfulness] make manifest whatever creative displays arise, while during the latter two [the absence of mindfulness and self-illuminating mindfulness], apart from abiding solely in dependence upon a subtle mode of cognition, all appearances that are its radiance and thoughts that are its creative displays cease, so there is only non-conceptuality.” [Essence of Clear Meaning p.52]

MODE	DESCRIPTION	CORRELATIONS FROM <i>ENLIGHTENED VIEW OF SAMANTABHADRA</i>
1. Single-pointed mindfulness (Tib. <i>rtse gcig gi dran pa</i>)	Vivid mindfulness resulting from the unification of the mind’s stillness and movement	When you have identified shamatha as a meditative experience and then naturally sustain it with mindfulness, free of attachment and clinging, the appearances of meditative experiences will naturally vanish, and single-pointed mindfulness will manifest.
2. Manifest mindfulness (Tib. <i>mngon du gyur pa’i dran pa</i>)	The natural power of mindfulness occurring without strenuously observing the mind’s stillness and movement	Recognizing meditative experiences for what they are, remain without hope or fear, and sustain the flow of mindfulness. By doing so, these meditative experiences disappear by themselves, coarse thoughts naturally subside, consciousness rests in a spacious and loose state, and without doing anything to modify all the roving thoughts that arise, your consciousness is sealed. This is called self-liberated mindfulness .
3. Absence of mindfulness (Tib. <i>dran pa med pa’i dran pa</i>)	Abiding loosely without mindfulness in a vacuous, wide-open clarity, a spacious vacuity	If you sustain mindfulness while naturally settling your mind without hopes, fears, craving, or attachment to meditative experiences, these experiences will vanish by themselves. Then, without mindfulness even being aware of itself, as a result of the subtlety of this mode of apprehension, you remain in a wakeful vacuity devoid of roving thoughts, which is the ethically neutral substrate. is called collapsing into empty mindfulness .
4. Self-illuminating mindfulness (Tib. <i>rang gsal gyi dran pa</i>)	Once coarse mindfulness has subsided, resting in a luminous vacuity, or the substrate consciousness	At this time there is a prominent sense of bliss, luminosity, and non-conceptuality, and indeterminate visions of gods and demons may arise. These are expressions of the luminosity of the substrate consciousness, so this is called self-illuminating mindfulness .