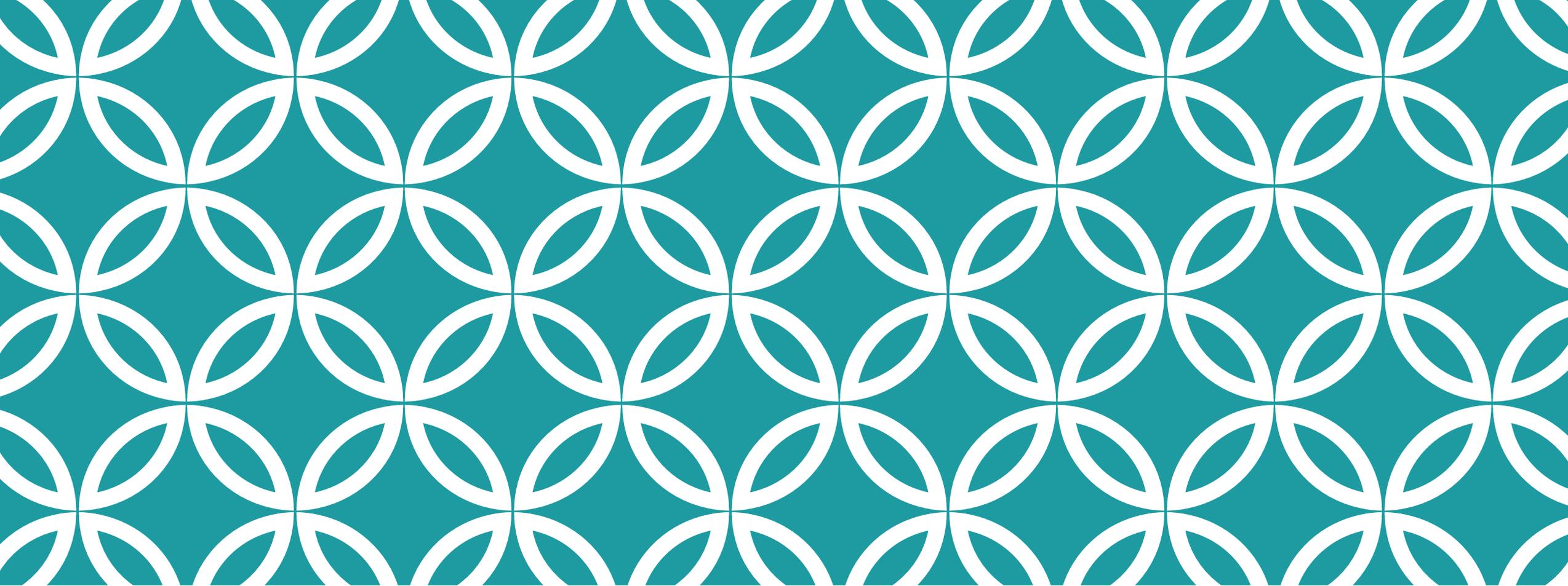


SAMSARA AND NIRVANA

Session 5: Online Course in
Meditation



BALANCING THE MIND

Meditation Theory

LET YOUR MEDITATION BECOME A GOOD HABIT

Every day

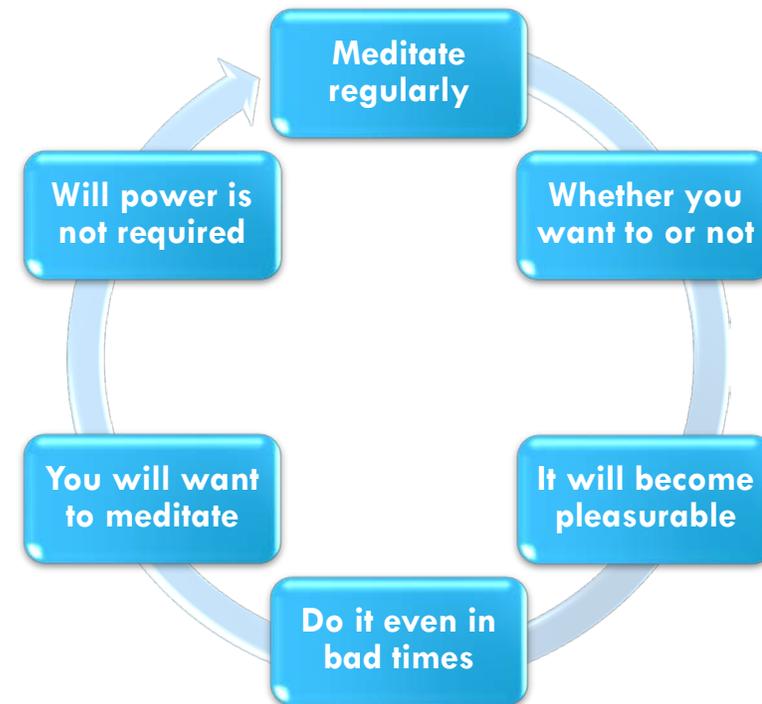
Make up your mind that meditation is an essential part of your daily life

- Like eating, sleeping, going to the bathroom or brushing your teeth
- You can't get by without it

Develop a regular routine

Do it every day unfailingly—no excuses

Until it becomes a habit



DEALING WITH DISTRACTIONS

Causes of distraction

- Scattered thoughts
- Past, future—not being present
- Habitual patterns of thought

Take action

- Relax
- Be in the present—bodily awareness
- Detach from and let go of everything that arises
- Do not involve yourself with, identify with or think about anything that comes up

Develop good habits

- Don't allow yourself to be attracted or repulsed by external or internal occurrences
- Continually bring your mind back to the present moment and to your practice
- Meditate in bad times as well as good—it will strengthen your meditation

MEDITATING WITH DISTRESSING PROBLEMS

When an overwhelming problem intrudes

Do not ignore the problem

Do not try to tough out your meditation

If you can't meditate, end the session

Seek advice

Ask yourself, "Can I solve the problem by thinking?"

If yes, then take action

If no, ask, "What does this experience have to teach me?"

Does understanding the origin of your distraction help you meditate?

You can improve the situation by not thinking

Know that meditation will change you

Calming the mind will make you less reactive and more responsive

You will be more useful to others

THE EFFORT OF BEING EFFORTLESS

Passive

Relax

Hold no intention

- Even the intention of becoming healed or enlightened

Let go

- All thoughts, desires, emotions

Allow

- Accept whatever arises

Detach

- Do not become involved in anything that comes up

Active

Focus your attention

- Mindfulness and introspection

Abandon thoughts and emotions

Maintain bodily awareness

- Find a place below

Connect

- Open up an energetic flow

Clear karma courageously

- Permit memories, fears etc. to arise
- Allow them to pass through and out of the body

ANALOGY OF A CANDLE



To be able to read by a candle it must be...

a) Stable

- No flickering
- No guttering

b) Clear

- Bright light
- No smoke

STABILITY AND CLARITY IN MEDITATION

Definitions

Clarity

- Awareness of an object by direct experience without conceptualization
- To see the reality of the way things are

Stability

- The mind has been freed of distraction
- In stable samādhi attention is sustained single-pointedly

Stability and clarity are both needed

Quiescence requires stability and clarity

- Without stability there's no meditative calming
- Without clarity the mind succumbs to dullness or laxity

Once stability is well maintained clarity arises with little effort

MEDITATIVE CALMING HAS THESE TWO ASPECTS

	1. Stability	2. Clarity
Method	Settling <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Relaxation• Patience, effortlessness• Non-conceptual awareness	Awareness of the object <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Concentration• Effort, work• Non-conceptual focusing
Excess leads to	Laxity, dullness, sleepiness, dreaminess	Excitement, distraction, restlessness
Result of excess	Lack of clarity	Lack of stability

TWO PROBLEMATIC TENDENCIES

1. Not working hard—too passive

You think you are getting somewhere because you've settled nicely

Dullness can create a kind of stability

But clarity will be lacking

A lack of enthusiasm and effort can lead to gloomy thoughts, depression

Without heat and light the candle does not function

Don't get stuck

2. Working too hard—too active

You strive to be successful in meditating

Concentrating hard can produce clarity

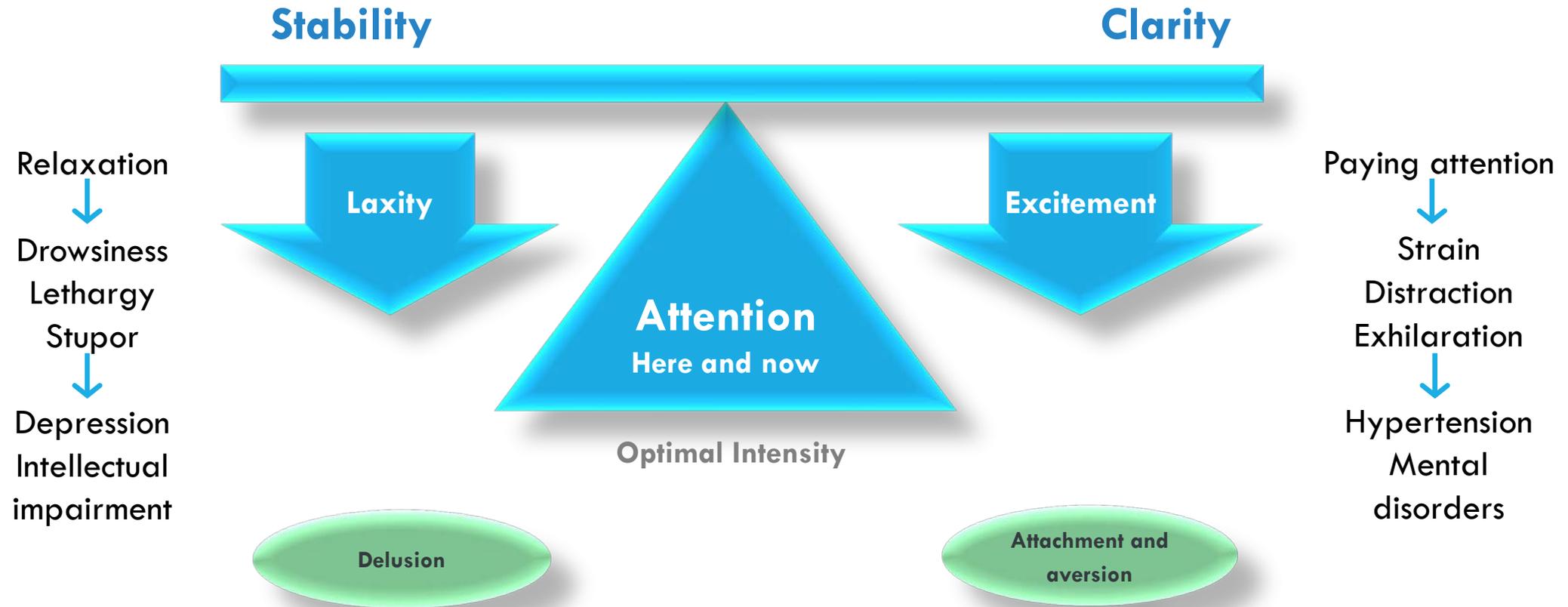
But too much effort disrupts stability

The mind becomes excited which leads to distraction

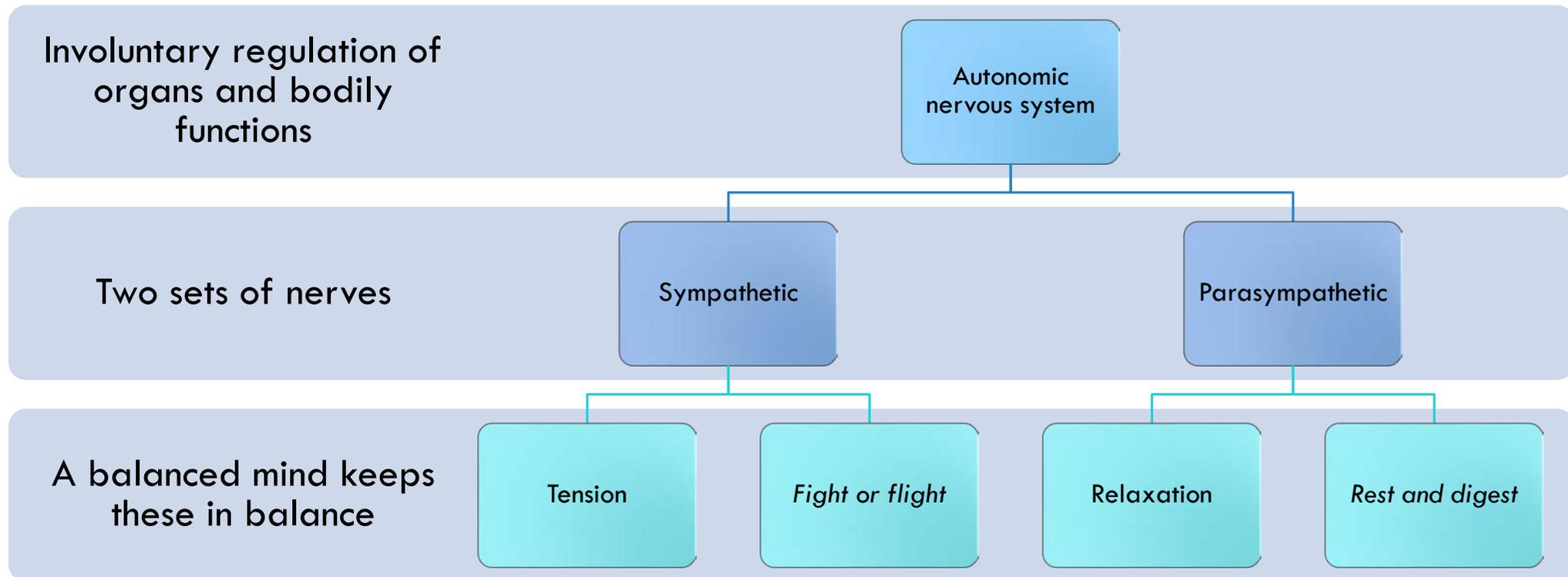
Too much wind will make the candle flicker or blow out

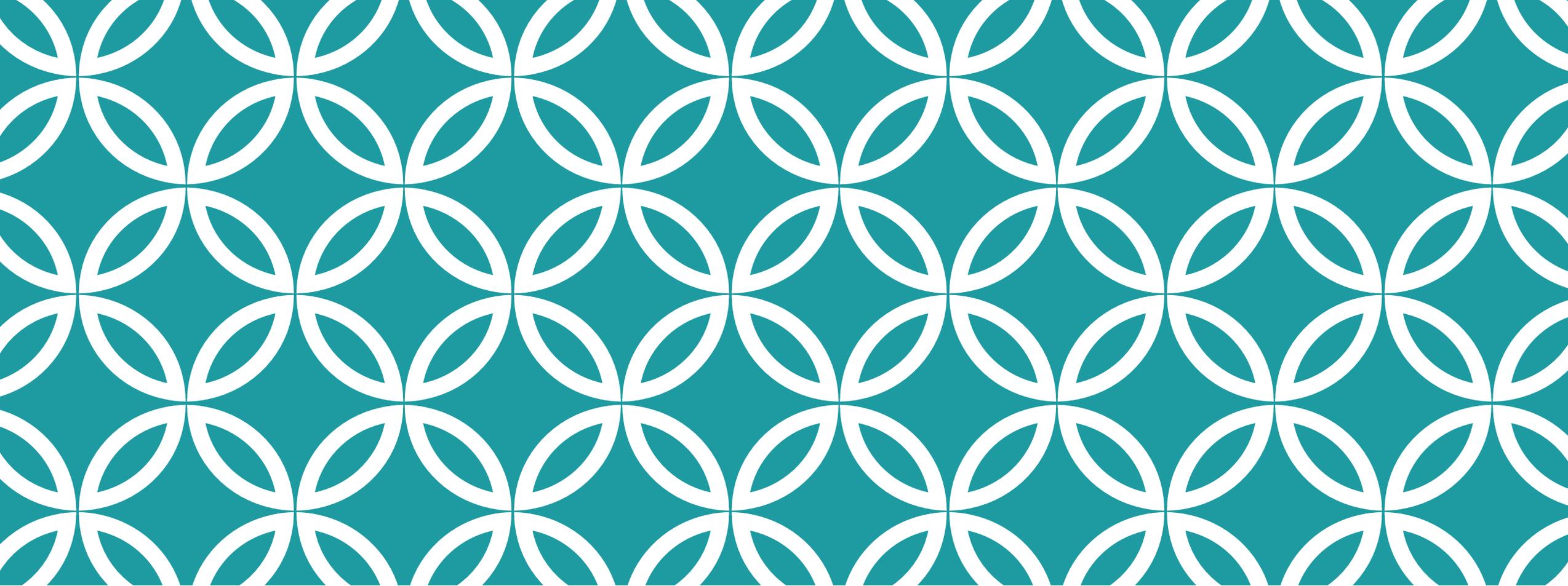
Relax—build a base of stability for clarity to grow on its own

STRIKING A BALANCE



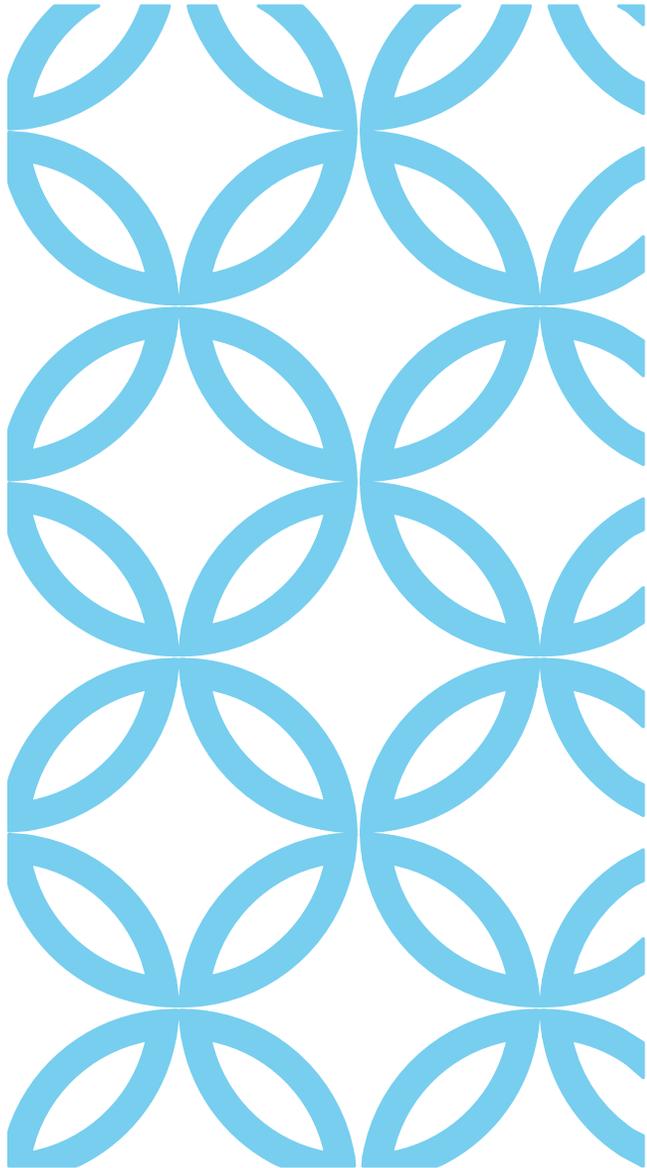
THE BODY IN BALANCE





QIGONG AND STANDING MEDITATION

Meditation Practice



To relax until you feel comfortable, free, without boundaries—as thin as air

A technique to develop resilience, confidence, fearlessness, peace, joy—to overcome adversities including disease problems

Qigong does not mean breathing techniques or absorbing essence from air—this popular definition is erroneous

QIGONG

INTERNAL ASPECTS OF QIGONG MOVEMENTS

1. Song kua

- **Soften the lower belly—Palace of Life**
- **Project flow through the sitting bones**

2. Pauses

- **Wait for your body to signal that it's time to start again**
- **Let the mind stop holding on and use empty mind to move**

3. Hollow movements

- **No intention—let the movement do itself—just “put” the arm**
- **Hollow limbs: allow blockages to fill the limbs from inside**

FOUR POSTURES OF MEDITATION

1. Sitting
2. Standing
3. Reclining
4. Walking



STANDING MEDITATION

Basic Posture

Measure the feet off as for standing qigong movements

Lower the body into *song kua*

Hold the arms in front of the body with the hands facing the fronts of the hips

Move the hands straight out from the body about a foot to a foot and a half

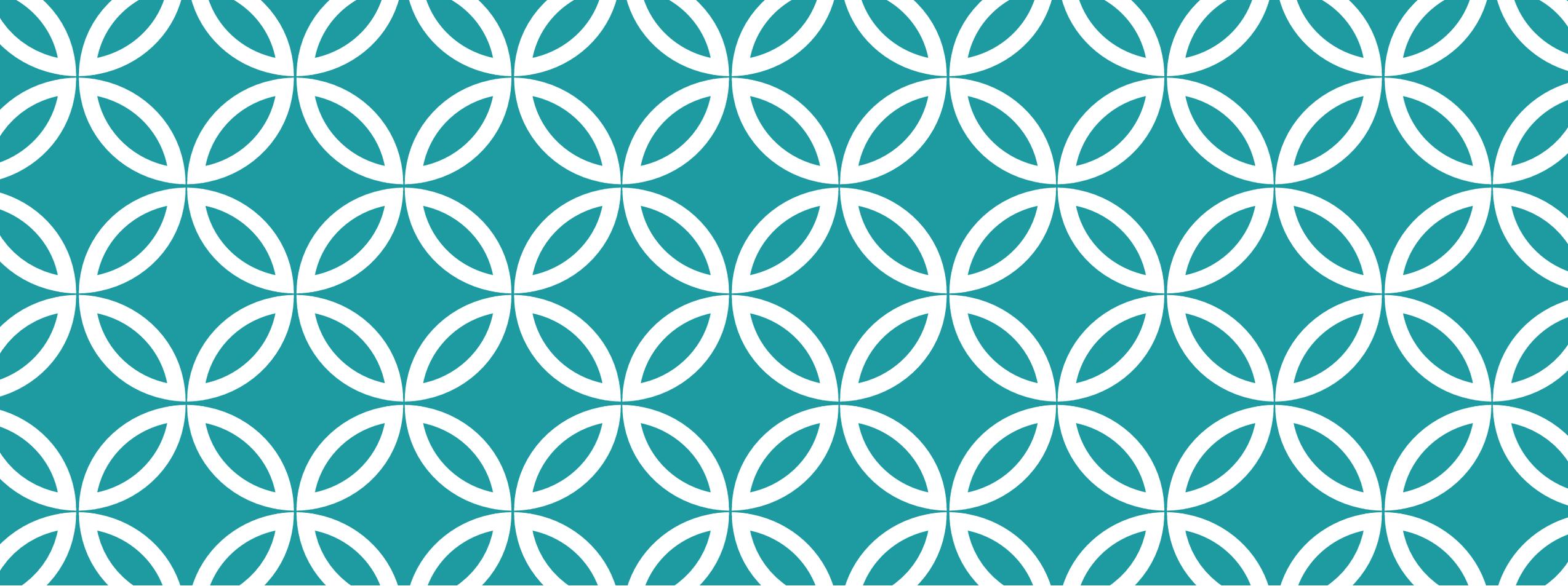
Keep the elbows raised out at the sides

Keep the head up

Maintain your attention on the space between your hands and the lower abdomen—angle the hands to face the lower belly

Keep the whole body relaxed

Work to find a posture that you can hold comfortably for an hour or more without tightening up



SAMSARA AND NIRVANA

Concepts

THE MIND MOVES

The Sixth Patriarch saw a banner flapping in the wind. Two monks were arguing, one saying that the banner was moving, the other that the wind was moving. They argued back and forth and were unable to agree.

The Sixth Patriarch said, "It isn't the banner that moves, nor is it the wind that moves. It's your minds that move." The two monks were astonished.

Shumon kattoshu, Case 83



SAMSARA

The world of samsara is in continual motion, constantly changing

- **Cyclic existence: yin and yang, formation and disintegration, arising and ceasing, body and mind**
- **Karma: cause and effect, past and future, birth and death**

Thoughts that discriminate

- **Preferences: likes/dislikes, desire/hate, selecting/rejecting**
- **Duality: good/bad, right/wrong, pleasure/pain, self/other**

Samsara is the world of suffering

- **Delusion, ignorance and doubt**

NIRVANA

With perfect enlightenment you see the world differently

- It has not changed but you have
- Doubts are removed

Sentient beings are originally Buddha and they originally have no ignorance. Only when confusion is originally present and you develop ignorance do you mistakenly see samsara and nirvana. The deluded mind, once restored, never again becomes deluded.

Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment

FROM SAMSARA TO NIRVANA

The mind of samsara

Discriminating mind

- Thoughts and words never stop
- Concepts, actions and speech create karma
- Thoughts lead us into duality and suffering
- Our thoughts are constantly lying to us

Cyclical existence—birth and death

The mind of enlightenment

No-mind and no-views

The great quiescent ocean

A mind free of attachments—joyful and equanimous

Therefore, if you desire to actualize Perfect Enlightenment, you must first learn “no-thought.” No-thought merges with enlightenment. The mind of thought has difficulty in following.

Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment

MEDITATION AND NIRVANA

Balancing the mind

A mind calmed by stabilizing meditation:

- Is free of attachments
- Enjoys physical and mental wellbeing

Our perception of reality is changed

*When reality is seen,
neither subject nor object exists*

Yongjia, Song of Enlightenment

Meditation is real life

Meditation helps us let go of thoughts

- We realize they have no substance
- We realize desires and delusions are nothing

We can live our lives without chasing after and being led around by ideas and desires

We wake up to the reality of our lives

SAMSARA IS NOT DIFFERENT FROM NIRVANA

There is nothing whatever that differentiates samsara from nirvana.

And there is nothing whatever that differentiates nirvana from samsara.

Nagarjuna. *Mulamadhyamakakarika*, 25:19

When the mind stops moving, it enters nirvana. Nirvana is an empty mind.

Bodhidharma