

FLOW HIJACKED — EASTERN WISDOM BRANCH II

THE DYNAMICS OF LIBERATION

*Tantra, Yoga, Taoism, Nonduality, Body and the
Expansion of Human Possibility*

*If psychological capture is a narrowing of accessible state space,
what would liberation mean in a dynamic human system?*

Complete English research lecture

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How to read this lecture

Reader orientation — This long-form lecture places Yoga, Tantra, Daoism, Zen, nondual traditions, embodied regulation, consciousness science, existential psychology, and recovery in a disciplined dialogue. Historical and metaphysical differences are preserved. Modern mechanisms are introduced only where evidence permits, and Flow Hijacked constructs remain proposals.

Central proposition — Psychological freedom need not mean that craving, fear, pain, or desire disappear. It may mean that these states possess less monopoly over what happens next.

Scope and safety — This work is educational and interpretive. Intensive meditation, forceful breathing, sleep loss, fasting, and altered-state practices can destabilize vulnerable people and do not replace medical, psychiatric, trauma-informed, addiction, or emergency care.

Epistemic labels used throughout

Label	Meaning
Established evidence	Replicated or convergent evidence appropriate to the stated claim.
Strong but incomplete evidence	Substantial support with unresolved heterogeneity, boundary conditions, or mechanism.
Emerging evidence	Suggestive research that should not carry a major conclusion alone.
Plausible mechanistic interpretation	A model consistent with evidence but not uniquely established by it.
Flow Hijacked hypothesis	A new, testable synthesis proposed in this lecture.
Philosophical analogy	Conceptual illumination without a claim of empirical or historical identity.
Historical contemplative claim	What a text, practice system, or lineage maintains in its own frame.
Metaphysical claim not currently scientifically testable	A claim that present empirical methods cannot confirm or refute as stated.

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Prologue — If Capture Is Narrowing, What Would Liberation Mean?

GOVERNING QUESTION If psychological capture is a narrowing of accessible state space, what would liberation mean in a dynamic human system?

Imagine a person in recovery at the end of a difficult day. Craving appears. The body is restless, a familiar route becomes vivid, and the future briefly contracts. In the earlier architecture, this is capture: one internal event begins to monopolize the next transition. Liberation cannot responsibly mean that the event never appears again. Such a promise would turn freedom into symptom perfection and every recurrence into failure.

A different possibility is more demanding and more humane. Craving appears, but connection remains reachable. Fear appears, but it does not write the entire future. Pain appears, but escape is not the only executable action. Pleasure appears, but its ending need not be prevented at any cost. An old identity loses viability, and the next identity is not yet stable; uncertainty is present without forcing a return to the old life.

CENTRAL FLOW HIJACKED CONSTRUCT Freedom as Accessible State Space means that unpleasant states need not disappear for viable alternatives to remain behaviorally real.

This formulation enters a field already crowded with meanings of liberation. *Nirvāṇa*, *mokṣa*, *kaivalya*, awakening, Buddhahood, self-realization, nonduality, equanimity, and freedom from attachment are not synonyms. They arise in traditions that disagree about self, world, consciousness, knowledge, action, grace, ethics, and metaphysical reality. Some emphasize cessation of greed, hatred, and delusion. Some describe isolation or independence of consciousness from material nature. Some claim knowledge of an identity between self and absolute reality. Some articulate Buddhahood as wisdom and compassion. Some emphasize recognition of awareness, spontaneous presence, or the non-separation of awareness and manifestation.

The scientific question is narrower. What changes in perception, attention, body regulation, learning, identity, agency, social relation, and behavior when experience no longer compels its historically dominant sequel? Science can investigate reports, tasks, physiology, behavior, and longitudinal change. It cannot decide metaphysical reality merely by finding a neural correlate.

EPISTEMIC KEY “Historical contemplative claim” states what a text or lineage maintains. “Historical scholarship” evaluates context, transmission, and disagreement. “Established evidence” reflects convergent empirical support. “Strong but incomplete” marks meaningful evidence with unresolved heterogeneity or mechanism. “Emerging evidence” marks early, small, or rare-practitioner work. “Plausible mechanistic interpretation” is not unique proof. “Flow Hijacked hypothesis” is a proposed testable construct. “Philosophical analogy” creates dialogue without equivalence. “Metaphysical claim not currently scientifically testable” is not validated or invalidated by methods incapable of addressing it.

This lecture will take Yoga, Tantra, Daoism, Zen, Advaita Vedānta, Mahāmudrā, Dzogchen, Kashmir Shaivism, Madhyamaka, ritual, death practice, and community seriously enough to preserve their differences. It will also take neuroscience seriously enough to resist

enchantment by a scan. The point is not to make the ancient modern. It is to let different maps expose what each other omits.

Part I — Liberation Has More Than One Grammar

A comparison without a universal essence

In early Buddhist traditions, nirvāṇa is tied to the ending of greed, hatred, and delusion and to freedom from the processes that perpetuate dukkha. Interpretations differ over its ontological status, the language appropriate to it, and the relation between meditative state, insight, conduct, and final liberation. Mahāyāna traditions expand the horizon through emptiness, bodhisattva ethics, compassion, and Buddhahood. ^[61, 69, 133]

In classical Yoga, *kaivalya* is often rendered isolation, aloneness, or independence: the disentanglement of pure awareness (*puruṣa*) from material nature (*prakṛti*) within a dualist Sāṃkhya-Yoga metaphysics. It is not a generic state of relaxation or modern psychological integration. ^[100, 136]

In Advaita Vedānta, liberation is centrally a matter of knowledge: ignorance of the true self is overcome, and nonduality is recognized in a framework grounded in Vedic revelation and philosophical inquiry. It does not make the same claim as Buddhist not-self or Madhyamaka emptiness. ^[145–146, 210]

In Mahāmudrā and Dzogchen, language of recognizing the nature of mind or primordial knowing arises within distinct Tibetan Buddhist histories, practices, vows, and lineages. These are not simply advanced versions of secular open monitoring. Kashmir Shaivism, in turn, presents nonduality through a Śaiva metaphysics of awareness and manifestation, not through Buddhist emptiness. ^[21, 42, 60, 185]

COMPARATIVE RULE Similar phenomenological words—openness, non-grasping, unity, awareness—do not establish doctrinal agreement.

Liberation can therefore be analyzed along several independent dimensions:

- **State:** a temporary absorption, clarity, ecstasy, or nondual episode.
- **Trait:** durable changes in reactivity, attention, conduct, or relationship.
- **Insight:** a change in what is understood or seen.
- **Identity:** a transformed organization of self-description and belonging.
- **Ethics:** reduced harming and increased responsibility or compassion.
- **Metaphysics:** a claim about what self, world, or consciousness ultimately is.
- **Practice relation:** a changed way of meeting experience.
- **Compulsion:** less obligatory grasping, avoidance, or enactment.

These dimensions can dissociate. A powerful state can leave conduct unchanged. An ethical transformation can occur without unusual phenomenology. A philosophical conviction can be sincere without altering habit. A reduction in compulsive behavior does not prove a metaphysical realization.

STATE-TRAIT RULE State is not trait. A profound experience is not automatically durable transformation.

Part II — Freedom as Accessible State Space

The difference between possible and accessible

Let $z(t)$ represent a task-specific human state: body, affect, attention, memory, prediction, action readiness, environment, social relation, temporal horizon, and identity. Let $A(z,c,\tau)$ represent trajectories that are sufficiently perceivable, credible, executable, and valued to influence action from state z , in context c , over horizon τ .

FLOW HIJACKED CONSTRUCT Liberation as Expanded Accessible State Space is an increase in the viable trajectories that remain able to organize action under perturbation.

This is not a definition of *nirvāṇa*, *mokṣa*, *kaivalya*, or awakening. It is a modern dynamical construct designed for psychological freedom. It asks whether the system preserves alternatives when craving, fear, pain, pleasure, or identity threat appears.

A freer system may show:

- a wider behavioral repertoire;
- a longer usable temporal horizon;
- greater tolerance of perturbation;
- more ability to disengage from dominant attractors;
- more flexible identity without loss of continuity;
- greater interoceptive tolerance;
- less obligatory coupling between urge and action;
- more social and relational regulation;
- more capacity to enter, dwell in, leave, and revisit states without being trapped.

More is not always better. A manic state may expand apparent possibilities while degrading risk estimation and sustainable action. Dissociation may reduce felt pain while reducing contact and agency. Chaos can increase transition count while destroying return capacity. A healthy repertoire is constrained by embodiment, ethics, values, and reality.

We can formalize obligatory coupling as the concentration of next-state probability after a perturbation. If one response becomes nearly certain across contexts—use after craving, avoidance after anxiety, attack after shame—the distribution narrows. Freedom increases when viable alternative responses gain probability *and* remain organized toward life-supporting aims.

FORMAL MODEL Freedom is not maximum entropy. It is context-sensitive response diversity under stable values, with adequate recovery and return.

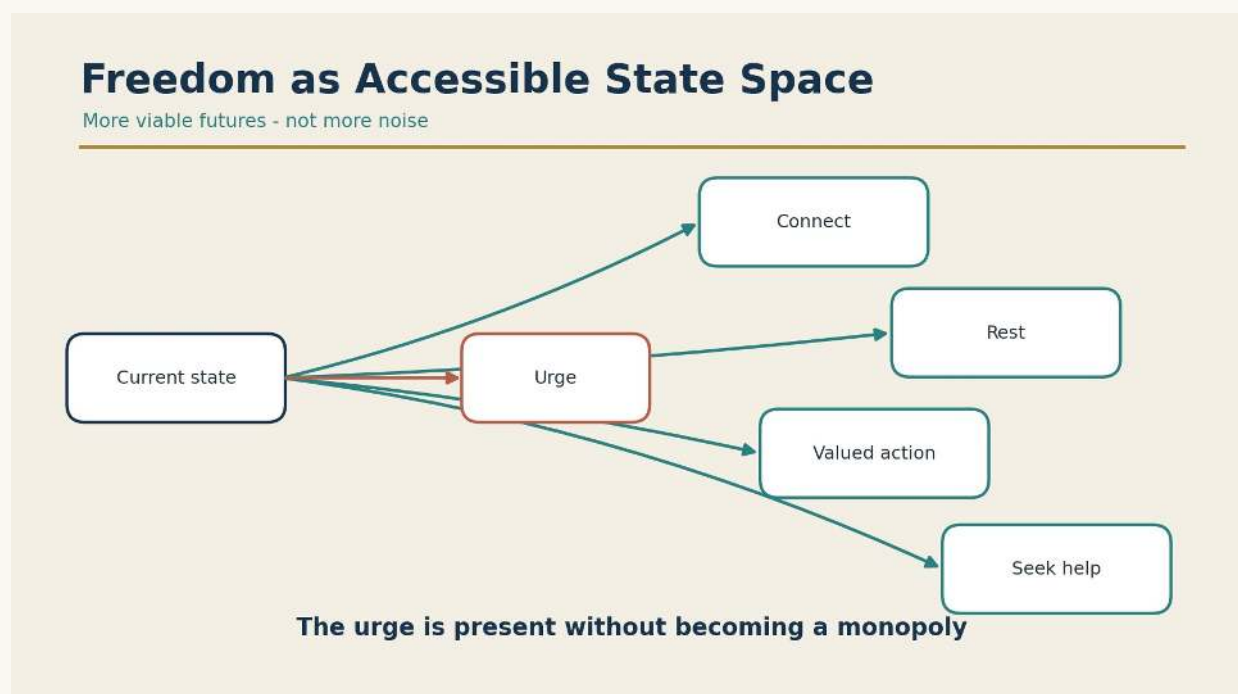


Figure 1. *Freedom as Accessible State Space. The urge remains present while other viable transitions retain enough weight to organize behavior.*

Equanimity as a transition property

Equanimity is often mistaken for feeling less. In Buddhist traditions it carries ethical and contemplative meanings that vary by context. Flow Hijacked proposes a restricted operational interpretation:

FLOW HIJACKED CONSTRUCT Equanimity as Reduced Behavioral Capture by Perturbation means that a valenced event can be fully registered while exerting less compulsory control over what follows.

This distinguishes equanimity from numbness. Numbness reduces contact. Equanimity preserves contact while reducing forced trajectory. The difference must be assessed through sensitivity, behavior, relationship, and learning—not calm appearance alone.

Dynamic mobility, metastability, and perturbation tolerance

Freedom as Accessible State Space describes what remains reachable. Freedom as Dynamic Mobility describes how the system moves: can it enter a state, dwell there, leave when context changes, and return when useful? The two constructs are related but not identical. A person may know many possible actions while being unable to switch into them. Another may change states rapidly but lack stable access to any valued direction.

Attractors provide one map. A deep basin can make a state easy to enter and hard to leave. Basin depth alone, however, misses transient amplification. A system can be stable over long periods yet highly sensitive to a particular input direction. In non-normal mathematical systems, interacting modes can amplify a perturbation dramatically before it eventually decays. Resolvent analysis characterizes which inputs and frequencies receive the greatest gain. ^[180]

FLOW HIJACKED HYPOTHESIS A recovery system may be globally stable yet transiently vulnerable to a specific alignment of sleep loss, rejection, bodily agitation, cue proximity, and social isolation.

This is not a demonstrated “non-normal brain of addiction.” It is a research proposal about why average stability can conceal acute directional vulnerability. Testing it would require dense within-person time series, directional models, pre-registered input definitions, and comparisons with simpler explanations such as arousal and autocorrelation.

Metastability adds a different property: temporary coordination without permanent lock-in. A person can coordinate around work, parenting, grief, rest, intimacy, and recovery while no single state becomes total. The system is stable enough to maintain commitments and flexible enough to reconfigure. ^[20, 91, 178]

Perturbation tolerance must also be distinguished from rigidity. A stone resists small inputs because it barely responds; a living system may respond strongly and still recover. Psychological resilience is not low sensitivity. It is the capacity to absorb, reorganize, learn, and return without losing the wider repertoire.

FORMAL DISTINCTION

Accessibility asks: which viable trajectories can currently compete?

Mobility asks: how readily can the system move among them?

Tolerance asks: how much perturbation can occur without compulsory collapse?

Return capacity asks: can the system re-enter valued coordination after disruption?

Part III — Yoga Beyond the Mat

Citta-vṛtti is not a brain wave

The opening of Patañjali's *Yoga Sūtras* famously defines Yoga in relation to the restraint or stilling of the fluctuations, activities, or patternings of *citta*. Translation is philosophically loaded. *Citta* is not simply the modern brain, and *vṛtti* is not a neural oscillation. Classical Yoga belongs to a metaphysical system in which mind is part of material nature and awareness is distinct. ^[100, 136]

The disciplined dialogue lies elsewhere. Classical Yoga and modern dynamical psychology both take recurrent patterning seriously. Experience is repeatedly organized, captured, and colored by learned or latent tendencies. The shared concern is functional, not ontological: what processes recur, what sustains them, and can their authority be altered?

Patañjali's eight-limbed architecture includes ethical restraints (*yama*), observances (*niyama*), posture (*āsana*), breath regulation (*prāṇāyāma*), withdrawal or gathering of the senses (*pratyāhāra*), concentration (*dhāraṇā*), meditation (*dhyāna*), and absorption (*samādhi*). Modern postural yoga developed through complex interactions among premodern traditions, colonial encounter, physical culture, nationalism, medicine, and transnational exchange. It is neither identical to Patañjali nor merely fake. ^[3, 38, 111, 169, 199]

Ethical foundations change the target

Non-harming, truthfulness, non-stealing, sexual or energetic restraint, and non-grasping are not warm-up exercises before “real” meditation. They specify what kinds of action count as progress. A person capable of deep absorption but organized around deception and exploitation would not satisfy the full ethical architecture.

This matters for Flow Hijacked. If liberation is measured only as subjective calm, a practice can optimize performance while leaving harmful attractors intact. Ethics constrains the topology: some newly accessible actions should not be reinforced. Freedom without responsibility can become expanded capacity for domination.

Pratyāhāra and the architecture of cues

Pratyāhāra is variously understood as withdrawal, gathering, mastery, or disengagement of the senses from their objects. It is not sensory deprivation and not a simple top-down suppression switch. Historically it belongs between breath regulation and concentration. ^[111, 136]

Its modern relevance is a question: must regulation always occur after a cue has already captured the system? Environmental design can change which perturbations arrive, at what intensity, and with what friction. A person in early recovery who avoids a drinking route is not spiritually weak; the route is part of the dynamical system. Turning off notifications, removing substances, changing payment access, leaving a high-risk social setting, or choosing a meeting space can alter transition probabilities before executive conflict begins.

FLOW HIJACKED DIALOGUE Pratyāhāra invites us to treat sensory and digital environments as components of regulation, while modern cue-reactivity science prevents us from romanticizing “withdrawal” as pure inward mastery.

The balance is delicate. Avoidance can shrink life and prevent corrective learning. Exposure can widen life but overwhelm the person if timing, support, and dose are wrong. Environmental control is neither cowardice nor liberation by itself. It is one lever among bottom-up arousal, top-down goals, learning history, and social ecology.

Dhāraṇā, dhyāna, and samādhi

The final limbs describe increasingly continuous concentration and absorption, although commentarial interpretations differ. A dynamic lens asks how attentional dwell time, distractor gain, return cost, and object stability change. It does not equate samādhi with one brain state.

Scientific research on absorption is early. Rare practitioners create selection problems; instructions differ; extraordinary phenomenology encourages confirmation bias; and a neural correlate cannot establish liberation. State stability is scientifically interesting. Whether it changes identity, ethics, or ordinary response to craving is a separate longitudinal question.

Part IV — How Does a System Regulate the Brain Through the Body?

Beyond the brain-only story

A brain is never encountered without a body, and a body is never encountered outside an environment and social field. Breathing alters gas exchange, thoracic pressure, cardiac timing, baroreflex dynamics, sensory afference, movement, and attention. Posture changes effort and perceptual readiness. Rhythm organizes prediction. Another person's voice changes arousal. A room, ritual, or route changes what the body prepares to do.

CENTRAL FLOW HIJACKED QUESTION How does a system regulate the brain through the body?

The answer cannot be “the vagus nerve” in singular. Vagal pathways are important, but popular explanations often treat a complex bidirectional autonomic system as a relaxation cable. Heart-rate variability depends on respiration, posture, age, medication, fitness, measurement window, and analysis. Respiratory sinus arrhythmia is not a direct readout of virtue, trauma healing, or freedom. ^[66, 101, 113]

Natural breath awareness and deliberate breath control

Observing the breath without changing it primarily manipulates attention and relation to sensation, though breathing may change indirectly. Slow-paced breathing deliberately changes rate and often depth. Prāṇāyāma includes many techniques—slow, forceful, alternating, retentive, warming, cooling—whose physiological effects cannot be generalized from one another. “Breathwork” meta-analyses aggregate heterogeneous practices and outcomes. ^[50, 152, 206]

Average evidence suggests that some slow-breathing protocols can reduce arousal and modestly improve stress or mood. The clinical mechanism remains multicomponent: respiration, expectancy, attention, agency, rhythm, posture, and context. A brief randomized study of structured breathing can support a near-term state effect without proving long-term trait transformation. ^[9]

Respiratory-brain coupling

Respiration provides a rhythmic bodily signal that can modulate neural activity. Human intracranial and behavioral studies show that nasal respiration can entrain limbic activity and influence performance in specific tasks; voluntary breathing recruits cortical systems beyond the brainstem. Broader reviews describe respiration-coupled rhythms across regions and species. ^[71, 73, 179, 207]

ESTABLISHED EVIDENCE Brain activity is coupled to bodily rhythms, including respiration and cardiac cycles.

LIMIT Coupling does not establish that breath is a master controller, that slower is always better, or that traditional prāṇa language has been scientifically verified.

Baroreception and cardiac timing can influence perception and emotion. Visceral signals shape cognition through multiple pathways. The system is therefore not brain plus accessories; regulation emerges through recurrent brain-body exchange. [8, 33–34]

Tummo and the discipline of not overclaiming

Tibetan *gtum mo* practices combine breathing, posture, imagery, attention, and a tantric context. Small studies have documented peripheral temperature changes in selected practitioners. They do not establish broad health benefits, reveal a universal “inner fire,” or validate subtle channels as anatomical structures. [12, 96]

The intellectually useful point is not exotic physiology. It is that imagery, respiratory pattern, muscle activity, expectation, and trained attention can form a coupled control process. The traditional meaning exceeds this process account; the process account does not verify the metaphysics.

Tai Chi, Qigong, movement meditation, posture, and rhythm

Tai Chi and Qigong are heterogeneous Chinese practices combining movement, posture, breath, attention, imagery, and often social transmission. Reviews suggest possible benefits for mood, cognition, balance, and autonomic measures, but study quality and intervention complexity limit causal attribution. [79, 190]

Movement meditation changes the problem of regulation. The person need not become still before awareness is possible. Rhythm can carry attention; weight transfer makes prediction visible; a coordinated group can supply timing and belonging. Walking, yoga, and Tai Chi also add exercise effects. Their multicomponent nature is not a defect to eliminate—unless the scientific question falsely claims to isolate one mechanism.

EMBODIED SYSTEMS SYNTHESIS Regulation can travel through breath, posture, movement, rhythm, contact, relationship, and environment. “Top-down” and “bottom-up” are useful local descriptions, but the living loop repeatedly reverses direction.

Regulation Is a Coupled Loop

Beyond a brain-only account

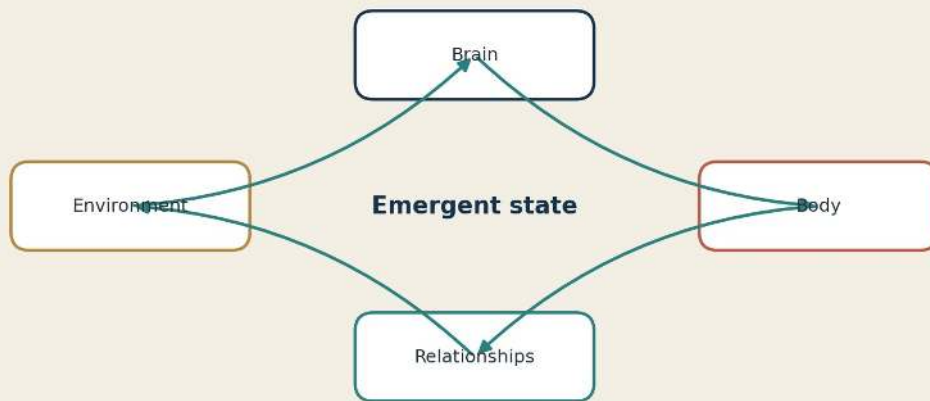


Figure 2. Regulation as a coupled brain-body-relational-environmental loop. No single arrow or organ owns the emerging state.

Part V — Tantra Is Not a Synonym for Sex

A family of traditions, not one secret doctrine

“Tantra” names diverse Hindu and Buddhist textual, ritual, institutional, and contemplative formations. Depending on time and lineage, tantric practice may include initiation, mantra, mandala, deity visualization, subtle-body disciplines, ritual identification, offerings, antinomian symbolism, devotion, philosophical inquiry, and practices concerning desire, fear, death, and embodiment. Sexual rites exist in some contexts, but the modern Western reduction of Tantra to sexual technique distorts the field. ^[63, 155, 181, 198]

Buddhist Tantra develops within Mahāyāna ethical and soteriological worlds and includes complex histories of monastic, courtly, and yogic transmission. Hindu tantric traditions likewise differ among Śaiva, Śākta, Vaiṣṇava, and other formations. Cross-influence occurred; equivalence did not. ^[37, 157, 192]

HISTORICAL LIMIT “Tantra says” is usually a warning sign. One must ask which text, lineage, era, community, and practice level.

Scientific respect does not require translating every traditional term into physiology. Mantra is not merely an auditory stimulus. A deity is not merely a cognitive schema. A mandala is not merely a visuospatial task. Prāṇa is not a validated neural energy. Traditional energy languages may organize practice, experience, and cosmology without naming experimentally established anatomical substances.

Deity practice and identity as trainable coordination

In some tantric Buddhist practices, a practitioner visualizes a deity, environment, body, symbols, sounds, and qualities, often dissolving ordinary appearance and re-emerging within a ritual sequence. The practice is embedded in initiation, commitments, philosophical view, and ethical aims. A cognitive account can ask how imagery, attention, memory, body schema, emotion, and social authority coordinate. It cannot decide the ontological status of the deity.

From a Flow Hijacked perspective, the practice raises a radical question: how fixed is the organization through which the self is predicted? Ordinary identity is already constructed from repeated imagery, remembered judgments, posture, anticipated others, and action scripts. Deliberate ritual reconfiguration may reveal plasticity. Yet plasticity is morally neutral; charismatic systems can expand or capture identity. Teacher power, consent, secrecy, and institutional accountability remain indispensable concerns.

Traditional energy language: neither anatomy nor nonsense

Tantric and yogic sources describe prāṇa, winds, channels, drops, centers, inner heat, sound, and subtle bodies. These terms do not map consistently even across Indian and Tibetan traditions. Translating them into nerves, hormones, fascia, electricity, or “neural energy” creates false validation. No imaging study has established chakras as brain networks, and no respiratory experiment has demonstrated prāṇa as a scientific substance. ^[51, 173–174]

Dismissal is also too easy. A traditional map can coordinate attention, posture, breath, imagery, emotion, ritual meaning, and teacher feedback. It may shape phenomenology and learning even if its ontological language is not a modern anatomical description. Science can investigate these component interactions and the reports they produce. It must not silently replace the original claim with the only part it can measure.

CATEGORY DISCIPLINE

A traditional energy claim states how a lineage understands body, practice, and transformation.

A physiological claim states what measurable bodily process changes.

A phenomenological claim states what the practitioner experiences.

A Flow Hijacked interpretation asks how the whole practice reorganizes transition dynamics.

None licenses automatic equivalence with another.

The distinction protects both inquiry and culture. Scientific uncertainty need not become contempt; contemplative significance need not become biomedical fact.

Part VI — Indulge, Suppress, Accept, or Transform?

CORE QUESTION What is the difference between indulging an impulse, suppressing an impulse, and transforming the relationship to the process producing the impulse?

Indulgence completes the familiar trajectory: urge → action → consequence. Suppression attempts to remove the urge, thought, expression, or awareness. Avoidance changes contact with the trigger. Acceptance permits contact without requiring endorsement. Transformation aims to change the organization that gives the impulse its habitual meaning and sequel.

These categories overlap in practice. Leaving a bar can be wise environmental design, fear-based avoidance, or both. Restraining action can be necessary safety, not pathological suppression. Acceptance without boundaries can become passivity. “Transformation” can become grandiose language for acting out.

Experimental emotion-regulation research shows that suppression often reduces visible expression while increasing or redistributing physiological and cognitive cost. Ironi-process research shows that efforts not to think a thought can require monitoring for the thought and thereby increase its accessibility, especially under load. Neither result means all inhibition is harmful. Human life requires inhibition; the question is timing, target, and downstream effect. [64-65, 193-194]

Acceptance-based approaches alter the task: the person need not win a contest with private experience before acting. Meta-analytic evidence supports psychological flexibility and acceptance processes across some conditions, but protocols, measures, and populations vary. Acceptance is not the claim that pain, abuse, or injustice should remain unchanged.

Urge surfing as trajectory practice

Urge surfing treats an urge as a changing process rather than a command or permanent object. Sensation rises, shifts, peaks, fragments, or returns. The person observes without completing the familiar action. Its therapeutic logic partly resembles exposure and inhibitory learning: the expected necessity of action can be violated. Yet urge surfing is not guaranteed extinction, and intense withdrawal or overdose risk requires medical and environmental care beyond observation.

Extinction usually creates context-sensitive new learning rather than erasing the old association. Fear or craving can return through renewal, reinstatement, stress, or passage of time. The return does not prove that no learning occurred. It shows that learning competes and is context-bound. [18, 31, 121, 187]

Reconsolidation research asks whether a reactivated memory becomes temporarily modifiable. Striking studies inspired claims of memory rewriting, but human results are bounded, heterogeneous, and inconsistently replicated. Retrieval conditions and prediction error matter; many interventions labeled reconsolidation do not demonstrate that mechanism. [46, 97, 137, 161]

FLOW HIJACKED PROPOSITION The energy or intensity of a state may not need to disappear for the trajectory historically associated with that state to change.

This is the disciplined point of dialogue with Tantra. Some tantric traditions do not frame liberation only as avoiding difficult or intense energies; they ritualize transformed relation, identity, and meaning. Modern science cannot certify those transformations as stated by the tradition. It can ask whether arousal remains while response probability, appraisal, bodily prediction, and action change.

For addiction, the distinction is concrete. Indulgence is not liberation because the urge directs use. Suppression may produce a brittle contest that collapses under stress. Acceptance may preserve contact without immediate action. Transformation would mean that the urge no longer predicts only one outcome: it can cue disclosure, movement, medication adherence, leaving, rest, grief, community, or renewed commitment. The substance is not transmuted into wisdom. The transition architecture changes.

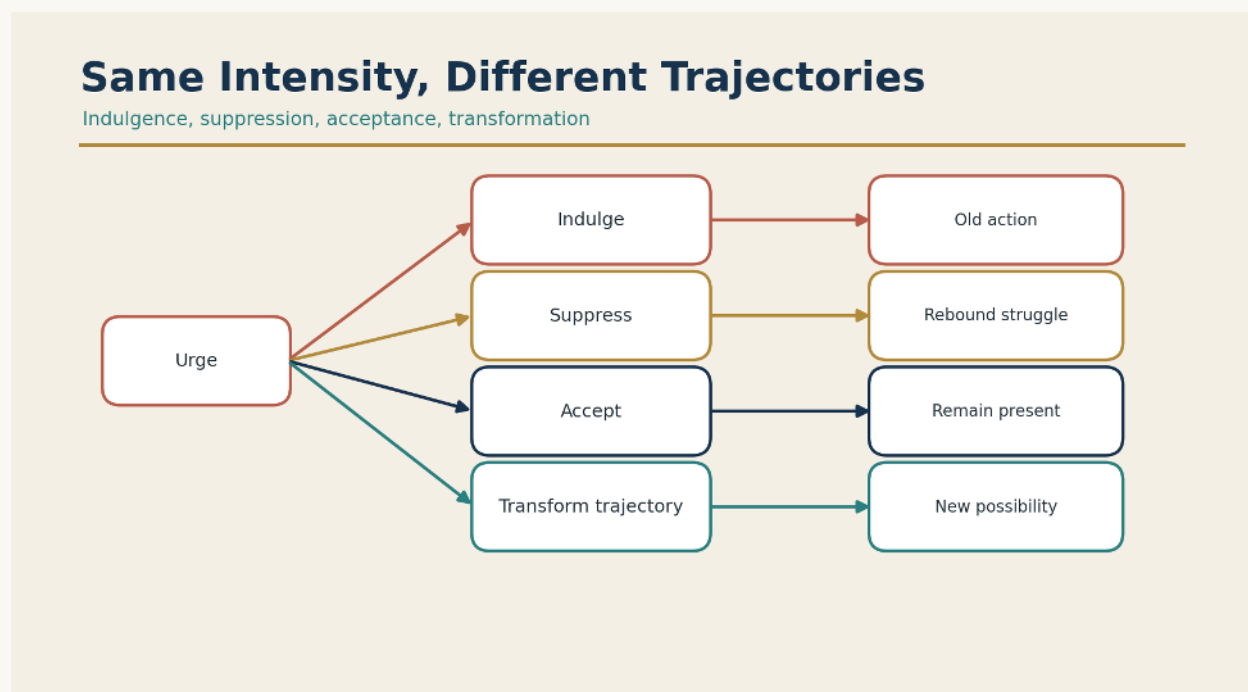


Figure 3. *The same intensity can enter different trajectories. Transformation concerns the learned sequel to an impulse, not a scientific validation of tantric metaphysics.*

Part VII — Desire Can Expand or Collapse Possibility

A taxonomy of motivational life

The English word “desire” covers processes that must be separated:

- **Craving:** urgent motivational pull, often coupled to relief or reward expectation.
- **Wanting:** incentive motivation, which can dissociate from pleasure.
- **Liking:** hedonic impact during consumption or experience.
- **Aspiration:** a valued direction whose fulfillment may be distant.
- **Intention:** commitment to enact a course under specified conditions.
- **Devotion:** affective and identity investment in a person, ideal, deity, or path.
- **Attachment:** a relational bond in psychology, or clinging/appropriation in some contemplative discourse; the meanings are not identical.
- **Sexual desire:** a family of embodied, relational, imaginative, and motivational processes.
- **Creative drive:** sustained generation and exploration.
- **Goal pursuit:** organized action toward an outcome.
- **Compulsion:** action experienced as difficult to resist despite conflict or cost.

Dopamine helps explain reward prediction, incentive salience, response vigor, and opportunity cost in specific circuits and tasks. It does not decide which desire is noble, whether a goal is meaningful, or whether pleasure is freedom. ^[130, 154, 163]

Self-determination research distinguishes autonomous and controlled forms of motivation. Work on harmonious and obsessive passion similarly suggests that intense engagement can integrate flexibly with life or dominate identity and conflict with other domains. These constructs are not state-space topology, but they support an important distinction: intensity alone does not determine capture. ^[39, 184]

FLOW HIJACKED DISTINCTION Desire can either expand possibility or collapse possibility. What matters is not intensity alone, but what desire does to the topology of available action.

A creative desire can make years of learning, collaboration, frustration, and revision accessible. An addictive craving can make every route except immediate relief disappear. Devotion can sustain ethical action or become authoritarian capture. Sexual desire can deepen mutuality or reduce another person to an instrument. The question is relational: what futures, persons, and values remain real while the desire is active?

Pleasure is not the same as freedom

Pleasure can be good without proving freedom. Addiction demonstrates that repeated pursuit of pleasure or relief can reduce repertoire. Conversely, a person may freely choose a

simple pleasure, enjoy it fully, and let it end. The relevant variable is not moral suspicion of pleasure but obligatory continuation.

CORE Pleasure is not the same as freedom.

Incentive salience helps explain why wanting can persist when liking wanes. Relief learning explains why an unpleasant state can make removal more motivating than positive pleasure. A system trained on rapid relief may learn that discomfort predicts action rather than information.

Discomfort is not the same as suffering

Pain interrupts attention and motivates protection. That is not a defect. Secondary struggle—catastrophic prediction, self-attack, urgent avoidance, or identity conclusions—can add suffering, but this should never be used to blame a person for pain or deny medical and social causes. [\[44, 115\]](#)

CORE Discomfort is not the same as suffering.

Distress tolerance is not stoic endurance of everything. It is capacity to remain in contact with difficult experience long enough to choose a context-appropriate action. Leaving danger can be the flexible action. Staying with a safe interoceptive wave can be the flexible action. Flexibility cannot be inferred from staying or leaving alone. [\[102, 168\]](#)

Part VIII — Taoism, Wuwei, and the Failure of Total Control

Non-forcing is not passivity

Wuwei is translated as non-action, effortless action, or non-coercive action. “Doing nothing” is often misleading. In the *Laozi* and *Zhuangzi*, the ideal can involve responsive skill, attunement, naturalness, and action that does not impose rigid will against the pattern of circumstances. Interpretations differ across texts and historical traditions. [94, 99, 170, 209]

The skilled butcher in the *Zhuangzi* does not attack bone with more force; he follows spaces and changing structure. The image is not a therapy protocol. It is an epistemological challenge to control models that assume the system is transparent, linear, and compliant.

Nonlinear systems resist naive control

In a linear machine, twice the input produces twice the output, and parts can often be controlled independently. Living adaptive systems contain feedback, delays, thresholds, learning, and compensatory response. Aggressive control can generate overshoot, resistance, rebound, or downstream instability. Systems thinking calls this policy resistance: an intervention changes the system that determines the intervention's effect. [76, 119, 171]

FLOW HIJACKED QUESTION Do some psychological regulation attempts fail because a nonlinear adaptive system is treated like a linear machine?

Sleep offers a clear example. Effortfully commanding oneself to sleep increases monitoring for wakefulness, frustration, and arousal. Intrusive-thought suppression can make the thought more accessible. Anxiety control can turn every bodily fluctuation into evidence that control has failed. In relationships, forcing reassurance can briefly reduce uncertainty while training both partners into escalating monitoring. In recovery, demanding the total absence of craving can transform normal recurrence into catastrophe.

None of this makes direct control useless. Removing alcohol, taking prescribed medication, setting a boundary, using a safety plan, or interrupting violence are direct actions. The principle is conditional:

FLOW HIJACKED PRINCIPLE Adaptive influence may sometimes be more effective than total control.

Influence can mean changing initial conditions, friction, cues, relationships, sleep, body state, timing, or expected consequences. It can mean guiding a system toward a basin rather than forcing every variable. *Wuwei* contributes the question of non-coercive fit; nonlinear science contributes explicit mechanisms and failure tests.

Part IX — Zen as an Epistemological Safeguard

Zen traditions challenge attachment to conceptual proliferation while generating sophisticated texts, rituals, institutions, and philosophies of their own. “Direct experience” is never simply raw data outside culture; practice, language, posture, teacher, and expectation shape what can be noticed and how it is reported. Zen critiques of conceptual fixation should therefore be applied to Zen claims too. [43, 80, 89, 165]

FLOW HIJACKED SAFEGUARD The map must never replace the lived field.

A person is not a dopamine curve, an attractor, a connectome, a diagnosis, a prediction machine, or a psychiatric category. These are maps. Each can reveal a relation and conceal a life. The attractor map can show why return is hard while failing to show the child's voice that interrupts the urge. The dopamine model can show wanting without liking while failing to show humiliation. The diagnosis can open treatment while becoming a prison if treated as ontology.

Zen's contribution here is not anti-intellectualism. It is discipline about reification. A model must return to the person and improve description, prediction, care, or action. If it does not, its elegance is not liberation.

Part X — Nonduality: Experience, Metaphysics, and Neural Correlates

Similar words, different worlds

Advaita Vedānta maintains, in one major reading, that liberation involves knowledge of the self as nondual Brahman. Mahāmudrā and Dzogchen operate within Buddhist traditions that reject a permanent independent self, even while using affirmative language about knowing or nature of mind. Kashmir Shaivism articulates awareness as the reality through which manifestation appears. Madhyamaka refuses intrinsic existence and subjects even consciousness to dependent analysis. These cannot be fused into “all is one.” [21, 42, 60, 146, 195, 210]

Phenomenologically, practices may alter the felt boundary between observer and observed, reduce ownership of thought, soften body boundaries, or make awareness seem non-objective. Such reports are important data when carefully elicited. They are not self-interpreting. A practitioner trained in Advaita and a practitioner trained in Dzogchen may describe similar sensory changes within incompatible ontologies.

What neuroscience can ask

Neuroscience can investigate attention, body ownership, agency, self-referential processing, perceptual boundaries, metacognition, conscious access, and reported nondual states. Studies suggest candidate patterns, but the literature is small and construct validity is fragile. Rare expertise and low sample size make false positives, idiosyncrasy, and selection likely. [84–85, 203]

Body-ownership illusions demonstrate that aspects of embodied selfhood are constructed and revisable. Sense of agency arises from prospective motor processes, sensory prediction, inference, and retrospective interpretation. This plurality undermines the search for one self center. It does not prove that self is metaphysically unreal. [16, 57, 68]

Predictive self-models offer one bridge: the organism maintains models that regulate body, action, and social continuity. A reduced precision of ownership or a changed model of agency could alter experience. This remains a plausible account among others. Predictive processing is not Buddhism, and nonduality is not prediction-error minimization. [27, 164]

EPISTEMIC BOUNDARY A neural correlate of a reported nondual state can show that experience has conditions. It cannot decide whether awareness is fundamental reality.

Part XI — Kashmir Shaivism and Spanda

Kashmir Shaivism developed sophisticated nondual Śaiva philosophies, ritual systems, aesthetics, and contemplative practices. Abhinavagupta synthesizes earlier streams; Recognition (*Pratyabhijñā*) traditions describe liberation as recognition of one's nature as Śiva-consciousness; *Spanda* language concerns the dynamic pulse, throb, or vibrancy of awareness and manifestation. [42, 98, 127, 182]

METAPHYSICAL CLAIM NOT CURRENTLY SCIENTIFICALLY TESTABLE The tradition's identification of reality with dynamic consciousness cannot be established by measuring neural dynamics.

Spanda is not an ancient name for oscillation, synchrony, metastability, or electromagnetic energy. The resemblance of “vibration” is linguistic, not evidential. Yet the tradition can deepen a process ontology: mind need not be pictured as a container holding static objects. Experience manifests as differentiated activity, recognition, concealment, and relation.

Flow Hijacked uses this as philosophical provocation. If identity, craving, and awareness are processes, then intervention can target coordination and trajectory rather than search for an object to eliminate. The scientific support comes from process models, not from Spanda. The tradition's own claim remains larger and categorically different.

Part XII — Śūnyatā, Madhyamaka, and the Limits of Reduction

Nāgārjuna's Madhyamaka critiques *svabhāva*—intrinsic, independent nature—and argues through dependent origination, conceptual designation, and the two truths. Emptiness is not a hidden substance behind phenomena and not nihilistic nonexistence. Things function conventionally precisely without the independent essence philosophical analysis seeks. Interpretations of Nāgārjuna differ; serious study must preserve the arguments rather than convert “emptiness” into a wellness feeling. ^[132-133, 195-196]

Complexity theory makes no equivalent metaphysical claim. It studies how interactions generate collective behavior, often using mathematical models. Still, a disciplined dialogue is possible. Both can expose failures of reification: treating an emergent pattern as if it were an independent, self-sufficient thing.

There is no single addiction center, depression molecule, craving circuit, or location of self. This does not mean biology is irrelevant. It means the phenomenon emerges through relations among brain, body, drug, memory, stress, culture, opportunity, expectation, relationship, future, and identity. Remove or change one relation and the phenomenon may transform; in another context the same change may do little.

FLOW HIJACKED SYNTHESIS Non-essentialism cautions against turning a useful level of description into the essence of a person. Complex systems specify how relational organization can remain causally real.

The ethical consequence is substantial. If addiction has no single essence, it is not reducible to vice, dopamine, trauma, habit, or diagnosis. Multilevel explanation is not vagueness; it is the demand to specify which relation matters, for whom, at what time scale, and under what conditions. ^[17, 92]

Part XIII — Time, Impermanence, and Death

The present is made from memory and prediction

Present experience is not an infinitesimal point sealed from past and future. Perception draws on prior learning; action anticipates outcomes; autobiographical memory constructs continuity; prospective simulation makes possible events exert present influence. Memory and future imagination recruit overlapping constructive processes, although the networks and computations are not identical. [1, 24, 160]

This temporal construction becomes visible in suffering:

TEMPORAL ARCHITECTURE

Addiction can compress the future.

Depression can make the future appear inaccessible.

Trauma can make the past behave as present.

Contemplative practice may alter the relation with present experience.

Mortality awareness may reorder value.

Each line is a research question, not a universal law. Some people with depression retain vivid futures; some trauma responses are numb rather than hyper-present; some addiction is carefully planned. The topology varies by state and person.

Maraṇasati and mortality without spectacle

Buddhist recollection of death (*maraṇasati*) belongs to ethical urgency and liberation practice, not morbid fascination. Tibetan traditions contain elaborate death, dying, and intermediate-state practices. Modern mortality-salience experiments usually use brief reminders of death and examine worldview defense, self-esteem, or behavior. They are not empirical tests of *maraṇasati*. [25, 35, 106, 175]

FLOW HIJACKED QUESTION How does mortality alter the topology of what matters?

Death can widen or narrow. It can render status competition trivial, make reconciliation urgent, or clarify a valued project. It can also intensify tribal defense, compulsive control, denial, or despair. Mortality does not deliver one moral lesson. It perturbs the field; history, culture, attachment, and support shape the transition.

An East-existentialism dialogue without invented agreement

Frankl asks how meaning can remain possible under extreme constraint, while never making suffering necessary or good. Yalom organizes existential psychotherapy around death, freedom, isolation, and meaninglessness. Fromm distinguishes modes of having and being

and treats freedom as socially conditioned. Kierkegaard analyzes despair as a distorted relation of the self to itself. Nietzsche interrogates inherited values and affirmation. Sartre radicalizes responsibility and bad faith. Heidegger places possibility and being-toward-death within temporality. They do not form one Western view. [52-53, 55, 72, 93, 128, 158, 204]

Nor do Eastern traditions supply one answer. Some ask how grasping ends. Some ask how puruṣa becomes disentangled from prakṛti. Some ask what knowledge removes ignorance of the self. Madhyamaka asks whether the person or any phenomenon can be found with intrinsic existence. Zen questions the concepts with which the questioner arrives.

Western existentialism may ask how a person lives meaningfully in the face of freedom, contingency, and death. Some Eastern traditions push further: what exactly is the person whose freedom is being defended? But the converse challenge is equally important. If self is deconstructed without confronting responsibility, history, power, and relationship, “no-self” can become an evasion of the life that must still be lived.

SYNTHESIS Existentialism protects concrete choice and responsibility. Contemplative traditions challenge appropriation and essential selfhood. Flow Hijacked asks how both alter the futures that remain accessible now.

Part XIV — Ritual, Mantra, and Symbol as Regulatory Architecture

Ritual is often dismissed because its effects resist isolation. Yet repetition, sequence, posture, rhythm, shared attention, authority, memory, expectation, and symbol can jointly organize a human system. Ritual can mark a transition that ordinary language cannot complete: entering recovery, mourning a death, making amends, taking vows, or being received into a community. ^[11, 75, 148]

Mantra can narrow discursive competition through repetition, entrain breathing and cardiac rhythm, activate semantic and devotional networks, and connect the practitioner to a lineage. A study comparing rosary prayer and yoga mantras found cardiovascular rhythmic effects associated with paced recitation, but it cannot separate cadence, belief, social learning, and sacred meaning for every practitioner. ^[13]

Visualization can train imagery, attention, emotion, body schema, and expectation. Symbol can compress multiple relations into one form. Deity practice may reorganize identity within a ritual ontology. A laboratory account can measure components without claiming that components exhaust the practice.

Social synchrony studies suggest that coordinated movement or arousal can increase affiliation or cooperation in some settings. Field work finds relationship-linked physiological synchrony during ritual. Effects are probabilistic and can support exclusion or obedience as well as care. ^[95, 149, 201]

FLOW HIJACKED INTERPRETATION Ritual is a multiscale transition technology: it can change what is attended, expected, remembered, embodied, socially recognized, and considered possible.

The word “technology” must not imply neutrality. Ritual can widen a person's future, or capture it inside coercion. Ethical evaluation and consent remain part of the mechanism.

Part XV — Sangha and Recovery as Social Ecology

Regulation is not wholly inside the individual

A calm voice can reduce threat. A reliable meeting changes the evening's possible paths. A sponsor, teacher, therapist, friend, or child can become part of how the system predicts the next hour. Relationships reduce or increase the effort required for regulation. Social-baseline and attachment research supports the view that risk, effort, and affect are partly co-regulated, although no theory makes relationships uniformly safe. [29, 47, 197]

In Buddhist settings, *sangha* can mean monastic community and, in modern usage, broader practice community. It supplies ethics, teaching, ritual, belonging, accountability, and material support. It also carries hierarchy and can reproduce exclusion or abuse. The individual-meditator model misses both sides.

Recovery communities likewise provide more than advice. Twelve-step groups, SMART Recovery, therapeutic communities, mutual aid, families, and clinical groups can supply identity, schedules, witnesses, language, models, limits, practical help, and futures embodied by other people. Evidence supports several pathways, but fit varies and no community should be treated as universal. [28, 90, 125]

FLOW HIJACKED PRINCIPLE Recovery as Social Ecology means that regulatory capacity is partly distributed across relationships, norms, resources, institutions, and environments.

In dynamical terms, another person can change a basin boundary. Calling before use does not merely add information; it can change bodily arousal, shame prediction, accountability, location, and available action. A stable community can deepen a recovery basin. A stigmatizing institution can deepen a return-to-use basin. Social variables are not external modifiers of the “real brain.” They are among the conditions under which brains and bodies regulate.

Community can liberate or capture

Belonging can widen identity and also demand conformity. A teacher can transmit subtle practice and also become unaccountable. A recovery label can stabilize action and become a prison. A family can co-regulate and also surveil. The test is not whether a system is communal, but what the community does to agency, truth, safety, dissent, and future possibility.

Part XVI — Ethics Is Part of the Mechanism

Meditation was historically embedded in moral, ritual, philosophical, and communal frameworks. Modern clinical extraction can make practices accessible to people who do not share the metaphysics and can permit controlled research. It can also shift the target from liberation and non-harming to stress tolerance, productivity, or institutional compliance. ^[118, 124, 141]

“McMindfulness” names critiques of commodification and performance optimization: the worker is trained to tolerate conditions the organization refuses to change. The critique is valuable when it reveals structural capture. It becomes simplistic if it assumes every secular adaptation is corrupt or every traditional institution is ethical. ^[142]

Spiritual bypassing occurs when spiritual language or practice is used to avoid grief, trauma, accountability, conflict, or material action. “Everything is empty” can invalidate harm. “Observe the craving” can neglect dangerous withdrawal. “There is no self” can evade apology. “Accept what is” can protect abuse. ^[26]

ETHICAL CONSTRAINT Liberation that increases calm while preserving deception, exploitation, or avoidable harm is incomplete by the standards of the traditions being appropriated and by Flow Hijacked's human purpose.

Non-harming, truthfulness, restraint, generosity, compassion, and right action affect the system. Telling the truth changes social prediction. Repair changes memory and trust. Restraint prevents a high-gain transition from being rehearsed. Generosity can loosen possession and build social ecology. Ethics is not a decorative value layer placed on neutral regulation; it changes feedback.

Part XVII — Altered States and the Problem of Integration

Jhāna, samādhi, mystical experience, ecstatic states, nondual awareness, breath-induced states, and lucid dreaming can be intense, meaningful, and life-reorienting. They can also be misinterpreted, destabilizing, or transient. The phenomenology must be studied without either ridicule or automatic authority.

Research on advanced absorption and nondual awareness is early. Rare practitioners and case-intensive designs can reveal temporal structure and generate hypotheses, but they cannot establish population effects. Different traditions use the same words differently; self-report is shaped by doctrine and expectation. ^[84-85, 203]

Dream-yoga traditions should not be reduced to lucid-dream induction. Neuroscience can study dream reports, lucidity, metacognition, and sleep physiology. Findings about lucid dreaming or posterior cortical activity do not test Tibetan claims about liberation through dream and sleep. ^[167, 189]

CENTRAL DISTINCTION State is not trait.

A state becomes consequential through integration: what is learned, rehearsed, interpreted, embodied, enacted, and supported afterward. Plasticity is experience-dependent, not experience-guaranteed. A peak can strengthen humility or grandiosity, connection or isolation. Ethical change and daily behavior must be observed, not inferred from intensity.

A differentiated altered-state atlas

Jhāna refers to absorptions described and classified differently in early texts, Theravāda commentaries, and modern revival communities. Reports may include strong unification, rapture, pleasure, contentment, or equanimity. The scientific problem is not merely to identify activation but to establish instruction fidelity, temporal onset, reproducibility, and relation to ordinary conduct. Intensively sampled expert cases can reveal candidate dynamics; they cannot establish a universal sequence.

Samādhi is even broader across Yoga, Buddhist, Hindu, and modern settings. In Patañjali, multiple forms of absorption are embedded in discriminative knowledge and a specific metaphysics. Calling every sustained-attention state “samādhi” loses the construct before measurement begins.

Mystical experience is a comparative psychological category often operationalized through unity, sacredness, noetic quality, positive affect, transcendence of time and space, and ineffability. Those dimensions are partly shaped by questionnaires derived from particular histories. Similar scores can conceal different interpretations and consequences.

Nondual states concern reduced or altered subject-object structure, but “nondual awareness” can function as a doctrinal claim, phenomenological report, practice instruction, or research construct. Studies must say which. A felt absence of boundary may coexist with intact sensorimotor discrimination; otherwise ordinary action would be impossible.

Ecstatic states can arise through devotion, music, movement, ritual, breathing, social synchrony, drugs, sleep loss, illness, or combinations. Ecstasy is not one mechanism. Positive valence does not establish safety or truth.

Breath-induced states depend on technique. Slow breathing, forceful ventilation, long retention, and cyclic hyperventilation have different physiology and risk. Altered sensation after respiratory manipulation should not automatically be interpreted as trauma release or spiritual attainment.

Dream yoga is a soteriological practice within Tibetan traditions, not simply lucid dreaming. Laboratory sleep research may investigate lucidity and conscious access while remaining silent about liberation claims.

Across all seven, evidence should track dose, sleep, prior psychiatric history, teacher or facilitator, social setting, adverse events, and post-state behavior. The criterion of integration is not how difficult the experience is to describe. It is what the person can now perceive, choose, sustain, repair, and share.

Adverse contemplative events deserve explicit attention. Intensive practice, sleep loss, fasting, forceful breathing, trauma activation, social isolation, and metaphysical interpretation may contribute to anxiety, dissociation, depersonalization, mania, or psychosis in vulnerable people. Causality and incidence are uncertain, but the signal is sufficient to reject universal safety claims.

SAFETY Altered-state practice is not a substitute for medical detoxification, psychiatric care, sleep, or trauma-informed support. Escalating insomnia, grandiosity, disorganization, psychosis, suicidality, severe dissociation, or dangerous withdrawal requires timely human and professional intervention.

Part XVIII — Bardo and the Liminal Architecture of Recovery

The Tibetan *bar do*—an intermediate state—belongs to specific doctrinal, ritual, funerary, and contemplative systems. The internationally famous “Tibetan Book of the Dead” is itself the product of translation, selection, and modern reception. Recovery is not bardo, and a return to use is not rebirth in a Tibetan doctrinal sense. ^[35, 106, 175]

ANALOGY, NOT EQUIVALENCE Recovery can resemble a liminal interval in which an old identity has lost viability while a new one is not yet established.

This interval can feel worse before it feels larger. The old routines no longer work, but they remain fluent. The new routines are meaningful but effortful. Old relationships may destabilize; new belonging may feel conditional. Pleasure is uncertain. Time is open but empty. The person is between social worlds and between predictions of self.

In Flow Hijacked terms, the old attractor architecture has destabilized while a new stable repertoire has not yet formed. Metastability here is vulnerability and possibility. Small events have disproportionate effects. A conflict can reactivate the old basin; a reliable relationship can help stabilize a new trajectory. Agency is real but ecologically scaffolded.

The clinical mistake is to interpret liminality as proof that recovery is failing. The romantic mistake is to treat it as sacred transformation and ignore danger. The dynamical task is practical: reduce high-risk access, build repeated viable transitions, create social holding, restore bodily rhythms, and construct futures that become believable through enactment.

LIVED FIELD The previous identity no longer works. The next identity is not yet formed. Freedom begins as the capacity not to resolve that uncertainty by returning automatically to the old attractor.

Recovery as a Liminal Dynamical Interval

Bardo is used here as analogy only



Figure 4. Recovery as a liminal dynamical interval. The old attractor architecture has destabilized before a new repertoire is reliable. Bardo is used as analogy only.

Part XIX — Liberation as Reduced Obligatory Coupling

PROPOSED FLOW HIJACKED THEORY Psychological freedom does not necessarily mean the disappearance of craving, fear, pain, desire, or difficult thoughts. It may instead mean that these states possess less monopoly over what happens next.

This theory integrates eight constructs:

1. **Freedom as Dynamic Mobility** — enter, dwell, leave, return, and redirect.
2. **Freedom as Accessible State Space** — viable alternatives remain behaviorally real under perturbation.
3. **Meditation as Training of Transition Dynamics** — practice rehearses what follows capture.
4. **Craving as State-Space Compression** — immediate relief can crowd alternatives below the threshold of competition.
5. **Equanimity as Reduced Behavioral Capture by Perturbation** — contact remains while compulsion weakens.
6. **Identity as a Metastable Coordination Pattern** — continuity without ontological imprisonment.
7. **Recovery as Re-Expansion of Possibility** — time, action, identity, relationship, and meaning become reachable again.
8. **Liberation as Reduced Obligatory Coupling Between Internal State and Behavior** — the presence of a state no longer dictates a single sequel.

These are proposed Flow Hijacked concepts, not accepted scientific terms. They translate none of the traditions above. They build a research architecture inspired by the questions those traditions preserve.

Formal conditions

Let $K(s' \mid s, p, c)$ describe next-state probabilities after perturbation p in context c . Let $A(z, c, \tau)$ represent viable trajectories available over horizon τ . A system becomes freer, in this restricted model, when:

- K becomes less concentrated around historically dominant harmful transitions;
- A expands in viable, values-consistent directions;
- transition thresholds remain sensitive to real danger and responsibility;
- recovery time after perturbation decreases without emotional suppression;
- identity coordinates behavior without forbidding revision;
- social inputs increase rather than replace agency;
- temporal horizon lengthens enough for later values to compete;
- bodily intensity becomes tolerable without losing interoceptive accuracy.

Raw variability is insufficient. The system needs return capacity. Raw choice count is insufficient. Options must be executable. Calm is insufficient. Ethical relation matters. Subjective unity is insufficient. Trait and behavior must change.

Research program and failure conditions

The theory should be tested against existing constructs such as psychological flexibility, distress tolerance, delay discounting, executive function, recovery capital, symptom severity, and environmental opportunity. Dense longitudinal designs can estimate transition probabilities and dwell times. Experience sampling can measure urge, identity, context, and accessible alternatives. Behavioral tasks can test whether perturbations reduce viable action. Qualitative work can prevent the variables from replacing the person.

The account is weakened if accessible-state measures add nothing to established predictors; if reduced reactivity reflects numbness or avoidance; if expanded repertoires do not improve valued functioning; or if the model ignores material absence of options. Non-normal amplification claims require directional time-series evidence beyond generic intensity. Criticality and entropy should be excluded unless precisely operationalized.

Part XX — Assimilation into the Wider Flow Hijacked Architecture

Ask Flow Hijacked

Add questions that identify what a state is making unavailable: “Which future, person, value, or action has become hard to feel as real?” Responses should distinguish acceptance from passivity, equanimity from numbness, and spiritual practice from urgent clinical care.

Addiction and Recovery

Integrate desire topology, reduced urge-action coupling, embodied regulation, liminal identity, and recovery as possibility expansion. Do not suggest that breath or meditation treats withdrawal, overdose risk, or substance-use disorder by itself.

Psychotherapy

Map indulgence, suppression, avoidance, acceptance, exposure, inhibitory learning, reconsolidation, compassion, ritual transition, and identity construction as distinct mechanisms. Preserve each therapy's own evidence and language; do not rename ACT, exposure, DBT, or psychodynamic work with Eastern terms.

Depression and PTSD

For depression, connect inaccessible future, low-vigor action, meaning, and embodied rhythm. For PTSD, connect past-as-present prediction, avoidance, interoceptive threat, body, and social safety. Keep trauma-sensitive cautions around body scan, breath retention, intensive retreat, and nondual practice.

ADHD and Decision Making

Use pratyāhāra as a carefully labeled dialogue about environmental cue design and digital salience, not as treatment equivalence. Add context-sensitive attention, task friction, reward timing, movement, and social scaffolding.

Psychiatric Drugs and Brain Dynamics

Medication can change arousal, salience, sleep, affective range, and transition thresholds. Do not frame pharmacotherapy as less authentic than contemplative practice. State changes created pharmacologically, behaviorally, socially, or contemplatively all require outcome, safety, and trait evaluation.

Consciousness

Add a comparative matrix separating phenomenology, metacognition, body ownership, agency, conscious access, and metaphysical interpretation. State clearly what neuroscience can correlate and what remains philosophical.

Recovery Identity and Social Ecology

Integrate bardo only as an explicitly labeled analogy for liminality. Strengthen Recovery Identity as Scaffold, Not Prison and Recovery as Social Ecology. Community must be evaluated for belonging, accountability, dissent, safety, and identity bandwidth.

Brain Atlas

Add body-brain coupling views: respiration, cardiac timing, interoception, posture, and action. Avoid a vagus infographic that implies one cable controls regulation. Every map should show the environmental and relational loop.

Coda — What the System Must Become Next

Liberation is easily pictured as arrival at an extraordinary state. Dynamical thinking changes the image. Freedom may be seen in ordinary transitions: the ability to remain with discomfort without obeying it; to enjoy pleasure without imprisoning it; to leave fear when danger has passed; to return to grief when love asks for it; to let identity coordinate action without exhausting personhood; to receive regulation from others without surrendering agency.

Eastern traditions contribute more than techniques. They challenge ownership, permanence, coercive control, metaphysical certainty, and the assumption that the observer stands outside the field. Existential psychology returns death, responsibility, and concrete life. Neuroscience returns the body, learning history, and limits of introspection. Complex systems return feedback, path dependence, thresholds, and the possibility that force produces the very instability it opposes.

None owns the whole person.

FINAL DESTINATION A human system may contain many objectively possible futures while, in a particular state, only one or two of those futures remain experientially and behaviorally real.

INVERSE Freedom may begin when the appearance of a state no longer determines, by itself, what the system must become next.

Research Method, Epistemic Audit, and Reading Guide

The evidence acquisition for this lecture closed on 10 September 2026. The 210-source architecture combines primary and authoritative translations; historical scholarship in Buddhist studies, Hindu studies, Yoga studies, Tantra studies, Daoist studies, and religious studies; systematic reviews and meta-analyses of breathing, Yoga, Tai Chi, Qigong, acceptance, exposure, recovery communities, and mortality; rigorous physiology and human neuroscience; consciousness and self research; complex-systems and cybernetic sources; recovery science; and existential philosophy.

The sources do different jobs. Texts establish traditional claims and categories. Historical scholarship establishes context, plurality, and reception. Physiology can establish coupling without validating metaphysics. Small rare-practitioner studies generate hypotheses but cannot establish traits. Meta-analyses aggregate evidence while inheriting heterogeneity and bias. Mathematical sources justify formal distinctions but not their clinical application.

The lecture therefore uses explicit labels throughout. “Flow Hijacked construct” means proposed synthesis. “Analogy” means no equivalence. “State” never establishes “trait.” A map never becomes the person.

Numbered Research Registry

The numbered registry contains every source in the research architecture. Sources cited in the lecture are listed first. The extended corpus supplied historical range, negative evidence, methodological boundaries, and adjacent mechanisms. Evidence tags describe the job a source can perform; they do not make all sources equal.

Research corpus at a glance

Evidence family	Sources
Review synthesis or conceptual analysis	69
Meta-analysis	33
Historical philological or anthropological scholarship	28
Model theory or monograph	25
Primary text or scholarly translation	17
Systematic review	11
Controlled or randomized study	10
Physiological or experimental study	7
Human neuroscience or consciousness study	6
Observational longitudinal or measurement study	4

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