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• Many of the reported EEG correlates of meditation are also the correlates of drowsiness. More sophisticated studies will begin to differentiate meditative states from sleep, said Frank Echenhofer and Mary Coombs of the Institute for Multidisciplinary Studies in Philadelphia, and are likely to show that the relationship of brainwave activity to contemplative experience is more complex than previous research has suggested.

• Alan Wallace, coordinator of the Mind and Life Research Network, described plans for a series of research projects involving high-ranking Tibetan lamas identified by the Dalai Lama. Studies to be undertaken as funds become available include research on longevity, the psychophysiology of advanced meditative states, lucid dreaming, dying and the role of spirituality in resistance to emotional trauma.

In addition to discussing research projects, participants took turns leading the group in various meditation practices. Particularly stimulating was an experiment in "state-specific science" proposed by Charles Tart, which can also be used in other settings to foster a sense of groundedness, relaxation and connectedness (see next column).

An Experiment in State-Specific Science

by Charles Tart

We are about to do an experiment. The psychological set I bring into it is that if people remain in the present as they talk, through some sort of technique, usually focusing on body sensations, that a lot of the intellectual static, daydreams and complications that ordinarily govern much of our communication are not present. What is said comes more directly from people's experience or from the heart. So I propose that we have a data collection session on meditation and ways to research meditation that draws more directly on people's experience before it is intellectualized.

I am trying to practice this right now, in that I am not giving you a planned speech. I did think about it beforehand, but I have dropped the specifics and am trying to speak from inspiration, using only what comes to me in this present moment while a significant part of my attention is devoted to keeping track of body sensations. Body sensations ground me in the here and now. My toes, fingers and elbows do not know anything about the past or future; they only know about the here and now. It is harder for my mind to drift off if 10-

15% of my attention is keeping track of body sensations. Normally, consciousness flies out the mouth as soon as we talk.

Unless you have practiced remaining present while you talk, I suggest keeping your statements down to one liners — or two or three sentences at most. Silence is just fine. You do not have to be clever and there is no need to force something.

As we sit here together, if something comes up about meditation or research on meditation that is appropriate, give a two- or three-word — or two- or three-sentence description. Stay present as you give that description. This requires self-monitoring. Again, I suggest awareness of body sensations as the most convenient technique. If you discover halfway through that you have lost track of your body, just stop. Take a couple seconds to get back into your body before you continue.

There is no need for anyone to comment on anything someone else says, even in the form of reinforcement. The usual social rule is suspended here: We do not have to make each other feel good. Our primary purpose is to practice a kind of mindfulness meditation in which we stay aware of body sensations. You can do it eyes closed or eyes open. If you find you have drifted off, bring yourself back to your body. If you find that sitting still works best, sit still. If you need to move, move mindfully and then settle down again.

So, whenever someone is inspired to say something — when something comes up directly out of your experience or your heart — say it. If you do not know how to say it and are running around in your head trying to find the best words, it is probably too intellectual and not all that real anyway. So we begin.

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people to see choices where previous habits.