

STUDY AND SERVICE

Study prepares us for service. The knowledge gained from study provides the basis for developing higher skills. Studying and practice go together. Then skilled practice becomes quality service.

There is service when we help others make their lives easier and better. Great service fulfills many ideals. At its highest, true service is selfless.

Usually study is associated with book learning. But learning from books is just the beginning. Higher learning is really thinking for ourselves. Learning from others is completed by knowing ourselves.

Next question, what do we study? Here is a well rounded daily approach. Take a book or study material on each of the following:

- 1 Hobby or leisure interest
- 2 Profession, job or calling
- 3 Science
- 4 Religion
- 5 Art
- 6 Philosophy
- 7 Theosophy

In a day, allocate at least 20-minutes for each book. For all 7-books, reading time in one sitting would take 140-minutes or 2-hours and 20-minutes. If we split our reading time into two, that would be 70-minutes or 1-hour and 10-minutes reading time for each sitting.

Now here is the catch. You have 7-books or materials to read. You have 20-minutes reading time for each of them. When 20-minutes is up, tell your mind, put the book you are reading down and pick up the next book. If you have to stop in the middle of an idea or something interesting, just the same, tell your mind, put this book down and pick up the next.

It is not enough to master the subject matter you are reading. Above all, master the mind which you are using to master the subject matter. This also prepares you for meditation. If you wish to read some more, recycle to the first book.

The study approach we have suggested is also a kind of obedience schooling for the mental body. Very soon, the mind, your own mind or mental body, will be your obedient servant. It will be like switching TV channels according to your will. This might take some time. With meditation, after constant practice, then you can do what you want, putting your mind where you want it to be or what you want it to do.

Should a situation come where your mind is about to get mad, you can tell your mind, put down this madness and, pick up peace instead. With your mind you transform those negative thoughts into those of a more ideal nature.

In meditation, when a thought comes up, you can deal with it just like a book. Tell your mind to put the thought down and, not to pick up any other thought. Meditation can, at last, take place or proceed.

The enumeration of seven books to read cover a broad spectrum. Let the books on your profession or calling include other jobs that relate to yours. Read the original Scriptures of other religions first, instead of just some narrow sectarian commentaries. Science can be the sciences. Art the arts. Let your study of philosophy range from the materialistic to the idealistic and up to the spiritual. The theosophical classics will last you a lifetime, integrating everything else you study as you live to serve others.

-- Bing Escudero