


# POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE MENTAL STATES

◀ **Mind and Awareness** ✧ Words: 388

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**Our mind is influenced by a spectrum of positive and negative mental states.**

This list of mental states serves as a basis for self-awareness, introspection, and inquiry into the inner influences that condition and liberate our awareness.



Our exploration of mental states will be extended into structured articles exploring the preconditions and composition of each mental state, along with applied illustrations and possible means for managing them.

## REVISIONS

**This document is a work in progress** – provided for a preview into concerns and contemplations to come.

► *Draft v1.0*: First version.

## CULTIVATING MENTAL STATES

Cultivation of *constructive, positive mental states* and elimination of *destructive, negative mental states* is a process of introspection and inner vigilance. These basic principles should guide our orientation and attitude:

- Where **negative states** are *present*, they should be *eliminated*.
- Where **negative states** are *absent*, they should be *prevented*.
- Where **positive states** are *present*, they should be *preserved*.
- Where **positive states** are *absent*, they should be *awakened*.

**Negative, destructive mental states** diminish over several stages in a gradual process:

- **Active** : Unaware and under the control of the negative state

- **Detached** : Acknowledgement and distancing from the negative state
- **Diminishing** : Disowned negative state begins to weaken and subside
- **Dormant** : Ignored negative state only appears under specific conditions
- **Absent** : Negative state and its preconditions vanish and will not reappear

**Positive, constructive mental states** likewise increase over several stages in a gradual process:

- **Absent** : Positive state is not present, recognized, valued, or cultivated
- **Attended** : Positive state is recognized, sought for, and cultivated
- **Increasing** : Presence of positive state increases and becomes more pervasive
- **Stable** : Positive state is well-developed and its preconditions are stable

- **Constant** : Positive state has been established as persistent and impervious

Categorization of mental states into *negative* and *positive* states is not absolute. Where certain "positive" states are *self-centered*, they may be undesirable and harmful. Where certain "negative" states arise from *altruistic concern*, they may be desirable and beneficial.

## INDEX - SIX PAIRS OF MENTAL ROOTS

Negative and positive mental states have been categorized under *six negative and six positive roots*:

### 1. Attachment - Detachment

- Desire + Dispassion

- Craving + Satiety

- Longing + Presence

- Greed + Moderation

- Obsession + Equilibrium

- Clinging + Release

- Dependency + Self-Reliance

- Conditionality + Unconditionality

### 2. Aversion - Affinity

- Anger + Calmness

- Frustration + Acceptance

- Repulsion + Neutrality

- Contempt + Appreciation

- Resentment + Forgiveness

- Hatred + Love

- Cruelty + Compassion

- Vengeance + Reconciliation

### 3. Falsehood - Veracity

- Ignorance + Insight

- Dishonesty + Honesty

- Concealment + Transparency

- Distortion + Accuracy

- Manipulation + Integrity

- Pretense + Authenticity

- Hypocrisy + Consistency

- Self-Deception + Self-Validation

- Denial + Acceptance

- Rationalization + Accountability

## 4. Confusion - Clarity

- Inattention + Mindfulness

- Distraction + Concentration

- Indecision + Decisiveness

- Misconception + Understanding

- Assumption + Inquiry

- Cognitive Bias + Objectivity

- Speculation + Methodical Thinking

- Avoidance + Responsiveness

- Obstinacy + Open-Mindedness

- Skepticism + Epistemicity

## 5. Selfishness - Selflessness

- Pride + Humility

- Envy + Co-Happiness

- Callousness + Sympathy

- Estrangement + Empathy



- Self-Absorption + Self-Sameness

- Self-Supremacy + Self-Equity

- Self-Deprecation + Self-Acceptance

- Self-Neglect + Self-Attention

## 6. Maladaptive Behavior - Conducive Behavior

- Worrying + Composure

- Negligence + Diligence

- Avoidance + Engagement

- Resignation + Determination

- Impulsivity + Deliberation

- Infatuation + Inspiration

- Compulsion + Autonomy

- Perfectionism + Realism

# LIST OF POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE MENTAL STATES

## 1. Attachment - Detachment

**- Desire** : Wish and intent to pursue an object of attachment with a promise of pleasure or fulfillment.

**+ Dispassion** : Satisfaction and peace of mind that are free of reference to various possessions or outcomes.

**- Craving** : Intense and incessant drive with burning restlessness in the absence of an object of attachment.

**+ Satiety** : Satisfaction and contentment with an absence of thirst and urge for an object of attachment.

**- Longing** : Melancholic hoping and yearning for something, sense of unease and lack of fulfillment without it.

**+ Presence** : Serenity and fulfillment in the present; not wishing for anything new or longing for anything lost.

**- Greed** : Excessive and insatiable demand for something with a compulsive need to acquire or possess more of it.

**+ Moderation** : Balanced, restrained and well-measured fulfillment of basic needs without excess or indulgence.

**- Obsession** : Overwhelming and exclusive preoccupation with an attachment at the expense of other thoughts or actions.

**+ Equilibrium** : Composure and balanced perspective without being preoccupied with or overwhelmed by specific attachments.

**- Clinging** : Inability to let go of an attachment that has been attained, often driven by fear of loss or change.

**+ Release** : Ability to release attachments and move freely forward without holding on to objects of attachment.

**- Dependency** : Reliance on an attachment for one's well-being, sense of vulnerability if it is threatened.

**+** **Self-Reliance** : Independence and self-sufficiency without dependence on external conditions or supports.

**-** **Conditionality** : Interest and will to engage only when the desired attachment or outcome is promised or likely achieved.

**+** **Unconditionality** : Engagement and action that is free of conditions or bargaining for promises toward desired outcomes.

## 2. Aversion - Affinity

**-** **Anger** : Irritation or hostility toward a perceived wrong or threat; tension, confrontation and aggression.

**+** **Calmness** : Emotional stability and tranquility; composed and constructive thought and demeanor in provocative situations.

**-** **Frustration** : Dissatisfaction and agitation with inability to fulfill a desire or when facing obstacles to its attainment.

**+** **Acceptance** : Embracing situations as they are without resistance or dissatisfaction, working

constructively with present conditions.

**-** **Repulsion** : Revulsion or profound disapproval toward an undesirable object; an urge to reject or avoid the object of aversion.

**+** **Neutrality** : Absence of emotional bias and categorical judgment; recognizing the admixture of positive and negative in all things.

**-** **Contempt** : Disdain or derision toward someone or something perceived as inferior, worthless, or undeserving of due recognition.

**+** **Appreciation** : Impartial regard and valuation of people and things, recognizing their actual worth, significance and potentials.

**-** **Resentment** : Lingering ill will and antagonism toward people or situations we perceive as having wronged us or treated us unfairly.

**+** **Forgiveness** : Letting go of aversion, grudges and negative feelings; allowing for emotional release and restoration of relationships.

**- Hatred** : Intense and deep-seated aversion, often accompanied by a desire for harm or misfortune for the object of hatred.

**+ Love** : Deep and genuine affection and care for others, characterized by kindness and benevolence in both thoughts and actions.

**- Cruelty** : Willful inflicting of physical or mental pain and suffering on others; with lack of empathy and disregard for their well-being.

**+ Compassion** : Genuine concern, empathy and care for the suffering of others, leading to intentions and efforts to alleviate their misery.

**- Vengeance** : Urge or action toward inflicting harm or punishment in retaliation for a perceived wrong or injury inflicted by another.

**+ Reconciliation** : Resolving conflicts and mending relationships; focus on mutual understanding and restoration instead of retaliation.

### 3. Falsehood - Veracity

- **Ignorance** : Lack of understanding, awareness, and knowledge of actuality or the fundamental constructs and workings of existence.

+ **Insight** : Deep understanding, awareness, knowledge and experience of actuality and the core principles and dynamics of existence.

- **Dishonesty** : Intentionally providing false information or deceiving others to mislead or gain an advantage.

+ **Honesty** : Being truthful and transparent in communication and actions, free from deceit or misleading intentions.

- **Concealment** : Deliberate hiding or withholding of information or facts to prevent others from knowing the truth.

+ **Transparency** : Openness and clarity in communication and actions, ensuring that facts and details are freely accessible.

- **Distortion** : Twisting or altering information or means for its understanding to create a misleading or false impression.

+ **Accuracy** : Providing information that is precise and true, reflecting reality without alteration or other distortion.

- **Manipulation** : Scheming influence or control of others' perceptions, decisions, or actions through deceitful tactics or dishonesty.

+ **Integrity** : Adherence to truth and ethical principles in interaction, ensuring fair and honest influence without deceitful tactics.

- **Pretense** : Constructing a false or misleading appearance to misrepresent one's true feelings, intentions, or identity.

+ **Authenticity** : Being genuine and transparent, presenting one's true feelings, intentions, and identity without pretense.



- **Hypocrisy** : Claiming adherence to certain standards without matching behavior, criticizing others for actions one also engages in.

+ **Consistency** : Maintaining alignment of one's actions with declared values, demonstrating integrity and coherence in behavior.

- **Self-Deception** : Lying to oneself or convincing oneself of a false belief, often to avoid uncomfortable facts or realities.

+ **Self-Validation** : Checking and validating one's perceptions and beliefs to ensure that they are unbiased, accurate and true.

- **Denial** : Conscious or unconscious refusal to accept or acknowledge a reality; often to escape from emotional and cognitive discomfort.

+ **Acceptance** : Welcoming and acknowledging reality as it is; without rejecting, ignoring, filtering, or obscuring uncomfortable facts.

- **Rationalization** : Crafting logical excuses to justify misguided or reprehensible behavior, warding off guilt or cognitive dissonance.

+ **Accountability** : Owning responsibility for one's actions and decisions, addressing mistakes or ethical breaches without making excuses.

## 4. Confusion - Clarity

- **Inattention** : Lack of focus or awareness, resulting in missed details or context, leading to misperception and misunderstanding.

+ **Mindfulness** : Being fully present and attending to the ongoing situation with uninterrupted, well-rounded and watchful awareness.

- **Distraction** : Diversion of attention by external stimuli or irrelevant thoughts, disrupting focused attention and clarity of thought.

+ **Concentration** : Ability to focus and direct attention effectively on relevant tasks or objectives, minimizing irrelevant interference.

- **Indecision** : Difficulty in establishing orientation and making decisions; due to lack of insight, conflicting feelings, or uncertainty.

+ **Decisiveness** : Ability to make clear and timely decisions with confidence; based on rooted insight and an understanding of the situation.

- **Misconception** : Misinterpretation of information or situations due to miscommunication, compromised faculties, or insufficient insight.

+ **Understanding** : Accurate comprehension of information and situations; based on precise communication, clear mind, and thorough insight.

- **Assumption** : Acceptance of something as true without adequate evidence or understanding; bypassing proper inquiry and investigation.

+ **Inquiry** : Thorough exploration and investigation to gain verifiable insight; with careful evaluation and validation of information.

- **Cognitive Bias** : Cognitive distortions, subjective filtering, confabulations and fallacies that result in illogical or inaccurate views.

+ **Objectivity** : Ability to evaluate information based on impartial evidence and logical reasoning, free from personal agenda and biases.

- **Speculation** : Formation of theories without sufficient information or clear methodology, leading to confusion and misguided beliefs.

+ **Methodical Thinking** : Development of consistent models of understanding based on clear or verifiable information and systematic analysis.

- **Avoidance** : Intentional uncertainty, passivity in dealing with ambiguity or lack of clarity; evading the consequences of clear insight.

+ **Responsiveness** : Actively encountering and resolving ambiguity and insufficient insight; seeking and welcoming the resulting clarity.

**-** **Obstinacy** : Stubborn refusal to change one's perspective despite evidence or reason; often due to denial, conditioning, or lack of insight.

**+** **Open-Mindedness** : Openness to evaluate new ideas, evidence, and perspectives; adjusting one's views based on sound reason and understanding.

**-** **Skepticism** : Persistent and unreasonable doubt or questioning of everything, impairing the ability to determine facts and reach conclusions.

**+** **Epistemicity** : Confidence in a well-reasoned process of establishing knowledge, leading to reliable determination of facts and conclusions.

## 5. Selfishness - Selflessness

**-** **Pride** : Excessive or inflated sense of one's own worth or abilities, preoccupation with self-aggrandizement and the belittling of others.

**+** **Humility** : Modest and realistic perspective of one's own worth and abilities, acknowledging one's strengths without diminishing others.

- **Envy** : Discontent or resentment provoked by someone else's success or achievements; with desire to obtain what they have.

+ **Co-Happiness** : Genuine joy and satisfaction in witnessing another's success or achievements; free of self-contrasted discontent.

- **Callousness** : Insensitivity towards the needs and feelings of others; indifference or disregard for the impact of one's actions on them.

+ **Sympathy** : Interest, understanding, and concern for the needs and feelings of others; involvement with a sense of affinity and support.

- **Estrangement** : Isolation or detachment from others with a lack of empathy, inability to connect with their feelings and perspectives.

+ **Empathy** : Connection and engagement with others, sharing and reflecting their feelings and perspectives with sense of mutual understanding.

- **Self-Absorption** : Consuming preoccupation with one's own thoughts, feelings, and interests; resulting in a lack of consideration for others.

+ **Self-Sameness** : Taking an equal interest in the feelings and perspectives of other individuals; awareness of everyone's needs and concerns.

- **Self-Supremacy** : Belief in personal superiority and entitlement; dismissiveness or disregard for the worth, needs, rights, and merits of others.

+ **Self-Equity** : Balanced and fair recognition and regard for the worth, needs, rights, and merits of every individual, including oneself.

- **Self-Deprecation** : Undervaluing oneself with excessive focus on one's flaws or shortcomings; feeling unworthy, unimportant and meaningless.

+ **Self-Acceptance** : Balanced and realistic view of self, acknowledging personal merits without undue self-criticism or feelings of inadequacy.

- **Self-Neglect** : Inattention to one's own needs or well-being; born of self-deprecation and being overshadowed by the demands of others.

+ **Self-Attention** : Attending to and caring for one's own physical and mental well-being, while balancing the needs and demands of others.

## 6. Maladaptive Behavior - Conducive Behavior

- **Worrying** : Persistent and excessive concern about potential future threats or problems, leading to heightened stress and impaired functioning.

+ **Composure** : Balanced and measured proactive approach to potential threats or problems without excessive concern, stress, or negative ideation.

- **Negligence** : Lack of adequate care and attention to important tasks or responsibilities, leading to potential negative consequences.

+ **Diligence** : Attentive and careful handling of important tasks, ensuring that all necessary actions are taken to avoid negative outcomes.



**- Avoidance** : Evading or ignoring tasks, responsibilities, or situations that cause discomfort, leading to procrastination and unresolved issues.

**+ Engagement** : Actively addressing tasks, responsibilities, and situations, even those that are uncomfortable, with proactive commitment.

**- Resignation** : Acceptance of negative circumstances or outcomes with a sense of helplessness; giving up or ceasing to strive for improvement.

**+ Determination** : Persistent effort and resilience in the face of challenges; striving consistently toward improvement and positive change.

**- Impulsivity** : Acting quickly and without adequate consideration of consequences or long-term effects, leading to potentially harmful outcomes.

**+ Deliberation** : Mature consideration and planning, evaluating potential consequences and long-term effects prior to decisions and actions.

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**Infatuation**

: Intense but often short-lived passion for something, leading to irrational behavior or decisions based on idealized perceptions.

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**Inspiration**

: A sustained and measured motivation for pursuits, interest and passion with thoughtful engagement and realistic expectations.

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**Compulsion**

: Repetitive and intrusive actions performed to alleviate anxiety or discomfort; often driven by irrational beliefs or fears.

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**Autonomy**

: Ability to manage and regulate behavior effectively; internal freedom in overcoming the control of habitual patterns.

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**Perfectionism**

: Excessively high standards, leading to chronic dissatisfaction, anxiety, and avoidance due to fear of imperfection.

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**Realism**

: Achievable and practical goals, maintaining a balanced perspective that allows for flexibility and acceptance of imperfection.

 <https://ananda.icu/texts/mind/positive-negative-mental-states>