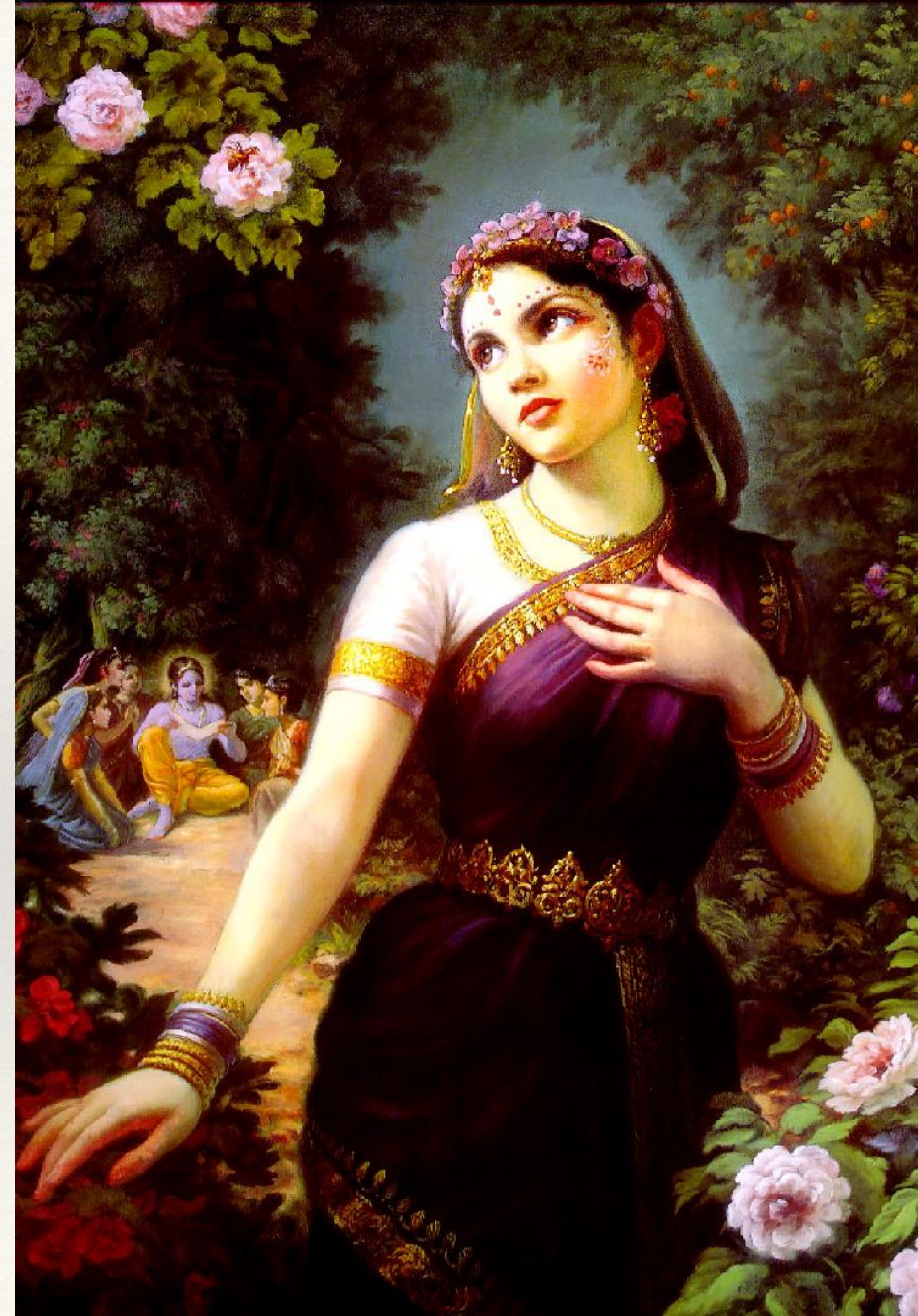


Practical Spirituality: The Yoga of Awakening
Lecture Nine

Pratyahara





Bhagavad-Gita

“When the mind follows the wandering senses, then it carries away one’s discrimination, as the wind does a ship on the water...”

— *Krishna, Bhagavad-gita 2:67*

Concentration

"Without wise concentration of thought, the experience of the truth is impossible."

—*Samael Aun Weor, Spiritual Power of Sound*

"...concentration is the first and foremost thing a sadhaka or aspirant should acquire in the spiritual path."

—*Swami Sivananda*

Steps of Yoga

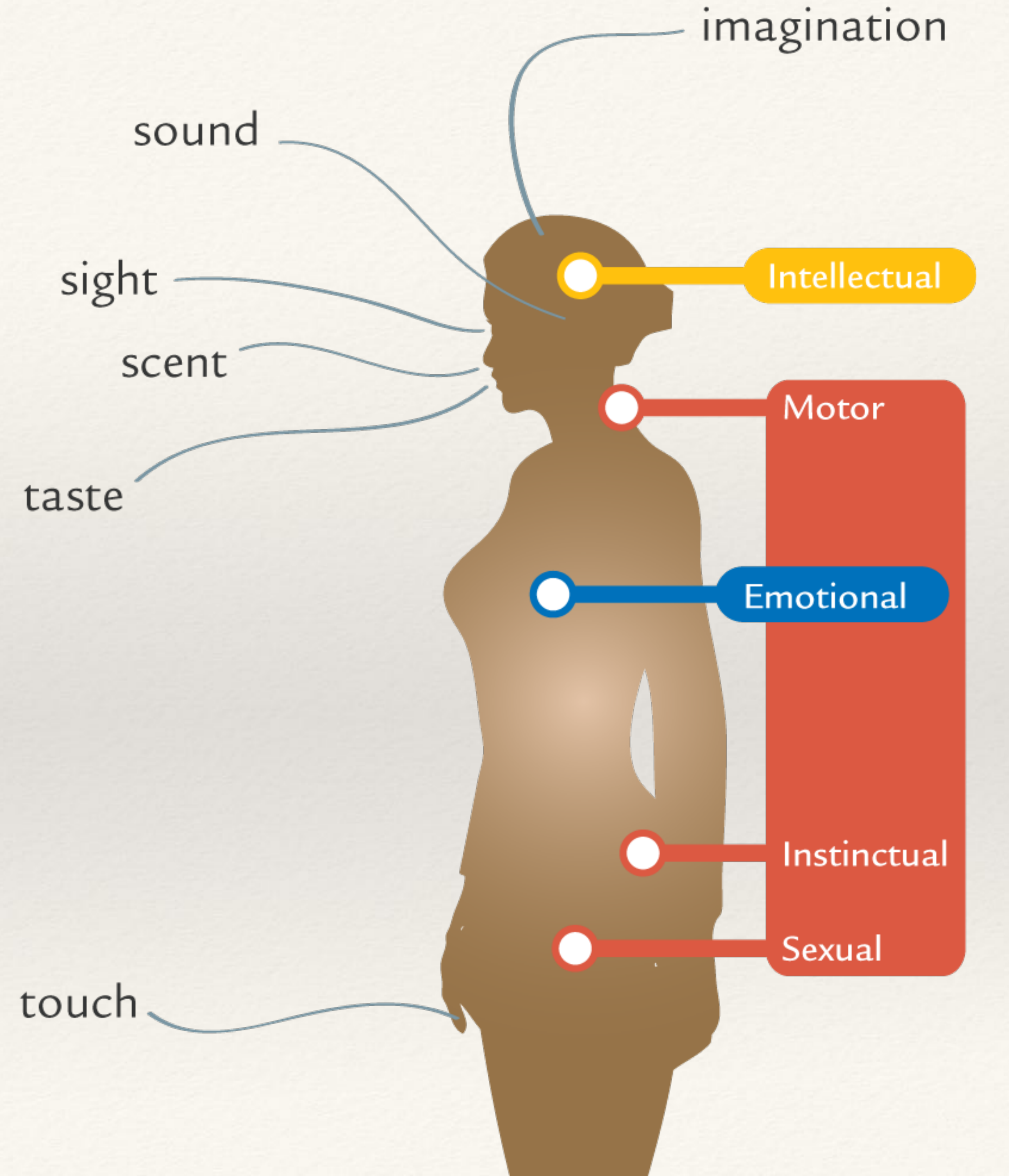
1. **Yama:** self-restraint
2. **Niyama:** precepts
3. **Asana:** posture; relaxation
4. **Pranayama:** harnessing of life force
5. **Pratyahara:** withdrawal from senses
6. **Dharana:** concentration
7. **Dhyana:** meditation
8. **Samadhi:** super-conscious state, blissfulness, ecstasy

“Dharana and Dhyana come automatically if Pratyahara is perfect.”

— *Swami Sivananda*

Pratyahara

(Sanskrit प्रत्याहार) Literally, “withdrawal, draw back, retreat”



Yoga Sutras

2.54. **Pratyahara** (“withdrawal”) is that by which the senses (indriya) do not associate with their objects, and imitate the nature of the mind-stuff (chitta).

— *Patanjali*

Yoga Sutras

2.3. The afflictions are **avidya** [ignorance], egoism, attachment, aversion, and clinging to life.

2.6. Egoism (asmita) is the mistaken identification of what is seen with how it is seen.

— *Patanjali*

Bhagavad-gita

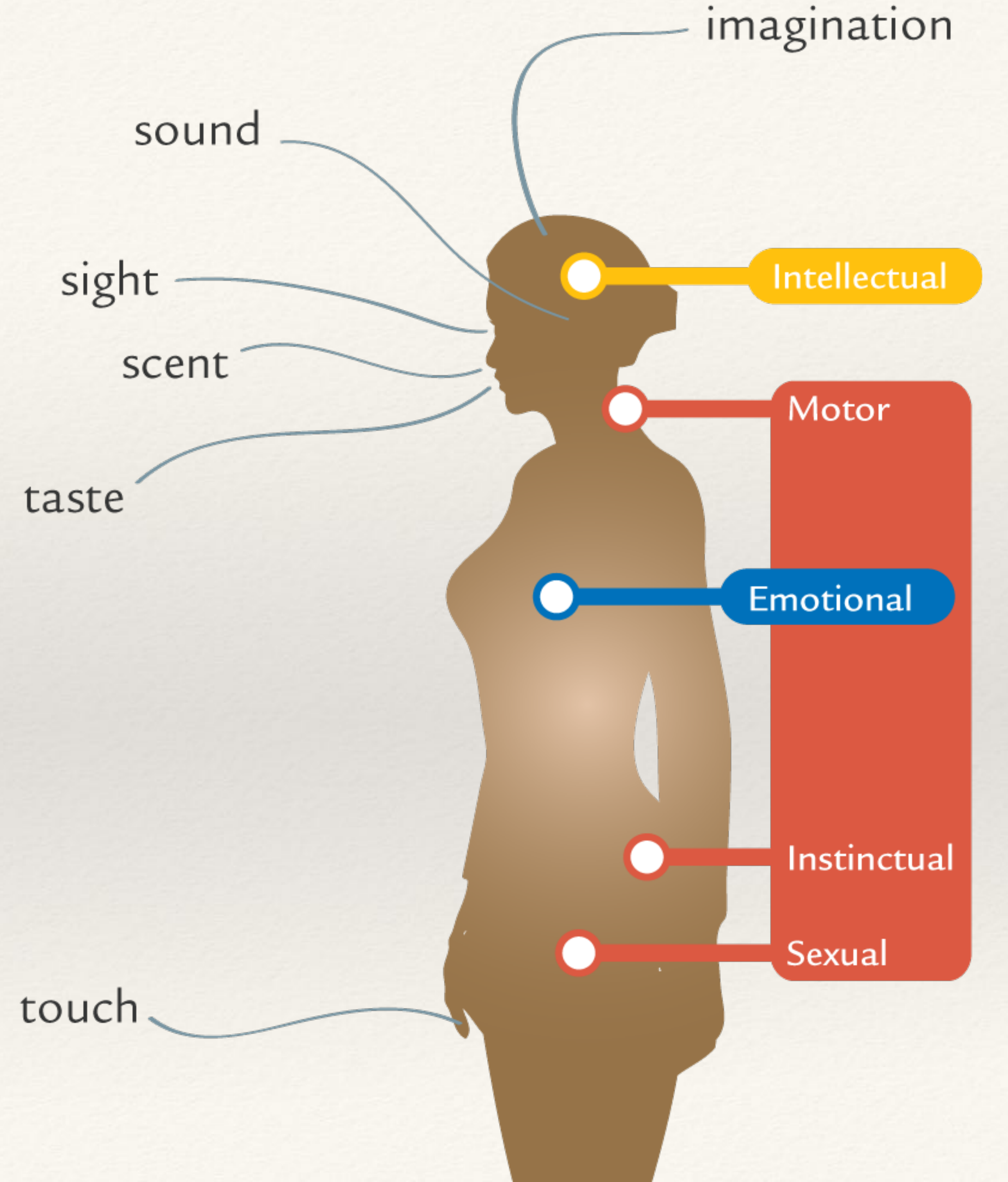
“When, like the tortoise that withdraws its limbs on all sides, one withdraws the **indriya** from sense-objects, then **consciousness** becomes steady.”

— Krishna, Bhagavad-gita 2:67

(Sanskrit इन्द्रिय)

Literally “belonging to or agreeable to Indra”

1. sensory power
2. virile semen, virile power





Bhagavad-Gita

“Shutting out all external sense objects, keeping the eyes and vision concentrated between the two eyebrows, suspending the inward and outward breaths within the nostrils, and thus controlling the mind, senses and intelligence, the transcendentalist aiming at liberation becomes free from desire, fear and anger. One who is always in this state is certainly liberated.”

— *Krishna, Bhagavad-gita 5:27-28*

Exercise: Develop pratyahara.

Meditation Practice: Relax, become still, practice some pranayama. Withdraw from all the senses, to focus within. Then, with each thought, memory, worry, etc. that comes to mind, study its origin, its cause; reflect on its nature: is it a desire, a defect? Then imagine a profound abyss. Throw each studied thought, each memory, worry, etc. into that abyss.

Helpful resources:

Books:

The Great Rebellion

Karma is Negotiable

Treatise of Revolutionary Psychology

Courses:

Beginning Here and Now

Bhavachakra, the Wheel of Becoming

Self-knowledge