Conditioning Forces (saṃskāra; 'du byed; du jé)

The conditioning forces can be divided into fifty-one different types of mental functions and the twenty-four non-mental and non-material forces (included in the appendix). The fifty-one mental functions condition our mindset and lead us in positive, negative or neutral karmic directions. The mental functions can be sub-divided as follows: (1–5) the five omnipresent; (5–10) the five allowing discernment; (10–21) the eleven positive; (21–26) the six root negative; (27–47) the twenty subsidiary negative; (48–51) the four changeable.

Five Omnipresent (sarvatraga; kun 'gro lnga; kundro nga)

1. Contact/Touch (sparṣa; reg pa; rekpa)
   The coming together of sensory or mental consciousness, its organ, and its object.

2. Feeling (vedanā; tshor ba; tsorwa)
   Pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral quality of experience.

3. Knowing (cetanā; sems pa; sempa)
   Pre-thought knowing of an object as pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral.

4. Concept/Label (saṃjñā; 'du shes; du shé)
   Mentally labeling something as attractive, unattractive, or neutral, always with the assumption that the object is real.

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1 The first ten mental functions are the mechanism or infrastructure of mind. These are helpful to know so we can overcome the negative and strengthen the positive.
2 I have included only in the appendix the list of twenty-four conditioning forces disconnected from mind or material form (ldan min 'dus byed), such as attainment and so on.
3 The order here follows VDKR’s explanation of their temporal occurrence. But they all occur rapidly in an indistinguishable cluster with each moment of perception.
4 This is listed separately as the “feeling skandha” due to its importance, but is included here also due to its being a subset of the fourth skandha.
5 See also the Western philosophical term "intentionality," i.e. consciousness’ being directed toward an object.
6 This too is listed separately as the “conception skandha” due to its importance, but is included here also due to its being a subset of the fourth skandha.
5. ध्यान | Attention (manaskāra; yid la byed pa; yi la jépa)

Developing a further relation to the object—beyond merely labeling it—by continuing either to grasp it as desirable or reject it as undesirable.

**Five Mental Functions Allowing Discernment (yul nges lnga)**

6. चार | Intention (chandāḥ; 'dun pa; dünpa)

The wish to get something desirable or to get rid of something undesirable.

7. अभिमोक्षता | Affection/Inclination (adhimokṣaḥ; mos pa; möpa)

Based on one’s taste, wishing with fondness to cultivate a thing believed to be desirable OR with aversion to get rid of a thing believed to be undesirable.

8. चित्त | Mindfulness (smṛtiḥ; dran pa; drenpa)

Remembering the quality of the object, so that one keep going toward it or away from it.

9. ध्यान | Concentration (samādhi; ting nge 'dzin; ting ngé dzin)

Single-pointedly concentrating on a thing to work on embracing it or rejecting it.

10. विच्छेदन | Discernment (prajñā; shes rab; shérab)

Distinguishing things; natural intelligence regarding whatever one is focused upon, either as something desirable that you want or as something undesirable that you reject.

**Eleven Positive Mental Functions**

(kuśalacetasāḥ; dge ba’i sems ’byung)

1. ध्ययन | Faith (śraddhā; dad pa)

Faith can be in the effects of karma, the four noble truths, the three jewels and so on. The three types are:

a. Inspired faith, based on seeing or hearing about something
b. Enthusiastic faith, based on one’s own wish to achieve something
c. Confident faith, based on unshakeable conviction.
2. **Preserving Self-Respect and Dignity** *(hrīḥ; ngo tsha shes pa; ngotsa shépa - Etymologically, ngo=face, tsa=blushing)*

Not doing anything to denigrate your sense of self-respect or dignity, mainly out of a healthy sense of shame with consideration for oneself or one’s own qualities.

3. **Conscientiousness** *(apatrāpyāḥ; khrel yod pa; trel yöpa)*

Being conscious not to do something reprehensible, mainly out of consideration for others.

4. **Absence of Attachment** *(alobhaḥ; ma chags pa; ma chakpa)*

On a gross level, not being attached to one’s self, possessions, status, etc. On a subtle level, it is the letting go that serves as an antidote to attachment.

5. **Absence of Aggression** *(adveṣah; mi dang ba; mi dangwa)*

Not responding to a seemingly threatening object with hatred (gross level). On a subtle level, it is the benevolence *(maitri)* that serves as an antidote to hatred.

6. **Absence of Deep Mental Fog** *(amohah; gti mug med pa; timuk mépa)*

Not being in a deep mental fog that allows attachment and aggression to develop.

7. **Perseverance/Diligence** *(vīryaṃ; brtson 'grus; tsöndrü)*

Enthusiastic application towards beneficial and positive thoughts, emotions, and actions.

8. **Being Thoroughly Processed** *(praśrabdhi; shin sbyangs; shinjang)*

The relaxed and uplifted physical and mental agility, presence of mind, and bliss that comes from having thoroughly trained in something.

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1 VDKR NSS 2019 - "freedom from lust" or from a disturbed state of mind,
2 VDKR NSS 2019 - freedom from agression Also, known as *zhé sdang med pa; shédang mépa*.
3 VDKR NSS 2019 - "exuberant in energy output" lacking three forms of laziness. See list under laziness below.
9. Vigilance (apramādaḥ; bag yod; bakyō)

Energetically applying oneself both toward guarding against harmful qualities and actions and toward cultivating beneficial qualities and actions. It is like the mental state of guarding an open wound.

10. Equanimity (upekṣa; btang snyoms; tangnyom)

An even-minded, composed, and balanced state of mind that has let go of affirming or denying.

11. Non-harm (avihimsā; rnam par mi ‘tshe ba; nampar mi tséwa)

A state of mind of physically, verbally, and mentally not bringing harm to others.

The Six Root Negative Mental Functions
(ṣaṭklesaḥ; rtsa ba'i nyonmog druk; tsawé nyonmon druk)

1. Attachment (rāgaḥ; ’dod chags; döchak)

Desire that propels you towards self-gain at the expense of others.

2. Animosity (pratighaḥ; khong khro ba; khongtrowa)

A deep rage that strikes out at beings or things that threaten oneself.

3. Pride (mānāḥ; nga rgyal; ngagyal)

There are seven sub-types:

a. Snobbishness (mānāḥ; nga rgyal; ngagyal)

Any mental pride regarding others who are inferior or equal to oneself, thinking “I am better than they are.”

b. Superiority (atimānāḥ; lhag pa'i nga rgyal; lhakpé ngagyal)

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*VDKR NSS 2019 - nonviolence

The Tibetan etymology is “deep inside” (khong) “anger” (khro ba; krodha)
Any mental pride regarding others who are equal to oneself, thinking “I am better than they are,” or towards others who are superior, thinking “I am equal to them.”

c. Conceitedness (mānātimō; nga rgyal las kyang nga rgyal; ngagyal lé kyang ngagyal)
Any mental pride regarding others who are superior to oneself, thinking “I am better.”

d. Egotism (asmimānāḥ; nga'o snyam pa'i nga rgyal; nga o nyampé nga gyal)
Any mental pride regarding (samanupāśyataḥ) the five skandhas to be “me” or “mine.”

e. Grandeur (abhimānāḥ; mgon pa'i nga rgyal; ngönpé ngagyal)
Any mental pride in which one has not reached attainment, but one thinks, “I have reached the highest (uttara) attainment.”

f. Immodesty (ānāmānāḥ; cung zad snyam pa'i nga rgyal; chungsé nyampé ngagyal)
Any mental pride regarding those who are far superior, thinking “I am only slightly inferior, but better than others.” This is a misconstrued notion of humbleness.

g. Deluded pride (mithyāmānāḥ; log pa'i nga rgyal; logpé ngagyal)
Any mental pride when one does not have good qualities, thinking “I have good qualities” (agunavataḥ). This can also manifest as a misconstrual of anger and so on as a positive quality.

4. Ignorance (avidyā; ma rig pa; marikpa)
Not being aware of the nature of self and phenomena, not understanding cause and effect, the truths, the three jewels, and so on. There are two types, namely coemergent and imagined.
5. Doubt (vicikitsā; the tshom; tėtsom)

Any confusion (vimatīḥ), second guessing, or discomfort about the truths, due to not letting go of one’s own limited or wrong points of view.

6. Beliefs (drṣṭiḥ; lta ba; tawa)—There are five types of wrong view/belief or dogmatism.

a. Belief in individuality (satkāyadrṣṭiḥ; 'jig lta; jīgta)

Any afflicted discernment (prajñā) leading to consideration of the five skandhas as me or mine.

b. Belief that grasps the extremes (antagrāhadrṣṭiḥ; mthar lta; tartā)

Any afflicted discernment leading to consideration of those five skandhas as lasting or annihilated.

c. Deluded Belief (mithyādrṣṭiḥ; log par lta ba)

Any afflicted discernment that diminishes cause and effect.

d. Clinging to Belief (drṣṭiparāмаṛśaḥ)

Any afflicted discernment leading to consideration of the above three types of beliefs as high, highest, superior, or supreme.

e. Clinging to the Vows and Moral Conduct (śīlavrataparāmaṛśaḥ; tshul khrims dang brdul žhugs mchog 'dzin)

Any afflicted discernment leading to clinging to a moral conduct, vows, and so on as purified, freed, and causing escape from saṃsāra.

The Twenty Subsidiary Negative Mental Functions

(upakleśa; nye ba'i nyon mongs; nyéwé nyön mong)
1. **Anger** (*krodha; khro ba; trowa*)

Not being able to tolerate something that threatens you and striking out in the presence of injury.

2. **Grudge** (*upanāhaḥ; khon du 'dzin pa; khon du dzinpa*)

Persistently holding onto resentment and possibly even contemplating revenge at a later time.

3. **Concealing/Hypocrisy** (*mrakṣaḥ; 'chab pa; chabpa*)

Hiding something reprehensible that we have done, not acknowledging it, and ignoring possible ways to remedy it.

4. **Spitefulness** (*pradāśa; 'tshig pa; tsikpa*)

Being consumed with anger and expressing this verbally or only in our mind.

5. **Jealousy** (*irṣā; phrag dog; tradok*)

Mental anguish regarding others' prosperity.

6. **S stinginess** (*mātsaryam; ser sna; serna*)

Mentally clinging to possessions and wealth that prevents one from giving to others.

7. **Dishonesty of a particular type** (*śādyam; g.yo; yo*)

Blaming others or circumstances for something that is your fault, or making excuses, rather than owning up and taking responsibility for what you have done. This prevents one from getting to the base of being able to confess."

8. **Having Ulterior Motives** (*māyā; sgyu; gyu*)

Giving others a false impression with the intention of getting others to serve your own interests, or not being straightforward at all. (Dishonesty and Ulterior Motives always go together)

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*VDKR NSS 2019 - 'khon 'dzin pa (both khong/khon appear in the dictionary)*
*VDKR NSS 2019 - agitation when you do not want to hear something*
*VDKR NSS 2019 translated this as "decepcion." Vasubandhu's Pañcaskandhaka defines it as: "Mental crookedness in which one conceals one's own faults or makes one's shortcomings or mistakes seem to be positive things."
9. **Bloatedness** *(madaḥ; rgyags pa; gyakpa)*

Being attached to and excited about one's own class, wealth, beauty, etc. It is a false sense of pride that does not come from comparing oneself to others. There are three types:

a. **Bloatedness about One's Class** *(gotramadaḥ; rigs kyi rgyags pa; rik gi gyakpa)*

Being bloated about being upper class or bloated having old money vs. new money.

b. **Bloatedness about Beauty** *(yauvanamadaḥ; lang tsho rgyags pa; langtso gyakpa)*

Being bloated about one's physique or beauty, especially if you have that reputation.

c. **Bloatedness about Wealth** *(bhogamadaḥ; nor gyi rgyags pa; norgyi gyakpa)*

Being bloated about one's wealth or possessions.

10. **Harmfulness** *(vihiṃsā; rnam par 'tshe ba; nampar tséwa)*

Harming beings physically, verbally, or mentally without any sympathy: treating others abusively.

11. **Lacking Self-Respect or Dignity** *(āhrīkyam; ngo tsha med pa; ngotsa mépa)*

Not feeling ashamed to do something reprehensible, for the sake of oneself.

12. **Unconscientiousness** *(anapatrāpyam; khrel med pa; trel mépa)*

Not feeling ashamed to do something reprehensible, for the sake of others.

13. **Dullness** *(styānam; rmugs pa; mukpa)*

Listlessness, mental sluggishness, and heaviness.
14. Wild mind *(audhatya; rgod pa; göpa)*

Mental restlessness that gets lost in thoughts of past or future.

15. Faithlessness *(āśraddhyam; ma dad pa; madépa)*

A lack of appreciation for or faith in cause and effect, the truths, or the three jewels. This is the opposite of having faith in them.

16. Laziness *(kausīdyān; le lo; le lo)*

A lacklustre mental attitude toward what is beneficial. This is the opposite of enthusiasm. There are three kinds:

a. **Busyness/procrastination** *(bya ba ngan zhen gyi le lo; chawa ngen zhen gi le lo)*

Being caught in the mundane momentum of one’s distractions that bring no benefit, like surfing the net.

b. **Torpor** *(snyoms las kyi le lo; chawa ngen zhen gi le lo)*

Feeling resistance when it comes time to do something out of attachment to rest or sleep.

c. **Giving up**

Talking oneself out of it before even trying.

18. Absence of Vigilance *(pramāda; bag med pa; bakmēpa)*

Negligence, or a lack of vigilance, due to which one fails to guard the mind from harmful qualities or actions and fails to cultivate the beneficial qualities or actions.

19. Forgetfulness *(muśītasmṛti; brjed ngas pa; jé ngépa)*

Not exerting yourself to remember what is positive to adopt or to abandon what is negative. Forgetting how to apply oneself in practice. Also, an afflicted mindfulness unfocused on what is beneficial *(kuśalah)*. One sometimes even purposely forgets what one has learned or puts no effort into applying oneself to keep what is beneficial in mind.

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*VDKR NSS 2019 - describes these three differently, more as restlessness, procrastination, and self-disparagement.*
20. \textbf{Distractedness (vikṣepah; rnam g.yengs; namyeng)}

The mental state in which one is being distracted in six ways:

\begin{itemize}
  \item[a.] \textit{Natural Distractedness (ngo bo nyid kyi g.yeng ba; ngowo nyi kyi yengwa)}
  \begin{flushleft}
  Being distracted through the senses and feeling “lost”
  \end{flushleft}

  \item[b.] \textit{Outward Distractedness (phyi rol du g.yeng ba; chirol tu yengwa)}
  \begin{flushleft}
  Being distracted by the particular thing one is absorbed in, such as music, objects of passion, and so on
  \end{flushleft}

  \item[c.] \textit{Internal Distractedness (nang gi g.yeng ba; nang gi yengwa)}
  \begin{flushleft}
  Being distracted by wild or dull mind.
  \end{flushleft}

  \item[d.] \textit{Distractedness About Signs or Status (mtshan ma'i gyeng ba; tsenmé yengwa)}
  \begin{flushleft}
  Being distracted by what one is studying or practicing, or by feeling “respected” or “important.”
  \end{flushleft}

  \item[e.] \textit{Distractedness of Habitual Tendencies (gnas ngan len g.yeng ba; né ngen len gyi yengwa)}
  \begin{flushleft}
  Being distracted by being caught in the feeling of being relaxed, rather than letting it be.
  \end{flushleft}

  \item[f.] \textit{Distractedness of Mental Engagement (yid la byed pa'i g.yeng ba; yi la chépé yengwa)}
  \begin{flushleft}
  Being distracted by the “next thought” before the “current thought” is even finished.
  \end{flushleft}
\end{itemize}
20. **Non-Discernment** *(asamprajāna; shes bzhin ma yin pa; shézhin mayinpa)*

Any afflicted discernment unaware *(vihārita)* of beneficial physical, verbal or mental qualities or actions.

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### The Four Changeable Mental Functions

These four mental functions can be either negative or positive depending on the context or situation. For this reason, they might be called "changeable" or undetermined.

1. **Regret** *(kaukṛtyam; 'gyod pa; gyöpa)*

Feeling remorse for what one has done. If one regrets a positive deed, then that regret is negative, because it undermines the positive seed sown. If one regrets a negative deed, then that regret is positive, because it lessens the negative seed sown.

2. **Sleep** *(middham; gnyid; nyi)*

A contraction of the mind that functions without self-control. If you sleep with positive state of mind, the sleep is positive. If you go to sleep in a negative state, that sleep is negative.

3. **Thinking in general** *(vitarkah; rtog pa; tokpa)*

A mental discourse focused on a general topic, grasping that first as a whole. Thinking can be utilized in a positive sense if it is a kind thought, or in a negative sense if it is a harmful thought.

4. **Reflection on specifics** *(vicārah; dpyod pa; chöpa)*

An mental discourse focused on the details within a general topic. This can be utilized in a positive sense if it is a kind thought, or in a negative sense if it is a harmful thought.