

Supernormal Capacities Q&A *

Q: In Buddhism, as well as other traditions, the teaching is to avoid siddhis (powers such as supernormal capacities), as they are a distraction from spiritual awakening (moksha before siddhi). How does the philosophy of ITP see this?

From the perspective of evolutionary panentheism, we can view the arising of supernormal capacities as a natural flowering of humanity, and that as we develop our capacities, we are aligning with the universe's evolutionary trajectory. We can responsibly develop our capacities for the highest good of all.

Q: Why should I be interested in developing siddhis? What is in it for me?

We are all hard wired for these capacities. In developing them, you may move towards realizing your highest potential, to become a fully articulated human being. These are our birthright.

Q: Developing siddhis seems like an egotistical act - a "look at me and what I can do" endeavor.

If developed as a way to aggrandize the ego, to feel special and more worthy, then it is an egotistical act. It is best to focus on developing those capacities that are the most helpful to others, always grounded in love. In addition, it is important to keep in mind that a person who manifests some of these capacities is not better, more special or more valuable than a person who does not.

Q: Can developing siddhis be dangerous? I am afraid I will be hurt going for such extreme capabilities.

Yes, if misused, certain siddhis can be harmful to oneself and others. We encourage the development of those that are most beneficial to ourselves and others. It is important to have a strong integral practice in place for balanced development. We must do inner work to help ensure that we always act from love and a high moral code. In other words, deal with our baggage and any toxicity of body, mind, heart and soul.

Q: Developing supernormal capacities seems out of reach for me, like a pipe dream. Aren't supernormal capacities for the saints and sages that are uniquely gifted?

No, we all have capacities latent within us but we do have different capabilities. We are unique. However, we are not all elite athletes no matter how hard we train; some of us have modest talents. Whether it is right time for us to manifest them, whether we are

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clear enough, is the question. We all have gifts and talents to be developed if we wish to.

Q: There are so many supernormal capacities, how do I know which one is for me or is mine to develop?

We begin by taking an inventory of what has already shown up in our lives and see what is naturally arising. You may wish to use the Personal Inventory and Practice Design Workbook in the Personal Practice Resources section of Living an Extraordinary Life to help determine this.

Q: There are so many supernormal capacities, don't they each need a unique and specialized path for their development? How could I ever hope to figure out exactly HOW to develop a supernormal capacity?

ITP takes a general approach to set the stage. To take it further you can focus your practice on arising supernormal capacities for example by increasing emphasis on meditation and inner work such as psychotherapy and other practices outlined in Part 3. If there is a clear talent arising and you want to cultivate it through practice, there are many teachers. Make sure you find people who have a high degree of integral development.

Q: Won't I need a teacher or guide who actually HAS the supernormal capacity I am desiring to develop? You don't learn to read from someone who can't read.

Ideally yes, if you can find people who have the skills, the integrity and are good teachers/mentors. We won't necessarily be looking for levitation mentors. Talents closer to home, as in helpful to others, will be emphasized. A solid ITP practice sets the stage for these and they may emerge on their own when the time is right.

Q: How will the pursuit of supernormal capacities integrate with my current practices? Will it take a lot of extra time? Will it interfere with the basics of my ITP practice?

Not necessarily. You can orient yourself towards the emergence of these capacities as you do your normal practice. We can view these capacities as a natural flowering that arises from your ITP practice. A strong foundation is essential. If you add on a practice to help develop a particular capacity, it will take more time of course but this should not be at the expense of your usual practice. In Part Three of the book we discuss ways to orient many of the existing ITP modalities with a view to the extraordinary.

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Q: I am afraid developing supernormal capacities may fracture my ITP group - with each person developing a unique siddhi in their own little silo - how can we successfully work together when on such unique and potentially very different paths?

According to George Leonard, each of us is “the universe from a particular point of view”. Like different facets of a jewel, we each reflect unique capacities and perspectives. We are all doing ITP but with different areas of interest anyway. If a group holds each other in love and support of each members flowering, it can enrich the group. Group members can also help to mirror us and provide valuable feedback. Not working from ego is very important here.

Q: How can we measure the supernormal capacities that aren't easily witnessed or measured? How do we know our practice is effective and we are progressing on the path?

In ITP we are encouraged to practice for the sake of practice without too much emphasis on results. Some spiritual traditions encourage us to practice without hope or fear. If you must measure, some sort of peer review, working with a mentor or if applicable, self-testing. There are a number of testing vehicles available for things like precognition, remote action at a distance.

Q: Can I develop more than one supernormal capacity, or should I stay focused on one?

This isn't a casual pursuit. One is best.

Q: What should be in place before I embark on the development of supernormal capacities?

A consistent ITP practice with good balance in body, mind, heart and soul, a solid meditation practice, peers to rely on for feedback and support. Also, professional resources to call on if needed for inner work.

* Thanks to Roger Marsh for these questions.