1. One needs to develop meditation with some basic understanding of mind. We must understand that we have two minds, namely the mundane mind and the true mind. To live life we use the mundane mind which is responsible for all arising of mind. Without wisdom this mundane mind will become heedless and evil, to arise the 3 evil roots of Greed, Hatred and Delusion. Then suffering will be the result following Dhammapada verse 1. With wisdom borne of right views, this mundane mind will arise all the right thoughts, right speeches and right actions, then happiness will follow us like the shadow that never leaves us following Dhammapada verse 2.

2. It is important to understand who you are, what are you and what that self-nature is all about. And that all things arise from self nature via the mundane mind’s creation.

3. Understanding the two types of the mind is essential. First type, is the mundane mind/thinking mind; second type is supra mundane mind/true mind/self nature/Buddha nature/silent mind/meditative mind. The reason why most people don’t know how to meditate is because they only know the mundane mind. This mundane mind is dependent originating, arises depending on conditions. However, when you are able to realize your true mind through meditation, you will come to understand that, this one is different because it is beyond thought and beyond mind and this self-nature is inherent in all beings. Without thought, there is only the awareness nature within. It is just a suchness ‘nature’ within (not a being), so it cannot come out and live life because it is not you nor is it a being. But this is the nature that can awakens, understands truth and realizes enlightenment. From this self-nature, everything arises through the mundane mind’s creation.

4. It is important to reflect on ‘the host and guests’ analogy. The host (which is the awareness nature within) is always there, the guests are the six external sense data, whereby upon contact with mind, all their respective sense door consciousness arises. The guests come and go whereas the host always stay (does not come nor go). Remember you are the host. You are aware of all the guest’s movements, and with awareness and wisdom, you can make use of them and stay above them because your wisdom will prevent you from being deluded or deceived by them. But without this understanding that you are the host, you can be deceived by all the guests and their complaints etc. and get sucked into the whole chaotic situation. However, when you understand that you are the host, you do not get involved. Similarly, when sense data comes in, upon contact what happens (following dependent origination), you will understand for you can see them clearly. Then you will not become entangled in it. On the other hand, if you do not understand, that you are just this true nature within, which is just being aware, not a being, then your egoic mind will arise to delude you. When you are just silent (without thought), the true nature can insight into phenomena to awaken.

5. Thus meditation is just the silent mind being aware of what is going on within our form and mind, to see the truth of dependent origination clearly via seeing things as they are.

6. Mundane mind before enlightenment is deluded, thus it creates a lot of wrong speech, wrong thoughts and wrong actions. All wholesomeness or unwholesomeness arise via the mundane mind’s creation. Reason why the Buddha under Dhammapada verses 1 and 2 says, ‘mind is the forerunner of things, mind is chief, when mind arise all good and bad arises dependent on the user of such mind’. If you act with a heedless mind borne of delusion (i.e. with
greed, hatred and delusion), suffering will follow you like the wheel which follows the hoof of the cart. Therefore wisdom is needed to use this mundane mind appropriately. When you are heedful with wisdom to use this mind, you will train it to develop awareness and understanding, and you will then act according to wisdom with a wholesome mind (free of the evil roots), then happiness will follow you like the shadow that never leaves you.

7. Therefore it is important to avoid all evil, do good and purify your mind as advised by the Buddha. Act with wisdom following the noble eightfold path, to be free of suffering. USER of thought is very important.

8. The 5 precepts are vital, violating them constitute committing major evil. With mindfulness and yoniso manasikara developed, there can be sense restraint to enable us not to violate the precepts.

9. We should enquire who actually harm and kill. They are violent, selfish and deluded people with the 3 evil roots of Greed, Hatred and Delusion. This will lead to karmic down fall and this is also the reason why keeping precepts or Sila is vital. Then you will have good conditions, good mind states and karmic support to support your meditation. With Sila comes Samadhi leading to Panna. (To refer to the brown transcript book on ‘Essential dhamma as taught by Buddha’ for more detail explanation).

10. The 5 aggregates of form and mind also has two aspects. 1st aspect is as a living being. 2nd aspect is as a mental 5 aggregates of form and mind or thought. This 5 aggregates of form and mind is subject to karma. Even though it is a karmically conditioned living being, but it is not a permanent unchanging entity that you can cling onto and grasp onto as the ‘I’ and the ‘Me’, thus it is non-self, but it does exists.

11. To develop wisdom, you need to meditate with the true mind to awaken.

12. In short, the whole of cultivation can be summarize as follows:

- Avoid all evil, cultivate wholesomeness and purify mind following advice of all Buddha.
- Cultivate and act following Noble Eightfold path. (Right view to cultivate right speech, right action, right thought and the 4 right efforts).
- Cultivate the 5 spiritual faculties of Saddha, Viriya, Sati, Samadhi and Panna.
- Constantly listen to dharma, inquire and contemplate the dharma with a relatively quiet mind (i.e. a creative mind) to arise the 1st and 2nd turning initial wisdom (Yonisomanasikara).
- Meditate is to realize the true mind (until mind enters sati).
- Cultivate daily mindfulness and clear comprehension leading to sense restraint.

13. To understand that things are just the way they are. We are all born of our karma, heir to our karma, conditioned and supported by our karma and we are what we are because of our karma. There are causes and conditions behind all that happen. Thus when things happen, you must not react, blame or get angry, then you can be at peace with the reality of the moment, with a clear mind. Then you can contemplate on what happened to resolve things amicably so that you can move on and not suffer. Noble eightfold path is the way to end all suffering. When you act with right view, you will know how to utilize the mundane mind.

14. The realization of one’s true mind is the beginning of true meditation.
15. There was an email question by a lady on: cultivating daily mindfulness. She described how while eating, she is aware of her mental intentions to hold the chopstick, take the vegetable, open her mouth, put the vegetable into her mouth, start chewing' etc.

Bro Teoh: The above is okay but the more important aspect of the training is when your hand moves to hold the chopstick you must be fully aware of that action and hand movement, that is body and mind moves as one (without thought) - that is sati (mindfulness). Similarly for the other activities and actions (like the taking of vegetables, opening of your mouth, putting it into your mouth and chewing etc.) - Just do, until you are just aware and most of the time without thoughts, then your mental chattering and verbalization will be greatly reduced and you will become more and more quiet and just mindful or aware. When mindfulness is more and more continuous, it will stabilized then your mind is extra ordinary sensitive and you can see many things which you never see before to develop the understanding of the essential dharma as taught by the Buddha and the understanding of who you are and what you are? How you function as a human being, etc. When u said, ‘Then pleasant feelings arise. So I watch the feelings & contemplate it in mind, this feeling is impermanent, suffering & non-self. It is the same for all other feelings. All these awareness is very fast. So I try to do it for everyday activities'.

The above is what you are normally taught to do (it that way) but the real contemplation is very different. This is mainly doing it via dharma knowledge. What you should be doing is just silent your mind and maintain awareness (don’t try to know). The awareness will develop the understanding to awaken to the 3 universal characteristics of anicca, dukkha and anatta by itself without words, knowledge or concept. After this training is developed then only contemplate to stabilize the understanding - not before, otherwise it will become just dharma knowledge based contemplation which may not be effective. (While chewing food, she notes the pleasant sensation, then uses dharma knowledge to relate why this is impermanent and non-self. This is not the way to cultivate. When aware there is no word, understanding will thus come, and then you can link back to knowledge).

16. Develop the silent mind and just be aware, understanding will come by itself without you doing anything. After this, you can contemplate with the silent mind. Through your mindfulness you can awaken, not through your knowledge nor thought or memory.

17. Brother Teoh’s daughter did her cultivation differently i.e. when chewing, she enquired: - How do I recognize this as a pleasant feeling? What does pleasant mean to me? How did I learn this concept of pleasant?

She traced it to her conditioning borne of memory. Her these style of questioning had helped her to discover and understand more deeply how she experiences the world while living life. The thing she now understand is very different from the knowledge she uses to have. In doing so, she becomes more aware of her life and her thought’s conditioning.

18. It is important to develop the silent, meditative mind until it is very stable and sensitive, so that you are aware when there is any intention to or any stirring of mind via likes or dislikes borne of habitual tendencies. Yoniso manasikara will prompt you that this is attachment for thing is just the way it is. When there is condition for good food, you can have it. But when there is no condition, there is no suffering because there is understanding.

19. Brother Teoh encourages kalyanamitta to ask questions to create conditions for him to share. Don’t be shy, shyness is by the thought. Not you.
20. Realization of the **unconditioned** cannot be expressed in words. It is **beyond words** and **beyond thought**. Words and concept are needed to express the dharma within the conditioned world. Hence in **heart sutra**, it is stated that, *in true emptiness, there is no Four noble truths, no one born, no one dies or gets sick or grows old and no one attains because it is the unconditioned*. But in the **condition arising world**, all such thing exist, example there are living beings, getting old, sick and die.

21. The ariyan disciples of the Buddha have **4 unique qualities** and **conducts**: Of good conduct, right conduct, wise conduct and dutiful conduct.

22. The **one who knows does not speak or talk frivolously**. They only speak with understanding and wisdom when there is condition to speak.

23. To come to this existential world you **need a karmically conditioned 5 aggregates of form and mind**. This is the ‘**vehicle and tool**’ for you to come. Only with this form and mind, can you **realize** your **self-nature** (true nature). All being has this **self-nature**. The mundane mind is the **consciousness trapped inside** the physical body. It is for you to use to live life. **Within this form and mind (near the heart area)**, there is a ‘**gateway**’ to your **self-nature**. This **nature cannot come out** and **live life**. This nature is **not a being** and is **non-self** because it is **not a permanent unchanging entity**. This **self-nature** can develop wisdom, understanding and awaken. When you realize the **self-nature and awaken**, you will know, the **form and mind** is **not you**. It is just a causal phenomenon.

24. The karmic force, rebirth consciousness and physical body – when **these 3 conditions** come together it will **animate into a human being**. Then when heart is formed, **comes heartbeat** and the **karmic force**. This then becomes a fully developed form and mind with all the senses while in the womb before being born into the world.

(The draft for this short notes were prepared by Sister Chong Phey Yuen.)