

The Calm Curriculum's

Guide to Mediation

Alistair Stevenson

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Meditation
By Alistair Stevenson

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Meditation is an art form that has come down from all types of cultures and from ancient civilizations. Yet, each form comes from its own place, making it a bit unique from others, and mediation is unique for everyone.

Introduction

Have you tried meditation to solve your stress and health problems? If you haven't done so yet, now may be one of the best times to make that experience a reality. Meditation is one of the most sought after forms of stress relief and is even recommended by many doctors.

Something that valuable is something that you should be striving to learn. If you are someone that spends your evenings worrying, stressing about all that needs to get done and even feeling physically bad without being sick, then meditation may be an ideal solution for you.

In meditation, you transform the way that your mind is working. While you can't say that it's a simple process, meditation is something that you can easily learn to do and then use daily.

In fact, studies show that when you do allow yourself (especially your mind) to meditate for just a few minutes each day, you can reduce the stress levels you face improving your quality of life. Indeed, lowering stress levels also can improve your physical self.

In this book, you'll learn how meditation can change your life. It is merely a guide to get you started, though.

Most individuals that are successful at meditation are those that seek out resources locally to help them to learn the process as well as to practice it. Meditating with others is something that can be powerful to the individual.

With more and more meditation clinics and classes popping up around the country, you are likely to find one relatively close to you. But, first, you need to learn a bit more about how meditation works and what it can do for you.

This book will prepare you to begin meditation and take you into a world that far too many people don't realize exists with such benefits.

If you are skeptical, there is nothing to lose by investing a few minutes in learning this process. In fact, you'll find yourself striving to learn more once you have just one or two sessions of meditation.

Learn to meditate alone or with friends. In either case, you'll find many different methods to select. More so, you could be improving your health and well being. That's worth just a few minutes of your time!

Meditation 101: The Basics

Before you can begin practicing meditation you do need to understand what it is and why you need to use this method of relaxation. The brain is the primary tool that you'll use to define this process. But, you may not realize that when the brain is in a “normal” state that it actually is very abnormal in what it is doing.

To help you to understand meditation, we must first break down the different stages in which the brain functions so that you can see the state of mind that you are functioning in most often.

The Stages of the Mind

There are three unique stages in the brain that depicts how it is functioning at any one time.

Stage 1. The Normal Mind

Stage 2. Concentration

Stage 3. Final Meditation

When you consider meditation, only going through these three stages can actually get to you achieve the serenity that you are after with meditation.

Stage One: The Normal Mind

In the “normal” state of mind, your mind is working in various directions. It is functioning as it usually does which means it is bouncing from one idea and thought to the next. In fact, this is quite abnormal activity for the brain because it needs to focus on a lesser amount of ideas if it is to be successful in resolving problems.

Stimuli (or stuff) from all over the place are coming in at the brain. When something new stimulates your mind, it moves from its previous thought to the new one.

Although you feel like you are completely in control of yourself during this type of brain function, you likely aren't.

You have very little control over the way that you behave and think during this type of situation.

Not only do your thoughts move from one thing to the next thing quickly, but your physical being is doing the same thing too. Your emotions follow suite, too.

An example of this type of brain activity can be as simple as seeing a child playing. If you see that child while you are driving, your mind goes from control of the vehicle to the child. She's cute, playing and riding her bike.



Then, your mind moves to thoughts from your own childhood. You feel good and smile at the happy memories.

Of course, it doesn't always play out so innocently. You can go through these same thought and emotional processes with negative images too.



Consider if that child was a teenager, doing something that they shouldn't be. Now, you are wondering about your own children, what they are doing that you don't know about. And, your emotions follow you too with thoughts that are fearful and tense.

In a negative situation, you are likely to become distracted by the thoughts playing through your mind which then directly impacts the way that you drive your vehicle. Perhaps you go through red light or, you narrowly miss a car accident.

As you can see, in your normal state of mind, your emotions as well as your physical being are at stake. Each plays their own role in the outcome of these events.

Often, stresses build up during this process and since it is our "normal" state of mind, stress pile on over time. You can find yourself unable to concentrate on anything and overtime you can have trouble balancing all that you have to do in your everyday life.

For the most part, your “normal” way of thinking may be one of the worst things that you can do for yourself.

Stage Two: Concentration

When you enter into concentration, you enter into the first state that will lead you to meditation. Yet, don't confuse concentration with meditation. It's very much something quite different.

During the second stage of meditation, you can begin to get control of your mind. When you learn to keep yourself in this type of mind frame, chances are good that you'll improve the quality of your life considerably.

In concentration, your goal seems simple but it actually quite difficult to master to any amount of degree. You need to concentrate on one sole thing or object.

To be successful, you need to keep your mind focused on that one thing and not distracted by any type of diversion that happens to spring up. Focus on it, without allowing your mind to wander.

It's very difficult, actually.

During concentration, although the process of focusing on one element is simple enough, the problem is the mind's ability to trick you back into its

“normal” state of being. By pulling off the actual concentration topic and focusing on another, it pulls you back.

For example, if you need to concentrate on a paper for school, you could be sitting down thinking and working. You’ll allow your mind to focus and relax on the topic at hand. You think to yourself about the topic and can really clearly see what it is.

Then, you think of what your teacher had to say about the paper. That leads to thoughts of what your friend said next to you while the teacher was talking.

Within a matter of minutes, you are thinking about something completely different than the original thought.

The end result is that you are distracted so much so that you are back at the “normal” stage of thinking, having accomplished little in way of concentration. That’s not what will help you.

The goal with concentration, though, is to realize what’s happened. When you can realize that you’ve been distracted and that your mind has fooled you into making its own decisions then you can come back and actually concentrate.

When you can master the art of keeping your mind focused and concentrating, you will experience a new type of thinking.

You'll be able to relax more and you'll be able to actually feel better about life. That's an amazing feeling!

Stage Three: Final Meditation

In meditation, the third stage of the process, you enter a completely different state.

Here, you are able to fully concentrate on the object or thought that needs to be accomplished without falling for any type of distraction. Here, no distractions or mind tricks happen to you during the process.

It's a stage that you should strive for because it really can offer you a new way of looking at things.

You'll be able to fully focus so much so that you can better understand and educate yourself. You make better decisions that are focused.

During concentration, your mind is only really concentrating on the objects you present it in a minimal way. Distraction breaks the continuously stream of concentrating thoughts. This leaves you with having to recognize the problem and to go back and change it.

In meditation, though, this is no longer the case. Now, you are keeping an ongoing stream of thought moving. There's nothing breaking it and nothing that is able to pull your mind from it. This is the ultimate experience in meditation because of the amount of focus it provides you.

In an example of what meditation can do for you, consider this. If you think about just one topic, over and over again, anything and everything connected to that topic will come to you in one form or another. Let's say that the word that you use is that of love.

If you think of love in a meditation stage, you concentrate on that one word which leads to other love terms. You love something, you love someone, different types of love, and so on. Eventually, you have connected virtually every way possible to love. You physically feel it, you emotionally feel it. You have thought everything about it. And, eventually, you have connected everything you can to love.

When you have achieved this type of meditation, you've elevated yourself to a new enlightenment. You've gone far beyond the simple level of concentration.

Now, you have entered the final stages of meditation which is called contemplation. This part of the final stage of meditation is the very best level of consciousness that your mind and body can enter.

Although it takes some time to work through these various processes to achieve this level of understanding, the end result is well worth it.

Understanding Contemplation

Instead of thinking about yourself and your own problems, you are now connected with the entire universe.

Contemplation is the final level of meditation. In this state of mind, virtually anything and everything is possible. Yet, not many can understand what contemplation is without experiencing it.

During contemplation, you enter an entirely new world of thought and mind. Instead of thinking about yourself and your own problems, you are now connected with the entire universe. Here, your body and your own mind are let go. Now, you are experiencing a level of consciousness that allows you to connect with the cosmos.

You realize now that you are part of a much grander scheme of things. You know that you are just one small part of a very large world. But, the key to contemplation is the ability to become united with all of this.

When you obtain this highest level of meditation, you enter into the state of Realization of Cosmic Consciousness. Now, you have entered into a very enlightened, meaningful and completely connected level.

Those that practice meditation know that this stage of being is the highest form of meditation is what you should be experiencing. In fact, most believe it is something that you are born with and you need to develop the ability to accomplish it.

The process of meditation is rather drawn out, but each stage in the game is something that must be fully understood if you are to find yourself experiencing all that it can offer.

Look at the way that your mind works today, right now. How does it feel? Are you thinking about this book, reading it, but have the commercials from the television drawn you in? Or, are the kids shouting for you? Each time that you face a distraction, your mind is pulled in another direction making it nearly impossible for you to focus and to obtain true meditation.

Yet, this is something that you can learn. In fact, it is something that you are born with, something that you have the ability to achieve and you have been given the right to obtain it.

Allow yourself just a few minutes a day to work towards total enlightenment with meditation and you'll find yourself in a completely different frame of mind.

As a beginner, don't let the process of meditation worry you. The fact is that it is easy to understand and fully something you can obtain.

The Benefits of Meditation

Consider what meditation can do for you by what it does for others.

Meditation is something you should consider and these are just a handful of reasons why.

The largest and most profound benefit of meditation is reaching enlightenment through the Contemplation phase of meditating. Achieving this **allows you to become a whole new person, one that has the ability to live a full and happy life** beyond that of what a person dealing with only “normal” brain activity can.

You can learn to be more compassionate. You’ll learn how to become a good person. You can learn to be more understanding, more interesting, and more educated. You’ll also become a person that is able to enjoy their life to the fullest, knowing what is out there and what role they play in that universe.

When you can fully reach this state of being and of consciousness, the fact is that you can transform yourself and experience true Grace.

Benefits You Experience

In addition to this, there are additional benefits that can come from meditation. Here are some of the many benefits your experience.

Meditation allows you to improve your level of stress. By reducing stress, you will make better decisions and fully handle problems effectively.

Meditation allows you to focus, allowing you to accomplish your tasks in a better method as well as faster.

Meditation allows you to communicate more effectively, through more defined words that ultimately lead you to a better realm.

Meditation allows you to improve your health including helps to improve heart conditions, cancer risks, high blood pressure and plenty of other conditions. By lowering stress levels on the body, you can heal faster and more effectively from any of these experiences.

Meditation allows you to be a better friend and family member. Through the dedication of those around you, you all can become enlightened and therefore on a higher realm of being.

Meditation promotes health of the mind, too. By allowing your mind to enter this improved state, you can create for yourself an amazing of being, which allows you to think clearer. It helps to keep your mind sharp.

Meditation allows you to become the real you, the one that you want to be, rather than the person that is held captive by the world around them. If you meditate, you can learn quite a bit about yourself as well as the world around you!

There are many more benefits to meditation. For each person, this experience is going to be quite unique.

If you wish to find out what it can offer you, you must learn to meditate. There is nothing negative that can come of meditation and what's more there is quite a bit of good that can come out from it.

Meditation Formats

As you will learn the further you look into meditation, there are many different types of meditation. Some are very ancient methods that have been used for thousands of years by various cultures. Others are much more modern and, in such, are sometimes more popular. Yet, learning about these types is something you should invest in.

Finding the right type of meditation for you is key and the process means educating yourself about the various types of meditation that you can select from.

Yet, all of these methods of meditation will fall into one of two different classifications. If you were to select meditation on any sole factors, it would be based on these two methods available.

Thoroughly exploring both of these methods of meditation can be very important to finding success. You'll need to experiment with both types, eventually, to determine the best route for you to take.

Concentrative Meditation

The first type of meditation is that of **concentrative meditation**.

In this type of meditation, you concentrate and focus on one thing

BREATH

AN IMAGE

A SOUND (or a MANTRA).

By using these tools, so to speak, you are able to clear the mind and allow for greater awareness as well as clarity.

To focus on meditation, you'll use one of these elements to help you to focus. By focusing on it, like you would a camera lens, you can then effectively reach the state that you are in.

Breathing

One method of concentrative meditation that is commonly used is that of concentrating on your breathing. It is probably the most simple of methods to use because you can do it any time without much need.



Breathing is effective because of how it plays a role in your daily life and well being.

Many of those that practice other alternative medicines, such as yoga, also believe that breathing is essential to maintaining the correct state of mind. In meditation, it is believed that breathing must be regulated in order to meditate properly.

You can see this clearly in your everyday life without considering meditation at all. When you are relaxed and comfortable, your breathing is slowly and deeper. But, when you are worried, stressed or anxious, your breathing speeds up. If you are distracted, this happens as well.

By regulating your breathing, you can focus your mind and gain control over it more effectively.

But, how does breathing effect meditation?

Have you ever felt overwhelmed and anxious? Where you afraid or even terrified? If so, then you may have told yourself to take a deep breath and to calm down. As you can see, you can control your own breathing.

As a tool in meditation in the concentrative methods, you can gain control over your mind using breathing. To do this, you must regulate the breathing. To do this, you'll need to focus on the rhythm of your breathing. The rhythm is the movement between inhaling and exhaling.

When you do this, sit and close your eyes. Focus on your breathing, the movement of air in and out of your body. You'll need to concentrate on that breathing and only the breathing you are doing.

Soon, your meditation on breathing will become something that helps to ease your mind. You'll see this as your breathing becomes more regular and then deeper and slower.

When this happens, your mind too is changing. It becomes quiet, calm and collected. You'll feel serenity and peace. You are also more aware of your surroundings and more likely to gain the benefits of meditation.

Breathing is just one example of concentrative meditation. There are many other forms, some of which we will talk about later in this book. Yet, remember that there is another type of method of meditation that accompanies concentrative meditation as the two forms that all methods and techniques of meditation fall under.

Mindfulness Meditation

Mindful meditation is quite unlike that of concentrative. If we use the example of a lens to help show the difference. In concentrative meditation, you are concentrating on one single thing, focusing the lens on that one element, like breathing or something in the room that you are in.

On the other hand is mindfulness meditation. Here, you are not focusing your lens, but widening it to include more and more information.

You may wonder just how including more of what is happening in any one moment can help you to collect your thoughts and focus your mind. Yet, the fact is that you can do this because of how you do it.

Using your abilities, you'll become very much aware of everything around you including all of your feelings, the things that you see, the things you hear, the smells and sounds, the very elements that you may want to filter out of your mind.

From here, though, something is unique. You'll notice and be mindful of these things, but you will not react to them. Instead, you are simply taking in whatever is happening in your mind. Don't become overly involved with these elements. You won't allow for images, thoughts, or memories to filter into your mind here as they do when you are concentrating.

Because, you are not becoming involved with the images and elements that are filtering through your mind; you actually calm down. Your mind is now clearer because it has taken in many of the things that are happening around you. You aren't focusing in on any one thing. Instead, you are aware of everything going on, but not participating in it.

Although this method of meditation is one that is less well known and not used by beginners because of how challenging it can be, it is still an ideal choice because it allows for a renewed sense of being and wholeness. By focusing on everything but not on one single thing, you can clear your mind fully.

All types of meditation fall in one of these groups. You will either use methods that are concentrative, in which you will concentrate on one thing to enter into a meditative state or you will use a mindfulness meditation method and concentrate on many things to enter a meditation state.

For those that are looking towards these methods and wondering which to choose, don't. You can use both types of meditation to gain benefits and sometimes one method will work better than others will. With the ability to learn either type, you'll be that much better at meditation that fits what you are doing and what your body and mind needs at any one time.

What Happens During Meditation?



Modern medicine does not say that meditation works. You won't find a doctor that will prescribe meditation as the sole means of healing your illness in traditional medicine, anyway. Yet, meditation is something that doctor's do tell you about in other ways.

For example, how many times has your doctor told you that stress was a problem in your health issue? Or, perhaps he told you of the need to relax more so that you can overcome your headaches, your pain, or your tension? In your doctor's words, he is encouraging you to clear your mind of the things you worry about and concentrate instead on relaxing. That is what meditation can do for you.

Yet, the mechanics behind how meditation works is something completely different. Not many actually realize how meditation works or why it matters that they know why it works. You'll learn both elements here.

In studies that have been done, there is evidence that meditation can produce a reaction in the body. It has been shown to provide a healthy state of relaxation. Physically, your body reacts in several ways.

Your breathing becomes regulated, smoother and deeper.

Your heart rate decreases which means your heart is beating slower.

It can help to decrease the amount of the stress hormone, called plasma cortisol that is produced by your body.

It can decrease your pulse rate.

It can increase a brain wave stimulation that causes you to relax. This is called your EEG or electroencephalograph alpha which is directly associated with the body's ability to relax

Probably the most astonishing physical experience to the body is the decrease in your metabolic rate, or the rate at which your body takes fuel and burns it for energy. This rate seemed to have dropped by some 20 percent in those that had otherwise normal metabolic rates.

Yet, not just physical changes happen during meditation. In addition, your body enters into a state of profound rest, rest that goes beyond that of any other stage of consciousness you could be in.

During this time, your mind and your brain are extremely alert and in tune. This has been shown through medical experiments as well. Patients were told to meditate while their brain's activity was monitored.

During these tests, there were indications that your brain was in a state called "restful alertness" where it was completely and extremely alert but calm and focused.

It has also been shown in the way that your body reacts to various stimuli. For example, most individuals experience stimulations that allow them to be faster in movements. They may be more creative as well. Some are able to comprehend at a higher level after they've meditated as well.

As mentioned, the body's metabolic rate also drops, which means that you don't eat nearly as much.

Patients that have been monitored during one specific technique of meditation known as Transcendental meditation, called TM for short, had metabolic rates that dropped below that of those that were in a deep sleep pattern.

Your heart rate will drop by several beats each minute as well as your breathing reduces by an average of two breaths for each minute.

Another result of Transcendental meditation was the effect that it seemed to have on patients and their blood pressure rates. In those that had normal levels of blood pressure considered healthy, nothing changed and those

numbers remained in low numbers. But, those that started with higher, above average and healthy blood pressure numbers saw a fall in their blood pressure rates. It fell to a considerably lower level in these patients.

Another area that was tested during this type of meditation is that of the body's relaxation of its muscles. This can be hard to measure but during some tests, doctors will administer a very low level of electrical current and monitor the reaction that your body's muscles have to it.

Individuals that have a fall in their skin's resistance are known to be people that suffer from tension and anxiety or have high levels of stress. If you had a rise in your resistance, on the other hand, that means that your muscles are very relaxed.

Once tested, it was easy to tell how the effects of meditation are. Those that meditated then had this electrical test down were found to have significantly more relaxed muscles than those that did not.

The Physical Reaction

As you can see, there is a real physical and mental change in the body when you are or have been meditating. But, doctors want to learn more and often people ask, why meditating has this effect on the body and mind. For that, let's explain a bit more.

One of the marked improvements during meditation happens to the individual's nervous system. Instead of what normally happens, a different branch of this system takes charge, which it normally does not. This branch, called the parasympathetic branch, is prone to help relax and calm you and your body.

Another example of what happens to the body is that of the amount of lactate in your blood before and after meditation. Lactate is a naturally produced substance that is necessary in the body. It is produced by your metabolism and is done so in the muscles surrounding your skeleton.

When you meditate, this lactate level drops significantly; which therefore causes your metabolic rate to significantly drop, as we mentioned. In fact, the amount of lactate in your body decreases by some four times the rate that it would if you were lying on your back and had not meditated.

In addition to this, the amount of lactate produced in your body fits the fact that your blood will flow faster and more effectively throughout your body during and after meditation. Because your blood is flowing faster (in some areas by up to 30 percent!) that means that oxygen is getting to your muscles faster.

When your muscles have an increased amount of oxygen, which they need, they don't produce nearly the amount of lactate that they would otherwise. Therefore, meditation helps to increase your blood flow and decrease your metabolic rate.

Are You Sleeping?



Many of the things that happen to your body while you are meditating are actually quite like what happens to the body when you are sleeping. Your breathing and heart rate drop. Your body and mind enter a very restful, deep relaxation and enter a very restful, deep relaxation.

But, are you sleeping when you meditate, then?

The question that many face is how your body can be both so relaxed and yet so alert. You see, when you meditate, your body is extremely alert, not sleeping.

When you are meditating, your body enters a type of rest that is similar to that of deep sleep and/or a hypnotic state. That's due to the fact that your body responds to the meditation in all of the ways that we've listed which causes the relaxed state to happen.

Behind everything is your ability to tell your mind and your body to relax. When you enter meditation in a complete manner and these things happen, you've learned to access your body's relaxation response, something that allows you to then control when and how well you can relax.

Many doctors and researchers believe that those that meditate also are able to allow their own body to make the right decisions about healing.

There are many theories on how meditation happens and what the real physical and mental change that happens in your body when you meditate is. What's important for you to realize, then, is that a physical as well as a mental change happens in your body. That change is one of serenity and enlightenment, two things that each person should strive to achieve for their ultimate state of mind.

Preparing Your Mind And Body

Now, you are ready to learn how to meditate.

Now that you understand a bit behind the reasoning behind meditation, you can clearly see what the benefits are. Over the next chapters, we'll talk about many of the different techniques that are crucial to meditation.

Some techniques you can learn through this book, others, though, you'll need a trained and experienced instructor to help you to learn how. We suggest starting with some of the simpler forms like those listed here and then working your way into more complex ones. You'll find that this allows you to be more successful with the difficult meditation exercises as well.

A Word of Warning

As you begin meditation, you should realize that the process can bring up feelings, thoughts and even traumatic events that happened in your past. If you have repressed memories or otherwise are psychologically affected by meditation, don't give up on it. You should work with a skilled instructor though to work through these problems so that meditation can be successful for you.

Meditation may not be for you if you are a person that is paranoid, have problems with delusions or are facing high levels of anxiety to the point of not being able to function properly.

These individuals often find that meditation can be helpful, but only when under guidance from their doctors. Those that have psychotic episodes of any sort should work with their meditation specialist first and foremost before starting their own meditation

Those that are interested in meditation but are worried about what could happen during meditation should insure that they have a skilled meditation specialist to help them through the first few episodes.

A Bit Of Background

Meditation is an art form that has come down from all types of cultures and from ancient civilizations. Yet, each form comes from its own place, making it a bit unique from others.

One thing that you will notice about meditation is its ability to change with the culture and therefore you'll find various names for the same techniques and styles. In addition, you will find countless religious and mystical applications to meditation. As you learn more, each aspect is different in where it is from and how it is used, yet all strive to offer the same end.

For example, in ancient Christian training of the spirit, meditation is the process of thinking with a good amount of concentration on a topic. Yet, in Eastern meditation, meditation doesn't have any such meaning. Instead, you are doing the opposite of thinking about a topic.

The goal of meditation in this form is to become detached; to pull away from your thoughts and then allow the silence to open up to you. When this happens, your mind becomes quite. In Eastern meditation, this is called the relaxation response that your body presents. Yet, in Christian mystical practices, it is called contemplation.

Activities for Meditation

As we work through meditation, it is important to find something to use as your focus or your tool to enter into a meditation experience. There are many different tools that you can use. The best things to do are those that allow you to relax, stay still and to have some passive amount of attention paid to the object.

Here are some examples:

Relaxing comfortably on the couch listening to soft music. Lying down is generally more beneficial than sitting up because it allows all of your muscles to relax.

A fire can be a wonderful meditation tool as well. Sitting quietly by the fire, gazing into it is alluring and often times allow a person to completely become memorized. For meditation purposes, a fireside meditation can be the perfect location, assuming you are safe of course.

Focusing your attention on any single object can be beneficial as well. Often times, this can be on anything that's in the room where it's quiet and open enough to relax. You can do this with anything in the room, a person, a scene or even just the atmosphere of the room.

In meditation, the goal is to find something to meditate on that allows you to focus, quietly and still, on it. Anything that provides this can work for you.

Get Yourself Ready

Now that you have a basic idea of what goes into meditation, you can provide yourself with the necessary tools to get started. We will get into that a bit more in just a minute. Yet, before you do this, ask yourself a couple of questions.

Are you able to fully experience meditation because you are open to the potential benefits it can provide to you?

Are you able to have someone to watch over you during your first sessions, or perhaps work with you through them, in order to insure that you do not have any type of problem during one?

Do you have a partner that may like to learn to meditate with you? This can allow you to better experience the process.

Now, you are ready to dive into meditation. First, ready your mind for the benefits that it can offer you.

SKEPTICS NEEDS TO STOP READING NOW.

Required Elements

So, you want to meditate. Now that you have a bit of background on meditation you think you can sit down and completely get into it, right? It's not quite that easy. Nevertheless, the process can be broken down to allow anyone to fully learn it.

To perform meditation, there are several key elements that must be taken into consideration prior to getting started. If and when you accomplish these tasks, you'll be in a better place to actually meditate to the highest possible level of consciousness.

There are four big things to consider.

First, you need to have the right attitude. For that, you need what is called a passive attitude. This attitude allows for the right experience because it takes away some of the lesser and often negative aspects that you may have towards meditation.

The next element that you need is the right location. The best location for meditation is one that is quiet and relaxing to you. Whatever it takes to get into the right setting, make it happen.

Next, you need the right physical posture. Your body must be in the right stage so that you are both comfortable and relaxed to the level that meditation requires. When you enter this stage, meditation is easier to accomplish.

Finally, you need something to meditate on. As we've already discussed, there is importance in what this is as it should be something that is relaxing and something that allows you to remain still and quiet while meditating with that element.

Now, we'll go into detail about each of these aspects. Each is a very important part to the meditation process.

Location

First, we need to help you to find the right location to meditate. As you can probably imagine, you need a location that is quiet and calm. If you wish to experience meditation, being in the correct surroundings will make all of the difference to you.

The best locations for you to select are those that will allow not only your mind to relax but also your body's muscles. This is generally done in a sitting or a lying position, so make sure that the location you choose offers that.

The location should be one that does not offer many distractions. This is crucial to the ability to filter these things out of your mind. Those that are

just starting to learn meditation need the least distractions possible. Once you hone your skills, though, you'll be able to meditate in more busy locations including in public locations where you can't control the distraction and noise levels. First, though, look for quiet!

The Right Position

Just like the right location, being in the right position for meditation is crucial. Actually, what we are looking for here is the right posture for your body that provides for the best abilities to meditate.

The posture in which your body is in is very much a role player in the type of experience that you have. This is believed in many forms of alternative medicine and wellness. In Yoga, there are a number of postures performed to get the desired results.

In Buddhist religious ceremonies, the posture of the body is very critical to the experience that the individual has in the prayer that they lead.

One of the most important elements in maintaining your posture is to **keep your spine straight**. Although there is no proof medically speaking, it is believed that when the spine is correctly aligned, in a straight line, which it helps to benefit the state of mind that you are in.

If you have a problem with your spine and this is not comfortable for you, do not insist on it. Most individuals will experience some discomfort during their first few experiences with this type of straightening of the back. For

most, this will go away after you get used to it. If it is pain, though, don't force yourself to do this.

You may be **tempted to meditate in a lying down position.** Although this position does work, it often causes individuals that are new to meditation to fall asleep. Therefore, unless you know that you can refrain from sleeping; try to use the sitting up position.

Semi Poised

The semi poised posture is another choice. In a semi poised posture, you are not sitting straight up and you are not lying down flat. You are reclining to a point. This is often done by those that can't sit well straight up. It can be done on your sofa for additional comfort. Make sure that your head is supported in this position. You should not put yourself in a position that allows you to fall asleep, though.

Poised Posture

The most common and the most beneficial type of posture is that of poised. The poised posture is one in which the back and spine is upright and straight, but is not rigidly so. The reasoning behind this benefit is actually important to understand.

When you are in the poised posture, your body is alert. Your state of mind is

that of being aware and poised, ready for attention. By keeping your back straight, you are keeping your mind alert.

Lotus Posture

Another option is that of the lotus posture. This is actually the most common and well liked posture in the Eastern forms of meditation. In this position, you will sit with your legs crossed and the back and spine in a vertical line. Your legs are crossed with the feet placed on the thighs.

The problem with the lotus posture is that it can be somewhat painful for those that aren't flexible. It can be something learned and even mastered after a few tries.

There are other postures that can be used as well. If you would like to learn a posture that allows you to sit in a specific position, look towards your meditation guide to help you to find one that works for you.

Passiveness in Your Attitude

The next key ingredient in meditation is your attitude.

When you enter poised awareness, you will at first need to fight to stay there.

Often, the attitude that is most commonly required and talked about is that of **POISED AWARENESS**. Your attitude is probably the most important element in this entire process. It is called poised awareness because that's just what you are.

You are relaxed but alert in such a way that is the perfect balance between the two.

When you enter this type of awareness, you notice what is happening around you but you are not focusing on it. You are casually aware of these things and yet you are detached from them.

When new thoughts enter your mind, you must let them just pass through, knowing that they have come but not caring much about them. As you gaze at your meditation object, you'll want to allow your mind the ability to notice what is happening around you.

But, when your mind wanders away and you begin to add thoughts onto that original one, come back to that meditation.

When you learn to keep your mind focused and relaxed, you can realize that your mind has gone off into another direction and bring it back to where we want it to be for meditation.

When you enter poised awareness, you will at first need to fight to stay there.

Yet, over time, you'll find yourself being able to stay in focus throughout your meditation experience. You don't have to fight it as much.

A passive attitude is one in which your mind can notice that there are other thoughts passing through, but that stays relaxed and doesn't focus on those thoughts. When you can do this, you'll be able to notice but not react to those distractions that come your way, therefore allowing your body and mind to enter into meditation easier.

Your Meditation Object

There is one more piece of the puzzle to enter into meditation through practicing yourself. You need to have a meditation object to use to help direct and focus your attention on.

The object that you use is generally called a **mantra**, which is actually a specific word or even a syllable.

Sometimes, like in Buddhism meditation, you'll focus on your breathing movements as your object for meditation.

If you do decide to use breathing as your method for entering into meditation, then do so correctly. You need to make your meditation method use the rise and fall of your abdomen rather than the presence of inhaling air.

In addition, make sure to use breathing that comes from your diaphragm rather than from your stomach. Proper posture will help this as will practicing how to use it. Once you get into a meditation state, you'll find that the rhythm of your breathing in the movement of your body will help to promote deep relaxation.

Either of these, mantra or breathing, can be used as your meditation object so long as they provide relaxation.

You can also use various other elements in the room you are in. If you choose to do this, make sure that the element you select is something that provides for relaxation. Some individuals like to close their eyes in order to relax and then to induce meditation. This is up to you and your preferences for meditation.

Should you go with a mantra for your method of inducing meditation, do so with careful thought.

Although some meditation therapists will tell you that a specific selection of sounds should be used for your mantra as determined by your nervous system. Some say that A and E and vowel sounds are good as they are on the same wave length as the alpha wave of consciousness. However there isn't a lot of noticeable benefit from this.

You can use any word that is neutral and that allows you to stay focused. It should not be something that easily brings another thought to your mind.

It doesn't have to be a word either. It can be a nonsensical sound or a grouping of sounds. OMM

Remember that your mind needs to enter into a phase in which no thoughts or very few thoughts and no thoughts of meaning are passing through it. When this happens, the deepest level of thought and consciousness are found and only then can it happen.

At Last Put It Together



Once you have learned each of these four very important elements to the meditation process, you can begin to develop a pattern for yourself.

Most of the time, it does take some practice and just trying out different methods to actually find the process that works the best for you. The goal is to remember what you are after. You want a state of mind that is clear from other thoughts and you want to put yourself both your mind and your body in a relaxed state.

For you, this may be different from others that meditate.

We recommend starting with those methods described here and practicing with them until you have achieved them. Later, if you find that something works better for you, such as with your posture or your meditation object, you can then change it to match the benefits that you've found.

Most commonly, though, meditation involves a trial and error. Don't assume that just one try of a mantra will work. If you don't fully learn how to do something, this too can lead to the wrong experience. For example, if you don't breathe correctly, you can't know that breathing doesn't work for you.

Next, we'll try to meditate.

Meditating In a Simple Form

Meditating is an art form, we've told you that.

Now, to get you started, you must first learn about the various bits you can make in your art so that the end result is what you can appreciate.

With meditation, everything is built from the simplest of methods up to more complex types. To enter into enlightenment, then, you need to first take baby steps. Our first meditation is one that's simple, straightforward and honesty is something you can master in a few tries at it, if you do it correctly.

Let's go through the process now. In this meditation, our goal is to introduce you with the relaxation response. This is a great type of meditation to do daily, even when you are busy.

To get started, put aside time to meditate. You need to try and do this daily to fully learn through practice how to accomplish it as well as to benefit from all that meditation can offer to you.

Simple Meditation

Simple meditation can start like this.

Find a location that's quiet and where you know you won't be bothered. You are looking for ten to twenty minutes of undisturbed meditation here. Turn off all telephones and anything else that could become a distraction.

Now, sit comfortably and quietly. Keep your back in position with your spine vertically aligned. Remember that posture is something that you need to make happen.

Commit to what you are doing right now. That means not allowing distraction to play a role now. Commit to not being interrupted by anything happening in the world around you. Most importantly, remove anything from the room or from your line of view that could be a potential distraction. Commit to performing meditation.

Select a word that fits into your natural belief system. For example, use **“love” “peace”** or others. If you are religious, select a work of a short phrase that signifies what you believe. **“Hallelujah”** or **“Om”** make good choices. TM or Transcendental Meditation teachers give their pupils words from ancient Sanskrit, but it's the same principal as taught here.

Close your eyes once you've selected the right word. Closing your eyes helps you to enter into relaxation.

Now, we'll go through the body and relax each of the muscles in it. Start with your toes. Consciously think to yourself that your toes should relax and feel them relax. Next, move to your feet, your legs and so on. You want to

allow each of your muscles to relax. Make sure to include your neck, your jaw, your pelvis, back, your arms, fingers and hands, and shoulders. As this happens, feel the tension leave your body.

Continue to breathe through the process in deep, long breathes and repeat your mediation word over and over again. Breathe in, say your word, breathe out, and repeat. You don't need to say the word out loud, but rather mentally pronounce it.

Use the passive attitude that we've talked about. If any thoughts come into your mind while you are sitting, relaxing, let them go out simply by telling yourself "oh well." Most people will have trouble with this at first, so don't worry about how well you are doing. Just let go of those words the best that you can. Keep repeating your meditation word, too.

Keep this going for ten minutes at least and strive for twenty. Don't use any alarm to warn you, just open your eyes for a moment to check.

Sit and relax for several minutes once you've come out of your meditation. Keep your eyes closed for a couple of minutes before opening them. Don't stand up just yet. Allow yourself time to come back into reality before doing so.

You should try to do this simple meditation at least once a day but two or more times per day really can have a positive effect on your daily stresses.

Many people find that this simple meditation works well before they get their day started, when they are fully rested and before they have eaten breakfast.

When you have practiced this type of mediation for several days or even longer, you should learn the benefits of meditation and what it can offer. If you don't feel any different, you may not be following each step appropriately. You need to focus on relaxation not on whether or not meditation is going to heal all of you.

When you do accomplish this form of meditation, try out some of the others that we've included here in the next chapter.

Other Methods of Meditation

There are many other types of meditation that can easily be used just like that of the simple meditation. Here, we'll talk about several other options that may fill your needs. Should you choose one?

After you have learned the basics of meditation you can begin to experiment with other sometimes more complicated methods.

Walking Meditation

One other type of meditation that you can easily incorporate into your daily lifestyle is that of Walking Meditation. The process seems much simpler than it is, but it's worth the try because it can allow you to enter into a new enlightenment no matter where you are.

Walking meditation does take practice so plan on giving it a few chances before you write it off as something that's not working for you.

Here's how walking meditation works.

Start by paying attention to your body as you walk.

You should take note of the way it feels, not just walking but how it affects each part of your body. You should feel the ground hitting the bottom of

your foot. You should feel the muscles in your legs and back tighten with each step that you take. Pay attention to these things.

Focus your attention, now on each of your feet. Start with just one foot. As it hits the ground, take notice of it. Feel the next foot come up and go down, notice how it feels too. Continue to do this over and over again until it almost becomes a mantra that you are saying to yourself.

If your mind begins to wander off, force yourself to focus on your movements again. Your eyes should be watching in front of you, without really looking at anything in particular. Don't focus on anything else. This will help you to take your meditation to the next level of meditation.

Why should you use walking meditation? It's simple. When was the last time that you paid attention to the actually walking part of your movements?

You think about the countless things you have to do, where you are going and who's talking to you, but not the movements of walking itself, which can offer a high level of relaxation when focused on.

By concentrating on walking itself, you can better experience relaxation and the movements of walking itself. Through this, you can enter into a new awareness of the world around you and of your physical self.

Transcendental Meditation

If you have come to learn meditation, it is likely that you want to learn transcendental meditation or TM for short. There are many people that have set their sights on this type of meditation and with good reason.

First, it's easy to learn. Second, you can actually find countless benefits from this type of meditation.

Once you learn to practice Transcendental Meditation, you'll find results and benefits right away. Through a bit of practice, you could be doing this within a week or so, especially if you have practiced the other types of meditations prior to this.

During Transcendental Meditation, you are supposed to work closely with an instructor. This instructor not only will walk you through the process of entering into this type of meditation, but he or she will also provide you with a unique mantra to use during the process.

Remember that a mantra is a word or a few syllables of a word that you will say over and over again.

In this type of meditation, your instructor will give you a specific mantra to say that is chosen specifically for you. Some say this type of selection is based on your body's needs and your nervous system specifically.

Once you have been given this type of meditation mantra, you can then begin the process of meditation.

From this point, you will sit down quietly and clear your mind of anything that is going through it. Then, you'll close your eyes gently and relax your muscles throughout your body, much like that of a simple meditation. From here, you'll begin repeating your mantra over and over again. The goal is to completely focus on those words.

When you do this, over and over again, you'll want to dispel any other thoughts that come into your mind. Clearing your mind and bring it back to the mantra is going to allow you to find benefits in meditation.

You should practice this type of meditation at least two times per day, every day.

In this type of meditation, your goal is to find an "oneness" with the universe. By repeating this one word or idea over and over again, you enter into a state of consciousness that is elevated. You are creating a one between you and the universe.

During the process, you'll use your passive attitude to easily dispel any distractions that come into your mind. Remember, when your mind wanders, a simple, "oh well" will allow you to come back to your mantra and therefore refocus your meditation exercises.

If you remember correctly from our earlier chapters, there are many benefits to Transcendental Meditation. If you will be practicing this type of

meditation for any purpose, you should still clear your mind of all of those thoughts prior to getting started otherwise it may not actually work well for you.

You should also remember our information about Transcendental Meditation in how it relates to your health. This type of mediation is the most profound type of meditation in the way of relaxation and health and mental benefits.

Mindfulness Meditation

There is another type of meditation that should be mentioned because of its many benefits on your lifestyle as well as just how unique it is.

In the other meditations that we've selected to tell you about, your goal will be to use a mantra or a breathing focus to help you enter into a state of meditation. But, that's not necessarily the only method to do so. In Mindfulness Meditation, which is also known as Vipassana, you don't focus on something around you but rather on inside meditation.

In Mindfulness Meditation, you are not paying attention to the physical aspects of what is happening around you. Instead, you are focusing on what is happening in the present moment, not the future or the past. You will learn how to focus on what is happening right now, at this very second.

You'll find that the Mindfulness Meditation is one that can help to turn the brain down to low. If you are one that has constant thoughts racing through your head and often finds that there's just too much noise happening in your brain at any time, then this type of meditation may be one of the best types for you.

In Mindfulness Meditation, you will not focus on any one thing. You are not even going to look at this factor yet. Instead, you are going to concentrate on the quality of your awareness.

You will be what is called a “silent witness” which simply means that you need to be aware of what is happening around you at that very moment silently. You are witnessing what’s happening around you.

Don’t mistake this type of meditation for a mediation that allows you to be passive in what happens in your daily life. Rather, Mindfulness Meditation helps you to stop and make decisions based on reality rather than making impulse decisions.

So, how do you do Mindfulness Meditation?

You may have heard of it before, actually. There are two ways to do it. One is informal. The other is formal and a good example of this is through Yoga.

Yoga works as a method of meditation because of the concentration that is paid to the here and now. You are mindful of the movements and positions of your body. Each movement is done slowly and carefully as planned. You are fully aware of each move you are making and thus you are mindful.

When you practice in this manner, you are mindfully aware of your feelings, your physical movements and what’s happening in your mind.

You are taught through this type of meditation to allow breathing to enter into your body and then to leave your body taking with it your stress, your anxiety and other elements. Through methods like yoga, you can focus your attention on removing these toxins from your body and live a more mindful lifestyle.

The other type of Mindfulness Meditation is that of informal means. In the informal meditation, you take in the world around you through just each thing that you do. Each thing that you do or encounter is fully experienced in a very unique way.

For example, if you are hungry and grab an apple for a snack, you bite it, chew and swallow while probably watching television or even sitting on the web. But, when you use Mindfulness Meditation when you are consuming that apple, things change considerably.

Now, you are not just taking a bite. You are observing the apple in all ways. What does it feel like in your hand? What does the apple smell like? Take in its color and its weight. As you take a bite, hear the crunch of the apple's skin, the texture of the apple's inside and the way that the juices come out of the apple as you chew.

As you can see, with Mindfulness Meditation, you are fully aware of everything to do with the task at hand. It doesn't just have to do with your foods, either. The same goes for everything that you are doing.

Your hand on the mouse of your computer, the putting on of your shoes, and the movement of your pen on the paper are all activities that you can use Mindfulness Meditation on.

Why do this type of meditation in an informal way? When you do this type of activity, over and over again, you gain benefits of meditation at a basic

level over and over again throughout your day. That means that you'll enter into a relaxed state often, probably dozens of times each day.

There Are More

One thing to take away from this book is the fact that there are many ways to enter into a state of meditation. Here are a few more examples of meditation methods that you can learn and practice for benefits.

Journey Meditation

In this type of meditation, you will take yourself to a new location through meditation. You gain meditation by taking yourself to a different location where peace is the focus of the trip.

To do this type of meditation, sit up in a proper posture yet comfortably. Keep some paper and pen near you so that you can write down anything that you worry about during this type of meditation. Breathe in slowly and deeply for about five counts to cleanse your mind and thoughts. Then, find your peaceful place. It's generally a location that helps you to feel relaxed and at peace. Keep distractions out of your mind and enjoy the peace that's offered to you.

Sound Meditation

In this type of meditation, also known as vibrating meditation, you'll use the sound of your mantra to move you. Stand up while doing this type of meditation and allow deep breathing to cleanse your thoughts. Then, pick a word that sounds good for you. Repeat it over and over again, in a chant like method. Relax your muscles and enjoy what this method has to offer to you.

Even though we've covered many of the best types of meditation, especially for the beginner, there are plenty more. Make it your experience to learn more of them.

Conclusion

As you can see, meditation is a very complex process that really can be brought down into a few simple things.

By finding an element to concentrate on and then clearing your mind of all that is happening around you, you can enter into a state of meditation.

Why do it? Why should you meditate? Although it can be difficult for anyone to really understand the benefits of meditation without first giving it a try, the fact is that meditation can take you to a new level of consciousness.

Not only will it help to improve your stress levels, often helping you to reduce them to healthy levels, but it helps you to feel good, too. You will feel more collected and organized in your thoughts. When this alone happens, you'll be able to make better decisions, work harder without working too much and you'll accomplish more each and every day.

Meditation has many health benefits and has been helpful in improving the quality of life for many. But, don't take our word for it. You know have the ability to learn how to take your own life to a new level through meditation. Enlightenment truly can happen through this process of experiencing meditation. Most individuals can master is quickly and therefore will improve their life easily.

Meditation is something to experience,
with your full heart and your empty
mind.

References

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