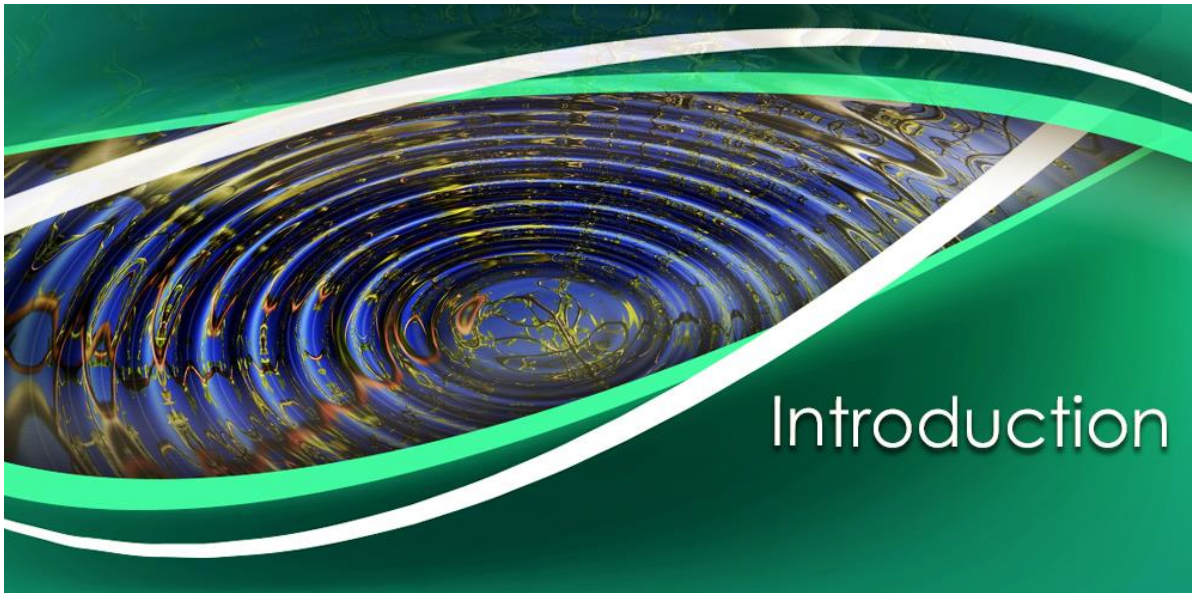


Learning The Art Of Meditation One Step At A Time



Gerald Pilcher



INTRODUCTION

We live in a very stressful world. You probably don't need me to remind you of that fact. Why are we so stressed out? Why do we feel so much pressure? Why does it seem like contentment and peace are so hard to find? Well, for most people, they simply just have too many duties, responsibilities, distractions and routines taking up their time and attention.

If you were to slice and dice and dissect your daily schedule, you probably would fit into this category as well. There's just so much that you have to cram into your mind every single day.

It is no surprise that a lot of people develop the following symptoms of stress:

They have short attention spans. When they read stuff online, they can barely pay attention until another item shows up on their Facebook timeline and they forgot about the stuff that they were reading before. They don't really read materials, they just scan. That's how short most people's attention span is.

Next, stressed out people overreact emotionally. It seems like everything that you perceive or become aware of is some sort of judgment or is somehow, some way, related to you. You personalize everything. Everything is personal.

And it's no surprise that you tend to react emotionally. This may be due to the fact that you're stressed out. You may be reading too much into things.

But unfortunately, once we open our mouths, we end up hurting people. We end up making decisions that we come to regret later on.

Another symptom of too much stress is simply a lack of patience. You don't feel like you want to stick around for anything. This is a very serious problem because it can lead to road rage if you're stuck in traffic. This can lead to violent disagreements with friends and family members.

You might hurt your relationships because you simply have grown impatient in dealing with people. People are people. It often takes time for people to get their act together. Finally, you get this generalized sense of anxiety and frustration. You can't quite put your finger on it, but you feel that something is missing in your life. You feel that something is just not right.

Not surprisingly, it's very hard for you to find peace and contentment. It seems that, at any given second, something wrong might happen. It may lead to you losing money, or it may lead to you suffering from some sort of illness. Whatever the case may be, something's off. Something's not right. Rarely do you feel that if your world is perfect.

It is no surprise that, given these symptoms, the western world suffers from several systemic dysfunctions. In the western world, there are high divorce rates. Too many people quickly conclude that their marriage is simply not worth saving, so this blows up the divorce rate. People are just not that patient with their relationships.

Another symptom involves the high levels of drug use. This is particularly deadly in the United States because of the current opioid epidemic gripping that country. Some people have always self-medicated to deal with stress and anxiety.

Maybe they smoke weed, maybe they do cocaine, maybe they shoot up heroin. Whatever the case may be, it numbs or suspends the pain for at least a period of time until they have to go back to "the real world."

Finally, the western world, as well as Japan, has always suffered from high suicide rates. This is another reflection of the prolonged systemic dysfunction produced by depression, stress and anxiety.

If you need proof of this, just look at the top prescribed medications in any given year in the United States and many parts of the "developed" world. What do you see at the top? Antidepressants or anti-anxiety medications. This is guaranteed. In the top ten of prescribed medications, you will always see those two.

Something's got to give. Unfortunately, most of the time, it is you. Thankfully, there is a better way to handle your mental resources. You don't have to stress out. You don't have to freak out. You don't have to be emotionally on edge every single time. You don't feel like something wrong is going on or something's about to get knocked loose.

The best thing about this better way of handling your mental resources is that it is 100% drug free. That's right. No chemicals are involved. This method is also 100% natural. You deal with your mind as it exists. You don't have to buy a machine. You don't have to take drugs. You don't have to ingest anything foreign into your body. It is 100% natural.

It works with how your mind works. It is also 100% conscious. You're not going to hypnotize yourself. You're not going to be under the mental control of another person.

Finally, this system enables you to remain in 100% control of your mind. You call the shots. You pick the method, and you work with it. It works on your schedule, on your own terms, and based on your needs.

Sound awesome? Wouldn't you like to try this better way? Are you sick and tired of the regular ways you deal with stress, anxiety and the daily strains of modern living?

Well, here's the answer: Meditation.

This training teaches you the ins and outs of practical meditation, so you can come up with a solution that works best for you!



CHAPTER 1

Near the end of the introduction to this training, you might be a little bit skeptical. You probably have heard of meditation before, however, you might not have been excited at first.

I really can't blame you because a lot of people have certain preconceptions regarding meditation. A lot of these are really myths that serve to turn people off from this amazing practice that can free them from daily stress and pressure.

Part of the reason for this is because of the religious or spiritual baggage of meditation. After all, meditation was pioneered in the East, in the specific context of Buddhism and Hinduism.

This cuts against the grain with most people from the West. Most Westerners are secular. It's no surprise that a lot of people are turned off by the spiritual or mystical reputation of meditation. But this is not the reality of meditation.

Here are 8 myths that might be holding you back about meditation. Learn to recognize these and hear the truth about meditation so you can make a real informed choice.

Myth #1: You have to be religious for meditation to work

According to this myth, you have to be a Buddhist or a Hindu for meditation to work for you. Absolutely wrong. Meditation works with how your mind naturally processes stimuli.

It doesn't need religion. It doesn't need spirituality. You just need to tune in to how your mind is already working.

Myth #2: You have to "believe" for meditation to produce benefits

You don't have to believe in anything. You just have to go through the steps of meditation because meditation works with how your mind works. It's kind of like redecorating a room with existing furniture.

The furniture is already there. You just need to rearrange the furniture, so it produces better effects.

You're not imagining stuff for the process to work. You're not forcing yourself to change what you believe in for meditation to produce results.

Myth #3: You are fully unconscious when meditating

This is an absolute lie. A lot of people are under the impression that meditation is really like some variation of sleep and you're hypnotizing yourself or entering some sort of altered reality. No. This is not true.

Real practical meditation is actually the precise opposite. You remain fully conscious. However, you train your consciousness to purify its focus. It leads to a very empowering feeling because you start becoming more mentally disciplined. This is the complete opposite of just simply being unconscious.

Myth #4: You will fall under the influence of others easily when meditating

When you meditate, you are calling the shots because your focus is super filtered. It is super fine. Only you can do this. Nobody outside of you can guide you to achieve this level of clarity and focus.

You have to do this yourself. Accordingly, you won't fall under the influence of others when meditating unless, of course, you want to. You always have that choice. But practically speaking, you are calling the shots.

Myth #5: Meditation is another form of hypnosis

Hypnosis works when somebody outside of you guides you to achieve an altered state of reality.

They basically change how you look at things. Maybe a hypnotist will make you change your mind about smoking or some form of addictive behavior.

Meditation is very different from hypnosis because you're not gaining instructions. Instead, you are clearing away your mind to focus on how your mind works in a given moment. You're not taking in stuff. You're actually clearing stuff away, so there's nothing to get hypnotized about. What you have is pure focus.

Myth #6: It takes a lot of effort to meditate properly

Your mind is actually very powerful. To use machinery analogy, your mind already has gears that turn. And these are very powerful gears. You have to understand that you navigate reality with your mind. It's how your body exists in reality. You perceive reality through your mind.

When you meditate, you tap into that machinery and you purify it. In other words, the energy is already there. You don't have to exert new effort. Instead, again, to use the analogy of the room with furniture, you're just rearranging the furniture to produce a different effect.

Myth #7: You have to meditate for a long time for it to benefit you

Meditation, to a lot of people, is a lot of work. They think that there are many levels to it.

Well, people who think that way are being confused by the traditional religion or spirituality that surrounded meditation because Buddhists think in levels. Hindus too, to a certain degree.

Raw practical basic meditation can produce results for you right here, right now. Since your goal is not to attain some sort of mystical enlightenment but to just live in the present moment and focus your mental energies, the benefit is almost immediate if you do it right.

Myth #8: People who meditate are gullible

This really is a slam against people who are looking for natural and self-controlled ways to deal with stress. This is an insult.

The truth is, even if you are the most skeptical person in the world and you really have a tough time believing anything, if you just focus on the mental processes you are already engaged in and direct it to a more

natural alignment, you don't need to be persuaded of anything. It just works on its own.

All of the 8 myths above will trip you up. Learn how to spot them in terms of your belief system. Let me tell you, what I'm going to teach you about meditation will not benefit you in the least if you hang on to any of these myths.

Get out from under them and start enjoying the benefits you've been looking for. You need to start with as clean of a slate as you can.

So make sure you go through your personal, mental and attitude laundry list and clear out any of the myths above or anything related or similar enough to these myths. Otherwise, meditation may not work out for you.



CHAPTER 2

What is meditation? We have already established in Chapter 1 that it is not some sort of metaphysical, spiritual or mystical state that you enter. It's definitely not some sort of attempt to achieve some sort of alternate

reality or navigate some sort of spiritual truth. Instead, meditation works with how your mind already operates.

The bottom line is, if your mind did not have a self-correcting system to achieve some sort of balance or some sort of inner peace at some level or another, you would have gone crazy a long time ago. That is the bottom line. Meditation really all boils down to getting in touch with that and becoming more aware of that machinery so you can call it into action when you need it, and on your own terms.

Your mind is a very powerful biochemical machine. It has all sorts of gears and processes and systems. Meditation just simply taps into this amazing interconnected network of internal systems that manage your personal reality to make the system work for you instead of against you.

The Cloud Analogy

To get an understanding of how these systems work, I need you to imagine that you are looking at the world from 500,000 feet. At that distance, the world is a globe. You can see the clouds at the surface, and you can see some storms.

And when you sink deeper, let's say, to 200,000 feet, you can see the storms up close. You can see the lightning, you can see the movement of the air. You can even see the surface of the waters. You can see the heat of the deserts. There's a lot of commotion. There's a lot of stress.

But when you sink another 200,000 feet, you can see everything up close and personal. There's a lot of turbulence. Then you sink another 500 feet into the ocean. It starts getting calmer. You can still see some patterns from the surface or, if you dig into the earth, you can see some mild disturbance.

But when you get to the core of the earth, it's surprisingly stable. In fact, it's a molten core. It rarely moves. It's just liquid because of all the heat and pressure from the surface. But it is very, very stable in the center of the earth.

Your mind is the same. When you drill down enough, things get calmer and calmer despite how traumatic, turbulent and stressful the surface areas of your mind become. When you get to the core, you can take a lot of comfort from the fact that it will always remain calm.

It has to be this way because, as I said earlier, if humanity did not develop in such a way that our minds have some sort of self-correcting system that's always stable, we would have died as a species a long, long time ago.

Meditation is All About Getting to Your Core

Practical meditation is all about getting to that inner core. It's all about getting to that part of your mind that is always at peace. It has these mechanisms that ensure that you keep going back to this sense of peace.

Believe it or not, really stressed out people, people who are going through a living hell as far as their emotions, their relationships, their career, their finances, and everything else in their life, actually have a calm inner core.

Unfortunately, that's just buried in all the stuff that's taking up all their mental energy. But it's not going to go away. It's always there. You are programmed by biology to have a calm inner core, otherwise, you would have gone crazy a long time ago. The bottom line is simple: meditation is all about living in the moment. That is where we reconnect with our calm inner core.

Here's the twist, though. Meditation is an art, not a science. If meditation was a science, like some sort of equation that you just plug in variables into and you will get the same predictable result, then we wouldn't be here.

But unfortunately, it is personal in nature because you have to go through the process of making choices to clear up your mind, so you can lock in on the present moment. That's how you reconnect with your deep, abiding inner core of calm and serenity.

Now, with that said, although meditation is an art and not a science, it's been scientifically studied thoroughly. In fact, there are at least 200 peer reviewed, hardcore scientific studies of meditation. A lot of this was done in the 1970s.

Meditation has a lot of scientific benefits. I will go into that in the next chapter.

But don't think that what I'm going to be teaching you is some sort of an experimental or completely new method. No. Its effects have been known for quite some time. In fact, in many parts of the world, it's been practiced for at least 1,000 years.

CHAPTER 3



The Top 10 Benefits of Meditation

CHAPTER 3

If you're going through this training, chances are, you already want to try your hand at meditation. There's a high probability that you probably already know some, if not all, of the 10 major benefits of meditation.

Just to be sure, if you are still in any way, shape or form on the fence regarding this practical and all-natural way to relax, here are just the 10 major benefits of meditation. Please note that the actual list of meditation's benefits is quite long. These are just the most commonly reported benefits.

Benefit #1: It slows down your mind

Part of the reason why people are so stressed out is because they have a thousand things on their mind. They're just so focused on so many things at the same time that they spread themselves too thin.

They're not very patient, they don't have much focus, and it's very easy for them to drop the ball. It's very easy for them to spend day after day thinking that they really haven't done much with their time or the opportunities presented to them.

By learning how to meditate on a practical basis, you slow down your mind. You're able to focus and appreciate one thing at a time. This is not a step back. In fact, this is a great way of reclaiming your ability to focus and control the many different areas of your life.

Benefit #2: It relaxes your mind

Focus is one thing, relaxation is another. Please understand that these are two totally different things. You can be focused on something that really stresses you out and take care of the problem. However, once the issue is done, you may still be tightly wound up. You may still be stressed.

Meditation enables you to completely relax your mind. It is a great way of not only taking off stress, but also relaxing your mind. You get inner peace, you get serenity.

Benefit #3: It relaxes your body

There's a tight connection between your body and your mind. The less stressed your mind becomes, the more relaxed your body gets. These two are strongly tied to each other. By working on your mind, you go a long way in relaxing physically.

Benefit #4: You gain perspective

Part of the reason why people are so stressed is because they think that they're jumping from one emergency to another. They are literally caught in the end-of-the-world every single crisis. It's as if they're putting out one fire after another.

Well, it turns out that most, if not all, of the things that you're stressed out about are nothing to stress out over. In the big scheme of things, they are really small potatoes. When you adopt a daily or consistent meditation practice, you get to see the big picture. Gaining perspective enables you to achieve some level of inner peace.

Benefit #5: You create distance between your emotions and your perception

One of the most common symptoms of stress is when everything seems to revolve around who you are, your personal value, and your goals in life. In other words, every small disappointment becomes a giant failure.

When you don't agree with somebody else, instead of leaving it at a fairly shallow level, the disagreement becomes really personal. You really have a tough time letting go of your emotions.

Well, when you learn how to meditate, you create distance between your emotions and perceptions. Just because you perceive certain things, it doesn't necessarily mean that you have to interpret things in a very emotionally negative way.

The more you meditate, the calmer you feel. It doesn't have to be the end of the world. It doesn't have to be all about you. Life doesn't have to involve a tremendous amount of unnecessary drama.

Benefit #6: Your focus increases in power

Where your focus goes, energy flows. Unfortunately, if you're stressed out, it's very easy for you to try to focus, but there's really not much power left. You can't muster the willpower needed to get stuff done, regardless of how much you think you've set your mind to something.

At some level or another, something is tapping your energy. It's just leaking out of you and you really can't, for the life of you, focus like a laser. When you learn how to meditate and control your mental processes, your focus grows in strength. You are able to target specific tasks with your willpower. When you do this, you become a more effective and productive person.

Benefit #7: Your focus increases in clarity

Just as focus involves willpower, focus also involves clarity. Things start to make sense. Things fall into place. Unfortunately, if you're under a lot of pressure, it's easy to suffer from brain fog. Everything looks like the same, everything is fuzzy, and it's hard for you to tell which is which. You don't even know what your priority should be or not.

It is no surprise that regardless of how much focus stressed out people try to put on certain tasks, they can't get anything done. It's as if they tried to impose their willpower to do certain things, but it turns out that they're doing the wrong things at the wrong time to produce the wrong results. They end up chasing their tails.

When you meditate, your focus not only grows in strength, but it also grows in clarity. You start using your values as your filter as to what to focus on. This can have a tremendously positive result on your productivity as well as your sense that you are able to make things happen in your life.

Benefit #8: It lowers your blood pressure

In research study after research study, scientists have discovered that consistent meditative practice actually lowers blood pressure.

This is a big deal because there is a cardiovascular disease epidemic in the United States and other developed nations.

As people live more and more sedentary lives, heart-related issues are killing more and more people. If you meditate, you tend to naturally lower your blood pressure, and this can possibly prolong your life.

Benefit #9: It can speed up emotional healing

If you have a tough time forgiving people, by learning how to meditate, you can gain emotional distance from painful or anger-inducing memories. Sooner or later, you are able to see things in perspective, and this puts you in a position to forgive.

Now, this doesn't necessarily mean that if you meditate, you will automatically forgive people who you feel have done you harm. That will still be your choice. However, when you meditate, you start viewing things in perspective, and it's more likely that, if you want to, you can forgive and move on. This can go a long way in helping you heal emotionally.

Benefit #10: Can bolster psychological repair

I wish I could tell you that all of us came from ideal childhoods. I wish I could tell you that we all had great pasts and that we've always hung out with great people and we've always had amazing times. It would be awesome if we all came from nurturing, loving relationships and families.

Unfortunately, that's not true. There are a lot of us who have suffered psychological wounds and are having a tough time recovering. When you meditate, you tend to gain perspective. This enables you to put yourself in the position to start looking at the past as well as the present consequences of your past with a fresh set of eyes.

If you feel that you've been victimized, if you feel that you've been harmed in the past, it doesn't necessarily mean that you have to continue looking at yourself the same way. Again, just like with speeding up emotional healing, meditation only puts you in this position. You still have to choose this benefit. This doesn't happen automatically.

Keep the 10 benefits above in mind if you're still hesitating or feeling apprehensive about meditation. While it is a commitment, please keep in mind that, in most cases, its advantages definitely outweigh whatever real or imagined disadvantages people may see with a meditation practice.



Chapter 4

In the first chapter of this training, I outlined the common myths that tend to hold people back from adopting a personal meditation practice. It really all boils down to a sense that meditation is, somehow, some way, religious, mystical or is some sort of superstitious practice.

We live in a very secular time. We'd like to believe that we are guided by reason and science. Given this context, it is entirely understandable why people have second thoughts about meditation. A lot of this really flows from the dichotomy between practical and esoteric meditation.

Esoteric meditation is really the historic practice of meditation. In this context, meditation is practiced in connection with some sort of higher religious goal or some sort of mystical objective.

If anything, meditation is not the centerpiece. Rather, it's just a side practice to what should be the primary goal, which is to attain some sort of enlightenment or some sort of spiritual release.

Esoteric Meditation

Esoteric meditation is rooted in Eastern philosophy. The whole idea of Eastern philosophy is that life is suffering or that there is such a thing as karma and eternal rebirths. The whole point of any kind of spiritual exercise is to gain a perspective that enables people to break out of this eternal series of birth, suffering, death, and rebirth.

Meditation has historically been associated with this thinking because meditation is one practice that enables people to start seeing life from a completely different perspective. This would enable them to think, talk and behave differently enough for them to break the pattern of karma or the attachment that keeps them trapped in that mystical cycle of birth and rebirth.

As you can tell, this involves a tremendous amount of religious and spiritual concepts. There is chanting. People who practice meditation in this context say "om om" or they use some sort of spiritual mantra. They also engage in yoga and other physical exercises that have spiritual connotations.

Practical Meditation

Practical meditation simply strips away all the esoteric, religious, spiritual and mystical layers of meditation. Instead, it looks at the meditative practice based on the core mental processes that enable people to self-repair to such an extent that they do not go crazy.

In other words, instead of dwelling on the surface differences, practical meditation goes to the structural components of the meditative act itself and strips away anything that is unnecessary. It also focuses on one non-religious, non-spiritual or non-mystical goal, which is to achieve focus in the present moment.

We're not even talking about peace. We're not even talking about some sort of inner serenity, harmony and what have you. Although those emotional states and experiences can and do happen, practical and fully secular meditation is all about achieving some sense of mental clarity in the here and now. There's no past to worry about, and no future to obsess over.

The Bottom Line with Practical Meditation

Practical meditation basically strips away all that is "extra" or "historic" and "cultural" about meditation. It goes to the basics.

The basics really boils down to learning how to focus on the present moment. Nothing before, nothing after. It's all about right here, right now. Using that, we get a tremendous amount of benefits as outlined in chapter 3.



CHAPTER 5

Starting with this chapter, I'm going to lay out the different purely secular methods of achieving a meditative state. Now, a lot of people might argue whether these methods are "classical" meditative techniques. But as I've mentioned

in chapter 4, we really couldn't care less about whether it's traditional, classical or what have you.

Instead, our focus is to learn the basic practical, doable techniques that enable people to focus on the present moment. This is the key to relieving stress and removing unnecessary life pressures. The first method I'm going to teach you is the SEAL quick stress relief method. This method was pioneered for the US Navy SEAL program.

SEAL stands for Sea, Air and Land teams. These are highly trained, mission critical military units run by the United States Navy. These are the seasoned military specialists that often see action first in any kind of armed conflict. In other words, you have to have your wits about you.

Usually, they get sent in to clear out an area, they plant bombs, they do sabotage, they do all sorts of highly stressful military work. It follows that the US Navy invested a tremendous amount of money to enable these military specialists to achieve instant or almost instant peace of mind right before they do a task.

Also, if they're in the middle of a firefight or they are in the middle of a very sticky situation that can be fatal, they get the US Navy invested in this training to help them calm down and remain focused on the task at hand.

The SEAL Method

The SEAL method is actually pretty straightforward. You breathe for a few seconds. It could be 4, it could be 10, as long as it's not too long for you to be uncomfortable. You breathe, and then hold. And then you release, and then you hold.

Basically, you breathe in, and then you hold it for however many seconds. You then release your breath, and then at the end of that stage when all the air has left your lungs, you hold it for the same number of seconds when you were breathing in. You repeat this about 3 to 8 times. Again, as long as it's comfortable.

Guidelines

When you're doing this, you don't think. You know you're doing it wrong when you're thinking. Instead, you should just focus on what you're doing. Focus on the air coming in, focus on holding your breath, then focus on the air going out. If you keep repeating this with your focus solely on your breath and what your body is going through, the relaxation will come. Your mind starts to unclench.

You're no longer worried about stuff at work. You're no longer worried about your relationship. You're no longer worried about your childhood. You're no longer obsessing about that person you can't forgive. None of that matters. Instead, you focus on the here and now. That's when the relaxation comes.

Ideally, you should start with the SEAL method for quick stress relief. This is the easiest meditation method and it delivers the quickest results. Once you learn to de-stress using this technique, you should then go deeper by adopting the methods described in the following chapters of this training.



CHAPTER 6

With this method, you're just going to focus on your breath, and nothing else. By doing this, you achieve a tremendous amount of relaxation.

If you practice this long enough, you can achieve a very deep and abiding sense of inner peace. It's fairly straightforward. There are really no "moving parts." It's not complicated at all.

Preparations

First, you need to find the right spot. Generally speaking, you should do this in an area where you're not going to be disturbed. There should be no distractions in terms of what you can see, hear, smell, taste, touch.

It should be a place that will be only available to you for around 10-15 minutes. It doesn't really take all that long, but you have to be in the right spot for a long enough period of time for this meditative technique to benefit you.

Second, you're going to close your eyes. This is a technique that you cannot do with your eyes open. Remember, we're basically going to avoid any kind of distractions. These distractions can be seen, heard, smelled, tasted and touched. No distractions. So you close your eyes, and you just focus on one thing and one thing alone.

Third, focus only on your breath. How are you going to focus on your breath? Well, you're not going to focus on it by feeling it or hearing it. Instead, you're going to "watch it." In other words, you turn your "mental camera" to your breath. You imagine yourself seeing yourself breathe in and breathe out.

The key here is to feel it with your body and see it in your mind's eye. Eventually, these two sensations will line up. So it diverts your attention from the stuff going through your mind as well as the stimuli that your body is picking up. Instead, everything is focused on your breath. Your conscious attention is focused solely on your breath.

You breathe in slowly, and you breathe out slowly. Everything is focused on the area of your body where the breath is coming in and going out. The key here is to not control your breath. The key is to not be self-conscious. Instead, you're just paying attention to this natural flow. When you feel that there's a strain in your lungs, you're doing it wrong. It means you're being self-conscious. It means that you're trying to force things. This should not be forced. It is actually effortless. You're just basically turning that mental camera that you have from obsessing about all these stresses or drama happening in your life to just focusing on your breath.

That's all it will be focused on. And if you keep this up long enough, you will become very, very relaxed. It leads to a tremendous amount of inner peace. However, let me tell you, in the beginning, it's going to be quite difficult. You might even feel bored. You might even feel like you're wasting your time.

It's because this is something new. Your mind is not used to thinking this way. After all, your mind has grown accustomed to thinking about a

thousand different things at once. It's used to using up a tremendous amount of energy.

Now, you're using very little energy and you're focusing on only one thing. As you can imagine, that takes some getting used to. The good news is, it's worth doing because the calm and relaxation that you get will be priceless.



CHAPTER 7

With this technique, you focus on what you see in front of you. In other words, you're going to be "meditating" or "practicing mindfulness" with eyes wide open.

You're just working with your awareness. You're training your awareness on one thing and one thing alone.

Steps to Present Sense Mindfulness

The first step is to practice the breathing patterns that you learned in chapter 6. Focus on your breathing until you achieve a sense of relaxation. You do this with your eyes wide open.

You can do this in a room with no other people, but there are objects in the room. You do this with your eyes open. Ideally, you shouldn't do this in any place where there are loud noises or music.

Next, you're going to focus on an object in front of you. It can be a tree, a park bench, it can be a house. It doesn't really matter. What's important is that you put all your focus on that one item alone.

The key is to look at that item. You're not out to enjoy it, you're not out to judge it, you're definitely not out to analyze it. Instead, you're just looking at it. The key here is to see clearly. You're going to basically be looking at all the details.

It's not like you're searching for something. Instead, your job is to just take it all in. It is kind of like taking a very thorough, high resolution snapshot of that item that you've chosen to look at.

Next, once you have determined that you've seen all there is to see about the object, the next step is to pay attention to what that object would smell like, taste like, feel like in terms of texture, and what would it sound like. In other

words, you sense it in 3-dimensions. You take it in with all your senses. This enables you to lose your focus on everything else.

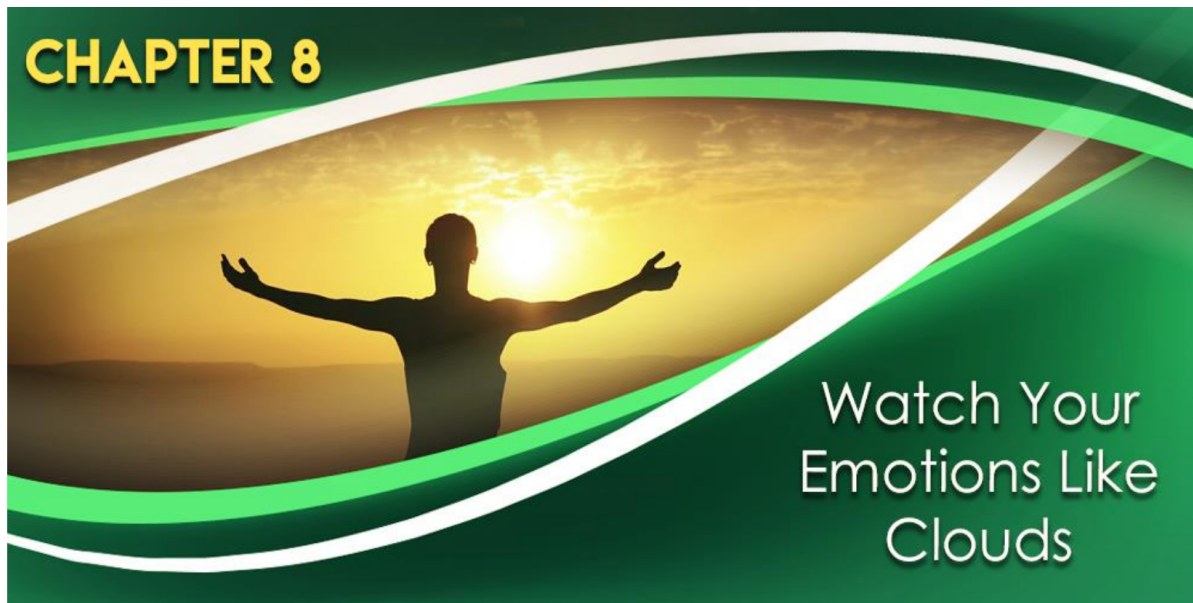
When you do this, your mind is being filled with the stimuli of that object and that object alone. You have no space left for stuff you have to worry about at the office. You have no mental resources left for that time when your best friend stabbed you in the back or did something that made you hold a grudge for a long time.

All that stuff gets pushed out. Instead, you're just cramming all the sensory data that you are willfully taking in based on that object that you have chosen in front of you. This enables you to lose focus on everything else and focus on that thing in front of you. This enables you to reset how you normally focus on things in your life.

The reason why you're so stressed out is because you're hanging on for dear life onto so many different things, and they layer on top of each other. And at the end of the day, all this willpower and this mental energy is just basically wasted because you're hanging on to so much stuff.

When you practice this meditative technique, you push a reboot button for your mind and let go of all that stuff that you're clinging to. And instead, you just fill it with this stuff that you take in, and that you flush out.

Eventually, this leads to mental hygiene because you will develop the mental discipline to zero in on an issue or a set of data for however long it takes to produce; let's say at work or in an argument or even dealing with a relationship, and then let go.



CHAPTER 8

Once you have done the previous meditative practices, the next step is to meditate in such a way that you let go of emotional attachments.

Let's get one thing clear, part of the reason why we're all so stressed out and anxious is because our memories are not emotionally neutral. When we perceive certain things, we tend to react a certain way because we have been "trained" by past experiences to respond that way.

What if I told you that, in many cases, we respond in a very unproductive or downright negative way? We could be responding in more neutral or more positive ways and our lives could be more productive.

Instead of wasting a tremendous amount of emotional and mental resources feeling negative, angry, frustrated, guilty, upset, you name it, we can focus more on feeling appreciated as well as content. It's all a choice.

But unfortunately, if we hang on to these past memories and we judge them in a predictably negative way, we lose sight of the fact that we can always choose our judgments. We feel that our negative analysis is just who we are. It's part of our identity. It's part of our personality.

Well, it isn't. It's always a choice. With this technique, you gain some freedom from the emotional roller coaster ride that you feel just takes you to negative territory like clockwork.

Here's how it works.

Step #1: Count your breath

Go back to the earlier chapter where I taught you how to count your breath. Watch your breath. Count it. Focus on your breath. At a certain point, you will relax.

You can use the SEAL method, or you can use the more intensive breath counting and watching method I discussed earlier. Whatever the case may be, keep doing it until you sense relaxation.

Step #2: Close your eyes

Once you feel that you have reached a certain level of relaxation, close your eyes. Everything should go black. Allow yourself to relax even deeper. Allow yourself to slow your thoughts down. Just focus on the calmness of the darkness.

There's nothing to prove here. You don't have to be somebody that you're not. You have nobody to impress. This is just you and your thoughts. It's just calm, pure darkness. No light, no color, nothing to get worked up about.

Step #3: Focus on your thoughts

Once you have relaxed, pretend that you are in some sort of movie theater and you're sitting back and you're seeing scenes. These are your thoughts. When you assume that perspective, you would realize that you're thinking a lot.

If you're a normal person, a lot of mental images flash through your mind. In fact, we go through so many mental images, oftentimes we're not aware of them all. So sit back and just see your thoughts play out.

Step #4: Make sure not to judge or analyze your thoughts

Here's the thing that you will be doing differently. Most people have no problem seeing mental images flash through their mind. But the problem is, once that happens, they get all emotionally caught up.

For example, you had an ex who cheated on you, stole from you, or otherwise did bad things to you. How do you think you would feel when you see something that reminds you of him or her? You probably don't feel all that good.

Now, with this technique, when the mental image or the picture or the likeness of your ex comes to your mind, your rule is that you let the image flash, but you will hold judgment. You're not going to analyze it.

You're just going to acknowledge that "This is the image of my ex," "This is the image of my boss," "This is a scene from my childhood," "This is a scene where I was let go at work," "This is a scene at jail."

Whatever the case may be, you're seeing all these mental images, but you're not judging. You are acknowledging. It's very important that you know the distinction. You're not engaged in pretending to not see something. For example, if there was a fire in your childhood, you're not going to say, "Well, this was a happy moment in my childhood." No. "This was a fire in my childhood."

But this is going to be different from "This is a very traumatizing childhood memory that basically destroyed my life because I lost both my parents." Do you see the difference? There's no judgment here.

You just say, "This is a fire that happened when I was a child." It's stripped out of all emotional baggage. It's stripped out of all emotional trauma. Acknowledge, and describe in a very objective, flat and neutral way.

This is not going to happen overnight. If you are carrying around a very heavy weight, maybe child sexual abuse, maybe you were unjustly punished. Whatever the case may be, you just need to focus on what you see.

Do not judge. Do not analyze. Just acknowledge it, and then move on to the next step.

Step #5: Let your thoughts pass like clouds

One of my fondest childhood memories involves me and my cousins just going up to this little hill and, for what seemed like hours, we would just lay back on the grass and watch the clouds pass by.

My cousin would say, "That's a bicycle." I would say, "No, that looks more like a dog." There was, of course, no right or wrong answer. Everyone's entitled to their opinion. Every person's guess was as good as all others. It was a lot of fun because we were exercising our imaginations.

We were, after all, just watching clouds pass by. There were countless clouds before them. And there will be countless clouds after them. They are here one moment and gone the next.

I want you to do the same with your thoughts but let them pass like clouds. Just like clouds, your thoughts just pass through. Let them pass. Don't deny them. Don't pretend they are something else. Don't argue with them. Don't bargain with yourself. Just observe the 'thought clouds' honestly. In other words, when the mental image flashes, acknowledge it.

For example, "This is a fire that happened when I was 3 years old." "This is an image of my parents about to leave for the United States when I was 3 years old." Whatever image you have from the past, strip it of all emotional judgment or analysis. Make sure you empty the mental image of any emotional content that might trip you up or set you off into an emotional analysis.

Compare "this is the fire that happened when I was 3 years old" to "this is that devastating fire that made my family homeless for 3 years. My father

was very angry during that fire and he has not stopped being angry since. We lost it all. I was only 3 years old."

See the difference? The first case involved just describing the facts. Nothing more. Nothing less. The other case includes a lot of analysis and commentary. These lead to you getting thrown off track. Learn to spot the difference. Recognize the point when you've stopped objectively describing and started emotionally reacting.

It doesn't make it any less real, mind you, but you're just acknowledging it because we're not engaged in self-delusion here. We're not trying to trick ourselves or hypnotize ourselves into thinking that

these events, which ultimately are very traumatic and hurtful, did not happen. Instead, you're just acknowledging.

And then the next step is what makes it really powerful. When you acknowledge, you then let it pass like a cloud. Just like a cloud, it's going to zoom over your head. It's going to linger slowly, depending on how strong the wind is. But you just let it pass. Eventually, it will pass.

Step #6: Enjoy the emotional distance

When you repeat this over several weeks, you start noticing emotional distance. Mental images, memories or what have you, that used to throw you off track no longer do.

Maybe there was a memory that used to make you cry like you were on autopilot, now you don't do that. You just say, "Well, that happened to me when I was 4 years old and my housekeeper was in that memory," then you let it pass.

"Well, that happened to be, and my boss said something and I was let go and I found another job." You let it pass. "Well, that was my best friend and my ex-girlfriend." You let the memory pass.

You do this over and over again, and the more successful you become at it, the greater the emotional distance. Eventually, all that stuff that used to drag you down and hold you back is left in the past. Congratulations.



CHAPTER 9

Meditation is like working out.

When you work out, you put a lot of stress on your muscles. That's how they get bigger. That's how they get leaner. That's how they get stronger. The same applies to your mental muscles. Because that's what meditation is. It's a mental workout.

Physical muscles get soft if you don't challenge them or you don't put pressure on them. With meditation, you're going to challenge and put pressure on your mental muscles. Believe me, it is quite a workout to let a mental image just pass over your head like a cloud without judging it.

For example, there was an episode of your childhood that used to burn you through your core because it was really humiliating, it was disgusting. Whatever it was, it takes effort to do that. But that's how you challenge your mental muscles. And the more pressure you put on it, the stronger it gets.

Practice Daily

The good news here is that you don't have to spend all day meditating. In fact, if you're doing that, you're overdoing it. That's probably going to do more harm than good. Instead, focus on spending no more than 15 minutes a day.

With meditation, a little bit of consistency goes a long way. So focus on your meditative practice for no more than 15 minutes every day. 15 minutes is plenty.

Associate Your Meditative State with Certain Stimuli

This is for advanced students. Usually, by this point, it will probably take months, if not years. But most people, if they're consistent, will reach this point. When you perceive any new stimuli, allow yourself to focus on your meditative state. You're basically linking the meditative state of peace, calm, inner serenity and harmony with stimuli that normally upsets you.

For example, if you work with an ex, it can be quite uncomfortable, awkward, and frustrating. This person broke your heart, this person cheated on you, or you're embarrassed because it didn't work out. Whatever the case may be, it's going to be very hard to handle that stimuli.

After you've meditated, and you've gained some emotional distance, allow yourself to look for that stimuli and link it with a meditative state. In other words, you are replacing the stress, discomfort and embarrassment that you normally feel when you perceive that stimuli, maybe it involves seeing the face of your ex or hearing his or her voice, whatever the case may be.

Now, you're replacing it with a meditative state. The meditative state, of course, involves a sense of calm, being in control, clarity, peace, healing, restoration. So instead of that person's voice or image just stressing you out, upsetting you, now, it calms you down. You say to yourself, "I'm okay. There's nothing to get hung up about. I can deal with this situation, this person, these memories at a certain level. And I'll be okay."

Sure, in the beginning this is going to be difficult because of your mental habits. When you are just starting out, the urge to go back to your old reactive patterns, with its rush of negative emotions, seems to be all but irresistible. This is the hardest part. But you can overcome.

Choose to override this 'natural' tendency and it will get easier and easier to respond to life's stimuli based on your highest values instead of your feelings or whatever is convenient or easy. The more opportunities you seek to practice your newfound power over your emotions, the stronger your mind becomes. It also makes the link between certain 'positive' stimuli and positive emotions or positive mental states.

Of course, none of this happens all at once. It takes time. Still, every time you successfully choose to focus on being calm and successfully recall the mental calmness of your meditative state, the easier it gets. The secret is practice.

Interestingly enough, to get the practice you need, you actually have to seek out situations or stimuli that normally stress you out. That's the only way you can test out your ability to recall a calm inner peace.

Usually, people do not need help recalling stressful, embarrassing, traumatic, or painful memories. Start there. Since these are thoughts, you have a lot more control over the thought and the outcome.

Compare the above to testing out your meditative recall skills on actual people. People can be quite random. You might have a very sticky situation on your hands and unlike memories, there's no 'rewind' button if you end up saying or doing something that harms your relationship or takes it to a much lower level.

Regardless of how you do it, give yourself the opportunity to constantly test out your ability to recall that state of mental calm, serenity, and peace. In that special space you have built for yourself within your mind, there is no need to prove anything. You don't have to be somebody else. There are no painful memories. There is no worrying future. Instead, you just have calm in the here and now.

Understand that you always have this available. Get some hope from this fact. Call this link at will. Once you have trained yourself to remember that meditative state when situations present themselves, the next step is to call it at will. Meaning, you yourself will trigger that meditative state.

You no longer need stimuli. That's when you have reached a higher level of practical meditation because that sense of calm, release and objective distance that you feel with your emotions pretty much persists on a 24/7 basis. You only need to choose to call that meditative state to being and it happens. You now know it like the back of your hand.



CONCLUSION

All the things that I've taught you here are the product of several years of meditation and mindfulness practice. There are lots of pitfalls, there are lots of dead ends, there are lots of false leads and false positives.

I've weeded all those out and I've presented to you meditative practices that work. However, these materials will not work for you until and unless you commit to doing them.

It's really important that you go through this training in order. Don't skip. Don't jump ahead. Focus on it one step at a time. This way, you will be able to fully benefit from the techniques that I have described in this training.

It is also important that you focus on consistency. A lot of people think that meditation is just another activity that they engage in because they're looking for a result. They are looking for some sort of solution.

While that may ultimately be the truth, please understand that you must look at meditation and mindfulness as ends in and of themselves. In other words, they're not just means to an end. They don't just enable you to go to where you really want to go. Instead, they must be your destination. They must find some sort of value in doing them. That value must be in the act itself.

If you're able to do this, then it becomes part of you. It becomes part of your personality in addition to your daily routine. You will then be able to put yourself in a position where you will level up your ability to focus, stay in the present moment, achieve emotional distance and emotional clarity.

Ultimately, it's all a choice. You have to exercise that choice. You have to be responsible for yourself, your thoughts and your actions.

Do It Today

One of the most common problems I've noticed people experience with meditation is the fact that they feel that they would be able to only do it when things are right. They feel that they have to feel a certain way. They think that certain conditions have to be present in their life for them to do this.

What you're doing is you're just giving yourself excuses to not start. I'm telling you, if you don't even get yourself to start, you are failing. You're not dealing with your stress, you're not getting your life back, you're not setting things in order as far as your mental peace and tranquility are concerned. You're achieving nothing.

You might be thinking that you're researching book after book about meditation, but what you're really doing is you're just giving yourself an excuse to not start. You have to understand that when it comes to any kind of profound personal change, our number one enemy is ourselves.

The Paradox of Self Sabotage

I know it sounds kind of weird. You know how frustrated you are. You know that you feel that something is missing in your life. You know that you're not fully content. You understand that meditation can help you achieve some sort of balance.

You understand that meditation can lead to a greater sense of inner peace. Why in the world would you want to get in the way of that? Why in the world would you want to sabotage that?

Well, it's actually quite simple. We're all creatures of habit. We get accustomed to things. We grow attached to things. Once you do things a certain way and you think about things a certain way, you feel that you're stuck in that pattern. You feel that you're not capable of going outside of that pattern.

I know it sounds weird, but you know that you're not really all that happy. But ultimately, at some level or another, most people would rather deal with the devil they know rather than roll the dice and take chances with something better.

They know they're not happy. They know that things could be so much better, but they are afraid of trying something new. These are the issues that you have to confront with. They will crop up sooner rather than later.

I share them with you and I shine a light on them at this point in the training, so you can spot them a mile away. Understand that when you start bargaining with yourself about why you should not meditate at the appointed time, you're basically giving in to this. This is all too predictable. This is to be expected.

Now that you know that you're going to be playing all sorts of games with yourself, stick to your resolve. Stick to the game plan. Understand that there's a lot at stake.

You are trying to get your life back. You're trying to gain control of your emotional and mental processes. You can be so much more productive, and you can be so much more effective if you overcome your old patterns.

Unfortunately, if you allow yourself to make all sorts of excuses and justifications to go back to your old way of thinking, you give up a tremendous future for convenience. You've grown to love your chains.

One of my favorite philosophers in college was the French Enlightenment thinker, Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Rousseau said, "Man was born free, but everywhere he is in chains." This quote, of course, is all about political philosophy.

But Rousseau was absolutely right on a personal level. We are born free. We are born with a tremendous amount of possibility. We are born with a tremendous amount of personal power.

We have it in us to do great things. If you are doubtful of this, just think of the great thinkers, builders, and innovators of this world. Think about people who managed to build vast fortunes even though they were born with nothing.

People have potential. All of us do. If successful people can succeed, you can too.

How do I know? Well, each choice you make is an exercise of power. You have all this unlimited potential in you. And it all flows from the fact that you have a choice. Your choice gives you power of the things you think about, talk about, and the things that you think you are capable of doing.

But the reason why you feel so powerless, so limited, so small is because you've allowed yourself to live in a neat, tidy little box. This box indicates what you can and cannot do. This box indicates what you are, what you're about, and what you are not. Nobody put you in that box. You chose to be in that box. You chose to live in a mental prison.

It's as if everybody's walking around with this tremendous amount of personal potential, but they're looking at their chains. They're saying to themselves, "I'm a victim. I'm wearing these chains." Little do they know that the key is in their hands.



Understand what is at stake. You have no excuse. You only have choices. I wish you nothing but victory.
