

Evolution of Consciousness Series

The Art And Science
of
**Mastering
Meditation**

Your Guide to a Healthier Happier Mind



Tony Myers

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Preface

Meditation has been time tested over thousands of years and is one of the most powerful methods to transform the physical, mental, and spiritual dimensions of our remarkable human experience. It is both fascinating and mysterious, with all the major traditions of the world developing their own unique methodologies. I offer this book with great respect for the Ancient Yogis who were the forefathers of these life-changing practices.

My journey began traveling through India in the foothills of the Himalayan mountains in the post-monsoon season in 2006, looking for a deeper understanding of human self-development and transformation. I sought guidance from various gurus throughout my travels, but I could not find the answers I was seeking.

While living in an ashram on the banks of the mighty Ganga river, I sat at the feet of a meditation master, ready to receive his darshan. The ashram residents were going up to the guru, touching his feet for good luck and asking him questions on how to improve their life. When it was my turn, I can clearly remember his response to every question I asked over seven days; his response was, "there is one mountain and many paths to the top", no instructions, plan, or map was provided on how to get to the top of my mountain.

Mystified with the instructions I received in India, I continued on my journey around the world with a zest for knowledge and self-transformation. I was determined to find solutions to not only transform my life but to help heal others and make the world a better place.

Forward into the future after 15 years of extensive personal practice and completing various yoga and meditation teacher training programs, I was fortunate to have some incredible learned teachers. My teachers were not only passionate swamis and monks, they were also medical doctors, psychologists, psychiatrists, and educators with extensive experience in western medicine and ancient modalities.

Finally, I was provided with clear instructions, proven techniques, formulas, and comprehensive knowledge of the science validating the powerful benefits of meditation. Once I had the system, my life started to transform. Even better, I taught the techniques to my students and private clients; the results were replicated, their physical and mental health positively changed like never before. My inspiration for this book is to provide you with a step by step guide to attaining higher levels of inner peace, happiness and transform your life like never before.

"May all beings have happy minds." — The Buddha.

Introduction

I want to begin this e-book by congratulating you for taking an interest in this wonderful and life-changing practice we call – meditation. We all have goals, dreams, and aspirations, may the techniques in this book act as a transformative catalyst, to enhance your life and have a flow-on effect to positively influence your family, friends and the world around you. My goal for you with this e-book is to empower you with everything you need to build a strong foundation for your meditation practice so you can live a successful, prosperous and fulfilling life. Furthermore, I want to assure you that it's possible, you have infinite potential for growth, change, and transformation.

In this e-book, you will learn how to practice a combination of scientifically proven techniques to not only develop a calmer, clearer mind, and improve your physical and emotional health, but to also develop a powerful positive mindset and a clear vision for your future.

The birth of this book came into fruition after years of extensively studying the ancient wisdom texts of the Vedas, Buddhism, Tantra, The Patanjali's Yoga Sutras and hundreds of evidence-based scientific studies on meditation. The meditation techniques in this book were developed from this knowledge and were formulated during deep states of meditation.

Whether you've chosen this book to better manage stress, deal with an emotional problem you wish to get a handle on, or you simply want to invest in your personal and professional well-being, the practices that I'm about to share with you are going to change your life for the better. More importantly, you will discover that learning meditation is actually an enjoyable experience.

But before we get to that, allow me to share a few words about myself.

My name is Tony Myers - founder and CEO of My Mediation Online – I am known as a transformational meditation coach and an authority on meditation.

For over 15 years, I have traveled the globe practicing meditation in ashrams in India, Australia, and Buddhist monasteries in Srilanka. Over the last 12 years, I have taught meditation and self-development classes in numerous universities, yoga studios, and corporate environments.

With all of My knowledge, experience, and my passion for transforming human lives, I have developed the ability to analyze complex ancient wisdom texts, and further simplify those texts, to create innovative, easy-to-follow, scientifically validated meditation methodologies designed for the world we live in today.

When I first envisioned this book, I wanted it to be a comprehensive and complete guide that will help any person – novice or experienced meditator – to harness the potential of this practice and use it to generate substantial physical and psychological benefits just like it has for my students and private clients.

In fact, there are several vital aspects that we will explore together, and I want to share them with you right from the start. Long story short, here's a sample what you'll learn throughout this book:

- A Framework To Combine Scientifically Proven Meditation Techniques and Integrate Them Into a Formula Designed for Your Individual Needs and Lifestyle.
- The Unique Formula the Buddha Taught to his Disciples After Attaining Enlightenment.
- How to Naturally Reduce Stress and Anxiety in Your Life Without Pills or Medication.
- A Five-Step Formula To Meditate With Ease Without Worrying About Stopping Your Thoughts and Stilling Your Mind.
- How To Tap Into the Unlimited Potential of Your Mind so You Can Live a More Successful, Happy, and Fulfilling Life, Becoming the Creator of Your Destiny.

The methodology in this e-book is different from any other meditation book you've ever read. There are no esoteric or metaphysics concepts, just time tested and evidence-based techniques and methods.

Meditation is such a wonderful life-changing practice, however over the years, I've noticed that whenever someone is thinking about incorporating meditation into their day-to-day routine, there are always some concerns and many people think meditation is too difficult.

Given all the concerns and misconceptions surrounding meditative practices; I can understand why you might be skeptical and hesitant. It's actually normal to feel like that, I used to feel the same way and I know how difficult it can be to turn meditation into a habit when nothing seems to work.

Fortunately, I discovered that there is a lot more to meditation than just a just being and repeating secret mantras. In this book, you will learn much more. By acquiring a deeper understanding of the essential key concepts of meditation and how to overcome all of the obstacles and challenges, you will discover that meditation is indeed for everybody.

How to get the best out of this book.

This book is designed for you to follow a step by step process. The meditation practices in this book build upon each other and systematically prepare you up for the more advanced techniques later on in the book. As you progress you will discover how to transform your meditation practice to a higher level by learning analytical meditations, concentration meditation and visualisation techniques.

Meditation is all about developing and unleashing your human potential so you can the best possible version of your self. It is a practice that must be experienced though, intellectual knowledge will not give you the benefits you desire, the more you practice the more you will experience maturity of your emotions, your thinking patterns, and your outlook on life. Therefore it's essential that you commit to practicing the techniques in this book, even 10min a day will have a big impact on your life. I looking forward to teaching the techniques in this book that have had such a powerful life-changing effect on many of my student's lives and my life personally.

*“Your Ideal Future Is Inevitable If You Consciously Take Steps
To Create It The Way You Want It To Be.”Tony Myers.*

Chapter 1: What is Meditation

Before we dive into various meditative practices, I believe it's essential to understand what Meditation is all about. And even though you've probably heard multiple explanations about Meditation, I hope you can find the patience to listen to one more.

Here's how I perceive Meditation after almost 15 years of practice and studying numerous modalities.

Meditation is a form of mental training designed to harness the infinite potential of your mind. It's a powerful self-development tool to transform the mind by developing higher levels of intuitive wisdom and knowledge.

Meditation refers to a whole variety of mental practices designed to promote relaxation, cultivate inner strength, and develop compassion, generosity, kindness, love, and even forgiveness. Furthermore, this practice is about understanding the nature of your mind so you can successfully combat the harmful effects of anxiety and everyday stress, inducing an overall state of inner peace and harmony.

Meditation is designed to teach you to see things from a new perspective and gain valuable insights about yourself and others so that you can live in peace with yourself and your environment.

And the best part is that ANYONE can practice Meditation – a simple and highly accessible method to developing an intimate understanding of your thinking processes, for restoring inner balance, and exploring the depths of your consciousness. You don't need special equipment; you don't have to sit in a specific position; and you can pretty much practice anywhere, even during a pleasant walk in nature.

Long story short, it's somewhat challenging to reduce the complexity of Meditation to one comprehensive definition. There are so many facets and nuances that distinguish this practice, that even a thousand pages wouldn't be enough to capture the beauty of Meditation. I would like to sum it up with my personal definition of Meditation. "The Art and Science of Human Transformation and Self Realisation."

Practical Tips on Meditation and Spirituality.

The Meditation techniques devised by the ancient yogis encompass a myriad of powerful transformative techniques and methods that facilitate their own individual effects, benefits.

As much as some meditation gurus advocate that their particular technique is all you need, in reality, depending on your temperate, and past experiences, it's important to practice techniques appropriate for your unique needs and lifestyle.

That's why in this e-book I have included various practices and methods for you to experience so you can discover what is best suitable for your unique needs and lifestyle.

Additionally, many gurus advocate not to have any goals or desires and just be and everything will be all right. The truth is, we are all human beings. It's perfectly normal and natural to have goals dreams and desires. Just look at the way some of the gurus are living their lives, as they advocate to their followers to not have any goals; they are pursuing wealth and living out their dreams.

Contrary to what some gurus will tell you, the trick is to live out your life's goals and dreams with wisdom, not to suppress them, for you will get to the end of your life wishing you had pursued them.

The secret is to discover your true nature and live your life purpose for the benefit of your self, your friends, and the rest of the world, just like the Buddha, the Dali Lama and many realised ancient yogis did. Meditation is the key.

"I think, therefore I am." René Descartes

Now that you have a general idea of what meditative practices are all about, perhaps you're wondering how Meditation works on a physiological and psychological level.

Chapter 2: How Does Meditation Work

We know for a fact that meditation – if practiced regularly – can lead to significant physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual changes.

If you're a seasoned practitioner, you can probably agree that meditation has radically transformed the way you think, feel, and behave. It might have even changed your perspective on the world and the path you need to follow in life.

If you've never practiced meditation before, I can understand why you might be somewhat skeptical and hesitant. It's perfectly normal to want to know more about what goes on in your mind and body when you meditate.

Meditative practices have been around for centuries, and the teachings and techniques promoted by the enlightened minds of Buddhism and Hinduism traditions have given rise to a whole new approach to health, happiness, life, death, and consciousness. In a way, we could argue that meditation can address our most profound existential dilemmas and shed light on the true nature of our physical, psychological, and spiritual self. However, meditation does not have to have any religious connotations, and it can be practiced purely for its physical and emotional benefits, the Buddha himself taught neither belief nor disbelief in god.

Understanding the Mind-Body Connection

The mind-body connection is perhaps one of the most fascinating phenomena in the entire Universe. Ever since the dawn of civilization, humans have always been intrigued by how their thoughts and emotions can generate bodily sensations and vice versa.

In fact, understanding the mind-body connection is the key to both physical and mental health. There are times when emotional problems can cause physical suffering and situations when medical conditions can negatively impact our emotional state.

The point is, when the body suffers, the mind suffers as well and vice versa. Fortunately, the same principle applies to healing, when the mind heals, the body heals as well, and vice versa.

To understand the mind-body connection – and how meditation can positively impact the delicate balance between the physical and the psychological – we need to go into more detail on how the nervous, endocrine, and immune systems work.

For example, we know for a fact that hormones and neurotransmitters are the communication lines between our brain and body. Negative states such as anxiety and stress can increase the production of different hormones which, in turn, suppress the immune system, thus setting the stage for infections and physical illness.

But how exactly does this happen?

Let's take stress for example, because it's something we're all familiar with. The human body is equipped with a system responsible for regulating our response to stress. It's called the 'autonomous nervous system' which is comprised of the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous system. While the sympathetic system is designed to regulate 'fight or flight' responses, the parasympathetic system helps our body and mind recover from stress.

Whenever we're faced with a stressful situation, the sympathetic system kicks in, accelerating our heart rate and increasing blood pressure. On top of that comes an entire array of hormones such as epinephrine, norepinephrine, cortisol, and other neurochemicals that generate all sorts of changes in our body. In other words, this system mobilizes extra resources so that we can cope with stressful events. As soon as we manage to get past the situation that's causing stress or anxiety, the parasympathetic system takes over, helping our body recover from the extra effort that was required to manage stress.

And all this complex process happens without us having to interfere. In other words, our bodies have somehow adapted to process stressful events and help us cope with life's adversities.

Unfortunately, there are times when stress becomes a constant state that puts a lot of pressure on our bodies and minds. It's almost as if our autonomous nervous system is out of tune. And the worst part is that the more time you spend under stress, the more pressure you put on your mind consequently translates to all sorts of physical problems.

Through meditation, you can restore the balance between mind and body and achieve a state of wholeness where all aspects of your physical, mental, and spiritual self are in perfect harmony with each other.

Let's begin exploring the profound effects of meditative practices by gaining a better understanding of how meditation changes the brain – thus changing the mind.

**“If you want to conquer fear, don't sit home and think about it.
Go out and get busy.” Dale Carnegie**

How does meditation impact the brain?

To understand how meditation impacts the brain, we need to look at one key feature that makes this organ remarkable.

I'm talking about neuroplasticity - the brain's ability to form new neural connections based on learning and repetition.

It is because of this ability that we learn new skills and adapt to our environment. But besides helping us learn and adapt to new situations, to evolve culturally and spiritually, neuroplasticity is also the reason why we recover from neurological diseases that can affect us on a sensory, motor, or cognitive level.

Neuroplasticity allows neurons to temporarily or permanently (depending on the needs of your brain) compensate for the loss of neural pathways by facilitating new connections.

The experiences we go through create new neural connections. Every lesson we learn, and every habit we practice has the potential to change the structure of our brain. For example, a famous study in which researchers compared the brains of taxi drivers and bus drivers revealed that cab drivers have a larger hippocampus. Why? Because unlike bus drivers who follow specific routes, cab drivers navigate the entire city. That means the brain areas responsible for memory – the hippocampus – changes in size and volume to integrate new information and allow the person to navigate more efficiently. [1]

The changes that occur in our brain's structure because of neuroplasticity will generate psychological and behavioral changes as well. That means that processes such as learning, memorizing, personal and professional growth, and even addiction have a solid neurological foundation.

As for meditative practices, experts believe different forms of meditation can generate significant changes in the overall structure of our brain; changes that often translate to emotional and psychological benefits.

A group of researchers who've looked at the brains of yoga meditation practitioners concluded that people who use this practice regularly exhibit greater grey matter volume. [2] In case you didn't know, the grey matter is the part of your brain that's packed with neurons which exert various functions. The higher the volume of grey matter, the "sharper" your brain and consequently the mind.

Another massive benefit of meditation is that it boosts stress resilience, which in turn leads to a long and healthy life. That is what a group of researchers concluded after conducting an extensive review of the scientific literature. Furthermore, it seems that the breathing part of meditation can also help us cope with painful emotions. As the

authors states in the study below, breath work enables us to rapidly and compassionately relieve many forms of suffering. [3]

Let's start on your journey. Next, we will explore some micro meditations that you can easily incorporate into your daily life.

Exercise 1. Micro Meditation.

Introduction to Micro Meditations.

You don't have to sit cross-legged in difficult meditation postures for hours to receive the benefits of meditation right away. If you're new to meditation, or even if you're an experienced meditation practitioner, I would recommend practicing short meditation for a couple of minutes at regular intervals during your day.

Micro meditation is a great way to reset your focus and naturally guide your body and mind back into a calm peaceful state that is conducive to reducing stress and revitalising the body and mind. The following practice can be practiced easily in a chair at home or in the office. The best part about these practices is nobody will even notice you're doing them.

Micro Meditation 1.

As simple as it sounds, as you're focusing on your breath, take a few moments to be aware that you are reading the words you are reading now, focus your attention fully on the task. Notice your eyes are looking at the words which are part of your physical body, notice your ears are listening to the sounds in the room you are in which is also part of your physical body. Most of all, notice that there is an external entity in the background being mindfully aware that you are reading the text and listening to sounds separate to your body. This separate entity is your intuitive, wise, aware, higher self.

Micro Meditation 2.

Become aware of your breath at the nostrils, observing the breath for a count of ten breaths. Maintain awareness of your breath, then shift your attention to your physical body. Become aware of the contact between your body and the chair you're sitting in. Become aware of your feet in contact with the floor, your legs, the trunk of the body; become aware of your arms, your head, then your whole body, from the top of your head to the tip of your toes. Return your awareness back to the breath, and as you're maintaining awareness of your breath, notice again that there is an entity in the background being mindfully aware of your breath and your physical body.

Micro Meditation 3.

Guide your awareness to your breath, take 5 easy diaphragmatic breaths. Start to smile, and smile some more, as you're smiling even more with each new breath, become aware of the sensation within your physical body, become aware of the shift in the energy body. Repeat the process one more time. Become aware of your breath, continue to smile, continue to become aware of the sensations within your physical body, become aware of the energy body. Next, take your awareness out of your body and notice the separate entity mindfully aware of yourself smiling. For advanced practitioners, maintain the smile throughout your entire day:-)

*“You'll Never Cross The Ocean Unless You Have The Courage
To Lose Sight Of The Shore.” Christopher Columbus.*

Chapter 3: Creating a Strong Foundation for Meditation Practice.

What is Awareness?

Awareness is One of the most fascinating and important techniques that we all need to master, not only in our meditation practice but throughout all of our lives. Fortunately, meditation provides direct and systematic methods to develop awareness. We know for a fact that how you view the world is often influenced by your past experiences. When it comes to meditation, it's essential to be aware of what is happening around us and within the depths of our mind. In other words, we need to practice awareness to gain the maximum benefits from meditation.

The essence of meditation is to develop awareness.

Practicing awareness is one of the first stages of learning to understand and take control of your mind. Without awareness, meditation is not possible. In broad terms, awareness refers to where the mind is, what the mind is observing, where you choose to focus your attention. There are two modes of awareness internal awareness and external awareness. Internal awareness is when your awareness is directed inwards to the activities of the mind and conscious knowledge of your character, feelings, motives, desires, thinking process. External awareness is when your awareness is directed outwards to the sense impressions of the physical body and events in your life.

Why is Awareness Important?

It is of utmost importance that we are aware of our emotions, thinking process, surroundings, the people we interact with, and the impact they have on our overall state. We are all living in a state where habitual thoughts and emotions are directing their lives. But although some of these habits and behaviors are beneficial to our lives, others aren't. Memories - stored in our subconscious mind - trigger automatic responses and we automatically react. And many times, the response might not serve the people around us or us. For example, we do things in our day-to-day lives, then upon reflection and thinking about our actions, we realize that we did not make a wise decision and regret our actions. Unthoughtful automatic responses like this can create a lot of stress and anxiety. Developing awareness will also help you to identify and recognize unhelpful repetitive thinking patterns that can prevent you from leading successful and fulfilling lives.

Initially, in your meditation practice, it can be challenging as unpleasant past experiences are more than likely to arise. This is a good thing as these experiences need to be released of their emotional charge. Therefore, aim to continue your meditation practice as much as possible when turmoil arises in the mind. The benefits will outweigh the initial challenges considerably as your mind purifies. The more the mind purifies, the more it becomes clearer, more powerful and its dormant potential shines through.

What is Mindfulness?

I'm sure you have heard about mindfulness – the process of being in the present moment; in the 'here and now.' If you've tried mindfulness meditation, you probably noticed that this particular practice has only one aim – to bring your attention to what goes on here and now. When practicing mindfulness meditation – also known as open-monitoring meditation - The aim is to remain attentive to any experience that might arise, without analyzing, judging, or focusing on any particular object. Simple actions such as walking barefoot, dancing, breathing, or exercising in nature can help you become mindful of what goes on 'here and now.' As long as you remain focused on the sensations you experience in the present moment – instead of losing yourself in endless streams of thoughts and emotions – you can enjoy the beauty and simplicity of mindfulness. Mindfulness can mean almost any activity that you practice regularly and induces a state of tranquility and relaxation; it's about being in contact with your bodily sensations and anchoring yourself in the present moment.

Why is Mindfulness Important?

Studies on mindfulness have indicated a beneficial role in naturally reducing depression, anxiety, and burnout which all seem to wreak havoc in today's society. These findings indicate that mindfulness leads to positive results because the human experience is guided out of the flight fight sympathetic nervous system into the parasympathetic nervous system which is conducive to rest and rejuvenation. Practicing mindfulness regularly, and living in the present moment can be a wonderful experience and it has many benefits. However, from my own experience, I've observed many people are challenged just being because they have not been taught the ability to analyze and understand their thinking processes, overcome obstacles and further devise plans for a brighter future. There are exceptions to this. I noticed the mindfulness-based stress reduction course created by Jon Kabat Zinn does include analytical meditation techniques and goals when studying the curriculum.

Difference between awareness and mindfulness.

As you can probably see mindfulness, it sounds a lot like awareness. However, there are some notable differences, especially the way it is commonly taught in the world we live in today. While mindfulness generally refers to being conscious of the present moment, awareness goes beyond mindfulness to work on all dimensions of the human experience ranging from the past, present and the future. It has no limits. Awareness techniques can be utilized to analyze and learn from the past, to direct your focus and concentration, to overcome obstacles, to expand to higher states of consciousness. To envision a positive future. Best of all, once you have developed the ability to envision a clear vision for your future, it becomes very easy to be at ease in the present moment. As you progress in your practices throughout this e-book, you will come to know the meaning of awareness, not through words but by personal experience.

The essential tool required to develop awareness is the breath. When you are consciously aware of your breathing process, it become a process of the neocortex, which is the more evolved part of the brain. Therefore, breath awareness techniques are perfect tools develop more awareness and to create a strong foundation for your meditation practice. Let's discover the powerful effects of correct breathing next.

Breathing Techniques to Enhance Your Meditation Experience

Natural Breath Awareness

The more you can exercise control over the finer details of your breathing process, the more you are in control of the mental and emotional processes that take place during your meditation practice. Awareness of the breathing process naturally slows down the respiratory rate and facilitates activating the parasympathetic nervous system, therefore establishing a more relaxed peaceful state that calms your body and mind.

Natural Breath Awareness is a crucial tool to master if you wish to have a long-lasting meditation practice. The breath is the tool we use to access the deeper layers of our mind.

Natural Breath Awareness allows you to tune into your more evolved brain, to understand your emotions and thinking processes with equanimity. This process facilitates the purification of unhelpful thinking patterns of the mind. Once this occurs, your mind becomes more powerful, calm, and tranquil. When the mind is calm and tranquil, all the solutions and answers you seek will spontaneously arise into your awareness.

Furthermore, the breath is the tool used in meditation to shift gears from analysing your sub-conscious mind to tuning into evolved states of higher consciousness.

Diaphragmatic Breathing

Abdominal breathing is the most natural and efficient way to breathe. However, due to tension, poor posture, restrictive clothing, and lack of training, it is often forgotten.

Once this technique becomes a part of daily life and you learn to breathe the right way, you will experience significant improvements in your overall physical and mental state, plus your ability to meditate.

Diaphragmatic breathing calms the mind and facilitates the release of endorphins and 'happy' neurochemicals in the brain. It also stimulates the parasympathetic nervous system, which triggers the relaxation response in the body and additionally helps to generate alpha, theta, and delta brain waves, which are conducive to meditation.

Diaphragmatic breathing also releases serotonin, the mood-stabilizing neurotransmitter, into our bloodstream. According to recent studies, this breathing technique can lower stress [37] and anxiety [38].

Your life and your meditation practice depend significantly on your ability to effectively breathe.

Full Yogic Breathing

Although we might not be aware of this, there are many times when we tend to breathe superficially, and our mental processes can influence breathing and vice versa. For example, when your mind is agitated by an endless stream of worries and concerns, your breathing process is shallow, fast and facilitated primarily from the chest. We rarely take the time to breathe deeply and calmly.

Full Yogic Breathing is not only a tool to prepare your body and mind for your meditation practice, but it will have a powerful effect on your health and well-being.

Proper use of the diaphragm causes equal expansion of the alveoli, improves lymphatic drainage from basal parts of the lungs, massages the liver, stomach, intestines and other organs that lie immediately beneath. It also has a positive effect on your heart and increases the oxygen levels in your bloodstream. On top of the health benefits mentioned, Yogic Breathing is an excellent technique to practice as a prelude to prepare your body and mind for your meditation practice.

According to some experts, consistent practice of yogic breathing can also reduce anxiety and depression, making it an ideal for primary and secondary medical care settings. [39]

“Drop by drop is the water pot filled. Likewise, the wise person, gathering it little by little, fills himself with good.” The Buddha

Exercise 2: The Power of the Breath. Breathing Meditation to Develop Awareness.

Building upon the previous exercises, basic breathing techniques are wonderful meditative tools to develop self-awareness and to guide the body and mind into a deep peaceful state of rest and rejuvenation. On top of that, you will discover later on in this course that the breath can also be used as a powerful tool to access higher states of consciousness. The proceeding meditation can be practiced any time day or night to de-excite your nervous system and evoke a sense of peace and calm.

10 Min Basic Breath Awareness Meditation.

1. Prepare yourself for your meditation practice. Sit in a comfortable meditation posture, or a chair, use any props, blankets or pillows so you're totally comfortable. Take some time to adjust your body so you are completely comfortable.
2. Guide your awareness to the base of your posture and lengthen up from the tailbone to the crown of your head, roll your shoulders back and align your spinal column with its natural curves. Allow your body to become still and stable. Become aware of your whole body from the top of your head to the tip of your toes.
3. Next, bring your attention to your breathing process, and become aware of your breath at the nostrils. Notice the breath flows in and out of your nostrils. No need to change or modify the breath, just observe the flow of your breath at the nostrils. Not trying to do anything, not trying to be anywhere, simply being aware of your breath, giving full care and attention to each in-breath and each out-breath. As they follow one after the other in a never-ending cycle and flow.
4. Next observing the breath deep down in your belly. Feeling the abdomen as it expands gently on the inhalations, and as it returns back towards your spine on the exhalations. Be aware of each breath. As you breathe in say to yourself I'm breathing in, as you breathe out say to yourself, I'm breathing out. Take 11 breaths and count each breath like this. Say to yourself internally, eleven I'm inhaling eleven I'm exhaling, ten I'm inhaling, ten I'm exhaling, and so forth.
5. If your mind wanders from time to time it does not matter, it's normal and natural, gently bring your attention back to riding the waves of your breath,

being fully conscious of each breath from moment to moment. Continue to observe your breath and allow the breath to guide you into a peaceful relaxed state.

6. Now, imagine your breathing positive energy in through the right hand, up through the right arm, then down through the right side of the upper body, flowing through the right hip, down the right leg into the right foot. Next, breathe in positive energy into the left hand, up through the left arm, then down through the left side of the upper body, flowing through the left hip, down the left leg into the left foot. Now, expand the field of your awareness. As you inhale, imagine that positive energy is flowing into both arms, both legs, into the trunk and every cell of your body, as you exhale, feel a sense of peace and calmness flowing throughout all of your body. Inhale positive energy flows into every cell of your body. As you exhale, feel a sense of peace and calmness flowing throughout all of your body. Once again, if your mind wanders it's normal and natural, gently ring it back to your breath. Continue for 5 minutes.
7. As the practice comes to its completion, take a few moments to feel a sense of gratitude for giving yourself the time to take a break and connect with your true nature. Slowly become aware of the sounds in your room again, your physical body, your breath, and externalize your awareness returning refreshed and revitalized ready to take on your day with positivity and enthusiasm.

“The Expert at Anything in Life Was Once a Beginner.”

Helen Hayes

Chapter 4: Benefits of Meditation.

Learning meditation is the greatest gift you can give yourself. My first experience learning meditation was in India, living on an ashram during a teacher training program. One of my teachers, advocated meditation was like medicine for your mind.

Even though I always felt so much better after meditating, and I was experiencing my life transforming step by step; initially, I did not totally believe his words,

Then after years of practice, I finally got to the point where I was experiencing the benefits of meditation in every crucial area of my life, but I was still not 100% convinced of the life-changing benefits. It was not until I noticed the changes in my private client's lives and studied 100s of scientific studies on the positive effects of meditation that convinced me.

For example.

I've assisted doctors, psychologists, scientists, accountants, and even builders transform their health and wellbeing with what I'm going to share with you in this e-book

I helped one of my student use the visualization techniques your going to learn in this ebook to foresee themselves presenting well in the job interview. The result was they ended up getting the dream job they were seeking.

Relaxation and mind training methods were taught to another student to help her reframe unhelpful thoughts into positive thoughts, this process helped her better manage stress while studying for exams. She went on to pass her exams, and to further build a successful career as an outcome.

At my private practice I had the opportunity to work with a Buddhist, even though she had been meditating from childhood for over 30 years, the stress and challenges of the modern world took a severe toll on her health to a point where she became ill and could not perform work or daily activities.

Working with her I devised a plan that integrated:

- Analytical meditation techniques, that helped her better manage her reactions to perceived stressful events in her life.
- Focused attention meditation techniques that assisted her to redirect her thinking processes towards empowering positive thought and a more powerful mindset.
- Visualisation techniques that help her Develop a Clear Vision for a brighter Prosperous Future.

Progressively her stress levels reduced considerably, she became well again, her energy levels and confidence boosted. She developed a clear vision for her future and her life's purpose, allowing her to live a happier, fulfilling life.

I know it sounds too good to be true; however, I believe that once you develop a better understanding of the powerful effects of meditation, and gain insight in the numerous scientific studies conducted on meditation, I think your perspective on meditation will change forever.

Next, we will cover some compelling studies to help you better understand the importance of meditating and what you might expect when you turn meditation into a daily habit.

Longevity: Meditation Leads to a Healthy and Long Life

We all want to live a healthy and long life. We all want to reach that age when we are surrounded by children, grandchildren, and why not, great-grandchildren.

According to recent data released by the World Health Organization, between 2010 and 2016, the average life expectancy across the globe has increased considerably. [4] Thanks to significant improvements in the quality of medical services and living conditions, we can now enjoy the benefits of a longer and healthier life.

However, there are plenty of factors that can affect longevity, from unhealthy habits like sleep deprivation and substance abuse to stress and even pollution.

But based on current research, it appears that meditation may play a significant role in our endeavors to understand and cultivate longevity.

For example, one study indicated that meditation could slow the rate of cellular aging. [5] Furthermore, transcendental meditation (TM) “may affect certain neural mechanisms which in turn influence age correlated physiological variables.” [6]

Although meditative practices can contribute to longevity, keep in mind that meditation alone cannot help you reach a healthy and long life. To achieve longevity, you also need other healthy habits such as: eating right, exercising regularly, having an active lifestyle, and getting plenty of sleep.

Meditation Can Help You Implement New Habits

The overall quality of our life is mostly determined by the habits we choose to promote daily. And that's why many of us are continually striving to adopt healthy habits that boost health and well-being.

Unfortunately, we all know how difficult it is to adopt a new habit. Whether it's eating healthier or getting more exercise, there's always something uncomfortable and challenging about change.

Fortunately, meditation is a practice through which, without too much effort, we can establish a deeper connection with ourselves, come to terms with the least pleasant aspects of our reality, and achieve a sense of balance that will radiate positivity into our lives.

The positive impact this ancient practice can have on our health and well-being has repeatedly been confirmed by practitioners, researchers, and mental health professionals from all over the world.

For example, studies indicate that short-term Pranayama and meditation practice can have beneficial effects on cardiovascular functions [7] and respiratory parameters. [8]

As Sara Lazar of the MGH Psychiatric Neuroimaging Research Program states, "Although the practice of meditation is associated with a sense of peacefulness and physical relaxation, practitioners have long claimed that meditation also provides cognitive and psychological benefits that persist throughout the day." [9]

It appears meditative practices can take us to a place of mental calm that allows us to overcome the discomfort and challenges associated with change, thus making it easier for us to implement new habits.

Meditation Boosts Productivity

In today's highly competitive, results-oriented world, everybody's looking for ways to increase productivity and achieve top results. Everybody wants to be the best and most energetic version of themselves.

We want to get things done as fast as we can, with as little error as possible, and at a quality level that would put us ahead of our competition.

But with so many distractions that can ruin our flow, it seems that reaching top productivity can often be challenging.

People who've used meditation for a considerable period know that this practice can cultivate amazing results in their personal and professional life.

A recent article which explored the relationship between transcendental meditation and productivity at work revealed that employees who used this technique, "experienced increased job satisfaction, better performance and better relationships with supervisors and co-workers." [10]

Furthermore, meditative practices can also alter our psychological and neuroendocrine responses to stress [11], helping us build resilience in the face of this significant productivity killer.

Perhaps the most prominent gift meditation can bestow upon us is clarity. A clear mind, free of rumination, negative thoughts, and constant worries, is a mind that can focus better and be productive.

Meditation Improves Focus and Attention

Attention is perhaps one of the most fundamental processes that our mind is capable of. Through awareness, we can shift our internal resources toward various tasks and goals we wish to achieve.

Without this process, any effort to achieve progress and follow through with a given task would be impossible.

Sadly, we live in a world where our attention span seems to grow shorter. Every day, we are bombarded by hundreds of stimuli that can quickly ruin our focus. Everywhere we look, countless distractions keep our mind going in circles.

Perhaps it's time to retake control of our inner resources and learn to ignore any distraction that drains our energy and ruins our focus.

In a 2010 study published in *Consciousness and Cognition*, researchers highlight the crucial role meditation can play in attentional processes. In other words, people who meditate regularly seem to experience more accurate, efficient, and flexible visual attention. [12]

Through constant practice, meditation can help you 'train' your focus and shift it with ease so that you don't get overwhelmed by the multitude of stimuli you encounter each day. As a result, you avoid the stress that occurs whenever your mind is 'forced' to go from one stimulus to another.

Meditation Leads to Quality Sleep

With all the buzz and hurry of our increasingly busy lifestyle, it seems that poor-quality sleep has become a severe issue for many of us.

The everyday stress coupled with unhealthy eating habits, lack of physical activity, and countless hours spent in front of a screen, can have a profoundly negative impact on the quality of our sleep.

Since sleep is so vital to our overall physical and mental health, experts from various fields have focused on gaining a better understanding of this phenomenon in hopes of developing effective interventions to tackle sleep disorders.

Aside from medication, psychotherapy, and natural supplements, one practice which proves to be extremely useful in helping us achieve quality sleep is meditation.

A recent study revealed that meditation could trigger chemical changes in the brain and the body. [13] More specifically, researchers observed that senior mindfulness meditation practitioners experience high levels of melatonin – a hormone responsible for sleep.

The mere fact that meditation leads to increased melatonin levels proves that such practices can directly influence the quality of our sleep.

But aside from the biological changes, meditative practices are beneficial for the quality of our sleep simply because they bring peace of mind.

Practicing yoga or other forms of meditation helps you relax and forget about the stress and worries of everyday life, allows you to exercise better control over intrusive thoughts, and balance mood swings. All these positive outcomes set the foundation for a pleasant and restful sleep.

Meditation and Creativity

Have you ever found yourself stuck on a personal or professional project? Have you ever encountered an obstacle and couldn't find a way around it?

Well, it happens to everybody. We're not always capable of finding original ways to solve problems. Sometimes, our day-to-day hassles can make it difficult for us to access the full potential of our creativity.

Many of us talk about creativity. We seem to be excited about the fantastic outcomes that can derive from this intricate mental process. We admire poets, fashion

designers, painters, and visionaries for the original ideas that creativity has blessed them with.

But did you know that meditation can help you access this valuable resource?

According to researchers, meditative practices based on open monitoring have a positive effect on creativity. In other words, only non-concentrative meditation – where you focus your attention on a specific object/thought/idea – can stimulate creativity and help you come up with original ideas. [14]

Furthermore, a study conducted in the 80s at Cornell University revealed some exciting changes that occur in the brain as a result of Transcendental Meditation. [15]

As Maharishi Mahesh Yogi describes it, Transcendental Meditation means “turning the attention inwards towards the subtler levels of a thought until the mind transcends the experience of the subtlest state of thought and arrives at the source of thought.”

In the end, being creative is all about finding your deepest passions and desires. It involves a long and arduous process of self-exploration and self-discovery that will eventually lead to your most authentic and most intimate self.

If you’re looking to boost creativity, try to meditate right before you start working on your project. Once you discover who you are and what you want to achieve, creativity will flow naturally.

Meditation Eases Anxiety and Stress

The world has reached a point where mental health is a serious concern for all of us and needs to be addressed. Meditation is the key to naturally tackle this challenge. In 2017, the World Health Organization released some worrying statistics about mental health at the global level.

It appears that worldwide, over 264 million people are living with anxiety disorders, which is roughly 3.6% of the global population. [16]

Over the last decades, there have been numerous studies highlighting the positive effects of practices such as mindfulness meditation, transcendental meditation, and yoga. Both researchers and mental health professionals are well aware of the fact that meditative practices can lead to increased health and well-being.

A 2015 paper revealed that meditation could have a direct impact on various brain mechanisms that are responsible for behavior and anxiety. [17]

Furthermore, a study on the effects of transcendental meditation concluded that this practice could generate significant changes in brainwave patterns and state anxiety. [18] The brain structures that seem to be most sensitive to meditation are the occipital and temporal areas of the left hemisphere.

Meditation is the most straightforward and most accessible strategy for anxiety and stress relief. Use it to naturally achieve physical, mental, and spiritual well-being without the nasty side effects of medications.

Meditation and Neurochemicals

Neurotransmitters are chemical substances found throughout the entire nervous system which help transmit, modulate, and amplify the electrical impulses that travel from one neuron to another.

As you can imagine, these neurochemicals are involved in every mental process that our brain is capable of generating. And that's why almost every psychological problem can – in part – be the result of chemical imbalances in the brain.

Although many professionals try to 'fix' this chemical imbalance using medication, there are alternative approaches that can prove safer and more effective.

Decades ago, researchers observed that transcendental meditation could produce changes in serotonin, noradrenaline, and dopamine – three neurotransmitters that play an essential role in our overall mood. [19]

Furthermore, recent studies revealed that meditation is associated with changes in GABA – a neurotransmitter involved in cognitive performance and emotional regulation. [20]

Lastly, serotonin, also known as 'the happiness hormone,' has a direct influence on our memory, mood, sleep, sex drive, and many other essential functions of the body.

Numerous scientific studies have revealed that meditation can have tons of benefits on our physical and psychological well-being, and some of these benefits are due to the release of serotonin.

Meditation is among the most effective methods of increasing the levels of serotonin in your body. An optimal level of serotonin can alleviate the unpleasant effects of depression and boost our overall mood.

Meditation Can Reduce the Risk of Heart Diseases and Stroke

In recent years, the number of people who suffer from cardiovascular diseases has increased significantly. From unhealthy eating habits and lack of exercise to stress and poor-quality sleep, numerous factors can increase the risk of heart disease and stroke.

But who among us has the time to care for our health when there are so many tasks we need to finish by the end of the day, plus tons of house chores that take up our free time!?

Perhaps, one way to avoid the risk of heart disease and other medical conditions is by being mindful of the habits we choose to include in our routine. In other words, awareness – especially when it comes to physical and mental health – can help you adopt a healthier lifestyle.

Awareness – a crucial element of any meditative practice – is a way of adjusting your attention by focusing on breathing, a phrase, or an image. Scientists have discovered the benefits of using conscious meditation techniques to help reduce stress, lower the risk of heart disease, and relieve ailments such as high blood pressure, chronic pain, and sleep problems.

For example, one study suggests meditation may be a viable approach to decrease the risk of cardiovascular disease. [23]

But awareness offers much more benefits, such as strengthening our appreciation for everyday experiences. By learning to focus on the present time and place, people who practice awareness discover they're less concerned about daily worries or past regrets.

Overall, we could argue that meditative practices can indirectly reduce the risk of cardiovascular diseases.

Meditation Boosts Sporting Performance

In general, sports involve both physical and mental pressure. In other words, aside from physical effort, every sport relies on certain psychological aspects such as motivation, willpower, and even tolerance to stress.

Whether you're a professional athlete or an average Joe who likes to exercise just enough to look and feel good, meditation can significantly boost your sporting performance.

Many believe that meditative practices are mostly about emptying your mind or gaining full control over your thoughts. In reality, meditation is like a fitness exercise for the brain; a practice that strengthens neural circuits and makes the brain (and the mind) more resilient to sustained physical effort.

Sadly, this aspect is often neglected by fitness experts and coaches. And the worst part is that by overlooking the benefits of meditation, athletes can end up losing a valuable resource that could help them boost their performance.

But you don't have to take my word for it.

Researchers believe meditative practices can help you achieve optimal athletic performance by lowering anxiety, reducing ruminative thinking, and enhancing the experience of flow. [24] Furthermore, studies indicate meditation can also 'sharpen' athletes' awareness and speed recovery. [25]

Based on current research, it appears that one of the smartest things you can do to improve your sporting performance is to try meditation. Not only will you gain a boost in performance, but you will also improve your overall health and well-being.

Meditation Increases Confidence and Self-esteem

Self-esteem or the way you perceive yourself (physically, emotionally, and spiritually) can influence every aspect of your life. From the people, you choose to hang out with, and how you understand yourself in relation to others, to your career path and parenting style, self-esteem seems to be a fundamental aspect of human existence.

As for self-confidence, this mental construct refers to your inner sense of power that allows you to pursue your dreams and goals.

But self-esteem and self-confidence are fragile constructs. Sometimes, all it takes to lose confidence in our strength is one adverse remark from someone we care about.

So, what can we do to regain faith in our abilities and learn to respect ourselves enough to not care about what other people think?

Research suggests meditative practices can encourage us to rely more on intuitive feelings of self-worth, thus regaining confidence in our strengths and inner resources. [26]

Furthermore, it appears meditation strengthens self-regulation, emotional coping, and self-esteem. [27] In other words, meditation can help us deal with the unpleasant emotions that can affect our self-esteem and the confidence we have in our abilities.

Overall, self-esteem and self-confidence are some of the most precious gifts that you can bestow upon yourself. Once you gain confidence in your inner self and internal resources, your creativity will flourish, and you will attract love and many other useful things.

Instead of doubting every step you take, you will be able to make decisions more quickly because you will have full confidence in your instincts and intuition.

*“Constant Persistence, Drive, And Passion,
Transforms Failure Into Extraordinary Achievement.”
Tony Myers.*

Meditation Facilitates Accurate and Flexible Visual Attention

Attention is perhaps one of the most fundamental processes that our mind is capable of. Through attention, we can shift our internal resources toward various tasks and goals we wish to achieve.

Without this process, any effort to achieve progress and follow through with a given task would be impossible.

Sadly, we live in a world where our attention span seems to grow shorter. Every day, we are bombarded by hundreds of stimuli that can quickly ruin our focus. Everywhere we look, countless distractions keep our mind going in circles.

Perhaps it's time to take back control of our inner resources and learn to ignore any distraction that drains our energy and ruins our focus.

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Through constant practice, meditation can help you 'train' your attention and shift it with ease so that you don't get overwhelmed by the multitude of stimuli you encounter each day. As a result, you avoid the stress that occurs whenever your mind is 'forced' to go from one stimulus to another.

Meditation Enhances Memory and Improves Learning

They say knowledge is power, and people who possess it can become masters of their own lives. But what happens when we're so stressed and distracted that we can't find the resources and focus on accumulating knowledge and becoming wiser?

Since education – both formal and informal – represents the vehicle through which we gain knowledge, perhaps it would be smart to improve this process.

According to a 2014 study published in *Mindfulness*, meditation can help students retain knowledge, leading to increased academic performance. [28]

In other words, students who meditate before class retain far more knowledge and information than those who choose to engage in other activities. As you can imagine, retaining knowledge will, in turn, help them score top academic results.

But why does meditation improve knowledge retention?

Well, once again, it's all about factors like attention allocation, distractions, and stress. It's hard to stay focused in class when your mind is somewhere else, dreaming about the next vacation or worrying about student loans.

Fortunately, a quick meditation exercise before class – or even before you study - can help you gain clarity and retain knowledge better.

Meditation Enhances Cognition and Brain Plasticity

Neuroplasticity is the brain's ability to 'reshape' and reorganize in order to integrate new information and keep up with an ever-changing environment.

At this moment, neuroplasticity is one of the most popular and controversial topics in psychology, with experts from different fields striving to gain a better understanding of this amazing process.

From a psychological perspective, neuroplasticity translates to adaptability and mental flexibility. In other words, it's what helps us evolve and grow on all levels. But to change our brain structure, we must invest in something that many of us often find challenging – training and practice.

Luckily, there is another way to improve brain plasticity, although it can never replace good old-fashioned repetition.

Recent studies indicate meditative practices can generate significant changes in brain structure, which can translate to a more 'flexible' and adaptable brain. [29] But these impressive results can only occur after weeks or even months of practice. In other words, the truth that many "experts" tend to overlook is that for meditation to 'work' you need to turn it into a daily habit.

Once we understand that change is possible, we will cease to believe that we can't achieve a specific goal and start thinking about ways to reach it. And that's where brain plasticity plays a crucial role.

Furthermore, having a 'flexible' brain allows us to adapt to stressful situations quickly and overcome whatever's holding us back from living a fulfilling life.

Meditation Boosts Alpha Wave Activity

As you probably know, the human brain can produce electrical impulses of various frequencies. In fact, five brainwaves characterize cerebral activity: alpha, beta, gamma, delta, and theta.

Alpha waves represent the bridge between our conscious and subconscious mind. This frequency occurs when we're feeling calm, relaxed, and detached from the outside world.

In this state, our memory and learning abilities operate at maximum capacity. In a way, those of us who tend to forget easily might have a problem accessing the alpha state of their brain.

In a study on the effects of integrative meditation, researchers discovered that meditative practices improve resting alpha activity. [30] This means that meditation can cultivate a mental state ideal for learning and knowledge acquisition.

Meditation 'Deepens' Our Thinking

The human mind is equipped with immense processing power. It can travel back in time – through memory – and even scout the future - through imagination. This highly complex structure allows us to make sense of our surrounding environment and come up with innovative ideas that help us grow on an individual and societal level.

The deeper our thinking processes go, the closer we get to our authentic self. The further we adventure into the depths of our consciousness, the more likely we are to discover the inner resources we need to create a truly spectacular life.

But how exactly can we reach this level of mental, emotional, and spiritual depth?

A 2012 study published in *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience* revealed that meditation increases both attention and the depth of information processing. [31] In other words, meditation practitioners, can quickly turn their attention inward and engage in a complex process of self-exploration and self-discovery.

Meditation and the Cells in the Body Aging Slower

Aging is a biological process that produces structural and functional changes at the cell level after the development and maturity periods are overcome. No one really knows why cells age.

Some believe cellular aging is due to extrinsic factors such as lifestyle, while others think it's caused by intrinsic factors such as genetics. As always, the answer is probably somewhere in the middle.

Although experts have yet to discover the answer to everlasting life, some researchers may have found a way to slow down cellular aging. A recent study that aimed to explore the impact of Yoga and Meditation lifestyle intervention (YMLI) concluded that this practice significantly reduced the rate of cellular aging in an apparently healthy population. [8]

It's incredible to see how something as simple and accessible as meditation could potentially increase our lifespan. It might not be the legendary Fountain of Youth that many still dream about, but it can definitely make a difference.

Meditation Reduces Your Amygdala

Ever since prehistoric times, humans have always relied on their basic emotions to survive and thrive in their environment. And the structure that houses these emotions is an almond-shaped group of cells located deep within the 'prehistoric' part of our brain. This is the place where essential functions such as breathing, movement, and metabolism are regulated.

In a sense, the amygdala is your brain's alarm system; a sentinel that continually receives messages from your five basic senses and ensures our survival by keeping us out of harm's way.

Unfortunately, despite its apparent role in keeping us safe and secure, the intense emotional responses triggered by the amygdala can sometimes complicate our lives. In other words, the amygdala can trigger intense emotional reactions even in the absence of real danger. That's why worrying, anxiety, and stress are so challenging to cope with.

According to a 2013 study, the reason why people who practice Mindfulness and other meditation techniques experience a significant reduction in stress is that their amygdala appears to be smaller in volume. [32]

In case you didn't know the amygdala and prefrontal cortex are the two brain structures responsible for fear and anxiety – our primary sources of stress. When we're under a tight deadline – and fear of failure kicks in – our stress levels go off the charts. And since meditation seems to have a direct impact on one of the brain structures responsible for anxiety and stress, it's obvious that this practice can help you relieve stress.

Long story short, practices such as meditation, Mindfulness, and other similar techniques have a direct impact on the structure of your amygdala, thus helping you lower stress.

Now that we know all about the exciting benefits of meditation, let's discover the finer details of an ancient technique called Pratyahara that will prepare you for a deeper meditative experience so you can experience some of the wonderful benefits mentioned above.

Guiding Your Body and Mind Into Deep Peaceful States of Consciousness.

Pratyahara.

On top of the breathing component of practicing meditation, the key to developing a long-lasting meditation practice is to learn how to systematically guide your body and mind into a deep peaceful state of consciousness that is more receptive to growth, change, and transformation. This is achieved by a yogic practice called pratyahara.

From my personal experience and my expertise working with my private clients, all meditation practices are more effective when pratyahara techniques are practiced as a prelude and during a meditation session.

Pratyahara is derived from the ancient Pantajali Yoga Sutras (Approximately written 400 Bc) it is a technique that is designed to systematically guide your body and mind into deep peaceful states of consciousness where your awareness is guided from the outer world to experience the inner world of your mind.

Each step of the pratyahara technique is designed to withdraw your senses inwards from all external stimuli so it is completely withdrawn to a point where it is only operating through the auditory sensory channel. This is achieved by systematically saturating the senses, ie touch, taste, sight, smell and sounds until the mind becomes naturally disinterested and internalizes. This is very important for meditation because if the mind is distracted by the body or external stimuli it becomes agitated and remains externalized.

By practicing pratyahara techniques you develop the ability to witness and understand, the preconceptions, emotions, the flow of thoughts, past memories and limiting beliefs that are holding you back in life. You will learn to witness the inner world of your mind, and understand the link between conscious, subconscious, and the unconsciousness mind. The best part about this process is that the mind becomes more receptive to purification, new empowering instructions, and transformation. Gaining mastery of pratyahara techniques will harmonize and awaken the full potential of your mind which is a fantastic and beautiful thing to attain.

The meditation practice called Kaya Sthairyam, (body stillness meditation) that follows is designed to naturally guide you into a peaceful internalized state of being where your awareness spontaneously directs itself inwards into a calm and balanced state of body and mind.

This meditation technique is classified as a Pratyahara Practice and Dharana practice (Concentration). The beauty of this meditation technique is that there is no need to

stop your thoughts, or still your mind, all you have to do is to listen to the guided instructions.

Kaya Sthairyam is an excellent meditation practice for beginners and experienced meditators. It is utilized in this e-book as a foundational meditation practice to prepare you for the more advanced meditations in this course, however many people achieve excellent results from just this meditation practice alone. I still practice various modifications of this technique myself daily and have been so for over 15 years. Kaya Sthairyam is a meditation technique formulated by Swami Satyanada and further developed by Swami Niranjanananda of the Bihar School of Yoga.

Exercise 3. Kaya Sthairyam: Body Stillness Meditation.

Stage 1: Preparation

Prepare yourself for your meditation practice, making sure you are comfortable and grounded. Placing cushions under the buttocks or knees if needed, making sure you have a comfortable base to sit on. Adjust your position so that you do not have to move any part of the body during the practice. Close your eyes and keep your body still for the duration of the practice. If the mind wanders, it's okay... it is a natural process of the mind, let it wander then guide your awareness back to the breath. You will find that with time and patience the process will become easier and easier...to relax and to stay focused for longer periods.

Bring your full attention to your chosen meditative asana...become aware of the base of the body in contact with the floor... observe the position of the feet... legs... buttocks... the pelvis and the stable base they provide.

Feel the tailbone extending downwards towards the floor. Allow the pelvis to move naturally into position so the weight rests evenly on the sitting bones... Feel the spinal column rising up from the stable base of the body.... following its natural curves. Feel the length in the trunk...draw the shoulders slightly back and down.... the chest is open. Relax down through the shoulders and arms to the hands resting lightly on the knees in chin or jnana mudra.

Observe the chosen hand mudra...experience the thumbs and fingers resting lightly in the hand mudra...awareness of each and every finger.

Shift awareness to the neck and head...bring the chin slightly in towards the front of the neck so the neck and head remain in alignment with the spine...awareness of the neck and head in alignment with the spine balanced...experience the crown of the head extending towards the ceiling.

Maintain full awareness of the meditative asana from the tip of the toes to the crown of the head, as you observe the body...maintain stillness throughout. Become aware of the breath moving within the stillness of the physical posture. Next, be aware of slow, deep breathing and count ten breaths mentally, maintaining awareness of every natural breath moving within the stillness of the meditative asana.

Stage 2: Body Posture

Switch your awareness to the body. Concentrate on your body posture. Feel your spine rising straight up from the floor, supporting the head even and balanced. Be aware of the balanced and symmetrical positioning of the arms and legs. Have total awareness of the body. Observe the whole right leg...the whole left leg...the balanced position of both legs from the midline of the body. Be aware of the synchronized and balanced position of the legs... right and left together. Awareness to the buttocks... right side... left side... both buttocks resting evenly on the floor...balanced and stable

Experience the right side of the trunk... front and back... left side of the trunk... front and back. Awareness of the equal strength and balance in the whole trunk even on the right and left sides... the whole trunk equally balanced and strong.

Experience the right shoulder... left shoulder... both even and balanced

Experience the position of the right arm... right hand... fingers... then the position of the left arm... left-hand fingers... experience the symmetrical and balanced in the position of both arms.

Observe the alignment of the neck in relation to the spine... experience the balanced position of the head. Total awareness of the whole body... synchronized and even throughout. The spine, the center point... and right and left sides of the body symmetrical and equal... even and balanced throughout...the head balanced and aligned with the spine ...even. Experience the body as a triangle, pyramid) mountain... the head the apex of the mountain and the base of the body is the base of the mountain... Sit with this experience of the body synchronized... balanced.... and in harmony.

Stage 3: Visualization of the body

Visualize the body externally... as if seeing it in a full-length mirror. Imagine a full-length mirror is in front of the body... see your body reflected back from the front ... see the position of legs... the position of the pelvis... the front of the trunk ... the abdomen ... the chest... shoulders... arms... hands... the neck... the face... facial features... the hair... head... see all of the front of the body at the same time.

Shift the mirror to the back ... see the body from the back ... legs ... buttocks ... the whole of the back ... back of the shoulders and arms ... back of neck and back of the head... see the whole back of the body at the same time. Shift the mirror to the right side ... see the body from the right side... the right side of leg... trunk... shoulder... arm ... neck ... head ... see the whole right side of the body at the same time.

Shift the mirror to the left side... view the body from the left side... left side of leg... trunk ... shoulder... arm ... neck... and head...see the whole of the left side of the body at the same time. Shift the mirror to above the body... see the body from above looking down... the top of the head. . . shoulders ... arms. .. trunk... buttocks... legs... see the whole of the body from above. See the body from all sides at the same time... front... back... right side... left side... from above... a glimpse of the body from all sides at one time.

Stage Four: Body as a Tree

Modify

Imagine that your body is growing from the ground like a large tree - your torso and head are like the tree trunk, and your legs are the roots. Feel the connection between the body and the floor... imagine the body to be extending down into the earth below... like the roots of a tree spreading in all directions... experience the stability these roots provide.

Have a sense of these roots drawing energy up into the body... into the trunk of the body ... like the trunk of a tree... upright and strong. Feel the life flowing up from the roots through the trunk... experience this connection. Continue this awareness up into the arms and head ... like the branches extending up into the sky... opening out in all directions.

Take in the whole experience now... the solid base rooted to the ground... the strength of the trunk... the spaciousness of the branches and leaves. Perfectly balanced between the earth below and the air above... see the body as a tree... feel the body as a tree... rest in this experience.

Convince yourself that because your body is part of the ground it cannot and will not move. You are as steady as a large tree.

Stage Five: Sensations in the Body

Let go of the image of the tree... Become aware of any physical sensations within the body. There may be feelings of cold... or warm... itching ... tingling ... seek out these sensations ... direct the awareness to the sensation ... experience it fully ... then let that sensation go and seek out another one to experience.

Allow the mind to roam freely through the body resting on any sensation that catches its attention ... pain... tension... a sense of comfort... whatever can be felt within the body. Keep the awareness moving through the sensations ... allow them to be a focus for the mind... go deeper still... each time the mind wanders, bring it back.

Stage Six: Body Parts

Take the awareness to the base of the body ... focus all attention on the toes ... draw the awareness up through the feet... feel the sensation of touch ... inner sensations ... experience the feet completely. Move the awareness into the ankles ... then up into the lower legs ... the calves ... shins ... into the knees. draw the awareness up the thighs right into the hips joints... the whole pelvic area. Slowly move the awareness up through the torso ... the abdomen and around to the lower back ... up into the lungs and chest to the collar bones and shoulders.

Feel down the lengths of the arms ... the hands ... the mudra. Draw the awareness back up the arms through the shoulders to the base of the neck ... the neck ... and head. Feel the face... expressionless... aware of lips ... cheeks ... nose... eyes... eyebrows and forehead... the crown of the head. Now take in the whole body... from the base, to the crown... the whole body...

Stage 7 - Immobility of the Body

Make a resolve that, 'I will not move my body throughout the whole practice. I will remain steady and motionless like a statue'. Even if you feel an impulse to move a finger or a toe, to adjust your clothing or to scratch, I will overcome this urge. When you feel the urge to move, you must say to yourself, no, I will not move any part of my body until the end of the practice because my body is like a statue, motionless.

Stage 8: Steadiness and stillness

Be aware of your physical body... of your meditation posture and nothing else... There should be total uninterrupted awareness of the whole body... The body is perfectly steady and motionless... Develop the feeling of steadiness... Be aware of your body and steadiness... Be aware of your body and stillness... Your body is steady and still. Be aware of steadiness... Be aware of your physical body... There is no movement, no discomfort, only steadiness, and stillness.

Stage 9: Psychic Rigidity

Feel the steadiness and stillness of the body... gradually your body will become rigid and stiff like a statue... as though all the muscles have frozen... The body should become so stiff that you are unable to move any part, even if you try... Total

awareness of the body...of immobility...of psychic rigidity... Feel the locked position of the body... Be aware of the body and stillness.

Stage 10: Breath Awareness:

Become aware of the natural breath... without altering or modifying it in any way...Simply watch the breath, as it moves in and out of the body...The breath moves in and out in a rhythmic flow...Follow each movement of the breath with your awareness...At the same time become aware of the body...Let the awareness alternate from the breath to the body... then from the body to breath...As the body becomes stiffer and stiffer...the awareness will automatically shift more and more to the breath... No effort is required... When the body is absolutely still and motionless the breath will become more and more subtle... until it seems that you are hardly breathing at all.

Stage 11 - State of Concentration

Start to gradually slow down the breath. The breath becomes more and more imperceptible, you will begin to experience the pure awareness. The breathing is responsible for the movements of the mind and body. Allow the breath becomes very subtle, the mind becomes one-pointed and still.

This is the state in which Dharana must be practiced.

Stages Twelve: Externalisation

Shift awareness to the feeling of the body against the floor... feel the grounding effect through the base of the body... the weight of the body against the floor. Feel the weight of the hands resting on the knees . . . awareness of the physical body, the position of the body in relation to the room... and to the space that the body occupies.

Experience the breath... the sound of the breath at the nostrils... begin to breathe a little deeper and fuller and slowly externalize your awareness more and more... hear sounds within the room... within the environment. Be aware of the room... walls... windows... doors... consciously externalizing more and more.

Chapter 5: Misconceptions of Meditation

As I mentioned in the Introduction, one of the reasons why some people might be skeptical about meditation is that they often internalize all sorts of myths and misconceptions that contribute to an overall distorted perspective. As a result, many choose to reject this practice without even giving it a shot.

We know for a fact that over the last decades, meditative practices have gained popularity throughout Western cultures. There are countries where even medical professionals have begun to prescribe meditation as an alternative to medication or other 'traditional' treatments.

From businesspeople and Fortune 500 CEOs to scientists, artists, and even children, it seems like everybody's looking for a way to relieve stress and get back in touch with their true nature.

But despite the increasing popularity of meditation, many people still think it's ineffective, or it won't work for them. And these are just two of the misconceptions that may be preventing you from adopting a habit that could potentially reshape your entire life.

Myth 1: Meditation Is Difficult

One of the most common misconceptions and a reason why many people either avoid or give up on meditation is that they think it is a complicated process.

In reality, meditation is just like any other skill we learn in life. It requires guidance from an experienced teacher and a proven well-structured system. Learning meditation from an experienced teacher will also help you understand what you're experiencing and help you to move past common roadblocks and obstacles.

One powerful mindset to develop when practicing Meditating is to view your practice as a way of seeking guidance from your higher self. View the process as a time to consult with your ultimate best friend, yourself, that you turn to for support, inspiration, and clarity. It doesn't have to be complicated; tailor it to your needs.

*“Whatever has the nature of arising
has the nature of ceasing.” The Buddha*

Myth 2: You Have to Empty Your Mind to Meditate correctly.

Another common misconception many people struggle with is the belief that you need to automatically quiet your mind and instantly stop your thoughts to achieve a successful meditation practice.

As you can imagine, this causes many people to struggle with their thoughts and emotions, ultimately giving up in frustration before even starting. Letting your thoughts rise into your conscious awareness without trying to suppress them, is an essential process when practicing meditation.

One question you might want to ask yourself is, "If my mind was calm, peaceful always producing positive thoughts, and coming up with solutions and answers all of your challenges in life, would you want to stop it?"

Our minds tend to suppress unpleasant thoughts and emotions because it is continually seeking pleasant experiences. It tries to push these thoughts and feelings away, out of your conscious perception. This process can be beneficial, especially if we were to experience trauma, or we have had an unpleasant experience. Our mind stores memories, so we can carry on with our lives.

However, we do need to deal with and face these challenges eventually. Because over time, these suppressed and undealt-with memories create tension in our body and mind.

Our physical and emotional problems can be the result of not dealing with life's challenges properly. Hence the importance of understanding that the thoughts which are rising from your subconscious into our conscious awareness to be understood resolved or worked on.

Even if most of them are unpleasant, we need to observe the activity of the brain that is creating the thoughts. If we suppress them, they are more than likely to arise again with more power, just like when we push a ball under water and release it. You need to let your thoughts rise naturally.

Long story short, the purpose of meditation isn't to 'put a lid' on your thoughts, but to help you explore your inner self in whichever way you find appropriate.

Myth 3: It Takes Years of Dedicated Practice to Experience the Benefits of Meditation

Many people believe that you need to meditate for years to experience any benefits. Practicing meditation for many years is indeed beneficial. However, the benefits of meditation can be noticed immediately.

There are many scientific studies providing evidence that meditation can have profound effects on your body and mind within just weeks of regular practice. For example, a landmark study led by Harvard University and Massachusetts General Hospital found that as little as eight weeks of meditation not only helped people experience decreased anxiety but also produced growth in the areas of the brain associated with memory, empathy, sense of self, and stress regulation.

Experts who've studied meditation have also found that people can sleep more soundly for the first time in years after just a few days of practicing meditation.

The obvious and immediate benefits of meditation include improved concentration, decreased blood pressure, and enhanced immunity.

It is true that seasoned meditators experience more benefits, but that doesn't mean meditation can't deliver you immediate results.

You can start with 10 - 15-minute sessions, at least three times a week, and you will begin to notice the positive effects.

Myth 4: Meditation Is A Spiritual or Religious Practice

Meditation does not require you to follow a specific set of spiritual beliefs. Some meditators have no particular religious beliefs at all.

Meditative practices can be used strictly for the numerous health benefits and as a strategy for self-development.

The other side of the equation is that many people of different religious backgrounds adopt meditation without having to deal with internal moral conflicts. For those that do follow a particular religious belief, meditation can even help them develop a more profound experience with their spiritual self.

Overall, just because meditative practices were initially part of various spiritual movements, doesn't mean you have to adopt a specific set of religious beliefs or join a cult to be able to practice meditation and enjoy its incredible benefits.

Myth 5: I Need to Repeat Secret Mantras to be Successful with Meditation

This misconception is somehow related to the one we discussed earlier. In other words, since meditation used to be part of various spiritual practices, some people think that practicing meditation means repeating a secret mantra that will somehow help you reach a state of inner calm and clarity.

While mantra meditation techniques such as transcendental meditation have benefits and are useful for health and well-being, I believe there are plenty of other 'Meditation techniques designed for those who wish to achieve real change without having to rely on a mantra.

As I've repeatedly mentioned throughout this book, meditation should be a comfortable and accessible practice, not a rigid and strict regimen of precise movements, gestures, and mantras.

Some people achieve calm and relaxation by focusing on their breathing, while others do it by focusing on a specific object. Some prefer to sit in a comfortable chair, while others prefer to meditate in the 'Lotus' position. Some repeat mantras while others meditate in silence. Authentic Mantra Meditation are covered later on in this book, best of all you don't have to pay thousands of dollars to receive a secret mantra.

Myth 6: There is Only One Type of Meditation Suitable for Everybody

Various meditation techniques are designed to produce different psychological states. The truth is, depending on your personality, needs, temperament, or time in your life, you need to practice a specific form of meditation which resonates with your unique needs.

Additionally, many people practice a combination of techniques. For example, you can practice breathing meditation to de-stress and a more sophisticated form of meditation which allows you to explore the depths of your consciousness.

Long story short, there are numerous forms of meditation, and once you get the hang of it, you can choose whichever type of meditative practice help you achieve what you wish. There are meditations for focus and calm; meditations for self-exploration, meditations to redirect the mind. It all boils down to your needs and preferences. In chapter 7, you will discover how you can combine various meditation techniques to suit your unique needs.

Myth 7: Meditation Is All About Being in The Present Moment

For many, the word 'meditation' might be synonymous with mindfulness – or the state of present-moment awareness. It seems like every article and book on meditation places a lot of emphasis on experiencing the present moment.

We are encouraged to put aside the painful past and worrying future; to embrace the beauty of the 'here and now.' As a result, many people end up believing that meditation is all about being in the present moment.

While this technique is somewhat useful, I believe the idea of focusing on the present moment has been over-emphasized. 'Being in the present' is just one of the aspects you'll need to focus on if you wish to learn how to meditate and make positive changes to your life.

There are times when being in the present moment is the exact opposite of what you wish to achieve through meditation. For example, if you want to attain a meditative state to explore a childhood memory, focusing on the present won't help you achieve your goal.

Furthermore, modern humans have evolved by reflecting on the past and making plans for a better future. Humanity would not be alive today if our ancestors would have focused exclusively on the present moment. Additionally, it's much easier to achieve a state of inner calm - in the present moment - after you purify the mind of past memories and develop a clear vision for your future.

Meditation is not just about being in the present moment. It's more about exploring your entire life – past, present, and future.

Exercise 4. Tips on Overcoming The Misconceptions of meditation.

Tip Number 1.

Meditation is just like any other skill we learn in life, it requires regular practice, and guidance from a proven method.

Tip Number 2.

It's natural and normal for your thoughts to arise during your meditation practice, your thoughts are arising to be understood, resolved and transformed.

Tip Number 3.

It does not take years to experience the benefits of meditation. The benefits are noticeable after just 10min of regular practice.

Tip Number 4.

Mantra meditations are useful, however, you will gain maximum benefits if they are practiced with other techniques such as analytical meditations and witnessing methods.

Tip Number 5.

Meditation and transformation is much more than just being in the present moment. Recognition of positive past experience and achievements and envisioning positive events in the future can be integrated into your meditation practice as powerful tools of transformation.

Chapter 6: Obstacles and Challenges of Meditation

Despite the overwhelming number of benefits associated with meditation, many still find it challenging to adopt the practice and turn it into a daily ritual. For that reason, I think it's important to discuss some of the main obstacles and challenges so you can develop a long-lasting, healthy meditation practice.

Obstacle 1. Overcoming Physical Discomfort

When starting a meditation practice, it can be common to experience physical discomforts, such as stiffness, back pain, knee pain, or tight hips. It's essential to find ways to overcome these challenges and to continue to meditate to the best of your ability.

One of the best ways to achieve physical comfort is to practice yoga asanas that are specifically designed to strengthen and prepare the body for meditation. On top of practicing yoga to prepare the body for meditation, it can be beneficial to use pillows and blankets to ensure you are very comfortable, even sitting with your back up against a wall can be helpful. You don't have to sit cross-legged; try and make yourself as comfortable as possible and keep your back straight. Many people find sitting in a chair also very useful when they are first starting. Long story short, meditation is about finding a comfortable position that you can be at ease.

Obstacle 2. Falling Asleep During Your Meditation Practice

We know for a fact that meditation induces a state of calm and relaxation. Many who think about implementing meditation into their daily routine are under a lot of stress and emotional discomfort. They need something that will help them start each morning with a sense of clarity or calm them after an exhausting day at the office.

But since many of the techniques promoted by seasoned meditators focus on relaxation, isn't it possible to fall asleep while practicing? And if so, why would we meditate when we could take a quick and refreshing nap?

First of all, there's absolutely nothing wrong with falling asleep while meditating. It happens to every practitioner. And just because you've fallen asleep after 5-10 minutes of meditation doesn't mean your effort was in vain. In time, you will learn to be in that wonderful state of calm and relaxation without falling asleep.

Second, not all meditative practices focus on relaxation. Some people meditate to explore and discover themselves while others use meditation to boost focus. In other words, various types of meditation keep your mind active as opposed to generating a state of profound calm, which can put you to sleep.

Obstacle 3. Lack of Motivation and Self-Discipline

One of the challenges that people often encounter when trying to meditate is the lack of motivation and discipline. Paradoxically, it's hard to imagine how such a simple and accessible practice could transform your life.

If we – for some reason – don't believe meditation can be that beneficial to our health and well-being, how could we find the motivation and self-discipline to practice it regularly?

There are many reasons why some of us might find it difficult to 'push' ourselves to start meditating and also be disciplined enough to practice regularly. I'm sure each of you knows his/her reasons.

But one thing that might help you all to implement meditation into your routine easily is to start looking at meditation not as a 'task' but as an enjoyable experience.

When you cease to 'treat' meditation as one of those things to cross off your to-do list, you will feel more motivated to do it. And it doesn't even have to be a regular practice. Once you begin to experience the first benefits of meditative practices, you will find the discipline to start practicing regularly.

Obstacle 4. Not Knowing Which Meditation Techniques to Practice

Okay, so you want to start practicing meditation more frequently. Maybe you were convinced by the benefits we discussed in Chapter 4 or perhaps you found a way to get past skepticism and give meditation a try.

The question some of you might ask is – Where do we go from here?

There are so many theories about meditation and so many techniques – each with its own set of rules – that it can be quite challenging to choose one. In fact, this is one of the reasons why, in this book, you will find meditative practices for both novice and seasoned practitioners.

I want to make it easy for you to choose a type of meditation that suits your needs and level of expertise.

By the end of this book, you will realize that you don't need to get 'tangled up' in complicated poses and read ancient texts to understand the essence of meditation and become a practitioner.

Obstacle 5. Managing a Busy Mind

It's taken millions of years of evolution for your mind to develop to its present capability. It is a miracle that is more powerful than any supercomputer. Your mind has infinite potential to grow change and evolve.

Human beings have evolved by their ability to reflect on and learn from the past, then to think about, foresee, plan, and create specific events in their future.

Your life depends on your memory and your mind's ability to contemplate the past and future. These natural evolutionary aspects of the human brain allow us to live a more fulfilling life. Therefore, it's essential to understand that you should not try to stop your thoughts during your meditation practice. Your thoughts are arising to be understood, resolved, and transformed. The key to learning meditation is to learn how to manage your mind and to harness its power.

If you are always just being in 'the now' or the present moment, trying to stop yourself from thinking of the past and the future - as some meditation teachers want you to believe - you're fighting your mind's natural evolutionary powers to create a better life for yourself. For example, if your mind was consistently peaceful, calm and happy, and coming up with all the solutions you need to live a successful, prosperous life, why would you ever want to stop it?

Obstacle 6. Expecting Immediate Results

We live in a world where patience is a scarce resource. Every day, people are in a constant rush to do more, achieve more, and be more. On top of that, many of us expect fast results.

Whether it's because of our fast-paced life or the expectations we were taught to have, we always seem to look for the quickest way to achieve our goals. And who could blame us? Immediate results are still better than long-term results, simply because we can enjoy them now, instead of dealing with the frustration of having to wait an extended period.

However, not every immediate result is necessarily a good result. When it comes to meditation, many of the benefits we discussed at the beginning of this book begin to show after we transform meditation into a habit. That means you'll have to practice consistently, knowing that soon enough, the benefits you seek to achieve will begin to show.

In short, if you're a novice practitioner, make sure to set realistic expectations and be mindful of the long-term benefits, instead of fast results.

Obstacle 7. I'm Too Busy; I Don't Have Enough Time to Meditate

Many people think that they don't have enough time to complete the tasks that they already have in their life, so they often wonder, "How will I find time for another activity?"

The truth is that many highly effective people such as CEO's, world-class athletes, and movie stars, make meditation a priority and schedule it into their daily lives because it is so beneficial and useful in helping them be productive.

As you start to make more time to meditate, you will notice that you can accomplish even more. Instead of struggling so hard to achieve goals, you will notice that you begin to think more precise, more logically, and make wiser decisions, thus boosting your overall productivity.

Additionally, if we meditate before we go to bed, it can help us sleep more peacefully, allowing us to wake more refreshed, helping us to be more productive during our day-to-day life. The main point is that it's important to schedule in time for your meditation practice; it will help you think more clearly and complete your daily tasks with more ease.

"Most of the important things in the world have been accomplished by people who have kept on trying when there seemed to be no hope at all."—Dale Carnegie

Exercise 5. Tips for Overcoming The Obstacles and Challenges of Meditation.

Tip Number 1.

It's very important to set up a daily routine, give yourself at least 10min out of every 24 hr. period. With just 10 min of practice, your perspective changes, solutions arise, stress is released, plus it has an accumulative effect on all areas of your life. On top of that just 10min will set a strong foundation for the rest of your life.

Tip Number 2.

There is a saying that the people who think that they are too busy to meditate are the ones who need it the most. A regular meditation practice will enhance your focus, concentration, and boost your productivity

Tip Number 3.

Proceed with confidence, the more you practice, the more you will attain a calmer, peaceful mind, and access higher states of consciousness to guide you on your journey.

*"The Best Way To Predict Your Future
Is To Create It." Abraham Lincoln*

Chapter 7: Key Concepts of Meditation

One of the fascinating aspects of meditation is that it's both simple and sophisticated at the same time. If you look beyond the practical aspects of meditation, you will discover that this practice is composed of several elements – key concepts – which I plan to detail in this chapter.

In this chapter, you will learn some of the essential concepts of meditation. It's important to be aware of these concepts for your practice to deepen and progress. Lack of understanding of these key concepts is one of the main reasons many people find meditation difficult and give up so easily.

Awareness and Higher States of Consciousness.

In the earlier stages of this e-book we discussed the importance of the initial stages of self-awareness. To gain maximum benefits with your meditation practice it is important to expanding your awareness to develop your ability to identify with tune in with higher states of consciousness. Once you develop this ability It will be a game changer for you practice.

What is consciousness?

Throughout the years, philosophers, great thinkers, spiritual leaders, and researchers have tried to explain this phenomenon. In fact, every person who's interested in self-discovery and self-growth has probably contemplated the mysteries of consciousness. Consciousness is our spiritual mentor, a guide that helps us make the right decisions and find our real purpose in life. It is said to be the wise calm and grounded part of our being and represents the source of our spiritual energy and the voice of our individual soul.

The Collective Consciousness.

The great sages of the ancient yogis have further elude that consciousness is not only individual but also collective. As the name suggests, collective consciousness encompasses the shared experience of all the individuals as we all share the same destiny. It represents the sum of every mind and soul that has existed on this planet, united in one form, with the aim of both individual and collective growth.

We all share an ancestral connection. In fact, everything in this universe is interconnected at levels we can't even begin to imagine. And there are many examples which could explain collective consciousness: people from different parts of the world share common behaviors, similarities between various religious

approaches, people who spend a lot of time together and start to emulate the same ideas, and the list goes on. Even on an energetic level everything on earth and in the universe is connected.

The ancient yogic texts called the Upanishads teach us that the way to attain liberation is to realize that one's true self (Atman) your individual consciousness is identical and connected with (Brahman) the universal principle, the ultimate reality in the entire universe. By studying these sacred texts, we can tap into the collective knowledge of our civilization, discovering ways to achieve mental, emotional, and spiritual balance. By exploring your consciousness, you can gain profound insights about who you are, not just to yourself, but to the world. In other words, you get a chance to look at yourself from a global perspective.

Meditation will assist you to tap into the unlimited resources of the collective and universal consciousness to guide you on your life's journey. Furthermore, Consciousness is a phenomena that needs to be experienced personally, to assist you to do this on a practice level, in the next section I will discuss the witnessing principal of meditation.

Witnessing

What is Witnessing? Sakshi Dhayn

To develop and maintain a grounded, calm mental state through our lives, we need to cultivate the ability to become the witness. The aim of witnessing is to observe without initially reacting or becoming affected with whatever is arising into your conscious awareness during your meditation practice and in daily life. The Sanskrit word for witnessing is called Sakshi. In Hindu philosophy, the word, *Sākṣī* or 'witness' refers to the 'Pure Awareness' that witnesses the world but does not get affected or involved. Sakshi means Ishvara, the sole Self-consciousness, the supreme ruler who is the witness of all. However, it does not mean that we detach without wisdom and care for other souls.

In practical terms, during our meditation practice we connect with the power of the mind to observe while not being disturbed or distracted by automatic, unconscious habitual thinking patterns that may arise during your meditation practice. We develop the ability not to be automatically influenced by feelings, emotions, and unhelpful thinking patterns.

Witnessing allows us to look at things from our higher self; the unchanging, eternal self, which remains unaffected by whatever life throws at us. The 'witness' state guides us with wisdom and intuition, revealing aspects and 'nuances' we wouldn't usually see.

Why is it so Important to Become a Witness?

Witnessing is very important because it helps us develop a greater understanding of our mind's underlying emotions, patterns, and mental processes, shedding light on how they influence our life. It enables us to observe the origin of our feelings, thoughts, and habitual responses that are triggered by them.

Witnessing allows us to be more comfortable with whatever experience is occurring - while we meditate and during our day-to-day life - without being caught up in feelings of identification and automatic responding to situations in our lives without wisdom.

Through witnessing, we learn to develop disconcertment and ultimately become masters of our mind. It wakes us up to the fact that there is something in the background, guiding us on our lives journey.

Developing the ability to witness purifies the mind of unhelpful thinking processes and stored unpleasant experiences as they are densitized of their emotional energetic charge. The more the mind is purified, powerful and has more energy to focus on your goals, dreams and aspirations. There is a meditation for you to practice next that will assist you to tune into your natural ability to become the witness and tune into higher states of consciousness.

Exercise 6. Developing the Witness.

One way to develop this ability is to witness it is to imagine that you are viewing the content of your mind as if you are watching a movie during your meditation practice.

When we are watching a movie, we know that we are not part of the movie and not involved. Our thinking process are like a good film, sometimes emotional, sometimes exciting, sometimes depressing. You can apply this concept to your meditation practice by following these steps:

1. Make your self comfortable in a comfortable meditation posture or sit in a straight-back chair.
2. Take 4 diaphragmatic breaths. Then maintain awareness of your breath.
3. Maintaining awareness of the breath. Scan your awareness to individual body parts from the feet to the top of your head.
4. Next, focus on the breath at the nostrils and follow the breath on the space between your closed eyes. This is called the Chidakash.
5. As you are focusing on your breath and the Chidakash, view the content of your mind as if you're watching a movie.

Samskaras (Stored Impressions from The Past)

What are Samskaras?

In Hindu philosophy, Samskaras hold great importance. In broad lines, Samskaras represents memories, recollections, expectations, mental impressions, or psychological imprints stored in the mind from past experiences.

As we come in contact with the outside world, each of us forms different impressions which are stored as memories. It could be something as simple as an emotion or as complicated as a detailed image of past experiences.

Samskaras act as a subconscious driving force behind our every action and decision.

Through meditation, we can access a state of introspection that allows us to gain a better understanding of Samskaras. In other words, meditative practices pave the way to a higher understanding of the expectations that drive our everyday actions. Furthermore, we can 'scroll' through recollections of past experiences, which may represent valuable sources of knowledge.

Why are Samskaras Important?

One of the critical aspects that separate humans from all other beings on this planet is our ability to introspect and self-reflect on past experiences. It is because of self-exploration that we are capable of learning from past mistakes, adjust expectations, and plan for a better future.

Samskaras represent small bits of knowledge, each telling a story about who we are and what we wish to accomplish. The reason why many spiritual leaders place a strong emphasis on this concept is that true enlightenment means getting to know ourselves on a profound level. And that means putting together our stored impressions of past experiences into one comprehensive image of who we are and what we wish to accomplish in this life.

Long story short, Samskaras are part of our quest for understanding and enlightenment. Thanks to this concept, meditative practices can become a tool for self-exploration and self-discovery, leading to extraordinary insights about ourselves and our reality.

*"The Ones Who Are Crazy Enough To Think They Can Change
The World Are The Ones Who Do It." Steve Jobs.*

Self-Acceptance (Befriending your mind)

What is Self-acceptance?

Self-acceptance represents “an individual’s acceptance of all of his/her attributes, positive or negative.” [33] That means accepting your body, mind, and spirit with all the ‘good’ and ‘bad’ that might reside within them.

Experts believe that self-acceptance is a process that leads to improved well-being and paves the way for positive change. [34]

Meditation is an excellent tool for you to connect with your true self and befriend your body and mind. Once you develop more and more self-acceptance - and become at peace with yourself - life becomes more joyful. You not only become better friends with your mind, but there’s also ‘flow on’ effect that helps you accept and have compassion for others. And that, in turn, creates even more peace of mind.

In short, before you consider the possibility of making some positive changes, start by accepting yourself just the way you are.

Why is Self-acceptance Important?

Self-acceptance represents the point from which you can start making positive changes as you realize that you are pure potential and you can capitalize on your inner resources. By refusing to accept yourself – with strengths and weaknesses; qualities and flaws – you will remain stuck in a vicious circle of self-loathing, self-criticism, and guilt.

When it comes to self-acceptance, many experts believe loving-kindness meditation and mindfulness represent the path to a greater understanding of ourselves. Accepting our minds and bodies means refraining from criticism and judgments and choosing to see ourselves exactly how we are. [35]

Self-acceptance gives you the possibility to look at your life as a continuum, starting from childhood and adolescence, all the way to the present moment. And the best part is that once you begin perceiving yourself as a ‘work in progress,’ you gain more confidence in your inner potential. In other words, self-acceptance builds self-

esteem and self-respect, two of the fundamental elements of personal and professional growth.

Through meditation, you can learn to look at yourself as a whole; a perfectly imperfect human being. Everything you need to achieve a better life is within you. All you have to do is make peace with yourself and accept every aspect of your physical, mental, and spiritual self.

Exercise 7. Self-Acceptance Tips

- Be kind to and accept yourself as a normal human being that has positive characteristics and traits that can be worked on.
- Believe in yourself. Remember as human beings we are all evolving, a work in progress and are pure potential.
- During your meditation practice recognise any condition thinking processes and behaviours from your childhood that have influenced your self-worth
- Analyse and challenge any cognitive processes that are devaluing your self-worth.
- Realise that a successful person is someone who experiences challenges and accepts failure and unhappiness as a part of life.
- Surround yourself with people that have higher levels of self-esteem and self-acceptance.
- Cultivate positive thinking processes by practicing affirmation and focused attention meditation techniques to remodel your thinking processes.

Conclusion

In the end, meditative practices are about purification and transformation.

One of the primary outcomes of understanding and practicing the key concepts is the purification of the mind. When practicing awareness, mindfulness, and witnessing, we activate the mind's natural ability to release stress and get rid of limiting beliefs.

As you practice more and begin to experience the benefits of meditation and understand the importance and the profound positive effect it has on your life. You start to 'release' all hidden fears and complexes. Your limiting beliefs and 'toxic' habits will slowly but surely be expelled, making room for clarity and positivity.

Once you start to purify the mind, your inner strength grows significantly. You gain focus, energy, and willpower to achieve your dreams and goals. Your life begins to transform for the better.

Understanding and practicing these key concepts will help you to enjoy meditating with more peace and ease, creating the foundation for change and transformation in your life.

"The root of suffering is attachment." The Buddha

Chapter 8: Essential Meditation Techniques to Learn.

Analytical meditation techniques introduction.

Analytical meditation techniques are an integral part of Buddhism. The Dali Lama is a big proponent of this technique. For some unknown reason many modern-day meditation teachers have totally omitted it from their practice. It is of upmost importance to develop the ability to understand and learn how to practice Analytical Meditation Techniques if you are to gain maximum benefits from your meditation practice.

The main aim of analytical meditation is to use wisdom, reasoning and logic to examine with great detail not only what is causing suffering in your life but to also construct solutions and positive outcomes to your desired objectives. Additionally, analytical meditation techniques can be utilised to analyse your actions and the consequences of your actions, and furthermore the karma they will create in your life.

Through the process of practicing analytical meditation techniques, you will gain a deeper understanding of how to:

- Use logic to recognize self-defeating thinking patterns and beliefs that are non-productive so you can replace them with positive thoughts and beliefs that are conducive to your desired outcomes.
- Manage your reactions to perceived stressful events in your life, so you can reduce stress and anxiety in your life to manageable levels.
- Learn from resolve past experiences so you can be calmer and more at ease in the present moment.
- Recognize conditioned behavioral, cognitive and emotional patterns that arise when working with difficulties and challenges so you can work under pressure more easily.
- Skillfully solve problems and overcome obstacles so you can experience breakthroughs and achieve your goals, dreams, and aspirations more easily.

Once you understand the inner workings of your mind more clearly, the purification of the root causes of mental, emotional tensions, and past impressions of the mind takes place. Analytical Meditation Techniques additionally lead to insights and clarity of understanding into how to live your life according to your dharma (life purpose)

Next, let's discover more about analytical meditation techniques and gain insight to how they can considerably reduce stress and anxiety. Once you reduce stress and anxiety in your life to manageable levels, a whole new world of opportunities opens up.

Meditation Tip.

It takes courage to observe the mind initially in your meditation practice, but it is worth it in the long run. Unpleasant thinking processes can arise; remember this is normal and natural. Never suppress them, let them arise with self acceptance and become the silent witness of your thoughts.

How to Naturally Reduce Stress and Anxiety Without Pills or Medication

Stress is a state of disharmony within the body and mind created by continuous perceived threats. Stress induced disorders are estimated to account for 60% to 80% of all physician visits and is the leading cause of adult disability worldwide.

Chronic stress which involves repeated threat to homeostasis by overloading the autonomic nervous system and is known to be a contributing factor for:

- High blood pressure, heart disease, and stroke.
- Mood disorders such as anxiety and depression.
- Accelerated aging and reduced life span.
- Inhibited focus, concentration, performance, and low energy levels.
- Insomnia and poor-quality sleep.
- Impaired cognitive functioning that can contribute to limiting beliefs, self-doubt, and lack of self-confidence.

Meditation and Stress Management

If we further investigate the 3,000 scientific studies conducted on meditation since the 1950s, it becomes common sense to make meditation a daily habit.

Numerous studies have shown that meditation is an effective stress-management tool. For example, studies conducted at dedicated centers at the University of Massachusetts Medical School in the US, and the University of Oxford in the UK, have discovered that meditation not only reduces stress but also builds inner strength and resistance to stress.

They also discovered, during brain scans, that meditation reduces activity in the part of your brain that activates the stress response - the amygdala.

While meditation reduces activity in the areas of the brain that reduce stress, another fascinating study conducted by a group of Harvard neuroscientists during MRI brain scans on the meditators, actually discovered that meditation increases grey matter concentration in areas of the brain involved in learning and memory, regulating emotions, sense of self, and having perspective.

These two studies demonstrate how meditation reduces activity in the brain that initiates stress and enhances your cognitive abilities and mood regulation.

Fortunately, meditation provides a natural, scientifically proven solution to deal with anxiety and stress, numerous studies have demonstrated positive physiological and psychological positive effects.

The next meditation exercise integrates Analytical Meditation methods which are designed to assist you to not only be mindful of what's causing stress in your life but to take a further step and direct your mind to focus on solutions and positive outcomes to perspective stressful events.

Exercise 8. Meditation Practice to Conquer Stress And Anxiety.

Step 1: Settling the Body and Mind

Choose a comfortable meditation posture. Sit cross-legged, on a cushion, or kneeling astride a cylindrical cushion. If you have any back problems or you are yet to develop the strength to sit with your back against a wall or have any hip, or knee injuries, you can prop pillows or cushions under your knees as needed to ensure you're comfortable. Alternatively, sit in a chair.

Lengthening up from the tailbone to the crown of the head, draw the shoulders back slightly to maintain the natural curves of the spine. Place your hands onto of your knees or in your lap, and gently close your eyes.

Guide your awareness to the physical body and become aware of your body's posture. Be aware of the balanced and symmetrical positioning of the arms, trunk, and legs. Experience the steady, stable, and balanced position of your body.

Direct your attention to your breath and become aware of the breath as the air moves in and out of your nostrils. Maintain your focus on your breathing, and nothing else. If thoughts arise, remember that it's natural for them to emerge. Just acknowledge them and gently let them go, as you bring your attention back to your breath.

Now, start to count each breath and focus on each inhalation and exhalation, maintain each inhalation for a count of 4, then each exhalation for a count of 4; alternatively, you can adjust your counting rate to suit your breathing capacity. Maintain your attention on counting your inhalations and exhalations for a few moments; if thoughts arise, remember that it's perfectly natural and normal. Gently let them go as you bring your attention back to your breath for this stage of the meditation.

Step 2: Body Rotation and Breath Awareness

Be aware of any physical sensations within the body; the touch of your clothing on your skin, the sensations of the air on your skin. Direct your awareness of these feelings and sensations. Let them be a focus for your mind. If your mind starts to wander, bring it back to the sensations in the body.

Increase your awareness of the physical body and nothing else; direct your awareness to the right foot, right leg, left foot, left leg, the abdomen, the chest, lower back, upper back, the shoulders, the right arm, the left arm. Shift your awareness to the neck, the head, and finally, the whole body. Be aware of the entire body.

Now, become aware of the natural breath, without altering or modifying it in any way. Watch the breath as it moves in and out of the body. The breath moves in and out in a rhythmic flow. Follow the movement of the breath as it flows in and out of the body. If thoughts arise, remember that it's normal and natural; acknowledge them and gently bring your attention back to your breath.

Enjoy the peaceful state of the body and mind attained by focusing on the breath.

Step 3: Analytical Meditation Techniques.

Now that the body and mind are in a profoundly peaceful state from the previous steps, it's time to integrate Analytical Meditation Techniques. While maintaining your attention on your breath, start to contemplate your specific situation. Analyze the events in your life that are creating stress, pain, or sorrow.

Start to develop insight into the stress that's making your life difficult; acknowledge that stress is a problem and the consequences, if you don't do something about it, can be devastating.

The key to this step of the process is to wisely analyze what is arising into your mind. Become the witness of what is appearing in the mind with Vijñāna (knowledge, wisdom, intelligence, understanding).

Aim not to get caught up in what is arising in your mind. Take a step back and wisely see things without any false illusions, pretenses, or automatically jumping to conclusions.

Step 4: Analytical Meditation Techniques

Next step is to further your analytical meditation practice and identify the causes, origins, and triggers of the stress that has 'polluted' your life. Wisely analyze with Vijñāna the triggers that are causing stress and anxiety in your life.

Develop a deep understanding of the root causes of stress and anxiety. The triggers are usually an over-attachment to events and things that are considered impermanent in life.

Step 5: Analytical Meditation Techniques

Building upon the analytical meditation practices, the next step is to contemplate on envisioning solutions knowing that you can conquer stress in your life. During this stage of your meditation practice, contemplate on how you can better manage automatic reactions to perceived stressful events, how you can skillfully modify your reactions and respond to perceived stressful events in your life with more intuition and wisdom.

Recognize your power and take control of how you respond to circumstances and events. Become more and more resilient and contemplate on what you must do to overcome your obstacles so that you can achieve your goals in life.

Step 6: Redirecting the Mind to Focus on Positive Scenarios and Outcomes.

Now that you have acquired all the data you need from the previous steps, the next stage, involves taking actions that will positively change the path of your life.

With wisdom and all of the knowledge you have gained in from this meditation practice, envision yourself with a positive mindset.

Focus and concentrate the mind with higher levels of self-confidence, taking action, and tackling your challenges in life. Direct your mind to focus on positive outcomes, managing stress and living a successful, happy, and prosperous life.

Practicing this meditation technique, you will be better equipped to:

- Wisely Analyse Your Thoughts and Create New Ways of Positive Thinking.
- Boost Your Self Confidence, Self Esteem, and Optimism to Higher Levels and Awaken the Great Achiever Within You.
- Tune into Your Higher Self to Develop a Clear Prosperous Vision for Your Future.

Now that you have an understanding of the importance of Analytical Meditation techniques, let's further discuss how you can develop your meditation practice by further incorporating focused attention meditation technique to train your mind to become the creator of your destiny.

“Forgive Yourself For Not Knowing What You Didn’t Know
Until You Lived Through It.
Honour Your Path, Trust Your Journey. Learn, Grow, Evolve. Become... “
Creig Crippen

Focused Attention Meditation Techniques. Dhāraṇā

Dhāraṇā (Concentration)

Concentration based or focused attention meditation techniques as scientists like to describe these set of practices have been recorded in many of the oldest ancient yogic texts such as the Vedas, the Tantras, Pantajali Yoga Sutras, and Various Buddhist texts. These meditation techniques are time tested and have been practiced for thousands of years not only by yogis but by people of all faiths including Christianity. Concentration techniques encompass a vast array of techniques with individual texts eluding their styles and methodologies. Depending on your temperament, karma, lifestyle, and needs, you will be drawn to one or a combination of the practices.

What is Dhāraṇā?

Dhāraṇā the Sanskrit words translation for the English word concentration is a collection, of practices that focus one’s awareness to an object or mantra yantra, mandala, deity, the breath, mantra or memory. The point of focus should be something you can easily focus on without force. Regular practice is required to develop concentration just like any other skill we learn in life. Dhāraṇā is mentioned in the Patanjali yoga sutras, and various techniques are recommended such as concentrating on the breath, (which we have practiced many times in this course), concentrating the noise tip, concentrating one's personal deity, or anything of the yogi's choice. Japa meditation is also recommended in this Pantajalis text, this technique is practiced by the repetition of a mantra.

Why Practice Dhāraṇā?

Dharana means 'to bind, to focus, to hold the mind at one point'. It comes from the Sanskrit word dhri, which means 'foundation' or 'basis'. The foundation of the mind must be developed so it is stable. The world we live in today is fast paced, challenging and there are numerous distractions. These conditions are contributing factors to stress, anxiety and unstable minds. The practice of dharana facilitates a

stable and unshakable mind so we can manage whatever situation arises in our lives without being affected and thrown off course.

Therefore, Dharana is an important practice to master when learning meditation and actually to accomplishing any goal in life it is essential to develop your ability to focus and concentrate.

Regular practice of focused attention meditation techniques will increase your ability to:

- Direct your whole attention and energy to what you are doing without drifting and jumping from one topic to another.
- Free your mind from futile and annoying thoughts by focusing the mind on the thoughts you want and disregard the thoughts you do not want. Accomplish tasks more easily and efficiently with fewer mistakes.
- Enter into a state of focused inner peace that leads to heightened awareness, greater self-knowledge, and understanding of life.

Furthermore, Focused Attention Meditation techniques build a strong foundation to not only assist you to become mentally stronger and confident, but they will also help you to remain grounded when faced with day to day challenges.

On top of that mental benefits, Dharana meditation techniques have been scientifically proven to produce many health benefits ranging from reduced stress and anxiety to reduced blood pressure and risks of stroke and heart attacks. Contrary to what some meditation experts advocate Mantra meditations actually come under the Dharana category of meditation techniques. We go deeper into this fascinating technique in the next lesson.

Mantra Meditation Techniques: Transcending the Body and Mind To Experience Your True Nature.

Introduction

Mantras encompass an array of sacred sounds, chants or words that are said to have been realized by the ancient rishis in the highest states of meditation and are believed to have special spiritual powers. The earliest mantras were documented in the ancient Vedic texts of India, and are at least 3000 years old. However, Mantras have more than likely been practiced for thousands of years earlier and maybe older than language. The practice of mantra meditations is advocated by certain schools of thought to be one of the easiest and powerful meditation techniques and can be practiced by anyone. The root 'Man' in the word *Mantra* comes from the first syllable of that word, meaning 'to think', and 'Tra' from 'Trai' meaning 'to protect' or 'free' the mind.

In the 21st century, mantras now exist in nearly all of the world's schools of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism, Tantra Zoroastrianism, Taoism, Christianity. Furthermore, mantras are also practiced without any religious or spiritual significance with great benefits. The use, structure, importance, and types of mantras use vary according to each school and philosophy. Within certain Tantric schools, some mantras are considered to be a sacred and personal, effective only after initiation from a guru, nevertheless, many tantric mantras require no formal initiation. In other schools of Hinduism and Buddhism for example, initiation is not a requirement and the practitioner can choose his or her own mantras.

What Are Mantras?

Mantras can be simplified into two basic categories: Number One, Bija or seed mantras, which have no meaning but utilized to induce a heightened state of consciousness and have energetic and spiritual powers. Number two mantras that have a meaning to the practitioner and are expressed with a strong belief, such as worshiping manifested forms of the divine. Additionally, the meaning of the mantra can be contemplated during meditation. Considering the complexity, mystery, and vast array of methodologies surrounding mantra meditations, my goal is this lesson is to give you practical tips and techniques that you can apply to your life right now whether you are agnostic or spiritually-minded.

Why Practice Mantra Meditations?

Every form of matter in the universe down to the smallest atom is vibrating at its own frequency, speed and volume. Even our thoughts, feelings and emotions are vibrating at their own frequency, whether they are in harmony or dissonant and unpleasant. According to yogic philosophy when there is disharmony in the energetic fields within the body or mind, energy blockages occur, and illnesses are formed. Therefore, mantras are practiced producing positive vibrations that have a profound effect on the physical, energetic, mental and spiritual dimension of our human experience. The main goal is to transcend the meditation aspirant to tap into higher states of consciousness where all of the magic happens.

On a cognitive level, the natural tendency of the mind is to move towards inner peace, inner focus, inner happiness, and inner clarity. This is the natural state of your mind. It has always been with you. We all have these states within us, we all can access a calmer, peaceful clear and harmonious mind, we have just lost touch with it. Mantra meditations allow the active agitated mind to settle down to a place of calm that is within all of us. When there is a storm at sea, the surface of the ocean is turbulent, but this is just a small proportion of the ocean, below the surface within the depths of the ocean there is space of stillness and calm. Mantra meditations transcend the thinking mind to actively settle down so higher states of wise intuitive consciousness can be accessed. Scientific studies have revealed mantra meditations are beneficial to reduce stress, anxiety, depression, insomnia; to boost memory, focus, attention and useful in reducing high blood pressure and hypertension. In the next video, I will show you how to practice mantra meditations.

How To Practice Mantra Meditations.

Mantra meditations like all meditations are designed to settle the body and mind and to induce calmer peaceful states of consciousness. From my experience mantra meditations and all meditation techniques are more powerful when practiced proceeding the pratyahara techniques I have been teaching you previously in this course. The pratyahara techniques prepare the body and mind for the mantra meditations. These techniques include body rotations, breathing practices and saturating the senses to a point where the mind internalizes. Therefore, you will notice that these methods are used initially in the prelude of mantra meditation audios of this lesson.

Deciding On Your Mantra.

When first learning mantra meditation, choosing a single universal Bija mantra is advisable, even experienced meditators still practice and receive great benefits from simple Bija mantras. Many Bija mantras, in general, have no meaning but have special vibrations. However, the great yogi Swami Sivananda of Rishikesh advocates Repetition Mantras in the Name of the Lord should be practiced. This is known as Japa. **Japa** ([Sanskrit](#): जप) is the meditative repetition of a [mantra](#) or a divine name.

This particular mantra can be from any deity or religion, for the yogis believe all religions and gods are the same. However, the mantra does not have to have any religious significance. Therefore, the mantra should be one that feels natural to you, once chosen, the mantra should not be changed. As you progress your meditation practice you can introduce additional mantras that are more extensive and have more sounds, words, and meanings.

Universal Bija mantras.

1: Aum Mantra

The Aum is a great place to start, it is mentioned in numerous texts and is described as the holy sound of the universe. Aum is said to be the king of all mantras and it can be practiced by anyone. The repetition of Aum calms the mind and tends to distract it from day to day worries and tensions. Experiencing Aum will lead to a deeper understanding of other mantras.

Pronunciation of Aum

Aum can be chanted slowly or quickly in time or out of time with the breath. Each method is as good as the other and you must experiment yourself to find out your own preference. A powerful method can be to chant Aum in sync with the heart and feel Aum resonating throughout the whole body in tune with the natural heartbeat.

The syllable 'A' in Aum is pronounced like 'AH' or 'a' in the word 'palm'. The syllable 'U' is pronounced 'oo' as in the word 'room'. The syllable 'M' is not sounded by moving the lips like the usual 'm' sound. It is sounded after 'A' and 'U' like a humming sound: 'm-m- m-m-m-m-m-m-m'.

The AUM mantra has slight differences in meanings depending on individual spiritual references. It is said to represent the individual consciousness within, called Atman and also signifies the essence of the ultimate reality, the cosmic, divine, supreme spirit called Brahman in Sanskrit.

2: So Ham or So Hum Mantra

The Soham is the next mantra you can practice that is widely accepted. *Soham* naturally and corresponds with the actual sound of inhalation and exhalation. If you listen carefully to your breath; you will hear the sound So with inhalation and Ham with exhalation. The meaning of the mantra Soham is not essential for the practice. However, it is worthwhile explaining it: So - Shiva or He Ham - A ham or 'I am' That is, Soham means 'I am He' or 'I am Shiva' or 'I am consciousness'.

3: Devine Mantras.

Mantras that represent Devine deities or whatever you believe in a higher reality can also be chanted, Examples are Ram, Rama, Shiva, Durga. With Devine mantras, Swami Sivananda of Rishikesh recommends repeating the mantras with the feeling of knowing the meaning of the Mantra. Feeling your God's presence in everything and everywhere. Additionally, when repeating these mantras, you can visualize your deity or your chosen Devine object. Feel that your heart is being purified and that the mind is becoming steady by the power of the Mantra and the Grace of your belief in your spiritual higher reality.

Exercise 9. How to Practice Mantra Meditation.

1. Set aside a regular time for 10m minutes in the morning and evening and make a resolve to sit for your desired duration. Gradually increase the time as much as you can. 20 min is a good duration to aim for.
2. Choose a regular place for your practice, as positive vibrations are created the more you meditate in one location.
3. Assume a comfortable meditation posture or sit in a chair, spine erect maintain the natural curvature. Feel the weight of your body at the base of your meditation posture, guide your awareness to tailbone that is connected to Mother Earth and lengthen up from the crown of the head into the heavens. Close your eyes.
4. Let the mind follow the breath and become aware of your diaphragmatic movements. Internalize your awareness to the outside world and maintain total awareness of your breath. No effort is needed, just observe the natural flow of your breath.
5. Rotate your awareness from the base of your body to the top of your head. Starting with the right foot, left foot, right leg, left leg, buttox, hips, tummy, chest, lower back, upper back, right shoulder, left shoulder, neck, back of the head, top of the head, scalp, the face, whole head, whole right leg, whole left leg, both legs together, trunk, right arm, and left arm together, whole head, then the whole body, the whole body.
6. Guide your awareness back to the breath, watch the breath as it flows in and out of the nostrils.

5. Repeat your mantra silently and effortlessly at a pace you're comfortable with, alternatively, the mantra can be synchronized with your breath.

6. If the mind wanders, gently bring it back to the mantra, time and time again. Towards the final stages of your practice or earlier if needed, practice Chidakasha awareness as described in the next step.

7. Leave the mantra and with your next breath follow the breath in through the nostrils to the space behind your closed eyes. From this space, observe any thoughts or visions as a dissociated witness, without involvement.

8. **End the practice.** Become aware of the breath. Deepen the breath and become aware of the whole physical body little by little, become aware of the sound in your surroundings. Sit quietly for a minute before returning to your daily activities.

Exercise 10. Mantra Meditation Tips.

Tip Number 1.

Mantra meditation like all meditations can churn up unpleasant thinking processes and emotions from the past. If this occurs the key is to maintain breath awareness and witness the content of your mind as much as possible.

Tip Number 2.

Over time, the events and unpleasant thinking processes will lose their emotional charge and the mind will purify. If this is too difficult stop the practice seek advice from a trusted advisor and recommence the practice when you feel ready to do so again.

Tip Number 3.

On top of the mentioned traditional mantras. Mantras in your own language with meanings can be repeated, for example, "I like myself" could be repeated by its self or linked in short sentences, such as I like myself, I can do it, it's possible...The possibilities are endless. Enjoy ,and have fun with it.

Chapter 9: The Evolution of Meditation: Consolidating Various Styles of Meditation.

Introduction

The secret to learning meditation is developing the ability to not only beware or mindful of the content of your mind but to develop strategies to transform the minds thinking processes and envision positive scenarios for your desired future. Your mind is like any other muscle in your body; it needs to be exercised and trained. If the mind is not trained and given a daily set of positive instructions, it will simply revert back to default thinking processes. For many people, this default mode is polluted by unhelpful thinking and limiting beliefs stored in the subconscious mind.

In this chapter, we will explore how to combine multiple meditation techniques. Additionally, you will learn the purpose and benefits of each specific meditation technique.

Exercise 11. How to Transform Mindfulness, So It is Even More Effective

In this first meditation tutorial, I'm going to walk you through the formula that the Buddha taught to his disciples after attaining enlightenment while meditating for 7 years under the bodhi tree. You will learn how to model this formula and apply into your daily meditation practice. You will discover that what he actually taught was much more than mindfulness.

The aim of this meditation technique is to teach you:

- How to wisely analyze unhelpful thinking patterns and replace them with positive thoughts that more closely reflect reality.
- How to develop a better relationship with your mind and skillfully manage difficult emotions that arise.
- How to live life with informed, conscious choice, as opposed to automatically responding unconsciously to events in your life.
- How to combine mindfulness with other scientifically proven techniques to really learn how to meditate correctly.

Understanding this formula is very important because many teachers have totally omitted, or don't fully understand many of the essential teachings of the myriad of effective techniques provided by the ancient wisdom texts of Buddhism and the Patanjali Yoga sutras. I believe that's why so many people are frustrated and confused when trying to learn meditation.

On top of that, the small components that have been extracted from these great wisdom teachings and commonly taught, have been over empathized, without any reference to many of the essential techniques required to really learn how to meditate.

This is why most people don't really understand what meditation really is; they get overwhelmed trying to practice, and never start to meditate to their full potential to get the results they are seeking.

It's crucial that you learn how to meditate correctly. The Buddha clearly developed powerful formulas that many modern teachers have omitted. On top of that, it's very important to understand that there are many other powerful meditation techniques you can practice as well as mindfulness meditation.

Mindfulness meditation is a useful technique; however, it is one technique, the first step. To really transform your life, it's essential to learn how to combine mindfulness with other scientifically proven techniques, such as analytical meditation and focused attention meditation techniques.

Learning these additional techniques will assist you to:

- Develop higher levels of awareness so you can respond to life events with greater skill, intuition, and wisdom.
- Skillfully manage your reactions to perceived stressful events in your life, so you can reduce stress and anxiety in your life to manageable levels.
- Cultivate new ways to develop an intimate understanding of your minds thinking patterns, so you can develop a calm, peaceful, tranquil mind.
- Discover new innovative ways to combine mindfulness with other scientifically proven techniques so you can form a long-lasting meditation practice.

Here is the Buddhas Four Noble Truths

The Four Noble Truths contain the quintessence of the Buddha's teachings. They are said to be truths or realities that can only be understood by the "worthy ones" or Buddhas who have attained nirvana.

After meditating for many years and studying the great ancient wisdom texts of Buddhism, it was revealed to me in deep states of meditation that the Buddha had developed a unique formula in the first sutra that he taught after attaining enlightenment.

I decoded that through these four Noble Truths, the Buddha was teaching a formula that you can apply to transform all areas of your life. This method integrated various meditation techniques. The formula included analytical meditation techniques, Samadhi or focused attention meditation techniques.

Once you better understand these key concepts, your ability to meditate will increase dramatically.

The First Noble Truth

The first Noble Truth is called Dukkha; the truth of developing insight into the nature of Dukkha. Dukkha means anything that is uneasy, uncomfortable, unpleasant, difficult, causing pain or sadness. The first step is to realize and acknowledge that you have a problem. After analyzing this sutra, I realized that the Buddha was referring to Analytical Meditation in the first step.

The Second Noble Truth

The second Noble Truth is called Samudāya. The truth of the origin of nature of Dukkha. This sutra refers to identifying the causes of the difficulty - pain or obstacles. One of the major causes is clinging and over-attachment to things in life that are transient and impermanent in nature. Developing insights into Samudāya is also achieved by Analytical Meditation.

The Third Noble Truth

The third Noble Truth is called Nirodha; the truth of the cessation of suffering or unhappiness and realizing that it is attainable. This sutra is about developing an accurate and deep understanding of what you have to do to overcome your obstacles and achieve your desired goal. Once again, Analytical Meditation is designed to develop this knowledge and help you gain understanding.

The Fourth Noble Truth

The fourth Noble Truth is called Magga; the truth of the path to liberate the mind. The fourth Noble Truth, integrates the Eightfold Path, is the prescription, the formula, method, or system to transformation.

The Eightfold Path is composed of eight practices: right view, right resolve, right speech, right conduct, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right "samadhi." The Buddha is referring to Samadhi Meditation in this context as a means to help you concentrate and focus the mind on what you want to do and become the master of your mind.

The Meditation Practice

Step 1: Settling the Body and Mind

Find a pleasant environment where you can relax for the next 20 minutes. Sit in your preferred meditative asana on the floor or in a chair with your back straight. Use any pillows or other props to ensure you are completely comfortable. Lengthen up from the tailbone to the crown of the head, relax your head, neck, and shoulders slightly back to align your spinal column with its natural curves.

Place your hands on the knees or in your lap in jnana mudra, with your index fingers folded in and thumb on top of the index finger. Place your hands on your knees, maintaining the mudra with your palms facing up. Be fully aware of your meditative asana, from base up to the crown of the head. Beware of the whole body and bring a feeling of inner relaxation to the whole body.

Step 2: Breathing practice and awareness of sounds

Shift your attention to your breath, at the nostrils, and the synchronized movement of your abdomen as the breath flows in and out. As you inhale, notice how your

abdomen expands as you inhale and notice how the abdomen contracts as you exhale. No need to change or modify your breath in any way; just be aware of the breath at the nostrils and the abdomen.

Give your full attention to each inhalation and exhalation. Next, allow your field of awareness to expand and imagine that your breathing in and out of the whole body. The entire body is experiencing the breath. If your mind wanders off to trains of thoughts, it's ok it's totally natural, gently bring your attention back to the breath. Continue practicing mindful breathing.

Next, become aware of the sounds in your close environment, move your awareness from sound to sound. Become aware of sounds without over-analyzing them, just become aware of one sound then move to the next and the next. Then expand your awareness of sounds to sounds in the distance and the sounds far away and scan from sound to sound. Then back to the sounds in your close proximity and the sound of your breath at the nostrils. Remember if your mind wanders it's ok it's natural, simply guide your awareness back to the breath.

Step 3: Body Scan

Be aware of any physical sensations within the body; the touch of your clothing on your skin, the sensations of the air on your skin. Direct your awareness to these feelings and sensations. Let them be a focus for your mind. If your mind starts to wander, bring it back to the sensations in the body.

Increase your awareness of the physical body and nothing else; direct your awareness to the right foot, right leg, left foot, left leg, the abdomen, the chest, lower back, upper back, the shoulders, the right arm, the left arm. Shift your awareness to the neck, the head, and finally, the whole body. Be aware of the entire body. If there is any tension in the body, imagine the tension is leaving the body as you exhale.

Now, become aware of the natural breath, without altering or modifying it in any way. Simply watch the breath as it moves in and out at the nostrils. The breath moves in and out in a rhythmic flow. Enjoy the peaceful calm state of the body and mind attained by focusing on the breath.

Step 4: Analytical Meditation Techniques (Modelled on the First Noble Truth. Dukkha)

Now that the body and mind is in a deep, peaceful state, it's time to take our meditation practice to the next level by introducing analytical meditation techniques to develop higher levels of awareness. As a witness, wisely analyze what is arising in

your mind and develop insight into the nature of what is creating unpleasant emotions, unhelpful thinking processes, or sadness. Additionally, develop the ability to see things as they really are, without any false illusions or pretenses. Develop insight into your specific situation or challenge. Acknowledge that you have a problem and become mindful of the consequences that may result from not doing something about it. The aim of this stage is to Cultivate New Ways to Develop an Intimate Understanding of Your Mind's Thinking Patterns.

Step 5: Analytical Meditation Techniques. (Modelled on the Second Noble Truth. Samudāya)

Next step is to practice analytical meditation techniques to identify the causes, origins, and triggers of your challenge. This is a critical step that most people tend to overlook because they get caught up in that mindful approach.

But analytical meditation really makes all of the difference. For example, it's essential to analyze the triggers of what is causing stress and anxiety in your life, so you can modify your reactions and respond to unpleasant events with intuition and wisdom. The aim of this stage is to Skillfully Manage Your Reactions to Perceived Stressful Events in Your Life

Step 6: Analytical Meditation Techniques. (Modelled on the Third Noble Truth. Nirodha)

Building upon the last two analytical meditations, the next step is to contemplate on envisioning solutions with the realization that you can achieve your desired outcome.

During this stage of your meditation practice, contemplate on what can you do to overcome your obstacles or to achieve your chosen goal, envision solutions.

Step 7: Focused Attention Meditation Techniques. (Modelled on the Forth Noble Truth. Magga)

Now that you have acquired all the data you need from the previous steps. The final stage of the fourth Noble Truths is the Eightfold Path. This stage is designed to redirect the mind to take action and walk the path to a harmonious, prosperous life.

During this stage of your meditation, practice focus, and concentrate the mind on:

Gaining control of your thinking processes and developing a positive mindset.

Replacing the unpleasant thoughts and emotions with positive ones.

See yourself overcoming any obstacles in the way.

Develop the ability to Respond to your Life Events with Greater Skill, Intuition, and Wisdom

Envision your self-taking action that will accelerate the achievement of your goals and dreams, changing the path of your life forever.

Step 8: Externalization

Get ready to end the practice. Gradually become aware of your surroundings. Bring your awareness back into the space where you are practicing. Become aware of your environment; the sounds in the room; become aware of your breath. As you externalize your awareness, remember to take actions that will change the path of your life forever.

*“Shoot For The Moon. Even If You Miss
You Will Land Among The Stars.”*

Les Brown

Exercise 12. Mastering Your Morning Meditation

Each day is a new day for growth, change and transformation, whatever you think about the most and plan in the morning is what you will manifest in your up and coming day. Meditating in the morning is important now more than ever, the world we live in today is stressful and challenging. It's imperative to get your mindset right in the morning. Many people wake up feeling overwhelmed and stressed out before they even start the day. Starting the day with too much stress and anxiety will detrimentally affect your focus, concentration, performance, and can quickly wear out your motivation. Stress not only has detrimental effects on your performance, but too much of it is one of the major causes of illnesses such as high blood pressure, heart disease, and stroke.

It's so important to learn effective strategies to develop a powerful mindset resilient to stress. That's what I'm going to show you how to do in this meditation tutorial.

Regular practice of the following meditation will help you start your day on the right foot and is designed to help to:

- Discover how to develop a more peaceful calmer state of mind so that you can respond to your day's events with greater skill, intuition, and wisdom.
- Develop a powerful mindset that will help you understand that you have all the skills and abilities to complete your daily tasks.
- Reduce stress and anxiety in your daily life to manageable levels, so you can boost your productivity and achieve your goals with more ease.

The Secret to making it work is to combine multiple scientifically proven Meditation Techniques. The meditation practice in this lesson incorporates:

- Meditation Techniques to guide your body and mind into a deeply peaceful state where your subconscious mind is more receptive to change and transformation.
- Gratitude Meditation Techniques to help you develop the recognition that you have the greatness within you to efficiently achieve your daily goals.
- Visualization Techniques to foresee yourself having a successful, productive day.
- Affirmation Techniques to train your mind, so you become the master of your destiny.

The Reason why this Meditation Practice works so well.

You Might be thinking how is all this possible and will it work for me. I'm going to show you the exact formula that has been working so well for my students and my private clients. Before I do that, let us cover why these meditation techniques are so powerful and the science behind them.

Gratitude Meditation Benefits

Here is what a team of scientists from the Yonsei University College of Medicine, Seoul, Korea discovered after reviewing numerous studies on gratitude interventions and conducting their research, using a 5-minute gratitude meditation, practiced every day for a month.

Gratitude is a necessary component of mental health throughout life, and it contributes to psychological well-being. Gratitude has been associated with a lower risk of psychiatric disorders, higher life satisfaction, and wisdom. More specifically, gratitude has been correlated with resilience and low levels of aggression as well as high levels of happiness and low levels of depressive symptoms.

They further explained that positive emotions such as gratitude are associated with enhanced self-regulation and resilience as well as promoting self-motivation. In particular, expressing gratitude is known to support positive mindsets and reduce stress levels. That's why it's imperative to practice gratitude every morning.

Visualization Techniques

Next, let's explore the power of visualization or guided imagery as it is known in the scientific community. There are numerous scientific studies demonstrating the positive effects of visualization techniques. However, I would like to bring to your attention some real-life examples.

Olympic athletics and famous movie stars have been tapping into this powerful practice for many years. Visualization techniques were the Secret to 18 Olympic gold medals, according to record-setting, Olympic swimmer Michael Phelps. He said he "Mentally Rehearses" the perfect swim and feelings of being victorious in his races. He does this each night before he goes to sleep and before he sets foot in the pool.

And Michael was not the only one; other Olympians have also used visualization practices for years to win numerous gold medals. Even celebrities and famous people throughout history, such as Oprah, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Anthony

Robbins, Will Smith, Drew Barrymore, Bill Gates, even William Shakespeare, and Winston Churchill were said to have used visualization to foresee their success.

Affirmation Techniques

Both researchers and spiritual leaders agree that positive affirmations combined with meditation have a positive effect on our health and well-being. But how can they help us start our day on the right foot and have a successful, productive stress-free day?

A peer-reviewed study building on previous research led by J. David Creswell from the Department of Psychology, Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania found that self-affirmation can buffer the effects of chronic stress on actual problem-solving in academic performance settings.

Eighty chronic stressed undergraduates were randomly assigned to either a self-affirmation or control condition. They then completed 30 difficult remote associate problem-solving items under time pressure in front of an evaluator.

The results showed that self-affirmation group had improved problem-solving performance abilities even though they had been underperforming and were chronically stressed individuals before the study.

This research teaches us that affirmations are a useful tool to boost problem-solving abilities under stress and to enhance your confidence, so you can train your mind to deal with problems successfully throughout your day.

Morning Meditation: The Practice.

Step 1: Settling the Body and Mind

Sit in a comfortable meditative asana on the floor or in a comfortable chair with your back straight. Adjust your position so that you are as comfortable as possible. Notice how your legs and tail bone is creating a strong foundation for you to sit on. Lengthen up through the spine and move your head, neck, and shoulders slightly back to align your spinal column with its natural curves.

Place your hands on the knees or in your lap, in your chosen hand mudra. Beware of the synchronized and balanced position of the arms and legs.

Maintain full awareness of the meditative asana, from the tip of the toes to the crown of the head. If your mind wanders during the practice, it does not matter, just let it and come back to the guided instructions. Close your eyes and start taking slow deep breaths.

Step 2: Energizing Breathing Practice

Using your diaphragm to guide the breath in and out of the body, take five conscious breaths. As you breathe in, imagine powerful positive energy flowing into every cell in your body.

As you exhale, feel the state of relaxation becoming more profound and more intense with each natural breath you take. Now, with every inhalation, imagine positive energy flowing up through your feet, your legs, and your spine. Imagine the body becoming more relaxed with each exhalation.

With your next inhalation, imagine the positive energy flowing into your hands, up through your arms, and into your spine. Take ten more breaths feeling an energizing life force permeating your whole body.

Step 3: Body and Natural Breath Awareness

Next, direct your awareness to your right foot; be aware of nothing else but your right foot; transfer your awareness to the left foot, create a mental picture of your left foot; transfer your awareness to the right leg, left leg, lower back, upper back, abdomen, chest, right arm, left arm, neck, back of the head, top of the head, forehead, eyes, nose, cheeks, mouth, and finally the whole body.

Make a resolution that you will be still for the next few minutes and imagine your body is like a statue, motionless.

Next, become aware of the natural breath, without altering or modifying it in any way. Simply watch your breath as it moves in and out of the body. If your mind wanders, notice that it has wandered and gently bring back your attention to your natural breath.

Step 4: Gratitude Meditation

Now that you are in a calmer peaceful state of body and mind, I would like you to shift your attention towards being grateful for all of the good things in your life. What do you feel most thankful for? Reflect with gratitude on all of the good things in your life.

Next, set your intention for today, with gratitude; reflect on what you would like to achieve today; what would be your best possible outcome. Now, with a sense of gratitude, start to reflect on all of your skills and abilities that have helped you so much in the past to achieve your goals. Furthermore, with a sense of gratitude and the realization of all of your skills and abilities, remember all the times when you have completed your tasks and goals before.

Step 5: Visualization Techniques

Now, as you're acknowledging all of the skills and past accomplishments, imagine everything is coming together into one big picture. See yourself calm, centered, focused, and, in the zone,' moving gradually towards the completion of your to-do list. See yourself achieving your goals with ease. If any obstacles arise, picture yourself overcoming them with ease, utilizing all the skills, abilities, and resources at your disposal.

Visualize a positive outcome; you have done it many times before and you can easily do it again. Visualize everything coming together. See yourself completing your to-do list and respond to daily events with exceptional skill, intuition, wisdom.

Step 6: Positive affirmations

Now that you have a clear picture of the excellent day ahead, the next step is to repeat positive affirmations that create new neural pathways in the brain and reinforce this belief.

Here are three common examples of affirmations you can repeat to enhance your daily performance:

- I have everything that it takes to complete all of my tasks.
- I am confident; I have done it before; I can do it again.
- Wonderful things are going to happen to me today; I am grateful for my life.

Take a few moments to repeat these suggested resolves or formulate your own affirmations to master your day.

Let's take it to a higher level. Visualise yourself achieving all of your daily goals as you're repeating your affirmations.

Step 7: Externalization

Get ready to end the practice. Gradually become aware of the physical body. Bring your awareness back into the space where you are practicing. Become aware of your physical body and external sounds in the room; become aware of your breath.

Slowly externalize your awareness. Open your eyes; you're wide awake, feeling energized, and experiencing feelings of excitement and anticipation for the day ahead.

“Your Imagination Is The Preview
Of Your Life’s Up And Coming Attractions.”
Einstein

Exercise 13. The Secret to Meditating with Ease, Without Worrying About the Past, The Future or Being in the Present Moment all the Time.

It's taken millions of years of evolution for your mind to develop to its present capability. Your mind is a miracle, it's more powerful than any supercomputer. Your mind has infinite potential to grow, change, and evolve.

Your life depends on your memory and your mind's ability to analyze the past and envision a better future. These natural evolutionary aspects of the human brain allow us to live a more fulfilling and successful life.

In this lesson, you're going to learn a powerful formula that will teach you.

- How to wisely resolve and learn from the past so you can be calmer and more at ease in the present moment.
- How to redirect your mind from unhelpful thinking processes about the past to positive thoughts about your future.
- How to positively transform your thinking processes and develop a powerful mindset resilient to stress and anxiety.
- How to harness the infinite potential of your mind envision positive solutions to challenges and obstacles in your life.

Learning this meditation technique is very important because in the world we live in today, many people are struggling with ruminating unhelpful thoughts about the past and the future.

As a result, they find it very difficult to meditate and manage their consistently busy minds. On top of that, they are stuck in the present moment with the repetitive, unhelpful thinking patterns.

These negative thoughts and emotions are creating too much stress and anxiety in their lives. This stress not only has a detrimental effect their health, family life and everything associated with it, it's also one of the major causes of illnesses that are reducing their quality of life and life span.

It's crucial that you learn new strategies to understand your mind better and to transform your thinking processes. Your life depends on it.

Regular practice of this meditation will help you to:

- Develop a better understanding of the thinking processes that are causing stress and anxiety in your life, so you can set in motion strategies to help you better manage stress.
- Understand that everything that has happened in the past, and every challenge you have overcome is designed by nature to help you become a wiser, stronger, more powerful human being.
- Tap into the unlimited potential of your mind to learn from the past and create a better future so you can become the creator of your destiny and live a more prosperous, happy, healthy, and fulfilling life.

The Reason why it works.

You cannot fight evolution or the nature of your mind's natural thinking processes. The key is to work with it. Numerous scientific studies conducted by psychologists and neuroscientists around the world have empirically proven that human beings have evolved by their ability to reflect on and learn from the past, then to think about, foresee, plan, and create their ideal future. [1]

You cannot just be always in the present moment all the time as some meditation teachers advocate. Human beings would still be sitting on a rock in a cave if we were just to do that. Your life depends on your memory and your mind's ability to analyze the past and to think of how to create a better future. Being able to predict how events might unfold – and the emotional reactions that you might display as a result – has a clear adaptive role. [2]

In fact, this is aligned with what the Buddha taught. The Buddha did not just teach mindfulness, he taught powerful formulas and systems that integrated, analytical meditation techniques and focused attention meditation techniques to free your mind so you can take the path to liberation and Nirvana.

The trick to making this meditation technique work is to practice a combination of meditation techniques once again. We also integrate visualization techniques at the end of this meditation to make it even more powerful.

The Practice.

Step 1: Settling the Body

Find a comfortable meditation posture or sit in a chair with your back straight. Make yourself comfortable and close your eyes and focus on your breathing. Inhale and exhale slowly for a duration of 4, 6 or 8, depending on your breathing capacity.

Focus on each breath and notice how your body becomes more and more relaxed with each easy diaphragmatic breath. Allow each breath to guide you into a deep state of relaxation.

Complete five rounds, then allow the breath to come back to its natural rhythm and watch the breath as it flows in and out of the nostrils.

Step 2: Body and Natural Breath Awareness

Be aware of any physical sensations in the body, direct your awareness to the sensations of the body and be aware of nothing else. If your mind starts to wander, let it, but simultaneously direct your awareness back to the physical sensations in the body.

Next, direct your awareness to your right foot, be aware of nothing else but your right foot, transfer your awareness to the left foot, create a mental picture of your left foot, transfer your awareness to the right leg, left leg, lower back, upper back, abdomen, chest, right arm, left arm, neck, back of the head, top of the head, forehead, eyes, nose, cheeks, mouth, and, finally the whole body, the entire body.

Become aware of your natural breathing style, without altering or modifying it in any way. Simply watch your breath as it moves in and out of the body.

Step 3: Witnessing Your Thoughts

Welcome your thoughts as they arise with curiosity and acceptance; it's okay; your mind is seeking solutions. Become the silent witness of your thoughts, just like you're watching a movie of your mind; initially let them come and go as your maintaining awareness of your breath.

If your mind is drifting towards the past and future in this initial stage, let it drift. Your mind has evolved by thinking of the past, then envisioning a positive future; do

not try to stop it. Let it do its thing; watch it and continue to focus on returning your awareness to the breath. Everything will work out naturally.

Let your mind wander and gently direct your awareness back to the breath. You will slowly become calm, tranquil, and peaceful; but first, you must let the thought arise into your consciousness. If you try and push your thoughts away, they will inevitably rise at another time.

Step 4: Analytical Meditation

Now you're in a state of complete relaxation, it's time to practice Analytical Meditation.

Continue to maintain awareness of the breath (When you are consciously aware of the breath, it becomes a function of your more evolved, rational, analytical brain).

Contemplate on the thoughts that are arising now; wisely analyze them; there's a lesson to be learned.

Why are these thoughts arising? Is there a solution coming into your awareness?

Understand that everything that has happened in the past, and every challenge you have overcome is designed by nature to help you become a wiser, stronger, and powerful human being.

Step 5: Visualization Techniques

Maintain breath awareness, and start to reflect on positive outcomes, see yourself overcoming obstacles or achieving your goals. Go into the future now, envision a better outcome for your actions, see yourself achieving your goals.

Envision everything is coming together. Foresee yourself, creating your ideal future.

Step 6: Focused Attention Meditation Techniques

Now that you have a clear picture of yourself achieving your goal, the next step is to repeat positive affirmations.

Here are some examples for you:

- I bless the past because it makes me wiser, stronger, and a more powerful person.

- My future is bright. Wonderful things will happen to me.
- I am excited to see what the future brings.
- I embrace and welcome the future because I am the creator of my destiny.

Take a few moments to repeat these suggested affirmations or formulate your own affirmations.

Step 7: Externalization

Get ready to end the practice. Gradually become aware of your physical body. Bring your awareness back into the space where you are practicing. Become aware of your physical body and external sounds in the room; become aware of your breath.

As you externalize your awareness, have confidence in your ability to use analytical meditation to understand your thoughts and thinking processes.

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Chapter 10: Reprogramming Your Mind.

In the end, the purpose of meditation is to reshape your belief system, reprogram your mind, and consequently transform your life.

The beliefs we hold about ourselves, others, and the world, in general, have the power to create our reality. How you interpret your environment will dictate how you respond to the external stimuli you encounter. What you believe is who you become.

For example, if I believe I'm a failure, I will behave in ways that confirm this belief, and I will focus exclusively on situations when I failed. In other words, how I envision myself, will shape my perspective and prevent me from achieving success (because success goes against my core belief).

Through meditation, we can gain valuable insights about the beliefs and mindsets that hold us back from achieving our full potential. And once we understand how we sabotage our attempts to feel better and live better, we can use meditation to envision a different path, one that will take us closer to our dreams.

True enlightenment comes when we understand the nature of suffering and self-imposed challenges and obstacles. Only then we can reprogram our mind, change our habits, and achieve lasting happiness.

And it's all thanks to this simple and elegant process called meditation

Exercise 14. Mastering Your Thinking Processes Meditation

In today's modern society, more than ever, many people are catastrophic thinkers. They have constant negative ruminating thoughts and are regularly forecasting worst-case scenarios in their minds. If you're going to sleep or waking up in the morning with an anxious busy mind, there are a couple of things that you really need to understand.

- Exaggerated ruminative negative thoughts are taking control of people's minds, detrimentally affecting their mental and physical health, and their ability to sleep.
- Unproductive negative thoughts are a stress magnifier and the number one cause of stress.
- These unwanted repetitive thoughts and emotions and feelings of inadequacy raise anxiety, lower self-esteem, and contribute to depression.

Living a successful, fulfilling life depends on your ability to learn how to manage your mind better.

The next meditative practice is designed to help you to:

- Wisely analyze negative thinking processes so that you can redirect your mind towards positive thinking and a brighter future.
- Release and purify the emotional charge of ruminating negative thoughts so that you can think more clearly and come up with solutions.
- Balance and calm your busy mind so you can reduce stress and anxiety and get a better night's sleep.
- Boost your self-confidence self-esteem and optimism to higher levels, so you can be more productive and awaken the great achiever within you.
- Redirect your mind to create new neural pathways that focus on positive thinking and positive outcomes in the future

Why it works

We all wish to achieve a state of internal balance; a state of inner peace and lasting happiness that comes not from material gains and social status but self-discovery and spiritual growth.

But inner peace requires quite a bit of soul-searching, and to be honest; we're not always in the mood to explore our inner selves and discover the things that bring us authentic joy and peace of mind. Sometimes, our everyday worries can become so pressing and tiring that we lose sight of what's genuinely important and healthy for us.

Fortunately, meditative practices can help you reconnect to your inner self and re-discover that internal sensation of calm and balance.

In fact, current evidence suggests that both mindfulness training [21] and other Buddhist meditation techniques [22] can restore inner peace and set the foundation of lasting happiness.

The healthy natural state of our mind is peaceful and calm. Meditation uncovers this natural state and cultivates contentment and compassion, our life becomes more balanced and in harmony with ourselves and our surroundings, benefiting your emotional well-being and your overall health.

Furthermore, meditation and quality sleep go well together. Those of us who meditate regularly have experienced firsthand how meditation can help us sleep better and feel better.

Studies indicate that meditation can lead to an improvement in sleep quality. [3] In fact, researchers believe that even short meditation practices can have a significantly positive effect on sleep (especially non-REM sleep). [4]

How the practice works in real life situations.

In this meditation practice, we model the Buddhas Four Noble Truths method and apply the formula to initially manage your thinking processes and further directing your thinking processes to focus on positive thoughts and positive outcomes for the future.

We additionally model and integrate yogic meditation techniques to tune into higher states of consciousness for guidance. The outcome of this process will be a calmer clear mind, as the mind is guided to follow its natural evolutionary process of analyzing the past and developing a clear vision for positive future events.

The Meditation Practice

Step 1.

Practicing the previous meditation's first two steps of settling the body and mind and breath awareness techniques.

The next stage is to guide the mind to internalize deeper and tune into higher states of consciousness to witness the content of the mind. This is the natural state of your mind that is peaceful, wise, and calm, and it does not get distracted or disturbed by your thoughts. It watches, analyses, and observes everything from a distance without being attached to the thoughts that arise into your conscious awareness.

To attain this peaceful state during your meditation practice: Become aware of the physical components of your natural breathing process, the diaphragm, and the chest, notice how it expands as air flows into and out of your body, just become aware of the physical component of your breathing process.

Become aware of the physical dimension of the body that is breathing as an individual entity.

Next stage is to notice the breath or prana as it flows in and out of your lungs, notice how the inspiration is a separate entity to the physical component of your lungs and body.

Next be aware that there is a 3rd component of this experience, the experience of noticing the breath, observing the breath. This separate entity is your higher self; the experiencer of the breath. Now, as you're tuning into your higher self, become the silent witness of your thoughts, initially let your thoughts come and go, regardless if they are positive or negative. Observe them as a spectator while maintaining awareness of your natural breath and your higher self.

Step 2.

While maintaining awareness of the breath:

Witness your thoughts from a distance and start to analyze your thoughts with self-acceptance and compassion towards yourself.

Are your thoughts repetitive exaggerated or negative thoughts that are not supported by logical thinking process?

Are your thoughts focused on solutions or ruminating on not so positive outcomes?

Are your thoughts optimistic and focused on positive outcomes for the future?

Step 3.

The next stage is to identify the causes of ruminating thoughts:

Wisely analyze what is arising in your mind and develop insight into the origin of what is creating the unhelpful repetitive thinking processes.

Can you identify the triggers that are exaggerating the rumination?

Are there any thoughts from past experiences that are creating repetitive thinking processes?

Step 4.

Redirect your mind and start to reframe your negative thoughts and your responses to them.

- Turn any unhelpful thoughts into positive thoughts.
- Find evidence that supports your new positive alternative thoughts you have just created.
- Acknowledge that you now have the knowledge, skills, and ability to transform your thoughts.
- Redirect the mind to solutions, new positive ways of thinking, and the possibility that more positive things will happen in the future in all areas of your life.

Step 5.

The final stage of this meditation practice is to create an internal picture of experiencing positive events and outcomes for the future. Maintaining awareness of the breath and being the witness of your mind, direct your mind to focus on.

- Recall positive events in your life when you were successful, happy memories of achieving your goals.
- Envision yourself with a positive mindset and feelings of excitement with all the possibilities of what can come into fruition in the future.
- Incorporate positive feeling of joy, accomplishment, fulfillment, contentment, and satisfaction.
- Picture yourself in the future walking the right path, with a powerful positive mindset, taking action with a calm, peaceful, wise, and tranquil mind, living your life to the fullest.

“What You Seek Is Seeking You”

Rumi

Chapter 11: How to Make Meditation a Daily Habit

Everybody's life is unique, which means everybody finds his/her own way to turn meditation into a daily habit. But what's truly important is to find the motivation and determination to start practicing.

Realistically speaking, you can meditate anytime and anywhere. Even taking conscious breaths with awareness for a couple of minutes anytime during your daily life will naturally guide you into a calmer peaceful state and set you on a new journey to receive the life-changing benefits of meditation.

In this chapter, I want to help you find YOUR best place and time to meditate. That way, you will feel more motivated to cultivate this amazing practice. And once you begin to experience the first benefits of meditation, I'm sure you will feel more determined to turn this practice into a habit.

Best Time to Meditate

Mornings are the best time to meditate because your morning practice will cultivate a peaceful state of mind and set you up for a more focused and productive day as mentioned in the previous morning meditation practice tutorial.

Morning meditation doesn't just bring you momentary relaxation. It's one of those habits that prepares your body and mind for a busy and productive day.

To turn morning meditation into a habit, you need to start waking up a bit earlier than usual. Though the idea may scare you at first – especially if your body is accustomed to a fixed sleep schedule – after just one or two weeks, you will no longer have a problem waking up 15 minutes earlier for your meditation practice.

What I want you to remember is that, even though mornings are usually the best time of the day to meditate, you can practice it whenever you prefer. If meditating in the morning seems too difficult for you right now, choose a different time of day to implement this practice.

Setting a Regular Time to Meditate

Realistically, though anytime that you can regularly fit into your daily schedule is the best time. The most important thing is to start and have fixed times for your daily meditational practices.

This regularity establishes a familiar routine, ensuring that you will receive great benefits. It is far better to begin with a duration that you can easily maintain every day. Even 10 to 15 minutes of practice every day is better than one hour in one day, half an hour the next day, and then a one-week pause. When it comes to meditation, make sure to keep it short and frequent.

When I first started out, my meditation practice was irregular, but as I slowly noticed the life-changing benefits of these practices, I started to meditate more and more, and now I've gotten to the point where I meditate at least two times a day.

Setting a regular time to meditate helps you transform meditation from an occasional practice into a daily habit.

Other Good Times to Meditate Are:

During your lunch break.

Short meditations during your lunch break can act as a powerful de-stressor and give your body and mind a mini break from the everyday challenges of a modern workplace.

Scientific studies have shown that meditation in the workplace boosts employee well-being, creativity, and productivity, as well as organizational innovativeness. [36]

As you can see, a quick meditation session during your lunch break can do wonders for your personal and professional well-being.

After Work

Meditating after work is an excellent way to release the physical and mental tension that can build up during a busy day at the office.

It's also a great way to take your mind off work, so you can develop a better work-life balance and reflect on other important things in your life, including your loved ones and leisure pursuits.

Think of it as a well-deserved 'treat' after a long and challenging day; your moment of relaxation, peace, and self-reflection.

Before Bed

Meditating in the evening is a perfect way to unwind and relax your mind.

Even during sleep, the mind can be overactive and continually thinking about your previous day's events and the tasks of tomorrow. Though there is absolutely nothing wrong about thinking about the past and the future - this is how your brain processes information - meditating before bed is an effective way to resolve the previous day's events and relax your mind so you can have a more refreshing night's sleep.

Discovering the Best Places to Meditate

Where you meditate can be just as motivating as when you meditate. In this subchapter, we will discuss the multitude of places where you can successfully practice meditation.

You don't have to become a monk and meditate in Buddhist monasteries to attain the positive life-changing benefits of meditation. The beauty of meditative techniques is that you can practice them anywhere.

Though some places are perceived to be more favorable than others, the location is not that important. After personally meditating in caves in the Himalayas, Buddhist monasteries, yoga ashrams, and other spiritual sites around the world for over 15 years, I was surprised to discover that I've had some of my most profound meditation experiences at home and while teaching a meditation class.

One of my students that I was teaching at a corporate workplace even had an enlightening experience during their lunchtime.

The point is, even though choosing your ideal place to meditate can make this practice more pleasant, learning the correct techniques and regular practice is much more important than any location.

Creating a Sanctuary in Your Own Home

Perhaps the best place to meditate is the place where you feel most comfortable. And for many of us, that place is called home.

Your home can be the perfect place to build a solid foundation for your meditation practice. Below are some tips for creating a dedicated meditation space:

Preferably choose a clean, peaceful room that is well ventilated and at a comfortable temperature.

Decorate the room and prepare your meditation space by placing a soft rug or blankets on the floor.

Use as many pillows as needed to sit on, to ensure you are comfortable.

You can use meditation stools that you can buy online or sit in a comfortable chair that keeps your spine upright.

Alternatively, anywhere in your home where you can sit comfortably is a good place to meditate.

Establishing a regular practice at home can be a great place to start, but there are so many other enjoyable places to meditate.

Practicing Meditation in Nature

Nature is a great place to meditate as it's a great storehouse of positive energy that can enhance the benefits of your practice. There are numerous places to experience the benefits of meditation in nature.

For example, parks, mountains, beaches, lakes, and rivers are perfect places to meditate in peace and harness the incredible effects of this practice. During your work week, you can take a break for 10 minutes and meditate on a park bench, before work, at lunchtime or after work.

You can literally practice meditation anywhere, as long as it's a safe place where you don't expose yourself to dangers.

Here are some more examples:

- In an office chair at work
- On an airplane
- On a bus
- On a train
- In airports and train stations
- At churches or temples
- In your back yard

As you can see, there are some many places where you can meditate while enjoying the wonderful effects of spending time in nature.

“Meditation is not evasion; it is a serene encounter with reality.”

Thich Nhat Hanh

“Feelings come and go like clouds in a windy sky.
Conscious breathing is my anchor.” Thich Nhat Hanh

Chapter 12: Meditation Postures & Meditation Hand Mudras

Meditation Postures

In this chapter will explore some of the simplest sitting positions which can be used for your meditation practice. The important feature of any meditative asana is that it should allow you to sit in one position for extended periods without discomfort.

Meditation postures are designed to internalize your awareness; this is not possible if your awareness is continually preoccupied with any discomfort in the physical body. Your aim should be eventually to sit for short periods in one of these basic asanas and increase the duration with time, allowing your body to progress step by step.

If you have any injuries or find it uncomfortable to sit in any of the suggested meditation asanas, sit in a chair with your back straight or on the ground with your back up against a wall and use as many pillows or props as needed to make sure you are as comfortable as possible.

Sitting in a chair

If you're new to meditation, you might like to start meditating in a chair. This is the simplest, most accessible meditation posture.

And the best part is that this posture allows you to meditate almost anywhere; at home, at the office, on the bus or train, on a bench, etc. Any chair, sofa, or park bench can be the ideal place to practice your daily meditation routine.

However, there are a couple of rules you need to follow to prevent injuries and enjoy a relaxing session of meditation.

First of all, make sure you find a sturdy chair that doesn't wobble or crack when you sit on it.

Second keep your back straight, your hands comfortably resting in your lap, and your feet firmly placed on the floor or ground.

Close your eyes and start practicing your meditation routine.

Sukhasana (easy pose)

Many meditation practitioners believe Sukhasana is among the easiest asanas, making it ideal for beginners.

Although this meditation posture can put a significant amount of pressure on your knees and top of your feet – since your entire body weight rests on your buttocks – it's still one of the most comfortable positions you can take during your meditation practice.

Fortunately, you can place a cushion or a folded blanket under your buttocks and lower your knees to the floor. That will make the entire process more accessible and more comfortable. Furthermore, if you're a beginner, try placing your back against the wall, until you develop more strength in your core and back muscles.

Here's how you do it:

1. Take a folded blanket, cushion, or yoga mat and place it on the floor/ground on top of a rug.
2. Sit down on your cushion with your legs extended out forward.
3. Place your left foot under your right thigh and your right foot under your left thigh. If possible, adjust your position and use any extra pillow if need to raise the buttock, so your knees are touching the ground. If necessary or you have any injuries use any additional pillows or blankets under the knees to ensure you are entirely comfortable.
4. Extend up from the tailbone to the crown of the head, relax the shoulder back to align your spine with its natural curves. Try holding your head, neck, and spine as straight as possible. If you do not have the strength in your trunk at the moment to sit for the duration of the meditation practice, you can achieve this by placing your back against the wall.
5. Rest your hands in your lap or on your knees in Jana or chin mudra. (we'll talk about hand mudras in the following chapter).
6. Relax your body and close your eyes.

Vajrasana (thunderbolt or diamond pose)

In Sanskrit, word vajra means 'thunderbolt.' If you suffer from sciatica or sacral infections, Vajrasana can be the ideal posture for your meditation practice. Although you might find this one relatively uncomfortable, with plenty of warmups, this asana can quickly become your favorite meditation posture.

Another considerable advantage of this posture is that it allows you to practice meditation after a meal – something which is generally contraindicated. Fortunately, Sukhasana places your body in a relaxed position and stimulates digestive processes.

Unlike Sukhasana - where you need to keep your spine and back straight – in Vajrasana, you need to slightly lead forward, thus placing less pressure on your back muscles.

Here's how you do it:

1. Take a folded blanket or yoga mat and place it on the floor / ground.
2. Bring your knees together or slightly apart and kneel on the blanket.
4. Rest your buttocks onto your heels while placing your hands on the floor for support. Alternatively, you can sit on a meditation stool designed for this technique, or sit on a yoga block or cushion in-between your buttock and legs to take the weight of your calves and ankles
5. Shift your weight from your ankles and knees to your arms, to avoid pain in the lower part of your legs.
3. Let your arms rest on your knees in Jana or chin mudra.
6. For more advanced users, try using your feet to support the weight of your body, without using your arms. Hold your head and back straight while resting your arms on your knees.
7. Relax your body and close your eyes.

Padmasana (lotus pose)

Unlike Sukhasana or Vajrasana, Padmasana is mostly used by seasoned meditation who've already mastered the two previous postures we talked about.

Before you can practice Padmasana, you need to develop flexibility in the knees and ankles. Otherwise, you risk serious injuries

Contra-indications - Those who suffer from sciatica or weak or injured knees should not perform this asana. Furthermore, this posture is strictly contraindicated during pregnancy.

By applying pressure to the lower spine, this posture has a relaxing effect on your entire nervous system. Furthermore, the lotus pose keeps your entire body steady and firm, directing the prana (life force) through all your chakras.

1. Take a folded blanket, cushion, rug, or yoga mat and place it on the floor/ground.
2. Sit down and stretch your legs forward.
3. Bend your right leg and place it on top of your left thigh.
4. Bend your left leg and place it on top of your right thigh.
5. Your heels should be close to your pubic bones while the sole of your feet should face upward
6. Keep your head and spine upright and relax your shoulders.
7. Place your hands on your knees in a Chin or Jana Mudra
8. Close your eyes and relax your body.

Meditation Hand Mudras

Next, we will cover three of the most common hand mudras used in meditation.

Hand mudras are symbolic hand gestures that are designed initially to alter the meditation practitioner's mood, attitude, and perception during their practice.

Additionally, hand mudras serve as methods to channel and direct positive energy within the body and to internalize awareness, concentration and anchor specific mental attitudes and refined states of consciousness.

Ultimately, hand mudras are intended to link the individual pranic forces or energy that resides within the body to the universal or cosmic consciousness, initiating higher states of consciousness.

Jnana Mudra

In Sanskrit, the word jnana means wisdom or knowledge. Therefore, Jana Mudra is the gesture of wisdom or knowledge.

Start by assuming a comfortable meditation posture. Fold your index fingers in, so they touch the inside root of the thumbs. Straighten the other three fingers of the hand so that they are relaxed and slightly apart. Place your hands on your knees, with the palms facing down and relax the hands and arms.

A different version of this mudra is with the thumb and index finger touching.

Chin Mudra

The word Chin is derived from the Sanskrit word, chit or Chitta, which means consciousness. Therefore, Chin Mudra is the gesture of consciousness.

Chin Mudra is performed in the same manner as Jnana Mudra, except with the palms of both hands facing upwards and the back of the hands resting on the knees.

As with Jnana Mudra, the modification is with the thumb and index finger touching.

Dhyāna Mudāra (or Bhairava Mudra)

To perform the Dhyāna Mudāra - also called the Bhairava Mudra - place the right hand on top of the left so that the palms of both hands are facing upwards and resting in the lap.

In some yoga traditions, there is a variation for female practitioners with the left hand on top. I practice this way because I have hand and injury with my left hand, and I like to support the left hand with my stronger right hand.

The two hands represent the Ida and Pingala Nadis and the union of the individual consciousness with the supreme consciousness.

Your heart is the size of an ocean.
Go find yourself in its hidden depths.
Rumi

Chapter 13: Meditation and Your Brainwaves

Have you ever wondered why our mood sometimes changes without any reasonable explanation? How come we experience inexplicable emotional reactions without being able to pinpoint a specific external factor that may explain these mood swings?

Although there are hundreds of internal and external factors that may influence the way we think, feel, or behave, there is one element that researchers believe may hold the answer – brain waves.

The electrical signals that get passed on from one neuron to another make up the incredible phenomenon we call human consciousness. From a neurological perspective, every thought, action, emotion, sensation, and decision are nothing more than a collection of electrical impulses that our neurons generate.

By tapping into the various brain waves on which neural impulses operate, we can boost our immune system, achieve a state of deep relaxation, cultivate robust mental health, and train our mind to achieve anything we want in life.

And the best part is that meditative practices can alter our brain waves, resulting in significant improvements in our overall health and well-being.

How Do Brainwaves Work?

Brain waves are electrical impulses that our brain produces as a result of neuronal activity. It has been scientifically proven that every cerebral frequency influences our overall mental state and, implicitly, our life. The human brain is still very much a mystery, even for the brightest minds of our generation. We still know very little about how the brain works, but it's important that we take everything we know so far and put it into practice.

Why? Because every frequency on which our brain “vibrates” can and will, at some point, create something in our lives.

The electromagnetic field that results from brain activity works just like a radar. In other words, it emits and receives information. Neural pathways transmit information, amplifying, or reducing this electromagnetic field.

Have you ever noticed that when something terrible happens in your life, it almost feels like everything around you has this negative vibe? You begin to see bad news, you're more aware of other people's struggles and pains, and you feel surrounded

by negativity wherever you go. In short, you emit and receive on the same frequency.

The Five Brain Waves That Influence Our Thoughts, Emotions, and Actions

Alpha Waves (7-13 Hertz)

Alpha waves represent the bridge between our conscious and subconscious mind. This frequency occurs when we're feeling calm, relaxed, and detached from the outside world.

In this state, our memory and learning abilities are at the maximum level. In a way, those of us who tend to forget quickly might have a problem accessing the alpha state of their brain.

When your brain is tuned into this frequency, you can envision your goals easily and also use positive affirmations to program your mind for what you want to achieve.

Finally, studies indicate that alpha waves are also related to creativity. [1]

Beta Waves (12-30 Hertz)

Everything that happens "here and now"; every moment in which we are fully present; every time we focus on something, our brain is in beta frequency. In other words, beta waves are associated with the conscious mind.

In this state, our mind is capable of focusing on external actions and objects. Beta waves help us make fast connections and are an absolute 'must' in any situation or activity that requires increased focus and alertness.

When we're in a Beta state, we are fully awake and capable of analyzing information. It's the perfect moment to work on our plans and organize ourselves to achieve excellent results.

It's no wonder that people who perform beta-specific activities for a long time should take 10-minute breaks every 2-3 hours. During your break, you can take a short walk, listen to music, chat with a friend. Basically, you need to do something that will induce a state of relaxation.

Delta Waves (0-4 Hertz)

Delta waves have the lowest frequency and occur mostly during sleep. This is the state in which our consciousness manifests on a different time-space continuum, and out-of-body experiences may occur.

The information that we receive and sensations that we experience in Delta states are of great importance because they cannot be accessed on any other frequency.

This is probably the reason why a good night's sleep is so crucial to our mental and physical health. [2]

During deep sleep, when your brain is under the influence of delta waves, the mind can access the information necessary to heal the body naturally. Your body has (to some extent) the ability to heal itself. The only problem is that your conscious mind cannot comprehend this because it does not have access to this information.

Gamma Waves (20-100 Hertz)

Gamma waves are associated with insight and high-level information processing. They often evoke feelings of happiness and compassion and an overall optimal brain functioning. According to a recent study, gamma band oscillations synchronize our brain cells, giving rise to purposeful thinking. [3]

Experts have observed that during meditation, Tibetan monks exhibit higher levels of gamma waves than the brains of those who don't practice meditation can't achieve.

Being specific to the higher cerebral activity, gamma waves are frequently accessed by those who practice spiritual techniques such as meditation, Yoga Nidra, and self-hypnosis.

When operating at this frequency, your brain (and mind) can detach from the outside world and enter a state of pure serenity. The gamma frequency is the pathway to altered states of consciousness that are characterized by peace, calm, and tranquility.

Theta Waves (3-8 Hertz)

Theta waves are specific to daydreamers and people who like to spend their time thinking about the endless possibilities of the future. Also, people who jog tend to experience states associated with theta waves. In other words, they relax and are

more open to new ideas. It is a state in which, although we feel relaxed, we are fully aware of the reality that surrounds us.

Theta waves can also occur when we brush our teeth, wash the dishes, or perform any 'automatic' activity. That way, we can let our mind detach from reality. During theta waves, there is no mental censorship or feelings of guilt; only positivity.

The Link Between Meditation and Brainwaves

Meditative practices have been used for thousands of years, but only in the last few decades, science has begun to discover the benefits of these practices. Using sophisticated tools such as magnetic resonance imaging, neuroimaging, brain mapping technology, and gene research, researchers have found how these practices can help us access different brain waves.

Beta waves, for instance, allows us to focus on school- or work-related tasks. However, high levels of beta waves are associated with stress and anxiety. In such cases, meditation can lower beta waves, thus helping us achieve a state of relaxation.

Out of all Buddhist and Hindu spiritual practices, meditation seems to have a profoundly beneficial effect on our physical and mental health.

By helping us tune into different brain frequencies, meditative practices allow us to achieve top performance, enter deep states of relaxation, and synchronize the two brain hemispheres.

With patience and a sense of inner balance, you will become a better wife/husband, parent, brother, sister, son, daughter, boss; in short, a better person. As soon as you sit down and begin your practice, you will give up on any judgment or inhibition that prevents you from achieving deep relaxation.

With every deep breath, you will change your perspective on yourself, others, and the world in general. You will rearrange your priorities and put your well-being first, before anyone or anything else. You will also become more grateful and humble.

The ultimate goal of any meditative practice is to help you live a truly fulfilled life!

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