

Inspirational
Meditation
For Beginners

Understand an effective technique called 'The Middle Way Meditation'

Follow the step by step explanation on how to meditate

Learn an inspirational technique to be calm, happy and wise

Discover peacefulness within, with a simple meditation technique



Inspirational Meditation For Beginners

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Introduction

We have seen more and more people becoming interested in meditation in the last few decades. Everything around us has become faster and faster. We can communicate with people who are in another part of the world very easily. Information technology changes our world continuously. In spite of this we wouldn't say that people of our modern time are happier than our parents, grandparents and our ancestors.

Material development has not given us what we need in order to have a happy life. Happiness happens in our mind. If we understand how our mind functions and know how to create energy in our mind, happiness should be easy to develop.

Many people are searching for ways to have a slower life. When we can live slowly, we can see more of the environment and also ourselves. Being slow allows us to save our mind's energy. That's why we feel more comfortable and less tired when we have a good holiday with a lot of time to rest.

Meditation is one important activity which helps us to slow down our mind. It's wisdom from the past which shows that a still mind can be more helpful and important than we have ever imagined. Also it can help us solve many situations in our life in the most effective ways. It is possible to train our mind and we should make an effort to do so. Life can be a lot easier with the right lifestyle. It's one of the best activities people should do each day. If we love ourselves, we shouldn't forget to take good care of our mind. People know a lot of ways to take care of their physical health. How about the mental component? Meditation is an answer for something we are missing in our modern society.

This book is the first volume of 'Inspirational meditation for beginners'. It will help the reader to understand the basic concept of meditation and also introduce 'The Middle Way Meditation Technique'. Meditation should be easy to practice. The simple explanations given in this book will let you understand better what meditation is and how we can practice it. We expect it will encourage more people in the world practice meditation. It's one of the best ways to create a truly peaceful world full of mindful people who are wise enough to know what we should do and what we shouldn't. This wisdom can be developed by a simple activity we call 'meditation'.

The Existence of the Mind

To talk about meditation, we should start first with the existence of the mind. Do you think that the mind exists or not? For a long time in school and university we study a lot about ourselves. Most of what we learn when we are young is about our body. What we know about ourselves mainly concerns our body. We know that our life begins at the moment we call 'conception' and life stays until the day we die. Scientists, doctors and biologists study and know very much about our body. But as for the mind, the scientific world has still not been able to explore it because there is no technology based on scientific knowledge which can detect and study our mind.

Neuroscience and Psychology

Neuroscience is the study of the our brain function. With sophisticated detectors we can see which part of our brain becomes active at certain times. We study our brain as hardware and try to understand how it functions. However, neuroscience is limited in that it cannot explain clearly what happens when we think. Knowledge of brain as hardware is not enough to explain software, which means mind or the spiritual function.

Psychology is the study and examination of our mind. Sigmund Freud, whom we consider the father of psychoanalysis, used hypnosis with his patients. Many psychologists observe people behavior and later elaborate ideas or theories. This field is limited in that it's not able to prove any results. That's why we put psychology in the field of human science, not pure science.

Both neuroscience and psychology are limited in their ability to study the mind. Neither field can say; what is the mind, where is the mind, how does the mind function.

Meditation is 100% a Mental Activity

Meditation is an activity we do with our mind. It's 100% a mental activity. Why? Because during meditation we do not move any part of our body. If you have ever seen a Buddha image or statue, you normally see him sitting with his eyes closed. It's the image representing his enlightenment and also his meditation position. Physically we don't see anything change or move when we meditate. But mentally, something happens.

The Mind's Nature is that of Energy

The mind can be considered a kind of energy. It's the same as the sun, wind, flowing water, electricity and so on; it moves. The body is the material part which is fixed and concrete. The mind is the spiritual part which is moving. We use different natural energies in our daily life. They serve us. Fire helps us to cook and to warm our homes. Water is essential for health and hygiene. Wind ventilates rooms, houses, and machines. But when there is too much energy, it can also cause problems. Too much water becomes a flood. Too much wind becomes a storm. Too much fire is clearly trouble also. It is the same as our mind. In normal daily life everything looks calm or acceptable. But in a possible yet unexpected situation we can be troubled with our mind. Our mind is sometimes angry, unsatisfied, worried, or worse. Once we can't control it, it can hurt us.

The Mind can be Trained

Once we know nature of an element or energy, we can use it. Techniques can be developed until eventually it becomes technology. We can use water power to generate electricity. Likewise we can use sun to create solar energy. If we know the nature of our mind and know how to handle it, we will use it in the right way and this will allow us to have a better life.

Different countries have different ways to train animals. When animals are wild, they look uncontrollable and can be dangerous. Once we know how to train them, they can become our friends. Thai people know how to train elephants; they help us work in the forest. In southern part of Thailand, people know how to train monkeys to collect coconuts from coconut trees.

If human beings know how to irrigate water, how to harness wind and fire and how to train animals, it should be possible for us to train our minds as well.

A Mind Meter

If we imagine a meter which shows the status of our mind energy, sometimes it will show a high level, and sometimes a low level. When you drive a car and the petrol gauge shows an empty tank, you need to find a petrol station. If you see lower battery sign of your mobile or computer, you need to charge it quickly. Likewise in your life, when you are energized and happy, you can do anything and meet anyone. But some days when your mind energy is low, you don't want to talk to anyone. You would just like to be alone. You want to be free.

The Universal Rhythm of Daily Life

In the morning when we wake up, we feel fresh. Then we go forwards to do some form of work during the day. Young children spend time in school, young adults may study at college or university, but it is still work of a sort. Each day at our study or work place, we will feel tired by the evening. Then we know it's time to be out of our working place. At this moment our mind meter reads a lower level.

Once released from our working environment we will have recreation time. We shop, dine, play some sport, listen to music and so on, and end up with sleeping. In the morning we will be fresh again. One's mind meter reads a higher level.

Friday evening is different from Monday evening. Each recharging session in the evening and night time isn't quite enough. That's why everywhere in the world people need a break of at least 1 or 2 days per week. To be free Saturday and Sunday is a longer recharge. It allows us to be really fresh and energized again ready for Monday morning.

Also for the year-round period, people need long holidays. It shows that even weekly holidays can't be enough in the long term.

Mind Energy Consumption

Then we can assume that some of the time we spend our mind energy and other times we recharge it. We use our mind energy during our studying or working time. We simply recharge it when we are free from our work or study commitments. From this we can summarize: When our mind is concentrated, it consumes energy. When it is relaxed, it gets recharged.

There are at least three factors indicating energy consumption. The first one is direction of observation. When we focus on the outside, our mind will be with 'things' outside such as work, people, problems, situations or environments. Each moment we let our mind roam outside, it will spend energy. The second factor is expectation. In our life, working time is important. It means the chance to create convenience or prosperity in our life. Also to be professional, we seem to have no right to make any mistake. The more working quality we expect of minds, the more we concentrate with it. The more we concentrate, more we consume our mind energy. The third factor is number of 'things' we are coping with. The more elements that float in our mind, more it spends energy.

Meditation Principle

Meditation can be in the recreation category, as opposed to the work category of human activity. And it's the best form of recreation if we consider it's quality and effectiveness of charging our mind. It has some differences to a lot of other forms of recreation. If you play sport you will be required to build up your fitness to stay on the team or in you like social activities like playing cards, part of the goal is maintaining social ties. Meditation however is an activity for yourself. It's completely for yourself - this means your mind, or your spiritual part.

The logic of meditation is what we have just discussed. If we know that leaving our mind outside of our body, having expectations and thinking about many things will let our mind consume more energy, then the opposite factors apply as well. We can just turn the direction of observation from outside to inside, be free from expectation and have the minimum number of items to think about. In simply doing this, our mind will reserve more energy and will even be able to recharge itself.

Recreation Principle

Why do people play games, listen to music, read or find something else to do even when we are free? Because we need something to focus on - something not serious and that we enjoy. If we have nothing to do, it's very easy to have a thousand thoughts in our mind. That's why people want to be occupied. Doing nothing is boring. In every society we have a universal word that means 'kill' the time. We would like to be free from work yet we don't want to be completely free. That's how recreation functions. However, during your relaxing time, you still focus your mind outside. That's why we would like to tell you that meditation is the best recreation to charge your mind because it's a rare activity that lets your mind rest inside concerned with the least possible items..

Meditation Techniques Can Differ

Meditation can charge our mind. It's the action or activity in which we turn the direction of observation of our mind within ourselves. There are many techniques of meditation. The most popular one is breathing meditation. We observe our breathing in and out. If you go to the library or bookstore and look for a meditation guide book, most of the book will discuss this technique. Recently a technique called mindfulness has become more and more popular, especially in United States. In this technique we don't focus only on breathing, but to any movement. For example, for walking meditation, we will be mindful of the actions of each foot from left to right, when we raise it and when we let it down.

The Center of Gravity

We would like to introduce 'The Middle Way' technique. In our school we consider that meditation has the objective to calm our mind or even to let it become still, or to 'stop' our mind. It is better if we focus to a still point. If we focus to something that moves, it can help us in the beginning. Once we feel calm already we may like to progress to a deeper calm. Moving body parts that support us to practice in the beginning can disturb us in the later stage. To focus our mind on moving things may not allow us to be completely calm enough for the advanced levels.

It would be more effective to focus to a still point inside. The best location as a still point to focus our mind on should be the center. Yes, it's center of our body. Where is it exactly? In physics, everything has a center. We call this the center of gravity. If our body has mass, it should have a point considered to be the center of gravity. It's the point to focus our mind on when we practice the Middle Way Meditation. It can be complicated to show how to measure your body and to calculate exactly where the center of gravity is located. To get an answer, experienced people who have developed their minds to advanced levels say the same thing: that the point or area in which they can develop their best experience is in their abdomen, horizontally in the middle between the left and right flank and midway between our umbilicus and our back and vertically 2 finger width above the navel. All high level mediators proved that this location works very well.

To make it easy, you can imagine a cross of which one line stretches from your left flank to your right flank and another line stretches from your umbilicus to your back. You will then have an imaginary cross inside your abdomen. Then you imagine putting your middle and index finger horizontally on the center of this cross on the top of your index finger will rest your center of gravity.

See with Your Mind, not Your Eyes

When you focus your mind at the center, please appreciate that you are not looking with your eyes anymore. When we see with our eyes, the world in front of us is a 3 dimensional world. We can measure the size or distance of everything we see. When you close your eyes, it's different. You come to another world. Your mental world is not a 3D world. Do you remember when visiting an art museum for the first time and admiring famous paintings? When we see some abstract art we don't really understand what it means. People say it's beautiful, it's magnificent or it's a masterpiece. Until we learn to not complicate it and just look it simply, we can't see its beauty. With attention to simpleness we can admire this art like the others. It's not just where we perceive with our eyes but where we also listen to our emotion. Beauty is emotional, not rational. Each person can interpret differently. It's another beauty of our world.

To meditate well with your center, please consider it as though you are in an art museum. Your center can be different to that of others. Some prefer to observe a precise location, some look at an area, some just keep a comfortable feeling around that location. What is important is your comfortable feeling inside.

Less is More

In physics, we first learnt about Newtonian physics and later about quantum physics. Sir Isaac Newton was the one who could start to explain the universe with logic. It has become a foundation of our scientific knowledge. Anywhere we are in the world, we have to learn what he explained 300 years ago. One simple principle is about force. If we want move something to move faster, we have to apply more force. By this reason 'more is more'. That is quite like our life; we learn that to be successful, we have to work hard. Because more study and more work will offer better rewards and consequences. This principle is for the material world.

The mind is not material. It's spiritual. More may not be more when we work with our mind. We better apply quantum physics with our mind training. In the energy world, less can be more. When your mind moves less, when you have less expectation, it will be more powerful.

To meditate is just to do nothing or almost nothing. We listen when people tell us to work smarter, not harder. Meditation can allow us to release that potential which lets us work smarter.

Education and Meditation

Education is a way to develop people. We start to be developed since we were so young. Parents send us to school. We are in school to learn. The higher we learn, the more we develop our thinking so it becomes more and more complicated and more sophisticated. A higher degree, or higher education means more ability to think. However, the power of thinking is like the power of being behind the wheel of a car. We learn how to drive this car faster and faster. But nobody tells us where the brake of this car is. We never learn how to 'stop' thinking. Meditation's role is to know how to 'push the brake' and 'stop' our mind.

Comfort

There is another important principle. To meditate, you need to know how to be comfortable. Any uncomfortable condition will not support our mind to be still. To persevere against any uncomfortable condition such as pain, heat, or cold is not the way. If you have to fight, it will not be peaceful. In the beginning of a

supervised meditation session the teaching monk will guide us to do first relax our body. A relaxed body allow us to be comfortable physically. For the mind to be comfortable, we need to be able to concentrate it at the center with minimum effort.

To close your Eyes

Please pay attention to your eyes closing. Close them as gently as you can. Let your upper eye lids fall down slowly and naturally. Your upper and lower eyelids will not quite touch. You can feel that a little light can pass through little gap between your upper and lower eyelids. This way you will also feel some softness around your eyes.

To Relax the Body

It's a good idea to spend a few minutes to really relax our body because only a well relaxed body allows the mind to be guided to and stay still at the center.

Please relax first your forehead, then your eyebrows and eyelids. Relax the muscles of your whole face. Then relax your neck and your shoulders. Relax your arms, forearms, hands and fingers. Relax your chest, abdomen, thighs, forelegs, feet and toes.

If you relax your body well, you will notice that your body starts to feel very light and soft. It can be as light and soft as cotton or the air around you. Your body can transform to be transparent or empty. It's possible that you feel your body disappear or that you don't pay attention anymore to the existence of your body.

Be Here and Now

Please keep in mind that now is your resting time. It's your private moment. We are letting the body and mind take a rest. We work for others for a very long time in our life. Now we will spend time on ourselves. It's a gift for ourselves. The future hasn't arrived yet. The past has already happened and we can't change it. The present moment is the most important one. We will be with this moment.

To harbor worry about jobs, duties and others is not really the right way to have a happy life. Without ourselves in the picture, people, jobs, work or businesses still have their own ways to go. It's better that we know how to be free from all concern, to take

time to let mind to be clear and free. A clearer and brighter mind will do many things better. Being with the peacefulness of this moment is a wonderful step to change a life into a brighter one.

A Feeling of Vast Space

After you relax your body well and you feel really peaceful, you can imagine you are sitting in the middle of a vast space. For example, imagine you are sitting far away from the earth. Around you is emptiness. You are free and alone. You are sitting in the middle of the universe. Also possible is to imagine you are sitting in the middle of the sea or the ocean. Above you is a big bright blue sky. Beneath is the water. You are so free and relaxed. Atop a mountain is also a good imaginary place. Imagine you are sitting alone on the mountain. You feel how spacious the sky above you is. You see the horizon 360 degrees around you.

Feel at Home

Some of us feel very pleasant just to imagine being at home. It can be your comfortable living room or the beautiful garden behind your house. Imagining the moment you will feel really relaxed and be happy to do nothing. You will not try to think or to do anything. It's time to let your body and mind recharge. Enjoy

being with peacefulness by listening to yourself. Observe your relaxed body and later observe what's inside and appreciate the calmness, peacefulness and stillness which arises in your mind.

Memory of a Good Deed

To remind oneself of any good deed that you have done in the past can be also a very good way to start to meditate. In each and every life there are always some moments that we appreciate ourselves very much. It could be any moment you helped somebody with a particular condition and you succeeded happily. Any devotion, contribution or sacrifice that is very deep and touched your heart can bring brightness to your mind. Some good intentions may have initially been seen by others as impossible or uninteresting. But you saw its importance, so you tried and in the end made it happened. Just remind yourself of that moment or the feeling you had after you can accomplished it, and your mind will brighten. Stillness can be developed better with bright mind.

Be Soft and Gentle with Your Mind

Mind has the nature of a soft element. It will be easier to concentrate it at your center when you deal with it softly and gently. We don't like anyone to force us to do something. We appreciate it so much more when people ask us kindly. It is the same for your mind; never force your mind to be at the center. The more you put effort on your mind, the more it will resist and the more you will suffer.

Meditation is a good exercise to develop your patience. Once you give up trying to get everything immediately and accept that you have to spend more time on it, you are increasing your chance to get it.

Please do your best for your mind during meditation. Give it time to rest. Let's not disturb or bother the mind when it starts to be peaceful inside. Be patient, be kind, be soft and be gentle with it. The way a father and mother love their children and always forgive always their mistakes is the same way you can nurture your mind with kindness and gentleness. Spend time to achieve each step of meditation. Don't hurry. You are not competing with anyone.

To Bring the Mind to the Center

When you close your eyes, you will bring your mind to your center of gravity. We know that we can't simply grasp or catch our mind to achieve this. People don't even know where their mind is during each moment. The way of knowing where our mind is located is actually very simple. When we think of anything, our mind will be there. When you think to events in the past, your mind goes to the past. If you worry about the future, your mind is already in the future. When you think of people, your mind will be with them. To reduce this bustle and not let our mind run away, we will need just one little thing for our mind to stay at the center. This little thing is the way we train our mind. It's what we do with our mind when we meditate:

- **Visualization**

The first effective way to bring our mind to the center is to visualize an object at the center of your body. It could be a crystal ball of any size. Let it appear at your center. It can also be something similar such as a bubble, water drop or diamond. It will help keep the mind from being disturbed by wandering thoughts. It is the same as children, if they have nothing to do they will run around or bother you. If we offer them a toy, they will be busy with that instead.

A good mental object can also be the sun, a bright full moon or a bright star. It could even be any simple object that you feel comfortable to imagine. For Buddhists, it's possible to imagine the Buddha. For Christians, it can be an image of the cross. For Muslims, an image of a crescent moon could be ideal. Whatever your mental object, imagine it appearing with the least effort possible at the center of your body. Make it simple as much as possible by not doubting or analyzing it. Just a single question when you meditate can disturb all peacefulness inside. Be happy and satisfied with any object you have inside.

• Feeling the Center

Some people cannot be really comfortable with any mental object. It's possible to be content with just a feeling. It's the same as when we turn off the light in our sleeping room. In a moment we feel the softness of the pillow and also how comfortable the bed is.

• Mantra

Aside from visualizing or feeling, we can also imagine a voice spreading from your body's center or the middle of the object you observe. Let the voice be as natural and as peaceful as possible. The traditional mantra is 'Samma Arahang'. The words come from the Great master who introduced this technique in the last hundred years. This word comes from the Pali language. It means right enlightenment. For people who don't feel satisfied with this mantra because of feeling uncomfortable with unfamiliar words, you can recite the mantra 'Clear and bright'. Of course it's possible to translate this meaning into any language. If one prefers another mantra which is simple enough and they feel comfortable with, it is also alright. The essential part is that this mental voice lets our mind focus with minimum effort. When we focus on these words, other words or dialogue will not disturb our mind.

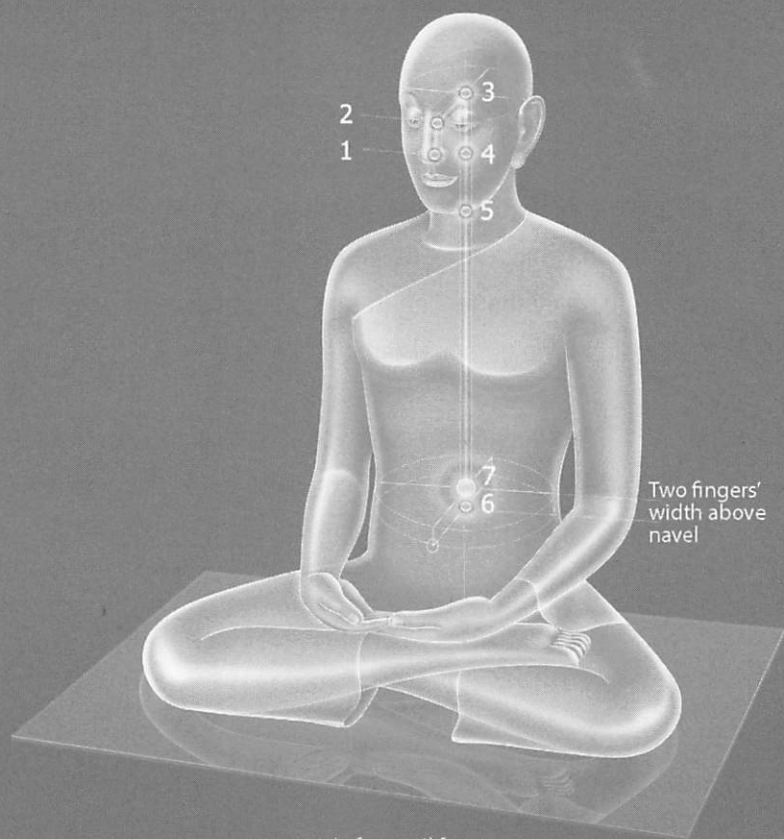
When you feel that your mind is peaceful or still enough and you prefer to not recite a mantra anymore, you can leave it and simply be with your centre without any mantra.

At Least One observation

You need to choose at least one option for your mind: Observing an inner image, listening to your inner voice or sensing an inner feeling. It can be any composition of the three, with a maximum of all three. You can create your own favorite style, for example an image of a crystal accompanied by the mantra 'Sam-ma Arahang' and feeling some energy at your center. Some may prefer just only the feeling in their abdomen. Some may love to repeat their own personalized, and so on.

Any way that makes you feel comfortable, relaxed and at the same time able to continuously focus on the middle area of your body is the right way for you.

The Seven Bases Leading to Peace of Mind



Base (1) Nostril { Left nostril for women
Right nostril for men

Base (2) Bridge of nose { Left for women
Right for men

Base (3) Middle part of head

Base (4) Roof of mouth

Base (5) Throat

Base (6) Navel

Base (7) Centre of gravity

Seven Bases of the Mind

According to our practice, the mind has several 'bases', or resting places, in the body.

The first base of the mind is at your nostril. For ladies it's your left nostril. For gentlemen it's your right one.

The second base of the mind is the inner corner of your eye; left for ladies and right for gentlemen.

The third base of the mind one in the middle of your skull.

The fourth base of the mind one is behind your palette.

The fifth base of the mind is in the throat at the level of your Adam's apple.

The sixth base of the mind is in your abdomen at the umbilicus level.

The seventh base of the mind is 2 finger widths above your navel level (2 finger widths above the sixth base of the mind)

When you meditate, you can imagine your object such as a crystal ball, sun, moon or star. Let it become small and move to our nostril. Let it stay at your nostril for a few seconds and then

move it to the corner of your eye. Let it stay for a few more seconds and move it again each time from one base to another until the object arrives at your seventh base of mind.

Some appreciate this technique to move the object through the seven bases. Some prefer to attend directly to the seventh one. Anyway you feel comfortable is the right way for you.

Concentration – Relaxation Balance

If you remember using a microscope or telescope in science class, you will realize how importance of patience needed to tune lenses to obtain a clear picture. It's similar to when we tune a radio or used to tune televisions to receive a channels. We are used to being careful to tune devices to get a precise result.

When you meditate, you need to be concentrated and relaxed at the same time. For relaxation, it's depends most on your body. Please relax your body to the maximum. The more you can relax your body, the better your meditation will be.

For concentration, it's all about your mind. It means your mind needs to concentrate on something but with a minimum of effort. You cannot let your mind have nothing at all to do because without any concentration, your mind can be restless easily. The 'monkey mind' comes when we have nothing to do. You need a little something for your mind to be drawn to.

The mind will be still only when you can relax your body to the maximum your body and concentrate your mind to the minimum. You do only this. Relax your body first, then bit by bit you focus your mind gently and peacefully on the center. If you do it well, you will enjoy it and feel that meditation is easy.

If you are not mindful enough when focusing your mind then you might lose your focus, or as we say, become too relaxed. If it's very easy for you to fall asleep or have a wandering mind then your mind is not yet well tuned.

In the opposite way, if you try to concentrate too much by forcing your mind to see a mental object or hear a mantra, you will lose your comfort bit by bit. Once you feel uncomfortable, your mind becomes restless again.

To guide the mind to be still with the minimum mindfulness effort of and the maximum body relaxation is considered the art of meditation.

Thought-Free Situation

Thinking processes are necessary to cope with the environment. In our life from the moment we wake up each morning, we start to interact with our surroundings. In almost every moment there are signals coming from our five sense organs: eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin. We need to think in order to interpret and understand these signals. That's why we hear the phrase 'I think, therefore I am'. It means that without thinking, we are missing something in our human life.

Meditation is another mode of mind function. When we open our eyes, we are the subject and the environment is the object. We need to interpret what we perceive from the environment, so we need to know how to think.

To meditate, we observe ourselves. We are the subject and object at the same time. The thinking process doesn't work anymore for this mode. To 'stop' thinking or be free from thought is a new situation we need to be comfortable doing.

When the mind doesn't move, it will be more powerful. Especially, if our mind can be still at the center of the body it will be able to connect to an important resource of energy and wisdom. That's why we say 'less can be more'. The less your mind moves, the more powerful and helpful it can be.

The Wandering Mind Visits

If the 'wandering mind' turns up, please don't pay any attention. Treat it as an uninvited guest. When you don't pay it any attention, it will leave you. In this way you can keep continuing to focus on picture, feeling or mantra at your center. The more continuously you can be peaceful at your center, the closer you will feel to your inner energy, and the more you feel calm and prefer to be with your center and forget all disturbances.

Open Your Eyes and Close Them Again

In the case where you focus on your center but the wandering mind still persists, you will start to lose your comfortable feeling. The last solution is to open your eyes. It's the same when your computer does not co-operate; the last solution is to restart it. After opening your eyes, take a few seconds or minutes to look the environment around you. Tune your body and your mind to be relaxed again. Check that your body is really comfortable. Also check your mind to make sure that you feel peaceful again outside and inside. If you are sitting in a natural place, take time to observe nature. Nature has the power to soften our mind. When you feel peaceful and comfortable again, close your eyes gently, and start to focus your mind on the inside of the body again.

Falling Asleep

If you fall asleep, don't be concerned. It can be a good sign since it shows that you are relaxing well, though perhaps just a bit too well.

Take several deep breaths, move your body a little and continue practicing. Many people have a good experience after this step.

Take care to also use a little more effort. You may need more concentration. An Image or mantra can be very helpful here. When we look something or listen to something, it's easier to maintain our consciousness. Visualization of an image or recitation of a mantra will maintain your concentration and consciousness continuously.

Expectation

Experiences and pictures are not the objective of meditation practice. What is important is your mind development. All experience is just natural consequences of your practice. Without expectation your mind can be stilled easier.

Expectation is always accompanied by worrying. We spend more of our mind energy when we expect things. One right solution is to just be mindful. It means if you can be careful and calm at the same time, you will have the best conditions for your mind to be still. Never let stress stay in our mind. With calmness your mind spends less energy.

A Good Observer

Most people in our modern time have been trained to be managers. We learn to manage everything in our life. When you meditate, be careful not to be a good manager. Rather, you have to be a good observer.

When any experience, feeling or thought comes into your meditation, you should only observe. To observe means to be mindful of its appearance. It's a minimum-effort activity for our mind. We will not try to interpret, analyze, think, manage or solve anything when we meditate.

Be in the 'Let it be' mode and you will see how wonderful our still mind can be. Or say to yourself 'whatever will be, will be'. Just relax and don't be serious. Everything is OK and will be OK.

Experience

Once your mind becomes more and more still, experiences will gradually and naturally develop. A mental crystal ball, bright sphere, sun or moon can become suddenly clearer and brighter. If anything arises by itself, let it be. Just observe and continue. An experience is a good sign to show that your mind is starting to be still.

What if you are imagining a crystal ball but the sun appears in your stomach? Solution: follow the nature. Observe the sun.

Never be frightened to see anything at your center. The center is an exceptional position in the body in which anything that happens will be good and pure. Some people feel that they are falling into a hole. Some see bright rings or a tunnel. Some feel that their body becomes bigger and bigger. Some don't feel as if their body still exists anymore. Some see themselves inside. All are good signs. Just keep observing the experience. Look especially at the center of the experience.

We suggest you consult a teaching monk for advice on any more advanced experiences.

Meditation Duration

If each day you can meditate for an hour, it would be excellent! If you can do it only half an hour, it is still helpful. You can split your meditation. Half an hour in the morning plus another half an hour in the evening gives you an hour of meditation for that day.

Any minute you meditate counts. Just closing your eyes for 1 minute or 5 minutes offers a good break in any busy situation. It will be good to create a habit of bringing your mind to rest at the center. The more you can bring your mind to its right place at the center of your body, the more healthy and well maintained it will be.

Regularity

One important factor for good development is being regular. Meditating everyday but briefly is better than waiting a long time to do it on a special day. Also we encourage you to maintain a connection to your center even when your eyes still open. You can do any daily activity and spare a little attention within at the same time. Even a little mindfulness to see or to feel your center can be important and very beneficial for your daily life.

No Time to Meditate?

Many people insist that they are too busy and have no time to meditate. Talking like this, it seems like this person will be too busy for their whole life. How we can be free from busy situations when we can't offer a few minutes for our mind to have a break?.

Meditation can be considered the best investment of your time. Any minute you spend meditating only enhances the rest. When you meditate for half an hour, it might seem like it has cost you 30 minutes that could be spent doing other, more profitable activities. But after this 30 minutes you can do everything better. You see everything clearer and more precisely. You have a better mood. You feel better with yourself with others. With a bright and powerful mind, you can do everything better. Solutions conceived by your now-still mind can be worth more than many hours of ineffective concentration.

Be Neutral

To have a good personal development with meditation, we suggest that individuals be neutral. It means learning to be calm in every moment regardless of how good or bad it may seem. When we are always neutral inside, it can also be very peaceful because neutrality comes with calmness.

Neutrality doesn't mean being indifferent but rather being mindful. When we see anything, instead of interpreting immediately, we should look at the whole situation as it is. It reduces subjective interpretation and bias. Neutrality is therefore an important step to develop our inner wisdom.

When the mind stops

• Happiness

When our mind can be still at the center, it can be connected to an energy resource. You feel automatically recharged. Your emotions, feelings, enthusiasm and motivation improve. You feel happier with yourself. You see your environment as more acceptable and friendly. Life has more value. The world around you becomes more enjoyable.

• Wisdom

Not only does energy emerge when your mind is still at the center, but it may also receive beneficial information. We can call it 'wisdom'. Knowledge or ideas arising when your mind is still is always very good and effective. Many people can solve difficult situations when they stop trying to think.

A still mind can give us different views of life and situations. We feel more sympathy and empathy. We care more about the environment. We develop more responsibility. We love ourselves and all beings more.

Join a Retreat

If you are able to enjoy long holidays, it's a good opportunity to join a meditation retreat. At the retreat you will be part of a group under the supervision of a teaching monk. The rhythm and atmosphere of the retreat can help you to enjoy better mental and spiritual development. When you meditate many sessions a day and practice as group, it can enhance motivation.

Retreats also offer the chance to meet other like-minded people. Anyone who loves to meditate distinguishes themselves as one ready to benefit society. One who meditates will discover peacefulness inside. When we are peaceful, we don't want to hurt or disturb others. Aside from non-harm, we want to share with, support or help out others more. Friends who meditate are more likely to be your 'good friends'.

Group Forming

It's also good to have friends who love to meditate who live nearby. You can organize together an agreeable session each week to meditate together. If in your community you have friends who love to share time and encourage each other to meditate, it will be a great opportunity.

You can also initiate other good activities for your society such as to help support children in schools, or to promote health or create interesting spirituality within your community and so on.

Precepts

It's also important to observe precepts, or basic moral guidelines. In Buddhism, we consider that a reasonable human being will not kill, not steal, not commit adultery and not lie to others. Additionally humans should not drink alcohol which disturbs mindfulness and makes one liable to break the above precepts.

People who take precepts will have better meditation because the level of mindfulness is high enough to maintain the mind within our body without distress.

Anytime an individual breaks a precept, a dark element will arise in their mind. This element is the opposite of the bright element which arises when we meditate.

Always try to remember: Observing precepts allows your meditation and self-development to progress better.

World Peace Through Inner Peace

We know the Nobel Peace Prize has existed for more than 100 years but there are still so many wars across our planet. Not many people we see in our daily life tell us that they are peaceful.

The solution to be peaceful and happy can be very simple. If each person can find their own peacefulness on an individual basis, we can avoid many conflicts and problems in our society. Just knowing how to close our eyes and guide our mind to be at its right place inside means a brighter life has already started. Real peacefulness can be created only from the inside. It originates with the mindfulness, respect, understanding, sympathy and empathy of each individual.

Peacefulness at the personal level, family level, community level or global level can be created by a genuinely simple method which we call 'meditation'.

Next book

Benefits of Meditation

How meditation improves your emotional intelligence

How meditation helps you be more creative and intuitive

Meditation, morality and spirituality

THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS:

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Phra Pawithai Vajiravijjo (Shaijarernwana) is a Thai Buddhist monk who has a background of scientific and socio-cultural study.

He has a medical degree in Thailand, masters degree (maîtrise) in educational science (DEA.) and occupational science, and a doctoral degree in medical science from France. His spiritual background began when he was ordained as Buddhist monk almost nine years ago.

In 2015 he developed a new international retreat center called 'Pa Pae Meditation Retreat' in Chiang Mai, Thailand. The aim of this project is to create a place for people from around the world to learn about meditation and Buddhist wisdom. Phra Pawithai believes it's important to introduce meditation with terms and principles that all people from any part of the world understand easily. His objective is to inspire people to apply meditation every day, as part of their natural routine. He considers his teaching as a chance to share Eastern wisdom to the Western world.

encouraged by how more and more people say that meditation can change and improve their life.

A guide book to begin meditation easily and simply

*Inspirational Meditation
For Beginners*

Volume I

*Understand an effective technique called
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Follow the step by step explanation on how to meditate

*Learn an inspirational technique to be calm,
happy and wise*

*Discover peacefulness within, with
a simple meditation technique*

Phra Pawithai Vajiravijjo

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