

Credit given to www.StevePavlina.com forum member “shivraj” for all information in this post and document

Understanding Meditation

Giving attention is not meditation. Meditation is not concentration. Meditation is not contemplation. The word 'meditation' originated from spirituality. In India, spiritual seekers understood the deeper aspects of 'meditation'. But today the word 'meditation' has become commonplace and is being used without its deeper meaning. It has therefore lost its importance. 'Giving attention' is being understood as 'meditation' by most people.

Meditation is an attribute. It is an attribute of the witness. The witness which is called differently by different people... God, Allah, Self, Self-awareness, Consciousness, etc. Meditation is that source which is present even in deep sleep – self-awareness - even in the state of unawareness.

Meditation simply means 'doing nothing.' For some people 'doing nothing' is very difficult. How can we do 'nothing'? If someone asks, 'What should I do to get sleep? What can be done to get sleep faster?' Then he will be told, 'You have to do nothing to get sleep. Just go and lie down. If you try to get sleep, it will run away. You can get sleep very easily without making any effort.' In the same way, meditation is also a process in which there is no need to do anything. You simply have to be present.

The techniques which have been designed to kick start meditation or to improve concentration, have also been called 'meditation'. This 'meditation' is a path to self-meditation. Self-Meditation means meditation of 'Self' which is the real aim of meditation. Just improving concentration is not the goal of meditation. The word 'Self-Meditation' is more appropriate than the word 'meditation'. But due to the greater prevalence of the word 'meditation', people have forgotten the real meaning of meditation. Concentration is a ladder in the path of meditation. Concentration improves with meditation. But if someone is meditating with the aim of improving concentration, then he is taking only minimal benefit from meditation. Many a times it so happens that someone begins on the path of meditation to attain 'Self-Realization', but he becomes very happy with improved concentration having gotten some powers and strays away from his real goal.

Meditation has also been taken as a Yogic Practice. Meditation (awareness) is necessary in every field of life. No work can be done without meditation. Meditation is essential for all activities of life. All our senses affect our body. Whenever our senses are directed externally and are involved in external things, then all the energy of our mind gets exhausted in the external objects. Therefore it is necessary that we have some control over our senses, which is possible through meditation. Through meditation it is possible to utilize for ourself a part of the energy which is getting consumed in the external world. To shift the mind from external objects and stabilize it inside is the beginning of meditation.

=====

Increase your Will Power

Every person makes promises to himself and to others. Many times he is unable to fulfill them and his will power starts to diminish. Therefore, as the first step, do not make a promise that you cannot keep. If you have made a vow, you must fulfill it. In order to strengthen your will power begin with minor promises. Some examples of such promises can be: I shall hold my hand high continuously for 2 minutes. I will not bring it down before the end of 2 minutes. Or, I will study for 2 hours. Or, I will not move from where I am sitting. Or, I will not have my lunch today. Fasting is a very good experiment to increase your will power. As these smaller promises get fulfilled, you can take upon bigger ones and add to your self confidence.

You could perform another experiment before retiring for the night. When you hit the sacks, ask yourself, "Is there one more task that I can complete before I go to sleep?" Then go ahead and complete it. Even if the task is trivial and not urgent, complete one such task every day. If you do so, you will find your willpower increasing tremendously.

BREATHING MEDITATION

Sit in an appropriate posture and mudra of meditation.

Relax yourself by taking one or two deep breaths and releasing slowly.

Let your breathing continue to be as it is at present. Shallow breathing or deep breathing, comfortable, natural... however it may be, let it continue the same. If you control your breathing, then it is not meditation. It is Pranayam (breath regulation).

Be aware whether the breath is going in or coming out... now it went in... now it came out...from the right nostril... from the left nostril... or from both nostrils, etc. Be aware of every direction and every state (cold or warm) of breath.

Concentrate the mind on the breath that is going in and coming out. Perceive the breath that is going in and identify the breath that is coming out... it went in... it came out... went in... came out. Just remain aware of your breathing as it is - natural breathing, comfortable, easy breathing.

Sometimes your breathing will be deep, sometimes shallow. Keeping the body steady, remain aware of the coming and going of every breath.

Practice this meditation for 20-45 minutes as per your convenience. After some time when you become an expert in this meditation, then meditate on the interval between two breaths.

SOUND MEDITATION

Close your eyes and sit in the meditation posture and fingers of hand in dhyan mudra (index finger touching the tip of thumb, remaining fingers stretched out).

Keeping the body steady, listen to all the sounds around you and try to perceive and identify five different types of sounds.

If there is the sound of a rotating fan, then there can be various other sounds contained in that sound, which you should listen to carefully. Various types of sounds can include

conversations of people, clattering of vessels, children playing, horns and sounds of cars, different vehicles, etc. The sound of something falling, the sound of somebody walking, the sounds of TV, tape recorder, or radio, the sound of birds, dogs barking or fighting. There can be the sounds of water flowing, the sound of a whistle, sound of somebody laughing or crying. When there are no sounds, then try to perceive the sound of silence. Feel the stillness.

Try to perceive every type of sound around you. If you can hear the sound of an aeroplane flying, then there are different sounds of various types of aeroplanes. Try to identify even the minutest of sounds. After identifying five different types of sounds, open your eyes.

Every week, go on trying to increase the number of sounds perceived.

THOUGHT MEDITATION

Close your eyes and sit in the meditation posture and fingers of hand in dhyan mudra (index finger touching the tip of thumb, remaining fingers stretched out).

Start watching your thoughts. See which thoughts are going on inside you.

Keeping the body steady, keep watching the types of thoughts that are going on in your mind from a distance (without getting identified, remaining separate). In this meditation, while being separate, you will know what kind of thoughts go on in your mind, what thoughts are going on about various subjects...

Keep watching and knowing your thoughts like a witness. Don't label any thought as good or bad. Avoid any such desire that I want more thoughts or I don't want any thoughts.

Initially do this meditation for 5 minutes and gradually go on increasing its time. When you become an expert in this meditation, then start giving numbers to your thoughts.

EAGLE MEDITATION

Eagle is a bird that views from the top. Its vision is amazingly sharp. In the same way, this meditation is practiced with open eyes to develop your physical and mental vision. Therefore it has been called Eagle Meditation.

With eyes open, ask yourself which all objects of red color are present around you?

On opening your eyes in the morning, while going to the washbasin, on the way see which red-colored objects are present. Search for at least 5 red objects around you.

Make a resolution every day to see different colors. Green the second day, blue the third day, orange some other day, and so on.

In this way, you will start knowing about the objects in your home. We have stopped seeing our home and the objects present there. With this meditation, we increase our power of observation. There are many things we have actually stopped seeing. But with this meditation, you will be surprised that you start seeing again. It may happen then when you decide upon pink color, then you don't easily get objects of this color. If you take violet, then you won't be able to see violet objects very easily. But if you want to see those colors, then you will have to see your whole house very carefully and meticulously.

After about after 12 days, all colours would have been exhausted. This is when your observation is truly put to test. There are many colors. Take different shades of a color such as light blue, dark blue, etc. and continue practicing this meditation.

INTERVAL MEDITATION

Feel In The Blank

Close your eyes and sit in the meditation posture and fingers of hand in dhyan mudra (index finger touching the tip of thumb, remaining fingers stretched out). Remain aware of your breath moving in and out through the nostrils.

Now when the breath goes in and comes out, then there is an interval between these two, even if it is the thousandth part of a second. Concentrate your mind on that interval (point) where the breath is neither going in nor coming out, i.e. there is a gap - blank. (Feel in the blank, don't fill in the blank). Similar interval exists in between two thoughts. People fill this interval with thoughts and that is why they always exist in the head. Meditation connects us to the heart - not the physical heart, but our center.

Similarly, when the breath after coming out goes in again, then there is such a point when the breath has stopped for some time. Keep your attention on that interval (gap) making a firm resolution in your mind that I will be aware about both these points of every breath - where the breath changes its direction. Your normal breathing should continue. If you miss these points, then there is no need to worry. Pay attention to the next breath.

Our breathing is always going on all the time. That is why this meditation can be done anywhere and anytime.

Thought Numbering Meditation

In this meditation, for becoming thoughtless, thoughts are destroyed by giving sequential numbers. Begin the meditation by watching every thought.

Now start numbering every thought. As soon as one thought arises, number it in your mind as 'one'. As the second thought arises, number it as 'two.' In this way, continue counting the thoughts.

Sit quietly even when there are no thoughts. If this thought arises that, "At this time I don't have any thought", then number this thought also because, "I don't have any thought" is also a thought.

Don't follow any thought. Just number it and leave it.

With this meditation, the number of thoughts will reduce drastically. Sometimes even a thoughtless state will result. Practice this meditation regularly without expecting a given result.

Gratitude Meditation

Close your eyes for 2 -3 minutes.

Look at yourself. Imagine your duplicate or clone which is exactly like you, but blind.

Look at the whole life of your blind clone. How he/she is living from morning to night. Look at what difficulties he/she faces due to being blind. Look at your clone living your daily life.

While imagining all this, feel all of his/her suffering arising out of the difficulties.

After seeing all this, make your clone go away. Now you will be filled with gratitude because you don't face all these difficulties since you have sight. Thank the Lord for this.

On the second day of this meditation, see your clone as deaf and perceive all his difficulties. Thank God. Get filled with gratitude. The feeling of gratitude makes you sensitive and receptive. You begin to understand more of others' pains and sufferings.

Every day in this meditation, contemplate on various blessings in the life of an individual and imagine about them. This will enable you to feel the grace that has been bestowed upon you. Without contemplation, even diamonds are coals.

Concentration Meditation

Concentration Meditation means to concentrate on something. For instance, if you are asked to recall what you had eaten yesterday at night or in the afternoon, then you will have to concentrate there. In this way, you can do this meditation by various methods. Here is the way to meditate recalling music:

Close your eyes, sit in the meditation posture, and listen with your internal ears.

Keep your fingers in the dhyana mudra (join the index finger and thumb while keeping rest of the fingers straight) during this experiment.

With your eyes closed, try to listen with your internal ears the sound of a flute. (This flute is actually not playing anywhere outside. Just like you can hear movie or album songs in your mind even when they are actually not being played anywhere, in the same manner listen to the sound of a flute).

Listen only to the sound of a flute, if you hear the sound of some drums or anything else in between, push it aside.

Now open your eyes.

In this meditation, many people feel that they could hear the sound initially, then it got lost, again they could grasp it, again it got lost. This happens because the flute is not really being played at this time which can be listened to. Many people have listened to the sound of flute very often, that is why it can be very easy for them. It may not be simple for many others because they have hardly ever heard the sound of a flute.

In this experiment, you should keep changing the sounds. You can sometimes listen to drums, sometimes to a clarinet and so on. In this way you can keep changing the musical instrument. This will help strengthen your concentration power. You can listen to a different sound every day.

Worry Fast

The One Hour Worry Cure Technique

Man fasts a lot. He goes without food for the sake of his health or out of the fear of God. Man thinks a lot about the food he feeds himself.... whether he should eat something or not... the impact of what he is eating... whether he will enjoy it or not. Obviously it is important to think so, because certain foods have a negative impact on the body. But such thinking is secondary. What then is primary?

What is primary is what you are feeding your mind with. Have you ever pondered on what thoughts you feed your mind in twenty-four hours? Are you feeding positive thoughts or negative thoughts? These are thoughts that impact your whole life. You have always used only two ways to combat worry... fight or flight. A better way is to face it.

Face the worry by acknowledging it and by just being with it without worrying over worry. Face the worry by deciding a fixed amount of time where you will not worry at

all, come what may. This is what is called as WORRY FAST. To start with, decide an hour of the day where you will be on a worry fast. During that hour you will not entertain any thoughts of worry at all. You are welcome to worry later as much as you want. During that one hour, whatever incident happens, however terrible it may seem, carry through your resolve of not being worried. During that hour, someone might inform you that belongings have been stolen. Reply back saying that you will not worry since it is none of your business. That person will emphasize that it is your belongings that have been stolen. Retort back saying that then he need not worry since it is none of his business. This example emphasizes that during your hour of worry fast, no incident should affect you however adverse it may be.

Choose an hour out of your schedule as per what suits you. There already might be a time of the day where you are most stressed. Some are stressed in the morning since they hurry a lot. That is the perfect time then to go on a worry fast. Some may be most anxious at work. Then choose an hour at work accordingly. There are many who are disturbed when they are back home from work. They try to quieten their disturbed mind by diverting the mind elsewhere, watching television, consuming alcohol, gambling, gossiping, etc. The result is that they invite more worry unnecessarily. Instead of a 'flight' from worry, face it. Face it by going on a worry fast. One hour of worry fast strengthens your ability to face worry. This hour is a great investment.

The procedure of worry fast is very simple. Staunchly determine about abstaining from worry in that hour. Tell yourself that you will remain cool, calm and poised for the next one hour. Then during that hour, when an event that triggers worry occurs, remind yourself that you are on a worry fast. Begin doing so. Once you have tasted being worry free for an hour, then the process for being liberated from worry is set in motion.

Neutral Meditation

Neutral meditation means you are neutral for every thought. If you are in sorrow, you are neutral; if you are in joy yet you are neutral. When you are practicing this meditation, then:

1) If you are sad, don't say, "I am sad." At such time, say, "Thoughts of sorrow are passing through my mind."

2) If you are happy, yet you should remain neutral. At such time also, say, "Thoughts of happiness are passing through my mind." At such time, don't say, "I am happy" or "I am sad", instead your thoughts should be neutral in both instances. That is why it has been called as 'Neutral Meditation.'

You can practice this meditation any time of the day. When you get thoughts of boredom, make them neutral. When you get thoughts of hatred, then too look at them with a neutral feeling and say, "At this time, thoughts of boredom or thoughts of hatred are passing by." Never say, "I am bored... angry... depressed... anxious..." etc. This will help you to remain balanced and steady in every situation.

Stop Getting Angry on Anger

Whenever you feel anger rising in you, remember these steps:

1. Accept your anger first. 'Yes, I am feeling angry.'
2. There is no need to be angrier about being angry. 'Anger on anger' is the result of ignorance.
3. When there is no anger on anger, then it will be fairly simple to get rid of anger.
4. Repeat to yourself that now that this anger has arisen, there is something I need to act upon. This action ultimately leads to my growth.
5. Whenever there is anger, it would have left you with a lesson... a lesson of understanding. A lesson that would have taught you the art of being peaceful even while in tension.

The Coolest way of calming Anger

Prayer : The blessing of peace

If anger is burning coal, then prayer is cool water. The words of prayer cool down the burning of the whole body. On praying, a person's receptivity for peace increases. That means he allows peace to enter inside him. Peace fills his whole body, his whole life. It proves to be a blessing, a boon.

For calming the flames of anger, sing the prayer given below from within, with awareness and love.

I am peaceful in the presence of God (Silence).
I am experiencing complete peace.
I am created by God,
Therefore tranquillity, peace, and happiness, which is the nature of God
is spreading within my heart and mind.
God has created nothing to disrupt this peace.
Whatever may be the reason of my instability,
it is not in the list of the Almighty.
I am offering myself in His lap,
just like a tired child rests in the lap of his mother.
Waves of happiness are arising all around me and I am feeling
a sense of stillness everywhere.
Peace... Peace... Peace...

The above is the shortest method to get freedom from anger. In this method, you just have to repeat this Truth, this prayer, again and again. The words of Truth can liberate you from anger easily.

Need or Want

People complain, because they compare. "If my neighbour, or colleague has purchased a television, then I must have it." At that moment, before buying anything, ask yourself, "Do I really need it?"

When you say, it is a 'Need', it means there is a compulsion of buying because it is essential and can be used daily. 'Want' is that which you like and wish to have, only because others have it or it is nice to have.

Whenever you feel like buying anything, ask the question in simple alphabets... N or W (Need or Want). If the answer is 'Want', then think again. Are all your needs fulfilled? - children's need, household needs, medicine, grocery, etc. You can definitely spend on 'Wants', but only after your 'Needs' have been addressed. You will be surprised to find out that more than half of your problems of money will be solved by 'N or W'.

"I DON'T KNOW" MEDITATION

In 'I don't know' meditation, all labels have to be kept aside. A label is any word that we use to represent a physical object.

When you see any object - like looking at a wall clock in your house, tell yourself, "I don't know what this is." Whenever you see any object at home or even if you see your mother, then don't say immediately that this is my mother. You should say, "I don't know who this is. Let me see which lady is going". Then look at her face carefully. You would be surprised that so many changes have taken place in your mother's face and you haven't even noticed them because seeing had totally stopped. You have put the label that "This is mother. What is there to be seen?" Seeing has stopped. But we have to start seeing again. Looking at a chair, don't say 'chair'. Ask, 'What is this thing?'. Seeing in this way changes your attention. This is called 'I don't know' meditation.

After having seen every object in the room without labeling, then that very room will become alive for you. Every object will feel more colorful and more alive. This meditation will also end your boredom.