

The Power of Meditation

Tactics and Techniques for Beginners

Jim Carruth

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*“Enlightenment is an accident. Meditation makes
you accident prone.”*

Roshi Richard Baker,
San Francisco Zen Center

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Chapter 1

Preparing for Meditation

Set aside time in your day for creative thinking, problem solving, shopping list making, to-do list making, etc., so these things don't accidentally start creeping into your meditation time. If you don't allow a separate time for these activities, your meditation time will become your default time for these things to happen. It's a bad habit to get into, and since we are learning meditation here for the first time, this book will be about what to do as well as what not to do, so as to give you the optimal meditation experience.

You want your meditation time to be solely a place and time in which to quiet the mind, and eventually go beyond the mind. Once you are out of meditation, you may find it easier to problem solve and think creatively, so you can put your mind at ease during the meditation. There will be plenty of time for these things later. In fact, you may find an increased ability to problem

solve and think creatively, if you've given your full attention to clearing your mind during your meditation. Using your meditation time to do other things is not only a bad habit to get into, but a bit ridiculous as well. Let me illustrate:

The Parable of the Jogger

I love to use analogies - which I will call parables just to sound biblical - and I'll be doing this from time to time in this book to help me hit my points home. So let me illustrate this point with a parable. It's called The Parable of the Jogger. First, imagine you are going out jogging.

Let's say you jog four or five laps around a track or the block near where you live. You wouldn't try to run errands while you're jogging - down to the supermarket to buy some bread and milk, then over to the cleaners to pick up your dry cleaning, and then over to the library to drop off your overdue books. That would be ridiculous, wouldn't it?

To most people, this wouldn't make any sense, although we might all be a lot healthier if we ran all our errands this way.

What you would do is your jogging first. After you've finished running your laps, you come in the house, shower and change, and then you get into your car to run your errands.

It is the same thing with preparing to meditate. If you absolutely have to write out your to-do list for the day, then you might want to do that first, before you meditate.

If you are mulling over some problem you are trying to solve, or planning to write a book, create a painting or write some music, spend your creative time doing it before or after you meditate and not during the meditation. That way you don't end up accidentally obsessing over it during your meditation. This frees you up to give yourself totally over to the meditation

If you must write out your to-do list, then you can do that before meditating because it will take some of the pressure off you while you meditate, and might make it easier for you to relax knowing your day has already been planned out ahead of time. If you are planning to do some creative activity during the day, then I would recommend meditating first.

I will explain why in the next chapter.

Chapter 2

The Function of Meditation

A function is different than a purpose. A function is simply a task that a certain activity accomplishes. It is a practical matter, rather than a philosophical one.

A purpose is more of a reason why you do something, like having a mission in life, or a reason for living. Its nature is philosophical, rather than functional.

The purpose of meditation is quite a different matter than its function. We will be looking at the purpose of meditation in another chapter. For now, let's start with the basics. What is the function of meditation?

The function of meditation is to clear the mind of all thoughts.

Now, you might wonder, "Why one would you want to do this?" I will illustrate my point here, using another parable.

The Parable of the Fallow Field

Ok, imagine this time that you are a farmer, and that you grow wheat. Every season you plant wheat in the same fields. Every season, you allow one of your fields to "go fallow."

If you are not a farmer and do not know what this means, it means that you intentionally dig up your crops, plow everything under, and let your field rest for one season. This period of rest - of not growing anything - allows the soil to restore fertility to the ground.

Then, when you plant crops in that field again, the soil has become rich and fertile again, and produces a superior crop. It produces a better crop than the other fields that are worn out from being in continual use each season.

Think of your morning meditation as a brief fallow period for the mind. You intentionally allow your mind to "go fallow," that is to say, not think thoughts in a steady stream as you normally would.

Then, when you get up from your meditation and starting doing things again, there is an amazing richness and clarity to your thinking that wasn't there before. Ideas come to you unbidden, from out of the blue. Problems get solved without agonizing over them. This is because you have given your constantly-thinking mind a rest through the process of meditation.

When you are out of meditation and your thinking

process starts up again, you have created a rich, fertile field for new thoughts to grow in. It has not been depleted by constant use, and the fallow period you give it in meditation allows your mind to become fertile again.

You have not worn it out from obsessively thinking the same old thoughts over and over again. You've created a fresh, rich space for new thoughts to grow. Some people have also referred to this process as "recharging my batteries."

This is why I wrote in chapter 1, "If you are planning to do some creative activity during the day, then I would recommend meditating first." You will be preparing the fields of the mind for some creative ideas to grow.

The Parable of the Empty Desk

For you city dwellers who work in offices or have desks at home, imagine an extremely cluttered, messy desk. The desk is so messy and cluttered that you can't find the important papers you need to find. In fact, you can't find anything you need because it is buried under a pile of clutter. Does this sound familiar?

You take a cardboard file box, the kind you see on TV whenever a character is walking out the door after cleaning out his desk, and you sweep everything from the top of your desk into the cardboard box. You might need more than one box to do this. Now you have a

perfectly clean and uncluttered desktop.

You start by putting down a desk mat, your telephone, a pad of paper, a pen, and your rolodex. Now you have a clean, functional desk where you have everything you need easily at hand. When you need to find something, you can refer to the file boxes, and return it to the desk, or perhaps organize it into a filing cabinet.

This is where the famous Zen aesthetic comes from - a life designed from empty surfaces instead of clutter. A black shellacked bowl with one grain of white rice sitting at the bottom of it. Simple, uncluttered, and beautiful.

Think of your mind prior to meditation as a cluttered desk. Through the practice of meditation, you clear the mind of thoughts - like clearing off the desk - leaving only the things you need immediately. Then, when you get back to your desk again, you can find things easily and work much more comfortably and efficiently.

So it is with the mind. After meditation, your mind is cleared of thoughts and uncluttered. As thoughts begin to come in again, you can organize them more easily because you are not flooded by them. They are not piled high on top of each other, like so many papers on a desk.

Your mind, like an empty desk, is now clean and ready for business again.

Chapter 3

Quieting the Mind by Using Objects of Meditation

To get our mind off our thoughts and quiet the mind, we need to learn how to develop the discipline of focusing our thoughts.

When I was at my first job, I learned how to use a Rapidograph technical pen creating technical illustrations. During the time I was in training for my profession, I did not think of anything else but what I was doing with the pens and templates I was using to create the technical drawings for the place I worked.

Before that, my mind was all over the place, racing here and there, from thought to thought, like a bee pollinating flowers, not staying on any one thought for very long.

Today they would call this ADD, or Attention Deficit Disorder. I simply hadn't learned how to concentrate and focus my attention. Learning how to concentrate on a task, such as drawing with technical pens and french

curves, strengthened my mind's ability to concentrate. While working, I was able to keep extraneous thoughts out of my mind by focusing solely on the task at hand.

We're going to be doing something very similar to this when we first learn to meditate. We will be keeping extraneous thoughts out of our minds by focusing on one thing in particular, as opposed to moving from thought to thought, so that our mind begins to learn how to quiet down.

As our meditation practice matures, we will experience less and less thoughts. Eventually we will be able to quiet the mind of thinking altogether.

Choosing one thing to focus on, so that our mind learns to concentrate, is called an *object of meditation*. Traditional meditation techniques may include many different types of objects to concentrate on, but they are all treated the same way during meditation practice. You focus on the object of meditation to the exclusion of all other thoughts, thereby quieting the mind. Allow me to illustrate this idea with another parable.

The Parable of the Fearful Flyer

A lot of people who have control issues in their lives also tend to have a fear of flying. For some people, there is no time when you feel more out of control than when you are flying in an airplane.

To get over my fear of flying, which are thoughts ob-

sessively directed toward fear, I used another thought to distract myself from the fearful thoughts. First, I always chose a window seat whenever possible. That way I had a good view of the ground outside my window. Whenever I found myself becoming afraid, such as during a patch of turbulence, I would look out the window and get a good view of the ground.

Seeing the ground - safe, comforting, stable and unmoving - focused my mind away from the fear, and gradually I was able to use this technique to distract my mind from its obsessive fear thoughts created by my reaction to the turbulence. I simply practiced shifting my attention away from something undesirable, and toward something I desired - that of being safely on the ground.

The view of the ground was a comforting thought, and as long as I focused my mind on the comforting thoughts of the ground, I was not allowing room for the fear thoughts of the turbulence to come in. It didn't happen right away. It took some practice, but eventually I was able to overcome my fear of flying by using this technique of focusing onto a less fearful thought, which then took my attention away from the fear thoughts I was experiencing.

Technically speaking, I was using an object of meditation - the single thought of seeing the ground - to shut out the multitude of other random fear thoughts that plagued me and created my fear of flying. This is very

similar to what we will be learning how to do in meditation - choosing one thought to focus on to the exclusion of all other thoughts.

Today in modern meditation practice, there are a variety of objects we may choose to concentrate on as our object of meditation. Choosing the right one comes down to experimenting with the different objects and finding which one you like, which one work the best for you, and which one you feel most comfortable with.

We will discuss the various objects of meditation and how to use them in the next chapter.

Chapter 4

The Objects of Meditation and How to Use Them

Some of the more commonly-used objects of meditation that we will be discussing here are:

1. **Meditating on the Breath**
2. **Listening Meditation**
3. **Mantra Meditation**
4. **Body Energy Meditation**
5. **Body Sensations Meditation**
6. **Electronic Music Meditation**

Bear in mind that these are all slightly different ways to accomplish the same thing. We want to first reduce the amount of thoughts we're thinking, and then from there, completely quiet the mind. In this chapter I will go through each meditation object and explain how to use it. Let's first discuss meditation posture.

Sit up straight in a chair, or cross-legged on the floor, whichever position you prefer, but whichever position you choose to meditate in, try to keep your back straight

while your body is relaxed.

The idea here is to be alert, yet relaxed at the same time. Too much relaxing may cause you to fall asleep during meditation, and too much alertness may cause your meditation to become stiff and uncomfortable. You need to find just the right balance between the two which works best for you. I call this the relaxed/alert posture.

You wouldn't want to lie down to meditate, for example, because your mind naturally associates this position with sleep, and it would quite easy for you to simply drift off to sleep instead of meditating.

These instructions regarding posture apply to all the objects of meditation we will be discussing in this chapter, so I won't be repeating them each time for the different objects. You may use the same posture instruction for each of the objects of meditation.

1. Meditating on the Breath - this is a good one to start with because the breathing process occurs by itself. This technique is also called "watching the breath."

Focus your attention on your breath while you're in meditation. Feel your breath going in and out of your mouth and nose. Feel your lungs fill up, and then empty themselves of air. Listen to the breath as it moves in and out of your body. Concentrate on the both the sound and the feelings of the act of breathing. Keep your body very still while you watch the breath.

If you catch yourself wandering, thinking stray

thoughts about something else, gently bring your attention back to the breath once you've realized your mind has gotten off track and away from the breath. You may find yourself doing this several times during your meditation. It is part of the learning process. Don't judge it in any way, simply bring your concentration back to the breath each time your mind wanders away.

Set an alarm or timer for yourself, or keep a small clock handy so you keep an eye on the time, and try to stay with the breath for about 20 minutes per each daily meditation session. After establishing a regular meditation practice, you can increase this time if you like.

You can also start out with a 10-minute meditation session if you prefer. If you meditate 10 minutes every morning regularly, you will definitely notice a difference, so the short meditation time is not as critical as it is to establishing a regular daily meditation practice.

When first beginning a meditation practice, it is better to do 10 minutes regularly each day and stay with it, than to do longer periods, but be meditating erratically. By this I mean missing a day or a couple of days, and then trying to make up for it by meditating for a longer period of time when you do finally sit down to meditate.

2. Listening Meditation - in this meditation, the object of meditation will be listening to the sounds you hear around you while you meditate. Remain as perfectly still as you can, and listen as hard as you can to the sounds around you without straining. I like to use

this analogy when describing how to do this meditation. Imagine you are all alone in a big house, upstairs in your room at night. You hear a sound downstairs and immediately you freeze. You listen intently to see if perhaps a burglar has entered your house, or some other threat, and then you become very still, trying to determine what it might be from the sounds you're hearing.

What I am describing here is a very intense listening experience, which normally would be filled with fear and tension. If you can listen to the sounds around you with the same intensity I described in the above scenario, yet do it while remaining in the relaxed/alert posture, then you've got the idea. As with the first meditation, each time your mind wanders off the object of your meditation, gently bring it back to listening intensely, while remaining as comfortably relaxed as you can.

3. Mantra Meditation - once you've assumed your meditation position and are relaxed and alert, introduce a thought in the form of a word. It can be a nonsense word, a word in a different language that has a pleasing sound, or a word that has meaning to you personally.

For this example, let's use the word "love" as your mantra. Think the word love very gently, and let it echo in your mind. Follow the word as it fades away and stay with it as long as you can. It's like you're listening to the word after you've thought it very quietly.

When your mind begins to wander, and stray

thoughts begin to come in again, reintroduce the mantra by gently thinking the word love again. Repeat this process for the duration of the meditation.

Be sure to pick a word that you can stay with each time you meditate. Once you've chosen your mantra, do not change it. That way it begins to build up an association with meditation in your mind, and as you use your mantra, going deep into meditation with it becomes very natural because you already have established a meditative experience associated with the word, aside from any other meaning or sounds the word might have on its own.

4. Body Energy Meditation - for this meditation object, assume your meditation pose, becoming relaxed and alert, then begin searching through your body sensations to feel the underlying aliveness in your body. This feeling would be more of a general abstract feeling, and not a specific thing like tuning into your sense of hearing or listening to your breathing. You would tune into the life force flowing through your body, beneath any sensory data your body might be sending you.

For example, you might feel a pain in your back, or a slight air current passing over your legs. These would be feelings you are getting from your five senses. For the purposes of this meditation, ignore the sensory information and feelings you are getting, and tune in instead to the bigger picture of simply feeling alive and in the moment.

Once you have identified what this feels like for you, you would then treat it as you would the other objects of meditation we've discussed in this chapter. When your mind wanders, you simply bring it back again and again to the sense of aliveness you feel in your body, for the duration of the meditation.

5. Body Sensations Meditation - this one is similar to the body energy meditation, only this time you are going to ignore the "bigger picture" feelings of being alive, and concentrate instead on the data your senses are sending you. This one will be a bit more varied than the previous meditations we've discussed, because your focus will be changing from time to time to each of the five senses during the meditation.

For example, you may feel an air current passing over your legs. You would focus on that for a while. Then you might hear something going on in the background somewhere. You would gently tune into that to see if you could hear the sound more clearly, perhaps identify it without generating a stream of thoughts about it. Next you may become aware of your breath moving in and out. Focus on that for a while. Then you may become aware of a scent in the air, and focus on that for a while. You might taste something in your mouth, or remember a flavor. You may sense the chair under you, and become engaged in feeling that sensation.

During this meditation, your mind is free to wander to some degree, but only between the sensory data

you are getting from your five senses. Keep your mind focused on these sensations. If you find yourself getting lost in your thoughts again, bring your mind back to its meditation object by scanning your body with your mind to see what sensations are present. Focus on the most prominent sensation. If something changes and another sense presents itself, then focus on that for a while. Keep repeating this pattern for the duration of the meditation.

6. Electronic Music Meditation - There is a lot of electronic music that is very meditative in nature. If you find a CD of music you particularly like for this purpose, start it on your music system once you're ready to meditate. The music will create a sort of overwhelming background that you can tune into instead of your thoughts. When you find your mind wandering among your thoughts again, bring your attention back to the music and allow yourself to get lost in the sounds of the music, and not your thoughts.

This can be a particularly fun object of meditation, especially if you enjoy electronic music. There are also CDs that are specially made for meditation using certain sound frequencies that entrain the brain to frequencies or (speeds of brainwave activity such as alpha, theta, or delta) that are related to meditative states. These CDs sort of meditate you instead of you meditating to them, but they are still part of the electronic music spectrum and can be fun to experiment with as well.

Music is very subjective and your taste in music may be very different than mine. However, to get you started in the right direction, and to give you an idea of the type of meditative music I am referring to, here is a small list of musicians or groups that produce this type of music:

Bluetech
Carbon Based Lifeforms
Grey Area
Higher Intelligence Agency
Infected Mushroom
Juno Reactor
Kip Mazuy
Orbital
Patrick O'Hearn
Tangerine Dream
Wavestar
Zero One

And if you are interested in experimenting with the brain-entrainment type of CDs, here are a few sources where you can find these kinds of CDs:

Dr. Jeffrey Thompson (The Relaxation Company)
Hemi-Sync (Monroe Institute)
Holosync (Centerpointe Research Institute)
DeepStim (Jim Carruth)

You may download a free stereo MP3 sample file of my DeepStim meditation CD by going to the meditation page on my website by clicking [here](#). Download the file from right side of the meditation page by right-clicking on the word “here” if you are on a PC, or control-clicking on the word “here” if you are on a Mac. You will then see a pop-up menu that gives you the choice, “Save Linked Content As,” and save the file to your desktop. From there, load it into your iPod through iTunes, or by any other means that you regularly use if you have a different MP3 player.

Instructions for Use

For use with Stereo Headphones only - please don't use while driving. 1. Sit comfortably on a chair or cushion. Sit upright and keep your back straight. Try to stay as still as possible. Moving very little or not at all while meditating will relax you and deepen your meditation experience automatically.

2. Use the MP3 sample with stereo headphones only. The kind that completely covers the ears works best because it filters outside noise, but you can use it with any stereo earphones or ear buds that you like.

3. Meditate once a day using only the first track, which is 15 minutes long. Try to be consistent in your practice to see some amazing results.

4. As you begin wanting to go deeper in your meditations, try listening to the same 15-minute sample twice, by simply loading it up twice on your MP3 player. The first one is designed to fade out gradually, while the second copy will fade in gradually, so the transition from going from a 15-minute meditation to a 30-minute meditation will feel very smooth to you.

5. Once you've done 30 minutes this way for a while, say a couple of weeks or so, try upping it to 45 minutes using the same technique. Just copy the sample 3 times onto your MP3 player so it will play consecutively for 45 minutes. If you want you to eventually go for a full hour this way, just add a 4th copy and you will have a full hour's meditation on your player.

At any point during your experimentation with DeepStim, you will discover the length of meditation that's right for you. 15 minutes can be a fantastic meditation. You can even try a 5-minute meditation with it by keeping a watch nearby and timing yourself. Or you can go the full hour if you want. Experiment with it and see what seems to work best for you. You will find this out as you as you practice and play with the length of the meditations. Longer is not always better.

You can order the full DeepStim CD from Amazon by clicking [here](#), but once you've got the sample file and instructions, you've really got all you need - for Free!

Chapter 5

The Purpose of Meditation

Meditation has been a long-time companion to the more contemplative types of spirituality, such as Hinduism, Buddhism, and any kind of discipline or path that involves looking at the workings of your mind.

Today these would include the modern-day works of Eckhart Tolle, *A Course In Miracles*, *Science of Mind* (Church of Religious Science), Unity Church, Christian Science, Yoga, New Thought, and New Age, to name but a few. These paths are generally lumped under one main category, that of *mysticism*.

A mystic is generally defined as a person who desires a first-hand experience of God, rather than to read about God in a book, or accept somebody else's second-hand account of God (such as from a priest, rabbi, minister, or preacher).

The mystic wants to taste the dish for himself, rather than to have the recipe read to him. The goal of any mystical religious or spiritual path would be closeness, or oneness with God. That is what the mystic desires above all else.

Meditation does have many benefits, which are discussed in another chapter. Do not get the idea, however, that only mystics meditate, or that all people who meditate are mystics, or are even religious for that matter. There are even some atheists who meditate because they recognize meditation's non-religious benefits.

The association between meditation and mysticism is a strong one because of its long history. Hinduism started using meditation 5,000 years ago. Buddhists have used meditation as part of their practices for 2500 years. Christian mystics date back to the time of Christ. The quote from Psalms, "Be still, and know that I am God," has often been interpreted as meditation instructions.

Hindu gurus, such as Yogananda, began importing their meditation teachings into the United States as early as 1920. Chinese workers first brought Buddhism to the West in 1820 when they first came to work on the railroads, and then again in larger numbers from 1849 on during the California Gold Rush.

Most people calling themselves mystics today would agree that the purpose of their meditation is first, to grow closer to God through knowing how the mind works and learning how to quiet the mind. Secondly, the mystic desires a first-hand experience of knowing God.

Hindus call this experience *Samadhi*. Buddhists call it *Nirvana* or *Satori*. Christians call it *Revelation*.

Chapter 6

The Benefits of Meditation

There is a long list of benefits associated with the practice of meditation, which is outside the realm of any spiritual or religious benefits that one might expect to attain.

These benefits range from lowering blood pressure, stress relief, treatment for depression, increased synchronization between the left and right hemispheres of the brain (sometimes referred to as coherence), clearer and more creative thinking, pain relief, psychological coping skills, to strengthening the immune system.

Some would go further and say that intuition and psychic abilities have been boosted by the practice of meditation, while others say that formerly angry or violent people have been able to cultivate the quality of compassion through its practice.

When Transcendental Meditation started opening up their centers in the United States in the 1960s,

they frequently touted their own “research,” which consisted of a lot of technical-looking charts and graphs that seemed to support their many medical and spiritual claims, including the development of latent human abilities (levitation, invisibility) known as *Siddhis*.

Today there seems to be plenty of reputable research available performed by scientific laboratories, psychological and sociological institutions. Meditation does have measurable benefits, and with a little legwork on your part, you can find the research to back it up, in your local library or on the internet.

It may not back up some of the more outlandish and ambitious claims, but there’s enough scientific evidence now, and a quite body of experiential literature, to prove to even the most skeptical mind that meditation does in fact have benefits, with no dangerous side effects.

Trying to mount a negative campaign against meditation now would be like trying tell people that exercise is bad for you. Sure, you could always overdo it and hurt yourself, but this would also be true of anything, not just meditation or exercise.

And like exercise, meditation is an activity that when practiced regularly, does bring tangible positive results. You only have try it yourself to prove it.

Chapter 7

How is Meditation Different Than Sleep?

You might wonder why you have to meditate, when you can get all the rest you need from sleep? First of all, meditation and sleep are two different things.

While learning to meditate, you are cultivating a state of awareness that can be described as a “relaxed alertness.” You are staying within the realm of the conscious mind, or waking state.

When you sleep, you go into the dream state of the subconscious mind. You are relaxed, but you are not necessarily aware. You dream, but normally you do not have control of your thoughts.

In meditation, it is much easier to become aware of your thought processes and “watch your thoughts” than it is in the sleep state. As you watch your thoughts in meditation, you become aware of the content of your mind. This is a valuable skill in that you learn how to objectively observe your mind. You develop detach-

ment from your thoughts. Detachment is a cultivated neutrality from your thoughts. Your thoughts may rise and fall, but you don't get caught up in them.

In the dream state, you may be engaged with the characters of the dream, or have some sort of emotional reaction to something going on in your life. This is what a nightmare is - an emotional attachment to the thoughts and images that are going on in your dream.

With detachment, you can objectively observe your life situations without the emotional content. This can help you to see clearly what is going on without the attachments and clouding of mind that can accompany thoughts with emotional content.

This state of detached awareness is sometimes referred to as the “Witness Consciousness.” It is also called “Mindfulness” in some traditions. Whatever it is called, it is a state of mind that brings you into the present moment with a great deal of awareness and a minimum of distraction. Present moment awareness is something that other writers, such as Eckhart Tolle and Thich Nhat Hahn, have discussed in great detail in their writings.

To be present in every moment, without thoughts of the past or the future, is considered a highly beneficial and valued state of mind. This is what developing the witness consciousness in meditation holds out as potential for us as meditators, and what you cannot develop through sleep alone.

Chapter 8

Happiness for No Reason Can't be Taken Away From You

Although not a meditation technique or tactic, it is a thought that occurred to me in the process of watching my thoughts, and I think one worthy enough to be included here.

As you watch your thoughts, think about what it is that makes you happy in life. After carefully looking within, a process meditators call “Inquiry,” find out what it is you think that makes you happy.

Now, does this happiness have an external reason or cause? In other words, does something have to happen first in your life order for you to be happy? If so, your happiness is conditional, and therefore dependent upon outside circumstances.

There have been times in my life when I was happy for no particular reason. In other words, my happiness was not conditional. It did not depend on anything outside myself. You see this sometimes in children. It's just

a feeling that bubbles up inside you, and is not particularly associated with anything occurring. Sometimes it's just a type of joy of living that comes out of nowhere.

This type of happiness is what I call being “Happy for No Reason.” Another word for this state of being would be innocence. If you can become aware of this type of happiness within you, happiness that is truly unconditional and does not depend upon any outside source, then my point is this:

By cultivating the kind of awareness that regular meditation encourages, you will also be able to cultivate a kind of happiness that is not dependent upon any sort of outside source or circumstances. You can learn to become happy for no reason.

And if your happiness occurs for no reason whatsoever, then no person or circumstance can possibly take it away from you. In order to do this, they'd have to find the reason you're happy, and then remove that from your life. If you are happy for no reason, then there is nothing that people or circumstances can remove from you that will affect this type of happiness.

This may be a new thought for you, but if you carefully examine your life, you may find instances in which you were happy for no reason whatsoever. Meditation can make you more aware of these times. Once you've recognized this feeling in yourself, try to see what it is that allowed you to be happy for no reason and concentrate on doing this more and more in your life.

Chapter 9

Judging the Meditation

Progress in meditation is dependent on so many different things, that it makes it difficult to judge your meditation. In a book like this, you tend to want to interest the reader by telling him all about the wonderful things it can do for you. That frequently sets up a series of expectations in the new meditator's mind.

If you can learn to meditate without cultivating any expectations, you will be in a better position to see what it can and can't do for you. There are some who say that meditating is just a big blank, and that nothing at all happens. Many people in the meditation community would call that a very good meditation. "Nothing happened, that's great!" they'd say. But it doesn't sound very exciting, does it?

You may start the practice of meditation with a very disciplined mind and a strong ability to concentrate. Obviously, this type of person is going to get a better

result than someone who is just starting out and can hardly concentrate on anything for very long. For this person, a regular meditation practice may help you learn how to concentrate your mind, whereas before you did not have very good concentration skills. But, you might not notice this right away.

For a person under a lot of stress, meditation may have very noticeable results right away, such as being able to remain calm under stressful situations, and new-found coping skills from the introduction of regular relaxed/alert time periods into your life.

Sometimes I've talked to people about meditation, and they get this feeling that they "should do it," but feel guilty that they don't. If you practice meditation for any length of time, you will know soon enough whether you like it, or if it has any benefits at all to offer you.

So you shouldn't feel guilty about it one way or the other. There are those who will be naturally attracted to it and will want to do it, while others who try it may find that it is not for them. Still, others may try it now and find that it is not for them, but find out ten years later that it is the best thing they've ever learned.

So, there is no should or shouldn't in meditation, when it comes to doing it or not. The important thing I want to stress here about first learning meditation is to try and not judge it too early in the game. It may take you a little while to get the hang of it, and then you may find that you really love it and can't be without it.

Chapter 10

Meditating Outside of Meditation

Most of the forms of meditation taught in this book are portable. This means that you could choose one of the 6 objects of meditation we discussed in chapter 4 and focus on it at any time, not just during your regular meditation sessions at home.

For example, let's say you're in a long line at the supermarket checkout counter, or the post office. That's a perfect time to have a "waiting in line" meditation." Instead of thinking random or impatient thoughts while you're waiting in line, you could start focusing on the breath as it goes in and out of your body.

Or, you could turn your attention away from your thoughts, and listen very intently to what is going on around you. You could scan your body and see what your five senses are telling you, or simply focus in on the aliveness you feel in your body. You could start silently repeating a mantra to yourself, if you use a mantra in

your meditation. If you do this and give it your full attention, you may find your wait in line much shorter than you expected it to be.

The only one I wouldn't recommend doing outside of a formal home sitting is the electronic music meditation. That's because it requires some equipment you need to have with you, while the other methods don't.

Even if you do carry an iPod with earphones around with you, I wouldn't try to do this meditation while waiting in line. Your turn in line may come up, and you may have become so lost in the electronic music meditation that you are no longer paying attention to the line. This might anger the people who have been waiting patiently behind you.

You can, however, go out to your car on your lunch break and meditate to electronic music while you are away from other people. I have had many a pleasurable lunch break this way, and I always come back to work refreshed and recharged for the second half of my working day.

So, while you're stuck in traffic, waiting in a line somewhere, talking a walk, or taking a break from work, try practicing one of the 6 objects of meditation and see if it makes a difference in what kind of day you have.

Chapter 11

Celebrities Who've Meditated (Past and Present)

Just for fun, I thought it'd be interesting to have a look at a list of celebrities who've been interested in meditation for a while. It is by no means a complete list. And, since I got most of this information over the internet – with one exception: I remember reading a magazine article about Tina Turner's Buddhist beliefs, and that she was a regular meditator at the time – I can't really vouch for how true or current this information is. But, since it is just for fun, and accidentally being labeled a meditator when you really aren't one can't do a person any harm, now can it?

Al and Tipper Gore
Andy Kaufman
Ben Harper
Bill Ford (president Ford Motors)
Clint Eastwood
Coach Phil Jackson
Danny Glover
David Lynch
Donovan
Dr. Dean Ornish

Eddie Vedder
Elvis Presley
George Harrison
Goldie Hawn
Halle Berry
Heather Graham
Jessica Alba
Joe Namath
Laura Dern
Lenny Kravitz
Leonard Cohen
Lou Reed
Madonna
Mia Farrow
Mick Jagger
Mike Love
Mitch Kapor (creator of Lotus 1,2,3)
Moby
Patti Labelle
Paul Horn
Paul McCartney
Paula Abdul
Richard Gere
Ringo Starr
Sheryl Crow
Stephen Collins
Stevie Wonder
Sting
Tina Turner