

Meditation, OLLI, Spring Term 2014  
Session I

### Housekeeping

Linda Bender

Phone: 703-451-0253

please do not call after 9 pm, especially if you want an intelligent response!  
lindabender@starpower.net

### Vocabulary Examples

someone who works with energy beyond the physical plane, usage in order as time passed

medium

psychic

Bill Stoney's definitions:

medium: gets information by communication with a deceased person

psychic: sensitive and knows things without being told

channel, my word choice for what I do, to me is generic

to me means that I pick up information that is not from my logical mind

sensitive

intuitive

“abandon what is unskillful,” from Hugh Bryne’s class on Meditation at Smithsonian  
defined: afflictive states of heart and mind, like, anger, greed, jealousy, hatred....  
phrase means that if skilled/knowledgeable in their percepts, will not think/act this way

if talking to someone about these kinds of things, be sure you are both clear on the vocabulary  
maybe even start conversation that way  
can be talking about the same thing but using different words  
can end up sounding like an argument

needless to say, you are going to get my take/my words on what all this means  
I’m not tied to any group or particular goal  
everyone has free will choice in everything  
I think everyone has a right to their own concepts  
important to me to understand what you mean when you say something  
not tied to my words  
tend to go to “what do you really mean”  
then go very high level and look for similarities

## What Is Meditation

What does it do for you?

Why bother?

Why is it worth your time and effort?

idea is to think in one pattern for an extended period

average person can hold a thought for about 6 seconds

Zen Master after years of training can go about 1½ *minutes*

that mental wandering is often called a “distraction”

so if mind wanders, just say to yourself, “Let’s go back to the discipline for now”

practice of meditation over time slows the very active mind

can think better, more clearly

more focused

I am certainly more productive and more effective, brain works faster

are physical advantages, Session II

are psychological advantages, Session III

## Meditation Is a Tool

clear as did research that meditation is not the final goal

it’s a tool to get to a goal

goal dictated by whatever organization is teaching

along with that get into confusions about vocabulary

examples:

Roman Catholic church

rosary, used as way to think about and resolve sins

Buddhist, use meditation as daily practice

gets into Mindfulness

meditation is not Mindfulness

do meditation so can get to Mindfulness

Lawrence LeShan in his book *How to Meditate*

his stated goal is what I call “mystical experience”

defined as a oneness experience with the Creator

word “mystical” is used in many ways by many people

## Types of Meditation

are 2000 + different kinds of meditation  
everyone has their own classification system  
based in part on the goal that they envision

Generalized, based on what you do, provided as a way to give examples for class

### Mantra:

Aum, Hare Krishna, etc.

Transcendental Meditation (TM)

are given a series of syllables, just repeat again and again  
there are 20 mantras in their list for distribution

rosary

better to keep it short, rosary is actually too long

create your own

phrase: "There is beauty everywhere" or "Welcome to my day"

telephone book system of getting two syllables

### Body rhythms:

count breaths, 1,2,3,4 and then start over, 1,2,3,4

better not to go consecutively, 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10.....---can loose count!

DO NOT mess with heart rate

### Image:

black spot on white page or a white spot on black page

icon

natural item, e.g., leaf, flower, crystal, stone,

photo of place that gives you peace, is a reminder of what feel/felt there

### Movement:

tai chi

Whirling Dervishes

yoga

running (unless you have a radio going or are talking with running partner)

walking

washing dishes (example of the Little Way, used in the convents in Middle Ages)

walk a labyrinth

needlepoint!

### Free Form:

Koan, e.g., What is the sound of one hand clapping

guided

deep prayer can turn into a kind of meditation

Lawrence LeShan, *How to Meditate*, Chapters 8 and 10

his goal, get to the mystical experience (oneness experience with Universal Energy)

Chapter 8:

Meditation of Contemplation

have an object and look at it actively, visual process, no words

Meditation of Breath Counting

count breaths, 1,2,3,4 or just 1

exhale on each word: 1 and 2 and 3 and 4 and 1 and 2.....

Meditation of the Bubble

thought comes in, put in a bubble and allow it to float up and away

watch river flow by, note items floating on the surface

watch items in the sky flow by

Meditation of the Theraveda Type

work with body rhythms

e.g., spread hands on ribs so don't touch each other, feel them move

**DO NOT USE HEART BEAT**

Meditation of the Thousand Petaled Lotus

choose a word with *positive* connotations

concentrate on your choice, another word will appear, see connection, let go

Mantra Meditation

repeat word, syllables or short phrase again and again

can do silently or orally (only if you are alone so bother someone else)

Who Am I (rigorous and difficult)

say "Who am I?"

get, for example, a name

say "No, that is a name I have given myself. Who is the I who I gave that name to?"

Sufi Movement Meditation (for a group)

stand in a circle holding hands

all lean out with "Ya Hai," lean in with "Ya Huk," repeat

Sensory Awareness (Elsa Gindler)

lie on floor, aware of breathing, let each body part settle into floor

Meditation of the Safe Harbor (not a beginner meditation)

allow subconscious to float to see a place

put out radar to find if place you are heading is right for you

will feel at home, stay, if not head elsewhere

Unstructured

problem resolution

stick with a problem, what are facts, how do I feel about them

NIH, National Centers for Complementary and Alternative Medicine

Link: <http://nccam.nih.gov/health/meditation/overview.htm>

CDC.gov, Meditation and Health, short

Hopkins & Duke, all Mindfulness, their training/meeting groups, research, use in psychotherapy

## Doing a Meditation

will be a lot of comparisons to physical therapy or doing an exercise program, many similarities

progress is not instantaneous

need to do it daily

if can't do 10 repetitions

start out and do 3, then next time try 4

when comfortable with 4, try 5 or maybe 6

build slowly

can reach a kind of plateau, feel like there is no progress at all

will I ever get out of this?

just keep going

will get a "breakthrough"

it's the trying that matters and process does work, but you have to do it!

pay attention and plan for your medical needs

better not to eat for an hour or so before

if have just eaten, then body is supporting digestion

blood flow to abdomen, not through whole body

blood flow needs to be freer

want to be so comfortable that can forget about the physical body

want to be fully supported so will not fall

no distractions

think about your space and see what would work for you

if there is a computer in the same room, turn it off

computers are electrical and magnetic energy

nervous system is basically a very low level electrical frequency

story of working at home between two computer/monitors

OK if you and your spouse/significant other/partner want to do together in the same room

try it out, see if it works for each of you

thinking about the other person is a distraction, go back to the meditation

better if really comfortable clothes

nothing too tight or restrictive

may need to continue to wear a brace, that's fine

body is used to that

restroom stop a good idea

means can be fully relaxed

find a comfortable place to sit

chair, floor

bed is OK but don't lie down

I need to have back vertical so energy flow is correct

if lie down more likely to fall asleep

idea is to have spine/back straight

yoga pose, long time to hold it, may work up to a 30 minute meditation

support to back and head

use a foot stool if that pleases you

use lap blanket if you tend to get cold

concept of energy flow through the body

not restricted

easy and gentle

better if it goes through you and out into the planet

otherwise can be a distraction

if cross ankles can make energy go around in a circle, can get a whirlwind

lotus position works because base of spine is on the floor

energy not through legs

better if just rest hands on knees or upper legs

not want to cross arms or hands

you don't want background noise, that is a distraction

no radio

no TV

no cell phones

no electronic toys

turn off the sound on your PC, may ping at you if an email comes in

at home I can hear that sound two rooms away and sound is not loud

immediately want to know what came in, that's a distraction

use some kind of timer

the alarm sound should be gentle and not too loud

if the alarm sound is raucous, then put the timer under a folded up bath towel or a pillow

make it easy to reach so you can turn it off easily

how long to meditate

some of the current literature says to start out with 5 minutes

I find that really short

we are a very-busy-run-around-check-electronic-toys kind of society right now

retirees tend to be a little more gentle with themselves

would be better to try for 10-15 minutes

eventually work up to 25-30 minutes

a way to manage this:

our class meditation has been planned for about 10 minutes

if you found you could manage for 10 minutes, then use that to start out

if you find 10 minutes hard to do, then try for 5 minutes

but set timer for 10 min

if get antsy, check time, if over 5 minutes that is good

next time may well be able to go longer

back to the physical exercise program, start slow and build

once you can do 10 minutes, set the timer for 15 minutes

I was trained to try for 24 minutes a day, 1 minute for each hour of day

works for me---key words: for me

pick a meditation to work with  
if needed, review the info for the particular type of meditation you have chosen  
sets it in your mind and makes it easier

close eyes (unless doing meditation where you observe an item)

### YOUR MIND WILL WANDER

remember the average person can hold a thought for about 6 seconds  
so if mind wanders, just say to yourself, "Let's go back to the discipline for now"  
that's OK, it's normal, just bring your mind back to the focus of the meditation  
reminder that the wandering is called a distraction

when mind wanders there should be:  
no anger at yourself  
no distress at yourself  
no feeling wrong about yourself  
no feeling inadequacy in yourself  
it's NORMAL

\*\*\* it is the *trying* to slow the mind that matters, don't worry about success with process  
reason don't count breaths successively,  
1,2,3,4,5,6,7 and so on  
get lost in the counting, then it's a distraction, no longer a meditation

at end may feel not quite solid  
start by moving fingers and toes, then legs and arms  
will go away in a few minutes

what is happening is as work with mind can go into an altered state of reality  
"out of the box thinking" pushed to another level  
why a Koan works  
during those few minutes of changing back, come back to this reality



like them to try some type meditation at home in the next two weeks

better if do daily

know it is tax time

actually will find mind is sharper if do the meditation even if frantic over taxes

what happens is that relax so brain can really focus effectively

for class purposes choose a type, do it for several days

generally give 2-3 weeks when try a new med type

handle differently for the class situation

better if do it the longer way

if start a meditation type and don't like it on the first attempt, then change

e.g., black dot on a white page would drive me nuts

will be a guided meditation in each class and they can use that if wish

may find that wish to change after using a particular type for 6 months

that's normal

you will have grown and may need a different type

again try out and see what works for you

if you are angry and try to start a meditation, it will be almost impossible

better to take a few minutes and calm down (change your energy)

e.g., be still and count breaths for a few minutes

e.g., look a picture that pleases you

e.g., read a joke and laugh

hereafter if want to sit on the floor that is OK

OK to bring pillow to sit on or blanket if cold

if you fall asleep, that's OK

better if don't fall asleep, but you are just starting the practice and it may happen

might want to look at your usual sleep patterns

are you comfortable when you sleep

are you getting sufficient quality sleep

idea: you can use a Yoga relaxation technique to relax into sleep

if you want me go over that in detail I can, it's a yoga relaxation

## Guided Meditation

I will be awake and alert

do not anticipate a problem but will be the watcher anyway  
concern that you may flow into an altered state and I want to be sure all are OK  
if there is any issue, I will walk over and very gently touch your hand  
will be a distraction, that will change your process

will go on an imaginary journey in your mind  
and I will be your tour guide

I will ask you to relax and breathe

use esoteric elements (also used in alchemy and early medicine):

earth: forest, garden, field, wheat/corn, shore of body of water

water: stream, creek, lake, ocean

fire: campfire, sun and warmth, shadows

air: clouds, wind, sounds

it is your choice

go in your mind to some place that pleases you or that you would like to go

then very slowly back to this room

gently wiggle your fingers and your toes

shift your legs slightly

move your hands

open your eyes when you are ready

if you like that meditation, can do it at home

will chat about it

do not want them to drive for 10 minutes after the med

need to be fully in this reality before driving

## Next Class

will *not* meet next week, *will* meet the week after and the week after that  
next week is 1040 income tax due date

would guess not want to take time for a class that day, especially one on meditation  
however, if you doing meditations at home, will help you focus, be alert, mind work better

will talk about experiences and answer questions

suggest that you write down your questions

it's an accepted fact that when work with a group

tend to walk in and feel safe

realize have forgotten all questions

walk out later and all the questions come back

in two weeks will use a piece of something as focus for meditation

may want to bring an item from home

piece of nature works well, things to see

can also be something like a pen or a pencil

book probably not a good idea unless plan to work only with the binding

will not want to get into words of any kind with this exercise

will bring crystals so can borrow