

R 902 Meditation
OLLI, Winter Term 2015
Session I

Agenda:

1. Vocabulary
2. What Is Meditation?
3. Meditation Is a Tool
4. Types of Meditation
5. How to Do a Meditation (all the details)
6. Guided Meditation
7. Next Class

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please do not call after 9 pm, especially if you want an intelligent response!

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Notes

Vocabulary

different individuals will use the same word to mean very different things
when in conversation be sure you are both talking about the same concept

examples:

someone who works with energy beyond the physical plane, in historic order
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 actually means:

if skilled/knowledgeable in their precepts, will not think/act this way

when talking to someone about these kinds of things, be sure you are both clear on the words used
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 overview 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 hold a thought about *1½ minutes*
that mental wandering is often called a “distraction”

so if your 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

fewer distractions from the task at hand

more focused

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

Session II will cover physical advantages

Session III will cover psychological advantages

Meditation Is a Tool

clear as did extra research for class that meditation is not the final goal

it’s a tool to get to a goal

the goal is dictated by whatever that 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

eventually 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 a “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 a mantra 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 (per LeShan)

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 an electronic toy going or are talking)

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 “and”: 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 the heart beat

heart rate will slow anyway during meditation

Meditation of the Thousand Petaled Lotus

choose a word with *positive* connotations

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

return to the word you chose

Mantra Meditation

repeat word, syllables or short phrase again and again

can do silently or orally (only if you are alone so do not bother others)

Others, not really applicable or are considered difficult

Who Am I (rigorous and difficult)

Sufi Movement Meditation (for a group)

Sensory Awareness (Elsa Gindler)

Meditation of the Safe Harbor (not a beginner meditation)

Unstructured

are some apps, search on “meditation apps”

be sure you can listen before you buy

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 do the meditation

if have just eaten, then body is supporting digestion

blood flow to abdomen, not through whole body

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 use electrical and magnetic energy

nervous system is basically a very low level electrical frequency

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 before the meditation is a good idea

find a comfortable place to sit

chair, floor

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

bed is OK but don't lie down

I need to have back vertical so energy flow is correct

IMPORTANT: if wear a CPAP, do not do meditation lying down

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 clasp hands together

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 quickly but gently

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-and-check-media 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:

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 slowly 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: 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

that mental 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 hold the meditation 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 feel better 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 our reality

like them to try some type of meditation at home in the next two weeks
better if do daily

for class purposes choose a type, do it for several days
generally allow 1-2 weeks when you try a new meditation type
handle differently for the class situation
better if do it the longer way
if start a new 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 you can use that if you 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 a new type 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

Guided Meditation

I will be awake and alert

do not anticipate an issue but will be the watcher anyway
concern that you may flow into an altered state

I want to be sure everyone is OK

if there is a concern, I will walk over and very gently touch your hand or shoulder
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 I will very slowly call you 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

we will start class with time to talk about experiences and answer your 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 last class 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