

Class 1 - How meditation works

The affairs of the world will go on forever. Do not delay the practice of meditation. ~ Milarepa.

In Summary

This class is about the mechanics of meditation and dispelling the myths.



- *Three steps - superficial mind, analytical mind and then intuitive 'Aah' experiences of the heart.*
- *The monkey mind wants to strain and mentally concentrate as though it is hard work, preferably without a resolution.*
- *Heart's concentration is letting go, relaxing, being comfortable in our own skin and letting ourselves surrender to our natural state of calmness, serenity and love.*
- *Breathing guided meditation*
- *The highest experience in every endeavour is an 'Aah' moment which is of course the moment of meditation.*
- *Meditation is extremely simple do not complicate it or make it mysterious.*

The first and most important thing to do before any class is to meditate. If you can, try and have someone else help you set up the space. As a suggestion, a circular setting with chairs and, if possible, cushions for those that want to sit on the floor works well. Place a small table in the middle with a cloth, a candle and perhaps flowers. You will need to note the fire safety policy of your venue - they may have smoke detectors and not allow candles. Play some nice meditative music. Allow yourself 30 minutes or so after everything is set up to go and meditate, and remember that people might start arriving up to 30 mins early for the class. It is a good idea to have others do the meet and greet while you are getting yourself ready. Wayne Dyer has a prayer that he repeats before his presentations "how may I serve?" You may try something similar.



The idea is to listen, to become an instrument, to be intuitively guided, to allow yourself to be used as exactly the conduit that your students need at this time in their lives.

Be aware that every class is different, the seekers that come all have completely different needs and your role is to respond to that. Visualise the whole class, the exercises that you will do, what you will say and see yourself being inspirational and your students being inspired. In any kind of public speaking, you need the practicalities of a joke or a story or an exercise to reinvigorate or help pace the session so work those out as well, have a couple of plan b's should everything not go exactly as planned. Meditation is actually really fun to teach because it is so practical. You will need some explanations and theory in the beginning but as the classes progress, the theory should succumb to more and more practical meditation exercises. The exercises are the best

teacher, because after all you are trying to teach your students to be their own guide. In this way you should try and develop real love and reverence for your students. Be in genuine awe of their stories, enamoured by their revelations, really listen and open yourself to their experience. They have come into your life at this time for you as well as themselves.

Let's begin

Then after you have meditated, make sure you are on time. You can be a minute or two early, but do not be late - always, always, always be on time. First impressions are extremely important. So be on time, smile, make eye contact where possible and really concentrate on radiating love to everyone in the room. Give reverence and love.

The best way to do this is to introduce yourself very briefly and then ask each person to say their name as you go around the group. You can only do this practically with small groups of no more than 30 people but if you have more than that just ask each person to shake hands and introduce themselves to the person either side of them. As this happens try and send love to every person in the room. You can ask for a show of hands to see who has meditated before, but this first class is basically to dispel some of the mystery about meditation, we start by explaining how it works.

You can refer directly to [class 1 here if you want](#) but for these first few classes the important information is copied across to here, whilst in later classes your teacher login will give you access to teacher information directly in the class itself. These first few classes also have a lot of extra ideas that you don't necessarily have to use all at once, but may be handy in later sessions.

Meditation is an extremely simple process. It follows three distinct steps

1. ***We start with a superficial, scattered mind*** – *(This is the level with which we often carry out our day-to-day chores, 'bring in the newspaper', 'cook the meal' - it is often characterised by lots of thoughts, positive and negative, with very little control or knowledge of how they got there) If we are often in this state of mind, we will find that we are easily distracted, have difficulty concentrating, probably worry about unimportant things and have little understanding of the real 'us'.*
2. *We then progress by virtue of our heart's concentration - to **deeper, analytical thinking**. When our mind is focused completely on one thing, we are the most efficient and purposeful in our thinking. (This is the basis of the rules of 'time-management' -> to be focused absolutely on one task at a time) This analytical level reveals the deepest we can go with thought. We can use a number of meditation techniques to achieve this, and they will be explored in further classes.*
3. *From this very deep thinking we enter into **intuitive states, revelations**, "I know this is right" feelings or extremely vivid goals or intense creativity or spiritual dreams. When thinking stops and intuitive experience takes over, this is meditation. We call these moments, 'Aah' moments. These moments are where the deepest moments of revelation and intuition are born, and where we reveal our real self.*

Most people in your class will have tried meditation before and have struggled with the 'monkey mind'. i.e. being able to concentrate. Let them know that step 2 is important, and it is about the heart's concentration. This is different to mentally concentrating where we increase tension and focus in our

intellect and usually strain ourselves. With our heart's concentration we are working on relaxing and letting ourselves go to our natural state which is calm, serene and loving, free from the noise and tension of our ego.

You might explain this as the trick of meditation, it is learning to surrender to our deeper self, our soul. The ego is not at all comfortable with this as it is tied up in thought, imprisoned by the past and future and all that it has done or will do. Timelessness is the enemy of the ego and the friend of the soul.

This trick then, is to move ourselves from being time-bound to being present in the now with complete acceptance of all that has come and all that will arrive in the future. The other part of the trick of meditation is to surrender to our natural loving nature, to let go of our fears, our doubts, our worries and everything that is not unconditional love for everyone and everything.

The exercise - Breathing

This is a good time for the first exercise so ask if there are any questions, and if not, ask if they would like to try a simple meditation exercise to get them started. This first exercise ask everyone to sit up nice and straight with their back straight. Explain that the most important part of the classic lotus position is to get the back straight and breathing relaxed. The weight of the body should 'rest on the bones', holding itself upright without conscious effort. Some people like to imagine the body sitting like a puppet, being held upright by the string directly through the backbone. They can do this just as easily in a straight backed chair.

Put a little music on and if it is at night, dim or turn off the lights. Then ask your students to place their hands on their laps or knees. Hand positions aren't strict, they can be resting palms up together in your lap, folded in prayer, etc. Then follow this script. It is ok in this first meditation for there to be lots of guidance so just read this at a leisurely pace, or you can use the CD quality download of the guided meditation exercise available in class 1.



Please close your eyes and relax. Let your breathing slow down and deepen. With each breath relax and deepen a little more. Just let yourself be here now and all that exists now is your breath. With each breath you are letting go of more and more tension. Physical, mental and emotional tension.

Everything that you have done or will do does not matter right now, all that matters is now, this moment and in this moment all that is, is your breath, going deeper and deeper into your breath. You are breathing in peace. And breathing out tension. Relaxing. Deeper and deeper. Relaxing tension in your toes. Breathing out letting go deeper and deeper. Breathing in peace and letting go of tension in your ankles and feet and knees. The peace is like a light that is flowing through you, rising up from the earth and relaxing you.

Breathing in peace and relaxing deeper and deeper. Your breath is becoming slower and deeper with every breath. Relaxing your hips and stomach and lower back, breathing out tension and breathing in peace. Your body is so relaxed it is as though it is falling asleep but at the same time you are becoming more and more alert, filling with a powerful dynamic energy that makes you more and more aware.

Breathing peace into your chest and shoulders – everything is dropping and relaxing, while your mind is becoming clearer and more focussed. Deeper and deeper relaxing more and more. Your arms and hands are relaxing, your neck and shoulders dropping, relaxing.

Deeper and deeper. Breathing in more and more peace. It feels like a beautiful fragrance that is becoming more and more overwhelming as though you are becoming completely filled with peace. Your face is relaxing as you release tension from your jaw and ears, your nose and mouth, your forehead, relaxing deeper and deeper and breathing in more and more peace. Your whole body is relaxed and at peace.

You realise that the peace you are breathing in is flowing through your heart, it feels like a light, an energy that is flowing through your heart to every part of you. Each breath deeper and deeper into the peace. And you feel the source of the peace more and more is your own heart, it feels as though you can dive deeper and deeper into your own heart and there is more and more peace.

It flows through every part of your being. As though every cell of your body has been illumined by the light of this peace, that every darkness, every worry, every doubt, every fear has been transformed by the light of peace from your own heart. You relax more and more into your heart. Diving deeper and deeper into the infinite peace within you.

You are peace. Now. This breath. Peace. Now. Peace.

I am going to leave you for a moment but I would like you to relax more and more into this peace. If your mind wanders just repeat the word peace to yourself and feel as though the power of the word is coming from the innermost recesses of your heart. (Leave people in silence for a minute)

(Very gently) Well done. Now I would like you to come back to an awareness of this room and the people here and when you are ready take a few deep breaths and open your eyes. (Wait for a minute or two, perhaps turning off the music) Then spend a few moments asking people how they went. There is no right answer here. The important things to emphasise are that we all meditate differently and that the best teacher of our meditation is our own experience.



The group will definitely help in creating the right atmosphere and the discipline to do our meditation, but in the end we must have faith in our own inner voice. Then spend a moment or two just reiterating the mechanics of meditation. Ask them if they noticed the meditation moment, the 'aah' moment. Let them relax with the notion that it is not a trance, it may only be a second or two but that there is a lot of power in these 'aah' moments.

You might describe again that our meditation experience just as we explained goes from superficial thinking, to analytical (just one thought) to the intuitive 'aah' moment. In the exercise we just did, we thought about peace, we imagined it, we concentrated on it and for a moment or two, we experienced it ('aah') – we become peace and then most of us would of said to ourselves 'is this it? Am I doing it?' and of course at that point we are not doing it – we are thinking again.

So try and make it very simple. Explain that the process is very simple, it is not mysterious, we think, we concentrate, then comes the 'aah' moment of meditation.

Our awareness is moving from superficial mind to deeper, analytical mind to perception from our heart. This is a great time to spend a few minutes explaining that we have all had meditation moments in our lives, probably very often. Perhaps even ask them to close their eyes again for a moment and find one 'aah' moment in their life. Ask them to smell the fragrances, hear the sounds, see what they were seeing, it might have been a beautiful sunset or the smile of a little baby or the first time they really experienced love and so on.

Leave your students for a minute or two and then ask them to come back and open their eyes and ask if anyone would like to share their 'aah' moments with the room. Usually someone will respond so just hear their stories and try and relate their experience to the process of focussing on one thought and then the 'aah' moment comes.

Every 'aah' moment people have in their life will come at a time of crisis or great focus so make sure you make it clear that it is the concentration, the one-thoughtedness, that is the doorway to meditation. Occasionally no one will speak, if that happens, just relate a story of your own. If still no one speaks than move onto the next exercise which is to explain that we already meditate in every field, in every endeavour of our lives.

That the highest experience in whatever we do is an 'aah' moment. Ask if anyone plays a sport, or is involved in the arts. Then show that in every endeavour we go through the process of training the body and mind and then concentrating the mind so that we can have an 'aah' moment. It might be walking. We walk with a mind full of thoughts to begin with. Let's say we are in a forest. We start our walk with all sorts of rubbish thoughts thinking about our rent or an assignment that is due or whatever, but then as we enter the forest and really enter into the experience of the forest we focus on just one thought – the forest. We walk and everything starts to get left behind.

Then we are just walking. And then will come a moment where we will see a leaf or a tree or even just a raindrop and we will have the 'aah' experience, and for a moment we will stop being tourists looking at a forest and start actually experiencing the forest, participating and becoming the forest. Show again the parallel to the meditation experience.

Perhaps someone plays the piano. Show how we start with the body and mind, learning to place our fingers in the right places in the right ways. But then if our teacher is any good she will say 'now concentrate, really focus, this music is the only thing that exists whilst you are playing it' and you will focus. Again in time, our teacher will say 'now stop thinking about the music and become the music, feel it' - and there will be the 'aah' moment.

Go through a few of the examples people give you, ask them do they recognise how they have got to the 'aah' moment in the past and how important the meditation experience is to their happiness and to their sense of themselves. Then explain that so far these experiences have been by accident, imagine what would happen if we could have these experiences when we chose.

Imagine how much more in tune with ourselves we would be, how much more in tune with our lives. Spend some time here emphasising that the meditation discipline is important. It will deepen everything

we do already but the discipline of meditating every day is extremely important to keep these skills tuned and honed. This is the most important part of the first class. It is crucial that you are sincere and committed in your recommendation that people meditate daily. Without daily meditation it is simply impossible to learn to meditate.

It will be easy to get an intellectual understanding of what meditation is and perhaps some people might say that is a start, but everything really begins when the seeker understands that he or she is the ultimate teacher, and that to really learn one must practise daily. Anything less than daily will be like trying to read a book and rereading the page over and over again because nothing is sinking in. Initially even 5 minutes a day is enough but emphasise it.

The next most important part of learning to meditate is the group and having friends that are meditating that the seeker/student/teacher can bounce off. Emphasise the importance of coming to your class to learn the guidelines of self teaching, to gain the empowerment from the group to keep motivated and the discipline to meditate every day. Then finally make sure you finish with a great meditation exercise. You can use any of your favourites from the classes, and if you want do the voice yourself with some nice music in the background.