

Perhaps you are interested in learning how to meditate or you are meditating already but feel the need to gain new insights or experience a refreshing tune-up. This short E-Book, **Journey Into Meditation**, may be of assistance to you. I have removed all cost and copyright restrictions in order that the book can be downloaded and printed, read and freely shared with others. This short study course has been based on fourteen years of my experience as a meditation teacher and writer. The contents of the book feature articles, brief lessons, explanations and exercises – all designed to help you take the first steps into your meditation experience. Enjoy your meditation journey as you make its benefits and blessings your own.

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Why Should I Meditate?

The subject of meditation and the great benefits it offers still remains a news-worthy topic today as many people now make meditation a part of their daily routine. One of meditation's great gifts results in re-balancing the two hemispheres of our brain, each of which has a distinctly different function. Our left brain hemisphere holds the seat of discursive thinking, planning, organizing and analysing. Its busy (masculine) active state is called 'beta' and in it our electromagnetic brain waves fire at 14 to 30 cycles per second. Our right brain hemisphere (feminine) functions are more intuitive, reflective, creative and are concerned with being rather than doing. These 'alpha' brain wave patterns fire more slowly – between 7 and 14 cps. In this state we are mentally receptive to the present moment rather than the past and future modes of beta. In an alpha state we also experience a non-judgemental frame of mind.

It has been tested and proven that when those who meditate reach an alpha brain wave state their two brain hemispheres adopt a single, coherent electromagnetic wave firing pattern. This indicates that both sides of the brain are working together in a balanced and synchronous manner. Whole brain functioning also produces neuro-chemicals called endorphins. These create feelings of well being, produce anti-ageing hormones and cause free radicals to move through the body seeking out and destroying harmful disease and cancer producing cells. (Free radicals are highly reactive molecules that contain oxygen. A by-product of normal chemical reactions, free radicals take electrons from undamaged cells to neutralize their own charge, causing cell damage in the process). By experiencing even short periods of whole brain functioning, people who meditate will notice improved memory and stronger concentration.

Beside the physiological benefits to the body there is a spiritual component to the practice of meditation as well. When one can achieve the balance of whole brain functioning and quiet a busy overactive mind, a deep sense of inner calm and peace is experienced. It is in this centre, the still point of meditation, that the tradition of simple silent spirituality, called 'Divine Listening' by Saint Benedict, can be enjoyed. Meditation opens us up to the inner senses by adding a totally new dimension to our experiences.

Nadi Sudi

There are many different breathing practices in the yoga tradition and these are collectively referred to as Pranayama. Prana is the vital life force that animates each living cell in our bodies. When prana flows unimpeded the body radiates health and the mind remains sound. When prana is blocked the result can lead to sickness and depression. Nadi Sudi, alternate nostril breathing, is a simple exercise to enhance balance. First sit quietly then take in a gentle breath. Close your right nostril with your right thumb, pause briefly then exhale slowly through the left nostril. Inhale through the left nostril, close it with your right index finger, pause for a moment, open your right nostril and then exhale through the right nostril. Continue by inhaling right, switch to the thumb then exhale left, etc. Enjoy this simple Pranayama Yoga technique as you adopt it for balance and stress relief.

Getting Started

It's time now to begin learning how to meditate and a positive first step is to select a quiet space where you won't be disturbed. If you are more comfortable sitting on a chair, find one with a straight back and no side arm rests. Sit on a cushion if the chair seat is unpadded, with your spine straight, your chin facing forward (not tilted up or down) and your feet flat on the floor. Place your open hands palms up and resting on your thighs. If you like to sit directly on the floor do so using a cushion or meditation stool with your legs crossed in front.

In meditation the body is deeply relaxed while the mind is alert and focused in the present moment. I like to call this the body asleep – mind awake state. Yet though the mind is at rest it is not drifting aimlessly from thought to thought, in a state of reverie. Instead meditation aids us in developing the habit of our being relaxed, yet focused and aware – the mental equivalent of being physically fit and healthy. Your personal experience of total and deep physical relaxation is always the first important step toward meditation. The following brief exercise will relax you deeply and could also serve as your introductory meditation.

A Body Scan Exercise

Sit comfortably and shake your body loose, releasing any obvious tensions. Scan the body at your own speed taking several quiet breaths in each region. Focus your awareness on your head, neck and shoulders, arms, hands, torso, legs and feet. Notice how much tension is held in the jaw and shoulders. Gently move these areas to release any stiffness. As you scan your torso repeat the words, 'soft and loose' several times. Feel yourself let go, knowing that your spine will hold you upright. When you've finished visualize your body as being relaxed, healthy and pain free. Sit quietly enjoying the sense of calm and well being.

Scanning from the head down is generally more calming in effect, while scanning from the feet upward raises your energy and keeps you more alert. Whenever you decide to end your meditation always take a few moments to leave this state slowly and gently. Notice how your body feels, in comparison to the way you felt just before you began your meditation. You should find yourself more deeply relaxed and at peace.

Three Meditation Techniques

1. Breath Awareness

Once you have moved into your quiet inner space and experienced a sense of relaxation, the physical side of the meditation equation is complete. However the mental side, one that requires us to remain focused and aware, will take some practice. If you are a meditation beginner you will notice how your busy thoughts begin to intrude, jumping back and forth, crying out for your attention. Observe this chatter of the ego in a non-judgemental way for a short time and notice that these thoughts are usually unrelated and are very brief. They generally last only for the duration of an in-breath or an out-breath. Next focus on your breathing by taking in a breath gently through the nostrils, hold it briefly and then exhaling it. It works best if you use your nose for meditation breathing, unless the nose is blocked.

Now hold your awareness on your breath and let successive breaths become soft and regular. Observe your breathing and carry your awareness from the in-breath, across the space before you exhale. If you can cross the space between in and out-breaths you will probably not carry any chattering thoughts along with you. If your thoughts continue to intrude keep them in the background and let the breath become your focus. Maintain your breathing, moving in a steady and gentle rhythm. Used in this way breathing is a device to hold and focus the awareness of your mind during meditation.

A Simple Mini Meditation, ‘Follow the Breath’

Take slow gentle breaths in and out. Feel the breath as it moves and follow it with your mind. Focus only on your breath – nothing else. You can breathe and notice the breath at the same time. Finish this meditation by moving into the still silence within. Rest here without thinking. Just enjoy being.

Relaxed Breathing

Open the chest with two or three big sighs.
Now let the breath go – no control at all.
Don't try to breathe deeply
Let the breath do what it wants to.
Say the words 'let....go....' as you breathe
Feel the breath and your body gradually soften.
Feel your mind slow down and settle in your body

2. Using Visualization to focus Awareness

Some people visualize easily. They may find breath awareness uninteresting and may instead enjoy imagining a beautiful object or recalling a deeply loved face. Visualization in meditation is another technique to hold the focused awareness and can work on several different levels: imagery, emotion and bodily response.

One can begin by evoking an image, perhaps one that arises spontaneously. It could be an object, a peaceful landscape or something personal. Try to recall its shape, colour and texture with as much sensory detail as possible. Next notice the accompanying emotion that fits this particular image. An image that evokes this subtlety of emotion will grasp your attention more fully. When you fully enter the emotional state accompanying the image, your body will believe it is really there. (Try this exercise for ten seconds: first imagine that you are alone in a snowstorm, without wearing any coat or hat. Then switch the scene for another ten seconds, visualizing yourself enjoying a warm bath in the sunshine). In the first scene your body will contract and in the second you will feel it begin to expand.

When you have selected your meditation object and moved yourself into the emotional response it triggers, just hold it in your awareness and enjoy the smell, taste, touch or sound of it. When your mind drifts away from the object bring it back again gently.

A Light Body Visualization

- See your body slowly fill with light.
- Breathe light into every cell as you see, feel and direct it.
- Imagine that every cell is being renewed, is being made healthy and whole.
- If part of your body is in pain, bathe it with light.
- When your entire body is filled with light, visualize this light radiating from your body as far as the inner eye can see.

My Point of Power Meditation

Relax, close your eyes and try to sense within yourself the source of power from which your own breathing and life energies come. When you feel this source within yourself sense the power flowing outward through your entire physical being, through your fingertips and toes, through the pores of your body, in all directions with yourself as the center. Imagine these rays undiminished, reaching out through the foliage and clouds above, down through the center of the earth below and extending even to the furthest reaches of the universe.

3. Mantras and Affirmations

Mantra and the breath meditation are the two most widely used meditation practices worldwide. Eastern meditation practices have frequently employed the use of a mantra to bring oneself into alignment with higher states of consciousness. Mantras are sacred syllables or words, generally in Sanskrit, which are repeated over and over to hold the focus of one's awareness. Some mantras have no meaning at all as the sound quality of the words is the most important aspect. Two of these common mantras are OM and SOHAM. The latter is pronounced SoHummm, repeated slowly, silently and continually in your mind. SOHAM can be linked to your breath: SO to the inbreath, HAM to the outbreath. It translates to "I am That" with "that" referring to your consciousness or awareness. This form of meditation is to simply sit with eyes closed and to silently repeat the mantra at a regular conversational speed while the breath remains normal.

Affirmations are phrases, selected and repeated over and over again during meditation. As we are often suggestible when we deeply relax during meditation, affirmations usually produce positive results. The most powerful affirmation should always begin with the words I AM. Some suggestions for affirmations might include:

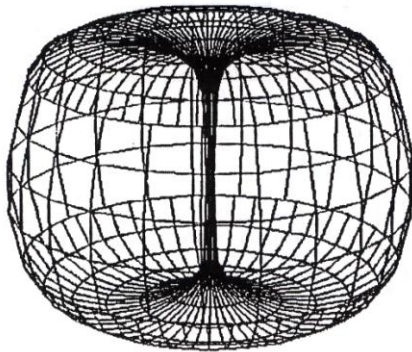
- I AM THAT I AM.
- I AM filled with vibrant good health.
- I AM creating a positive and happy life.
- I AM loving and fulfilled in all my relationships.
- I AM forgiving and compassionate.
- I AM one with the Great Creator and all of Its creations.
- I AM enjoying financial abundance.
- I AM happy and at peace.
- I AM willing to make changes, to be open to something new and better.
- I give myself permission to truthfully express my feelings.
- Divine love and light are working through me now.

Those beginning meditation often find mantra and affirmation meditation very satisfying. You may enjoy creating your own mantras or affirmations to suit your special spiritual needs at the time or to assist you in working through a particular difficulty or problem. To add variety to your meditation practice you may choose to incorporate two or three techniques in the same meditation: breath awareness, visualization and a mantra or affirmation of your choice. Use whatever holds your focused awareness, as even in meditation variety can be the spice of life.

The Chakra System

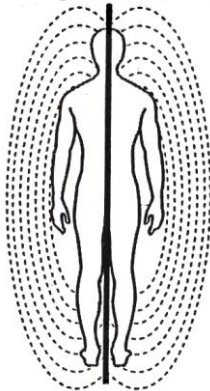
We live in a universe propelled by the laws of electricity and magnetism and all third dimensional life forms within it reflect this. Our stars and planets (geo-magnetic life forms) all have a north pole and a south pole with magnetic lines of force flowing between them. Our human bodies (bio-magnetic life forms) also conform to this bi-polar magnetic field, with the top of our head reflecting our north pole and the soles of our feet the south pole. In a third dimensional representation, these lines of force moving between our head and feet completely encompass the body within an etheric structure known as a tube torus. Imagine this donut shaped energetic field extending all around your body. It is called your aura.

tube torus



Have you noticed that when meeting another person for the first time you may be instinctively drawn to them? This could be evidence that both of your auras are vibrating in sympathetic resonance. The same would be true when the presence of another feels uncomfortable. Perhaps the magnetic energies in your auras are repelling each other. At the centre of each bi-polar magnetic field is a magnetic core running from north to south. In the case of a simple bar magnet it is a magnetized piece of metal. In the case of the bio-magnetic human body it is a channel, only observable in subtle matter, called the pranic tube. Within this core the life force is carried to sustain each individual creation during its existence.

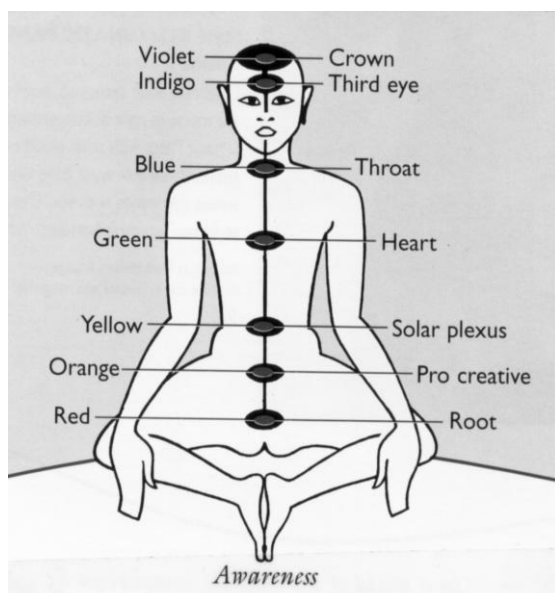
pranic tube



Every spiritual tradition identifies and acknowledges the life force, that great field of potential that gives rise to and then sustains each and all in existence from moment to moment. In Chinese spiritual teachings the life force is called chi, (Tai Chi meaning

increasing life force) while the Japanese and Koreans call it ki, (Reiki, healing life force). In the Indian and Tibetan traditions it is identified as prana. The Christian tradition may name the life force sanctifying grace or grace, practitioners of new age spirituality refer to this field as the light or the white light, and to the physicist, it's known as the sub-atomic or quantum field. As you move among numbers of people going about their business in any large city, you can notice and identify many of those who are suffering from a diminished access to the life force. It shows in their state of health, their sense of openness and self confidence and even the way they relate to others and carry themselves. We must all access the life force fully and completely to maximize it's benefits to our daily existence and our chakra system is the vehicle that has been beautifully designed to fulfil this function.

Chakra, is a Sanskrit word that translates as “a spinning disc” or “a wheel.” It is one of many human names for what is perceived to be a bio-physical connection to our soul or spirit. These energy connections or chakras exist in that the soul or spirit is immersed in the physical body and mingles throughout. At present we each have seven of these energy connections that are woven into our body's meridian centres with some lying along the spine. These centres are similar in function to the junction box found in the electrical system of a home or office. Likewise our physical body is controlled through a vastly complicated neuro-electrical circuitry, with a number of special locations where these circuits converge. Each of these locations is monitored through a special mini neuro-computer connected through the central nervous system to the brain. It is these specific locations that are called chakras and each fulfils a number of functions. As well there are also several ductless glands associated with the functioning of each chakra point. Since the vibratory field of light also activates colour and tone, each of the chakra centres produces its own specific colour and sound.



- **RED**, the root chakra, links you to the physical world and serves as the foundation to build and evolve your personality. As the electrician grounds the junction box with a copper grounding wire, so too this chakra grounds us here on earth.
- **ORANGE**, (ovaries/testes) the pro-creative or sacral chakra is the center for sexual energy and creativity, balancing the free giving and receiving of feelings and emotions in all your relationships.
- **YELLOW**, (spleen) the solar plexus chakra is where your honor, integrity and power originates. It is the essence of who you are.
- **GREEN** (thymus) the heart chakra is the centre of the system. Known also as the great transformer it generates the ability to love freely without fear or self consciousness.
- **BLUE** (thyroid) the throat chakra is where feelings and emotions are transformed into expressions. This chakra centre helps you find the balance between silence and speech and assists you to say what you honestly feel.
- **INDIGO** (pineal) the “Third eye” between the eyebrows above the nose, connects you to your spiritual being and invites intuition and awareness into your daily life.
- **VIOLET** (pituitary) the crown chakra connects you to your total being with the awareness that you, the universe and the Great Creator are all one.

A Simple Chakra Meditation

First relax deeply, as you connect with the heart chakra through your breath. Next anchor your life force or light into the centre of the earth through a brief thought intention. Slowly focus on your breath and establish quiet, rhythmic breathing.

Become aware of your heart chakra and allow it to expand with each breath you take, until it is large enough to overlap the chakras in the throat and solar plexus. Then see these three chakras expanding as one with every rhythmical breath. Extend them to embrace the third eye and the sacral chakras. Gradually expand again to merge with your crown and root chakras and feel your aura swelling outwards. Continue expanding your breathing until you experience yourself as one huge chakra. Enjoy your breath and your new sense of an expanded self.

When your chakra system is unified and balanced through meditation, you will be able to access more and more of the life force. You will sense its beneficial effects by enjoying better health and more positive life experiences. When your meditation is finished, close down the chakras and seal or protect your aura. Do this by visualizing or intending that each chakra closes like a flower.

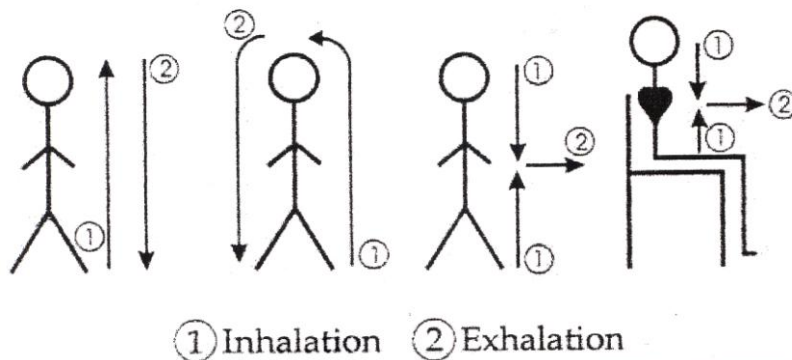
As was noted earlier, prana is but one name used to describe the life force that interpenetrates all existence, everywhere. To more fully access the life force, prana – breathing, a powerful form of energetic breath work will be widely practiced by most persons during the coming new age.

Prana – Breathing

While either sitting or standing begin to relax fully. Take several quiet breaths while slowly closing your eyes and then imagine or visualize your pranic tube. It begins above your crown chakra in the higher dimensions, flows down through your body along the spine, then grounds itself into the planet beneath your feet. Touch the tip of your thumb and second finger together and make a circle. Your pranic tube is approximately the size of this space.

As you breathe in visualize the celestial pranic energy coming down into your tube and through your body into the earth. Hold it briefly then exhale. On the next inbreath draw earthly prana up from the planet through your body and exhale this out through the tube at your crown. Practice this several times until you clearly sense the flow of pranic energy or life force.

Next, on the inbreath draw prana simultaneously both up and down your pranic tube, holding the prana in your heart, then exhale it gently. Finally draw prana into your body, holding it in your heart chakra then sensing it move throughout the body completely as you exhale. The life force will truly flow into your entire body, energizing and revivifying you. This will be achieved through the law of attention as, “Energy always follows awareness.”



If you experience a sudden stress or a deeply disturbing event withdraw, focus yourself and enjoy a short period of prana breathing. A few deep quiet breaths will totally rebalance and restabilise you.

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<http://www.Kirael.com>

Group and Global Meditations

The 100th Monkey, a story about social change (by Ken Keys, Jr.)

“**T**he Japanese Macaca Fuscata monkey had been observed in the wild for a period of over 30 years. In 1952 on the Island of Koshima, scientists were providing monkeys with sweet potatoes dropped in the sand. The monkeys liked the taste of the raw sweet potatoes but found the dirt unpleasant. An 18 month old female named Imo found that she could solve this problem by washing her potatoes in a nearby stream. She taught this trick to her mother. Then her monkey playmates learned this new way and taught their mothers too.

This cultural innovation was gradually picked up by various monkeys before the eyes of the scientists. Between 1952 and 1958 all the young monkeys learned to wash the sandy sweet potatoes to make them more palatable. Only the adults who imitated their children however learned this social improvement. Other adults kept eating the sandy sweet potatoes. Then something startling took place. In the autumn of 1958 a certain number of Koshima monkeys were washing their sweet potatoes – this exact number was not known. Let us suppose that when the sun rose one morning there were 99 monkeys on Koshima Island who had learned to wash their dirty potatoes. Let’s suppose that later that morning, the 100th monkey learned to wash potatoes. **THEN IT HAPPENED!**

By that evening almost every monkey in the tribe was washing potatoes before eating them. The added energy of this 100th monkey somehow created a critical mass that led to an ideological breakthrough. But notice: the most surprising thing observed by these scientists was that the habit of washing sweet potatoes had somehow crossed the sea. Colonies of monkeys on other islands and the mainland troop of monkeys at Takasakiyama all began washing their potatoes too. Thus when a certain critical number achieves a particular awareness, this new awareness may be communicated directly from mind to mind. Although the exact number may vary, this 100th monkey phenomenon suggests that when only a limited number of people know about or choose a new way, it may remain the conscious property of these people. However, there is a point at which if only one more person tunes-in to a new awareness, a field is strengthened so that this awareness is picked up by almost everyone.”

Global meditations practiced among new age participants, both in small groups and numbering in the thousands to the hundreds of thousands, have drawn on the 100th monkey theory to bring about world wide social and consciousness changes. It has become a firm belief within New Age spirituality that energy always follows thought and that a clearly and energetically focused intention will often result at some future time in its manifestation. We all create our own reality, both on a personal and community level. Persons who meditate regularly know this and frequently contribute their prayers and loving energies, at specifically chosen times, to ensure that beneficial effects will flow on to earth’s peoples and to the planet.

The internet has become the most outstanding means by which to alert, mobilize and draw together groups performing this activity. Various websites announce these global meditation occasions that occur during full moons, solstices, equinoxes and

major religious feasts such as Easter and Wesak. Global meditations tend to follow two formats: the world wide gathering at a specific time of a particular day and the twenty four hour 'wave' meditation.

When a mass gathering with a huge impact is desired, a particular intention, day and hour in GMT (Greenwich Mean Time) is nominated for the occasion. It is a fact, scientifically tested and measured, that when a group of people in their thousands simultaneously focuses upon and holds the same thought intention, the planetary field (as it is measured from the increasing cycles per second of the Schumann Cavity Resonance Level), experiences a higher atomic vibration and a consciousness raising shift. Barbara Wolf's excellent web site offers one of the most complete listings of global meditations, in which you can participate either with a group or alone in the privacy of your own home. Visit: <http://www.globalmeditations.com>

During a wave meditation the initial impact is lessened but its effects are spun out over a much longer time frame. Each person participating focuses on 'noon' for example in the time zone they find themselves in. As the sun passes over continents, oceans etc. at high noon, the meditation wave encircles the globe for a full day.

The Peace Clock Wave Meditation

Starting Now: Wherever you are perform a brief silent meditation for world peace - every day at noon - for one minute. Silently repeat the following intention, "**MAY PEACE PREVAIL ON PLANET EARTH.**"

The Goal: To have every person on earth performing this event by the end of the year 2012.



Synchronized Intention is the Key

- With an alarm, a note or any other means, remind yourself when it is noon in your time zone.
- Involve the active participation of your company, school, city, state or nation.
- Request that radio, TV and newspapers broadcast the Peace Clock daily.
- Approach all interactions with others in peaceful, constructive and creative ways.

Already the critical mass of humanity has chosen global peace instead of war and with our continual holding of this focus, by attending or participating in peace marches, group meditations and related activities, ultimately global peace will prevail.

Merging Meditation Into Daily Life

Sitting with the eyes closed is a good way to begin the practice of meditation as this method best allows one to control a wandering mind. However this skill may also be practiced while walking or performing life's day to day activities. Meditation in the midst of activity brings the whole world and its experiences into your life and keeps you fully focused in the present - alive and aware in each moment. And over time meditation during activity will also produce significant inner transformation and enlightenment, as it will give greater meaning to the simple outward activities we all do.

As an example, you could make any of the following activities become a meditation.

- When eating a meal, notice the smell, taste and colour of each bite of food. Enjoy the dinner conversation and feel appreciation for Mother Earth's rich bounty.
- When taking a bath or shower, enjoy the smell of the soap, the warmth of the water and visualize the washing away of inner problems and tensions.
- While walking feel the air or wind moving across your face, notice the colours of passing trees and flowers and listen attentively to the passing soundscape.

Welcome meditation into the simple activities of your daily life. It needn't always require a quiet room and twenty minutes stolen from the day. You can also ground yourself and focus your awareness by experiencing the sensations of each moment. Listen to each person speaking to you, enjoy the taste of a piece of warm, buttered toast, smell the rain and feel all of your aches and pains. Observe all these aspects of your daily life, both pleasant and unpleasant, without judging them. While they may not all provide enjoyable sensations, through meditation within activity, you will truly begin to feel more deeply and fully alive.

The great Spanish mystic, St. Teresa of Avila, lived with her sisters in a convent which relied on the charity of others for the partial provision of their food. One day when a whole, fresh fish was left on the doorstep and served during the evening meal, St. Teresa was noticed smacking her lips as she ate with relish. When the Mother Superior admonished her, the saint replied, "Mother, when I work - I work. When I pray - I pray. When I eat fish - I eat fish."

Frequently we may feel that we are getting nowhere in our meditation practice in the midst of activity, whereas a period of quiet withdrawal, while sitting with the eyes closed seemingly brings greater and more instant results. It should never be a question, however of choosing one practice over the other. Strive instead to become skilled in the practice of both.

Meditation On The Spot

So often modern life stops us in our tracks as we move ahead with our daily activities. We meet these situations at some of the following times:

- When we are put on hold by a telephone call
- When we're suddenly stopped by a red light
- When we're caught in an endless queue while shopping or banking
- When the bumper to bumper traffic gets longer and slower
- When the trains or busses aren't running
- When the electric power fails

Instead of getting angry, impatient and developing high blood pressure why not view the situation as a small gift and an opportunity to put our engines on idle. Slow down and take several deep quiet breaths. On the inbreath say 'I accept' and on the outbreath say 'I release.' Relaxation is all about letting go and this may be something we all consciously need to practice. Let go of your breath, your thoughts and even the effort to relax. Deep regular breathing has a beautiful sensual quality about it. It ebbs and flows within you and massages your body from the inside out. Gradually you will feel the change to a greater sense of peace and balance. When activity resumes again you will move forward with a healthier and more positive frame of mind.

The Ginko Walk, a walking meditation

Japan's Buddhist culture has gifted us with a beautiful form of walking meditation known as the Ginko Walk. Alone or in the presence of others, usually with a notebook and pen (and even a digital camera), people walk meditatively in nature in anticipation of an 'a-ha' moment waiting to express itself. When a particularly arresting flash of beauty is experienced, a haiku (a very brief three line, free verse poem) is written. The haiku describes the personal effects of the moment on the writer or reflects poetically upon it. One may also capture the image on camera to create a haiga, (working later with computer software to embed the haiku within the digitally enhanced photo). A haibun may be written as well, (a short, terse prose description, followed by a haiku. While unfamiliar to most readers in the West, this prose/poetry literary form is very common throughout the East). On its completion the participants share their memories and writings with each other over refreshments. Through the Ginko Walk, a meditation on nature can also become a creative expression of the fine arts.

Every day drink deeply from the beauty that surrounds you, as you allow it to rejuvenate and elevate your entire being. Pause frequently for a moment to admire the beauty of small things as you express your gratitude and thanks to our Great Creator and to Mother Earth, for their precious gifts.

The Search (a haibun)

The day ends with a late afternoon meditation ... time for a 'walk about' in nature to dream, touch, smell and capture a last haiku moment. Armed with notebooks and pens we set out, as a sliver of pink and gold widens on the rim of the horizon.

*ginko walk
ringing with resonance -
bell birds*

Our pace quickens as rich foliage deepens into shadow. The bushland suddenly falls silent, the horizon flames into orange red, the open sky provides just enough light to guide us back safely.

*setting sun -
each treetop wears
a golden halo*

Using Music to Enhance Meditation

The maternity ward in Kosice-Saca Hospital in eastern Slovakia, discovered the perfect way to ensure harmony among its new arrivals – by playing them the music of Mozart. Lined up in their cots the infants are a picture of contentment. Headphones are connected five times a day to the babies as the staff discovered that music helps newborns recover from the trauma of birth. The music therapy begins five hours after delivery and when the babies hear classical music they fall asleep or lie quietly. This music keeps them healthy and relaxed.

Of recent times a new phenomenon called the Mozart Effect has surfaced. The Mozart Effect is an inclusive term signifying the transformational powers of music for health, education and well-being. It represents the general use of music to reduce stress, depression and anxiety and to induce relaxation and sleep. Research with Mozart's music began in France during the 1950s, when Dr Alfred Tomatis began experiments in auditory stimulation for children with speech and learning disorders. Mozart's music has been sequenced by Dr Tomatis for different activities: high frequencies for stimulating the auditory system and slower tempo works for relaxation. He found that Mozart's structural patterning and subtle emotional expression helped to clarify time/space perception. The rhythmic qualities of Mozart's pieces mimic rhythmic cycles in the brain. Mozart's music is not overly stimulating and his classical forms such as the rondo, sonata and variation present basic ways in which the brain becomes familiar with the development of simple ideas.

Dr Georgi Lozanov, a renowned Bulgarian psychologist, developed a method of teaching foreign languages that used Baroque music (that is music written during the 17th and 18th centuries) with a beat pattern of about 60 beats per minute. While listening to this music, students increased their normal retention of vocabulary and phrases. Dr Lozanov proved conclusively that by using certain Baroque musical pieces, foreign languages could be mastered with 85% effectiveness in thirty days. This occurred because students using Mozart and works by Vivaldi, Handel and Bach, recorded at 60 beats per minute, felt calmer, could study longer and indicated a higher retention rate overall. Why was this so? These special pieces recorded at just the right tempo activated the right and left brain hemispheres simultaneously. Music activated the right brain as the words one was reading and saying aloud activated the left brain.

When the body hears only a few beats per second of Baroque music the heart rate and pulse immediately relax to the beat. While one is in a relaxed and alert state, the mind can focus and concentrate more easily. During heavy mental work our pulse and

blood pressure rises and it often becomes more difficult to concentrate in this physiological state. Listening to Baroque and Mozart pieces as well as Gregorian Chant, cool jazz, relaxing new age pieces and some popular music will automatically reduce your blood pressure and pulse rate, while increasing your learning ability at the same time. This also becomes more effective when the volume level is tuned in the low to medium range.

Why not experiment yourself with the Mozart Effect? While experiencing the healthful effects of this music you will also reap the added bonus of its sheer aesthetic enjoyment. All of it is so beautiful and uplifting. And once you learn when your mind needs stimulation or relaxation you can develop a variety of ways to use the music to your best advantage. So relax, dream, meditate and enjoy the healing powers of music.

Below are several attractive and beneficial CDs to help you get started.

- ‘Music for the Mozart Effect’ CD volume I is entitled, Heal the Mind
- ‘Music for the Mozart Effect’ CD volume II is entitled, Heal the Body
- There are a further three CDs now available in the ‘Music for the Mozart Effect’ series, from the classical music departments of all good record shops.

About the Author



Mary Mageau is an Australian spiritual teacher and author. Her meditation classes have been conducted at the Queensland University of the Third Age and for The Pine Rivers Community Education Programs. She regularly contributes articles to spiritual and metaphysical journals, web sites and leading magazines in Australia, the United States, Singapore and New Zealand. Her two books published by Boolarong Press include: **Insights – For an Awakening Humanity** and **A Little Book of Living Spiritually**. Grevillea Records has produced her audio CD entitled, **Journey Into Meditation**. Mary has also written several additional free e-books. Click on: http://www.thecominggoldenage.com/Preparing_For_Ascension.htm

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