

# *Mindfulness Meditation*

*A*

## *Western Approach*

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*Mindfulness Meditation*  
*A Western Approach*  
*The First Step*  
*of the*  
*First Stage*

*Steve Allan*



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## *Introduction*

The information on Mindfulness Meditation techniques and knowledge contained in this book is not new. This information has been around for at least two and a half millenniums.

So if you think that you have heard some of this before, it's because you probably have.

A few years ago, at the suggestion of a Buddhist nun friend, I had begun to share my knowledge of Mindfulness Meditation with many others.

To date around 200 people have come to me asking about meditation.

Due to the location of where I live and practice, all these people have come from western societies from all over the world, never the less; they are westerners with western concepts, ideas and a western way of thinking.

One of the most common feelings that I have picked up on and encountered from these people is that, in most cases

people know that they need something in their lives to ease the stress of modern day to day living and to calm their minds and so to bring a sense of peace to their personal situations, but when faced with the fact that eastern wisdom is the basis of meditation techniques, they seem to withdraw, especially if that fact is presented to them at the early stages of their involvement with any form of meditation.

It is for that reason that I have written this book:

***‘Mindfulness Meditation a Western Approach’***,

The entire book is based on western pragmatism and not trying to divulge eastern wisdom.

When I began studying and practicing meditation quite some years ago, like anybody learning any new subject I started from a point of little or no knowledge and of absolutely no understanding of it.

As I have moved along studying, practicing and realizing more about the art of meditation, the learning curve, whilst steep was obviously linear.

You learn one thing and move on and then learn and practice the next step.

Your knowledge, meditation skills and understanding builds up as you go.

After more than a year of studying and practising, it hit me one day, the realization that this knowledge line is not linear, it is round or circular, the knowledge follows on from itself and back to the beginning again.

Having made this miraculous discovery, it was not long before I realized that this too, is not completely correct.

The learning or understanding curve is not just circular but a circular spiral as the knowledge went around and around on itself my practical meditation skills and understanding of the theory of meditation went up.

So there you have it, the learning curve that comes from Mindfulness Meditation is a circular spiral .....wrong!!

Now many years later and after a lot more studying in Asia, India and Australia and info sharing from America, I am now able to tell you the learning curve is not in the shape of

a straight line nor of a circle or even of a circular spiral, it is in the shape of a ball or an orb.

All the information, knowledge and understanding of Mindfulness Meditation eventually interlocks with each other like a jigsaw puzzle and when the puzzle is finished it is in the shape of a globe.

It is for this reason, that when you read this book, it may seem at times, in different chapters and sections that I am saying the same or almost the same thing again.

For example, information in the early chapter, preparing for meditation, will cross over in a much later chapter where I give you a meditation to try and practice.

Also, 18 years ago I was trained in the American business teaching technique, known as the ACE program and I have conducted countless instructional programs using this technique since.

To boil this teaching technique down to one sentence is that it is based on the '*3 Tellem's concept*'.

1. Tell them what you are going to tell them.

2. Tell them.

3. Tell them what you told them.

So if you see this creeping in somewhere into the information, it's something important and I am trying too get my point across.

## *Why Meditation ?*

*P*eople want a variety of things from meditation.

Some come for peace, others for self control, some for power and some for silence, but of all the reasons, the ones which are most often expressed are peace or peace of mind. At first glance there dose not seem to be much difference between the two but on closer inspection, we find that they are asking for different things.

Peace is simply an experience, whereas 'peace of mind' is a way of life.

*Taken from:*

*Practical Meditation.*

*By*

*Ishwariya Viswa Vidyalyaya*

# *What is Meditation ?*

*M*editation is the process of getting to know myself completely, both who I am ‘inside’ and how I react ‘outside’.

Above all, meditation is ‘enjoying myself’ in the literal sense of those words.

Through meditation, I discover a different ‘me’ from perhaps the stressed or troubled person who may seem superficially to be ‘me’

I realize that my true nature, the real ‘me’ is actually very positive.

I begin to discover an ocean of peace right here on my own door step.

***Taken from:***

***Practical Meditation.***

***By***

***Ishwariya Vishwa Vidyalaa***

## *Part One.*

### *The Goal of Mindfulness Meditation.*

*See first with the mind, then with the eyes,  
and finally with the body and limbs.  
—Yagyū, Japanese Swordsman.*

*B*efore I start section one, I would like to reiterate something that I mentioned in the introduction.

That is, that most people who live in a western country with a western upbringing tend to look at things that are of new ideas and concepts to them from a pragmatic point of view.

What I mean by this is, that whilst they may or may not be skeptical about the idea, they do however have the need to check the math's and science behind the concept and work out for themselves the arithmetic and get a gut feeling for the percentage of feasibility of this new idea.

It is my ardent wish that you approach this book from a positive point of view and with a desire to find out more about Mindfulness Meditation.

I would like you also to have a desire to look into how it works and how to get started, rather than just think “well I paid a few bucks for this book, I better see what this joker has to say for himself”.

It is for this reason, that I would like you to put this book down now and get on the web and Google “*Mindfulness Meditation, Stress Relief and Health*” and read as many of the 50,000 or so articles on this subject that you need to from a variety of scientists, medicos and psychologists to get a good gut feeling about this form of meditation and what it can do for you.

Then come back to the book when you are ready to find out about the process behind this ancient technique that is becoming more widely used today in mental health and work place health and safety for the management of stress at home and in the work place throughout the western world.

## *'Stress'*

The causes of stress in most cases originate from outside of and beyond us.

Stress is set in motion by the pressure placed upon us from a myriad of things in our lives, timeframes, deadlines, business performance levels, relationship worries, financial concerns and so many more.

Once the concern of the pressures, whether they are real or imagined, lodges themselves in our mind they tend to travel around and around until these concerns turn into stress.

This stress left unchecked has the ability not only to cause severe emotional distress but also the ability to manifest itself and appear in a negative form in a wide variety of places in the body.

This appearance could take the form of a rash, stomach problems, an ulcer or even more sinister and serious problems.

The question is how do these outside physical concerns travel into our minds so to agitate it?

What is the mode of transport and along which medium are they traversing the gap between the outside world and our inner mind self?

The answer of course is that, the conduit from the outside world to our inner mind is our thoughts.

Many thoughts come in, inundating the mind with information and when enough data on a particular concern builds up, these thoughts turn into inner conversation this in turn convinces our mind that we have a problem and ends up causing us stress.

The chances of you successfully changing the outside world to a place of soothing calmness are not real good and the mind is only doing what it was designed to do, take in data and processing it in relation to the information at hand, so it is only doing its job.

So if you think about it, a viable way to reduce stress in the mind is to reduce the number of nagging and negative

thoughts that enter it and to soften the attitude that gives rise to them.

MFN Meditation has the ability to calm the mind and ease the flow of constant and pesky thoughts and when practiced on a regular basis over a period of time also has the ability to soften our attitude.

This form of meditation has the ability to help bring under control your untamed mind.

***‘Question’:***

Does your mind do what you tell it to, or do you do what your mind tells you to do?

This may sound like a weird question but think about it.

When you tell your mind to settle down and just relax and lets not get stressed about a situation, does it do it?

When you are trying to balance your visa card statement or trying to finish off a large arduous job and your mind says to you, it must be time for a coffee break or we could take the dog for a walk and get some fresh air or how about some

chocolate or “hey, can I smell pizza”, then what usually happens?

Who really is in control here?

So in reality when you think about it, it all comes down to mind control.

***‘Another Question’:***

How much mind control do you honestly think you have?

***‘And Another Question’:***

If you just answered I have good mind control, then, who was it that really answered that question?

Was it you or did your attitude answer it for you?

In 2010, whilst leading a 10 day meditation program at a large yoga school in Bali, I was asked to give an evening talk on MFN Meditation, of what it can do for you and what is required in the practice of it.

Many of the people who used this facility to practice yoga and had only experienced the relaxation style of meditation that was given at the end of a yoga session and had not heard of MFN Meditation.

Whilst the form of meditation that they were doing was extremely effective as a wind down after their yoga session, it sounded very different to the bits of information that the people in my group were telling them about, so the title of the talk became known as;

***‘The Goal of Mindfulness Meditation’.***

With the sub title of,

***‘The Path that Leads to the Goal’.***

The talk was so well received by a large number of people, that instead of rewriting this section I have decided to simply include here a transcript of that talk and the question and answer section that followed.

***The Goal of Mindfulness Meditation’.***

*T*he topic of our talk tonight is entitled the goal of Mindfulness Meditation and the path that leads to that goal. We are on a 2 hour time limit tonight, so I will attempt to

give you as much information as I can in that time frame, hopefully without going into information overload on you.

It should take me a maximum of 6 seconds to tell you the goal of MFN Meditation and then an hour or so to explain that goal and the path or the technique used to attain it.

The goal of MFN Meditation is simply;

***‘The Attainment of Silence,  
Stillness and Clarity of Mind’.***

That did not take long but now for the explanation.

First let’s talk about ***‘The Silence’***. In every second of every day our mind is constantly active and filled with thoughts and internal conversation even when we are sleeping; it is this excessiveness of this activity that we wish to quieten.

Basically, we only have two kinds of thoughts, historical thoughts, those of past memories and experiences and things that have happened to us in our life, old reruns of those events, like old TV programs, the other thoughts are dreams and plans, images and visions of the future.

## *'Always the Past or the Future':*

These thoughts zip in and out of our mind, they come and go and pass through our mind seemingly at their own will. We have little or no control over them.

For example: You could be reading a book or watching a movie or in conversation with friends, when you suddenly catch yourself thinking about your day at the beach yesterday, or thinking about the bus you cant miss at 9.10 tonight.

### *'Always the past or the future'.*

The only way to bring silence to the mind is to reduce the amount of these scurrerless and seemingly self activating thoughts to such a degree that, during the time of meditation the constant drum of thoughts and inner conversation is quelled from a roar to a very low murmur.

This will in turn induce a state of calmness and add a reduction to our stress levels.

Meditation does not mean that you bring your mind to a stage of total blankness.

The only time your mind will ever enter a state of total blankness is approximately 6 minutes after you leave this life.

Anyway, we do not want our meditation practice to bring us to a completely static state, we want the silence, the stillness and the clarity of mind to activate our intellect and increase our awareness.

The question arises, how do we attain this silence, this quietening of the mind, this quelling of the mind from a roar to a murmur.

Well this is where the stillness comes in.....

*The Mind is Like a Windy Lake:*

*T*here's a very old saying:

*“The Mind is Like a Windy Lake”*

Thoughts buzz around inside our head and act like a wind blowing over a quiet lake.

This wind creates white caps on the water and stirs up the silt on the bottom making it impossible to see what is beneath the surface.

So it is with the mind, it is stirred with thoughts of problems and day to day stresses so much that it is virtually impossible to mentally relax and gain clarity of mind.

If we could gain this clarity, even if only for a short period of time, then the answers to the riddles of life would have more of a chance of surfacing and presenting them selves to us.

By stopping the wind on which our thoughts travel, we calm the waters of our mind, so that during the time of our meditation our mind is brought to a peaceful and quiet yet focused state.

The next question that naturally follows is,  
“How the heck do I do that”?

I talked earlier about how our thoughts are always in the past or in the future but to attain this calmness we have to bring our mind to a state which is neither, the past or the future.

If you remove from your mind all that is past and eliminate images of the future you are only left with one last possible time period.

### *'The Now':*

*T*he now is the most difficult of thoughts to achieve because as soon as you are thinking of the now you are no longer in the now, the now is now in the past and we are now thinking about a past event all be it, only a few seconds ago.

I once heard one of the great meditators of our time say, “if you can bring your mind into the now and hold it there for one full and continuous minute then you are doing very well, but if you can bring your mind into the now and hold it

there continuously for two full minutes then you are amazing”.

This will indicate to you the degree of difficulty involved.

There are three steps to MFN Meditation.

***Comfort, breath and focus*** and this is where the focus part comes in.

To bring our minds into the present or the now we need to focus our minds on something that is always occurring in the now, no matter where we go and no matter what we are doing.

That thing that is always occurring at all times in the now is ***‘our breath’***.

Using specific techniques we focus our concentration, honing in closely on the sensation of the breath as it comes and goes.

At the time when we are following the breath and nothing else, that is when we are ***‘in the now’***.

Our mind will invariably slip back into the past or into the future and once we have become aware of this, we simply take a slightly deeper breath than normal and as we exhale we refocus and go back to the now.

The more you practice this, the easier it will become to enter the now.

Please let me make it clear that it is not ‘the now’ alone that gives you the attainment of silence, stillness and clarity of mind but also the time that your mind is spent in calming down, as the thoughts and inner conversations are eased and slowly reduced to a minimum as you focus your mind.

Learning meditation is no different than learning to play a musical instrument. It requires your attention and regular practice and the more we practice the better our skill level becomes. As with any skill, the more proficient you become at that skill the greater the rewards and as the quieter and the stiller your mind gradually becomes the greater the clarity it achieves.

Be aware that a regular and ongoing meditation practice can do more than just calm our minds, a much deeper transformation can take place, a transformation of attitude and a change in the way we approach problems in our lives. We begin to approach them with calmness and clarity instead of emotional turmoil and this will always bring us to a better outcome, even if that outcome is simply a lack of the loss of our calmness and our demeanor.

*“Every Action Has an Equal and Opposite*

*Re-Action”.*

Up until now, I have talked only about the effect that meditation has on our mind, but the act of this kind of meditation is not only a mindfulness act it is also a physical act and as a great scientist once said,

*“Every action has an equal and opposite reaction”.*

Now he was talking about physics at the atomic level, but so it is with life and with anything that has energy.

For example: When we walk on the beach our stepping is the action and the indent in the sand, our footprint, is the reaction.

Then when a wave, which is energy in water breaks on the beach, that is the action, it smoothes out the sand wiping out our footprint and that is the reaction and so it is with MFN Meditation.

The more action we do the more reaction that occurs.

Whilst everybody reaches differing states of meditation over differing time periods, never the less, every action has a reaction.

We have talked about the action of calming the mind and its reactive outcomes but the act of meditation is not just a mindful act but also a physical act.

It is also an act of sitting and calming the body as well as the mind.

The physical action of calming the body also has a physical reaction and that is the physical sense of peace and tranquility.

So that is what I call:

### ***‘A Western Approach to MFN Meditation’.***

It has outcomes of silence, stillness and clarity of mind and the physical outcome of a sense of peace and tranquility, although that physical sense is a short term outcome.

I think that is possibly too much information for now but that is a brief overview of MFN Meditation.

Are there any questions?

#### ***‘Question 1’.***

“You mentioned that you call this a western approach, does that mean there are other approaches and if so how do they differ?”

#### ***‘Answer’:***

The other approach is known as the ***‘Eastern Path’***, whilst the meditation technique is exactly the same, the eastern path has different outcomes, this is because it is based on a set of beliefs, a tradition and a large number of teachings of which meditation is just one.

People on the western path are not usually interested in taking on foreign and ancient traditions and things just on face value.

We want the facts, all the facts, and nothing but the facts and if you back up those facts with some scientific research data, then that is even better.

This is the difference between western pragmatism and eastern wisdom.

*Pragmatism unstiffens all of our theories,  
limbers them up  
and  
sets each one at work.*

*Being nothing essentially new,  
it harmonizes with many ancient  
philosophic tendencies.*

*(William James)*

***‘Question 2’:***

“The last thing that you mentioned in your talk was that the outcome of peace and tranquility is only temporary.

Can you elaborate on this?”

***‘Answer’:***

There are several stages of MFN Meditation.

The one that we are working on within this program is the first stage of MFN Meditation.

In the first stage of meditation there are the,

*‘Four Fundamentals of Meditation’.*

1. Contemplation and meditation of the body.
2. Contemplation and meditation of the feelings.
3. Contemplation and meditation of the mind.
4. Contemplation and meditation of mind objects (things, items).

In this program we are only dealing with the first of the four fundamentals.

Contemplation and Meditation of the Body.

So you can see that the subject of MFN Meditation is somewhat larger than you may have first imagined, so we are only working here with the body.

Whilst regular meditation practice can give you an ongoing calmness of mind and softening of attitude, it only gives a short term outcome of peace and tranquility.

The mind tends to go on evolving but the body is in constant fluctuation and change, therefore, concepts, ideas and attitudes continue and physical feelings tend to change and fade.

For example: You have just finished a one hour group meditation with friends and others and you are on your way home, your mind and attitude is telling you that meditation is wonderful and calming and that you wish to go again next week and you have a sense of peace and tranquility about you.

You get home, the kids are screaming, the TV is blaring and your partner is at their wits end and wanting to know what took you so long, so, what has just happened to your peace and tranquility?

It's gone! But your awareness that MFN Meditation is beneficial remains, so attitudes and states of mind go on, even in the turmoil of life, but physical states are constantly subject to change without notice.

*.....meditation is never simply  
a set of techniques.*

*If you keep meditating, a transformation of attitude  
takes place that is deeper.*

*Meditation guides you  
in how to approach problems,  
how to create your own techniques,  
how to find the 'Way'  
and then follow its path.*

*Everyday involvements take on  
greater personal meaning,  
becoming opportunities  
to learn from,  
as you apply a meditative approach  
to life.*

*(C. Alexander Simpkins, Ph.D.)  
&  
(Annellen M Simpkins, Ph.D.)*

# *Who am I?*

*T*his simple question seems easy to answer at first.

However, as soon as I start to think about it,  
I realize giving my name or description of my physical  
appearance does not describe the myriad of thoughts,  
moods, actions, and reactions which comprise  
myself and my life .

Even a description of what I do becomes confusing because,  
every day I wear so many hats.

I may start the day as a wife or a husband.  
At work I become a secretary, a clerk or a teacher.  
At lunch I may meet a friend  
and in the evening an acquaintance.  
Which of these roles that I play is me?

***Taken from:***

***Practical Meditation***

***By***

***Ishwariya Vishwa Vidyalaya***

## *Part Two.*

### *Stress and MFTN Meditation.*

*Life's challenges await us,  
Though we cannot control our fate  
We can meet contingency hopefully,  
As we step through destiny's gate.  
\_\_C. Alexander Simpkins, Ph.D.*

### *"Stress Induced Anger"*

The pressure and the stress of our environment, our job or business, difficult clients, narky and subversive and competitive work mates, the negative and aggressive people that we have to deal with, on an ongoing day to day basis out there in the world, its no wonder that the internal stress of this manifests itself as outward anger.

Internal stress is the action.

Outward manifestation of anger is the reaction.

The other pressure that is also on the mind at all times is that we have to get out of bed tomorrow morning and go out and suffer it all over again.

It is a sad state of affairs when this situation develops to such a degree that when we come home to the safety and the sanctuary of our home and family, often, the first thing we do is kick the cat and yell at our partner.

***‘Question’:***

How many years are there left in your working life?

And how long do you think this situation can go on for?

***‘Another Question’:***

Who do you think will get fed up with your antics and leave first, your partner or your cat?

***‘Information’:***

Did you know that a cat is a very territorial animal and is often far more attached to its environment than to the people it shares its environment with.

***‘Observation’:***

I hope you don't consider yourself to be a dog person because it could be just you and 'Miss Puss' for quite a while.

***Intelligence is an attribute  
of a person's performance,  
that is,  
an attribute of his past or current behavior,  
and it is not an unchanging  
or unchangeable attribute of the person.***

***Changing conditions,  
personal or environment  
...may increase or decrease  
the functional level of a person's  
relative level  
of demonstrable intellectual recourses.***

***(Matarazzo)***

How often after we calm down from the day, that later in the evening, we regret what we said in anger and stress?

How often do we apologize for our actions or just silently vow to ourselves not to ever do that again, or again, or again?

So why did it happen?

Forget about the work related reasons, forget about the justifications and forget about whose fault you believe it was.

What was the absolute basic cause of those words coming out of the mouth?

The answer, a total lack of ***‘Mind Control’!!***

If you had the ability to switch off the past visions of your day and let go of the pent up stress of that days occurrences and had the ability to refocus your attention on your home life, then this would not have happened, and would not keep occurring after particularly emotionally difficult days.

What we need is a ***‘Full Stop’*** to the day, a mental break between the two scenarios and this needs to be done before it becomes an ingrained and learned regular pattern to your life.

If someone said to you that all it would take is

***10 minutes of your life everyday***, to improve your mental attitude and possibly save your relationship would you do it?

Or would it just be easier to start afresh on a new relationship and then try harder to avoid your mistakes next time?

If your answer is that the next relationship sounds easier for you at this point in your life and would be your choice, then you can skip this next bit and go straight to the next subject heading.....

Otherwise, here is a suggestion on how to insert that full stop to the work day and insert a mental break between work and home.

When you get home and pull the car into the carport or garage, don't get out, instead switch off the engine and sit there quietly or slip a meditation CD into the player and then do a 10 minute mini meditation.

Sitting quiet and still will settle the agitation in the body and the easing of thoughts will calm the mind and help soften the attitude and that little extra hesitation before entering the house will also heighten your desire to be with your loved

ones and increase your desire to maintain that calmness and control.

If you are already in a situation where your home life has also become stressful and is impacting on your working life, which is then re-impacting on your home life, then you are in a; *'Destructive cyclic situation'*.

I am sorry to tell you that you will need to spend more time sitting in the car, 10 minutes in the morning before you drive off to break the events of the night from the day ahead and 10 minutes in the evening when you get home to break the day's events from the evening.

Try it! It is a lot easier that living with a demanding cat!

*Long prior to the age of reflection  
is the thinking of the mind.*

*Out of darkness it came  
insensibly into the marvelous light of to-day.*

*(Ralph Waldo Emerson)*

## *'Stress Induced Depression'*

*I* once heard one of the great thinkers of our time asked about how to handle stressful and depressing situations. Now this man knows all about stressful and depressing situations.

In the early 1950s as the young leader of his country, he witnessed it's invasion and the death of many of his people and today, over 50 years later at the age of 75 and still the leader of his people, but now in exile, watches helplessly as his people's culture is being slowly eradicated all over his homeland.

So with this back ground knowledge I thought to myself his answer is going to be long and intricate but interesting, so I prepared myself to listen intently, so to be able to comprehend the wisdom that was about to come my way.

Then he simply said

“If you have a situation and it is within your power to fix it, then don't get stressed or depressed over it, just fix it.”

“If you don’t have the power to fix it then find a way to deal with the outcomes of the situation and then don’t get stressed or depressed over it, just deal with it.”

And then with a glint in his eye and that little chuckle that he is so famous for he said;

“But you may need a little meditation for that.”

In the Western world today there are many people suffering from severe depression and in serious need of the help given by medical science.

And then there are the rest of us in whose life depressing stress comes and goes as the situations of our lives fluctuate. It’s no wonder that we may appear to be inconsistent or erratic to others from time to time.

People get tired of dealing with these fluctuations and sometimes it can become easier to simply get depressed and lie down, rather than to fix another situation or even easier get depressed, lie down and take an anti-depressant and let medical magic make us happy again.

The problem with ongoing medical magic is that it can lead to the need for the intervention of medical science and in

many cases the original problem 'way back when' progressed due to either the lack of knowledge of how to deal with it or being too emotionally tired to bother.

The beauty of MFN Meditation is that you sit there and do nothing with your body except breath and you sit there and do almost nothing with your mind, so apart from having to read the rest of this darn book, what is your excuse for at least not trying it?

See if it is of any value to you and as a back up plan, you can always go back to the magic if you really, really want to.

*Allow Healing.*

*...be with it,  
keep company with it:  
this is the way to get rid of it.*

*(D.T. Suzuki)*

## *The Mindful-less Erratic'*

*A*s a non-medical professional, I find that the easiest type of person to spot at a party is the mindful-less erratic. It appears to me that there are at least two types of ME's. One is the long term erratic and the other is the short term erratic.

That is to say, that the long term erratic on the surface seems to just flow through life from one job to the next, one new idea to the next and usually from one relationship to the next and every move seems reasonable, logical and explainable or at least it's somebody else's fault but never the less as the years go by the flow goes on.

One of the biggest disappointments with long term ME's is the pain and hurt that is suffered by innocent parties that are left in their mindless wake.

The short term erratic on the other hand is just astounding to watch and listen to, as that is all you can do, is just watch

and listen, as you have no hope of getting a word in for at least an hour.

I have an Irish friend who is an ME and one evening at dinner with a group of friend's, she talked non-stop for just over an hour and changed the subject 16 times, that's around 3.75 minutes per subject, non stop.

One of her subjects that evening was how, as living as a girl in Ireland she never got to kiss the Blarney Stone but how lucky she was that she still had the 'gift of the gab' anyway. I saw this as an opening and went to say that "it was not a gift" but I wasn't quick enough, as without taking a breath, she changed subjects and moved on and now we were hearing about her husband's boat and how much time he spends on it.

I saw this as an opportunity to practice '*patience and tolerance*' but to be honest 'patience and tolerance' is difficult on an empty stomach, especially when you have no idea how long it is going to be before you can even get time to discuss ordering the meal.

The difficulty with ME's is that they are not usually aware that there is even a problem, especially with the long term ME that takes 3 to 6 months to change their mind, where as the short term ME who changes their mind every 3.75 minutes or so, believe themselves to be informative, up to date and entertaining.

ME's can be lovable and sensitive people, but boy do they need some calming and clarity of the mind.

But until they feel there is a concern we just nod and smile and love them for who they are and maybe grab a Maca's on the way out to dinner with them.

*The greatest fault to be avoided  
is 'Ignorance'*

*To overcome the enemy of ignorance,  
'One Requireth Wisdom'.*

*The best method of acquiring Wisdom  
is unfaltering endeavor in meditation*

*(Evens-Went 1935, 1965)*

## *'Stress Induced Burnout'*

*I*t's interesting and at the same time distressing to note that in many cases burnout usually hits key personal.

It's in these key employees that businesses and government departments have invested many thousands of dollars in the form of training and skilling to give them the professional expertise to accomplish their tasks usually in a difficult industry.

The employer's vision is that their investment in their staff will be returned many fold over through years of service.

Often the basic reason behind why it's the key personal that burnout, is the same reason why they are key personal in the first place and that is due to their high work ethic and industrious attitude.

Due to this work ethic and industrious attitude they tend to exceed maximum velocity for too long and too often and then hit the wall, burnout, dry up and then just fade away.

In my own case, twenty years ago, after ten years of service working with unemployed youth in Perth W.A., I didn't just burnout, I flamed out at thirty thousand feet and when I came down every thing came down with me.

My career, my reputation in the industry, my relationship, income, security, the works.

I ended up renting out my house for income and spent the next five years hiding in my little yacht at Fremantle Sailing Club, emerging only on weekends to see my son.

In the late 1980's, employers attitudes were different than they are to-day, employees were not seen as a business asset but rather as commercial commodity.

It was with this attitude that my overlords did not take the position that 'our main man has burnt out we better get him some help' their attitude was 'our main man has become whacked out we better get him replaced'.

They didn't give a moments thought about the years and tens of thousands of departmental dollars and training that was just going down the drain they just closed their eyes and moved on.

Thankfully employer's attitudes are different today and in many cases they are involved in preventative measures for their staff.

If at that time, someone had suggested the idea of meditation to me, I would not even have raised enough energy to laugh at them.

I would have just 'flipped them the bird', rolled over and went back to sleep in the bilge of my boat.

MFN Meditation is not an antidote or a remedy for burnout, at this stage it is too late and more drastic medical measures are required, but MFN Meditation can play a major roll in your preventative Program.

MFN Meditation along with professional industry assistance, networking between colleagues, family and friends and a healthy diet and life style is what will prevent burnout.

With all these people involved in a network if a burnout is still coming someone will notice erratic changes in you and

be able to bring an early intervention so to help prevent a full on crash.

Looking back, one of the most amazing personal things that I experienced about burnout was that for the first time in my life, both my mind and I were totally in sync and we fully agreed on the decisions and actions that we took.

It's just a shame that these decisions and actions were so erratic and misdirected.

In the world today, especially the western world, the rhythm of life is far more stressful and chaotic than ever before, so you have to make the positive decision to take action to protect your physical and mental well being and in turn that will protect your future.

MFN Meditation can be a small but personal and intricate part of this protection process, whilst calming the mind of stressful thoughts and the clarity of mind to fore see problems and the understanding and the practice of ***'Letting Go'*** will help to insulate you from stress induced burnout.

*The human mind can discipline the body,  
can set goals for itself,  
can somehow comprehend  
its own potentiality  
and move resolutely forward.*

*(Norman Cousins)*

If you have mindfulness understanding, then the chances of you experiencing mindless burnout are greatly reduced.

This subject is a very personal one for me.

I understand the situation!

If you require more detailed meditation information, I can be contacted via the web address at the front of this book, if you need personal assistance with your meditation, I am available.

The following is a short poem by:

William Earnest Henley (1849 1920) called 'Invictus'.

I hope that you will find it, other than the last two lines, of no recognizable value to yourself, but if you do, then you

may be you are in the early stages of ‘burn out’ and should take action to circumvent any problem.

### ***Invictus***

*Out of the night that covers me,  
Black as the pit from pole to pole,  
I thank what ever gods may be,  
For my unconquerable soul.*

*In the fell clutch of circumstance,  
I have not winced or cried aloud,  
Under the bludgeoning of chance,  
My head is bloody, but unbowed.  
Beyond this place of wrath and tears,  
Looms but the horror of the shade,  
And yet the menace of the years,  
Finds, and shall find, me unafraid.*

*It matters not how strait the gate,  
How charged with punishment the scroll,  
I am the master of my fate,  
I am the captain of my soul.*

## *'Dependent Rising'*

*You* are an independent person, well no you're not! Well yes you are!! Well may be!!!

You've got a job, a car, your own bank account and maybe even your own home and a family, so now you are a totally independent individual out there in the world doing your own thing.

Or are you?

Great intellects today still muse over the age old subject of *'Dependent rising'*.

The philosophy behind dependent rising is that we are all dependent not only on each other but also on our environment and our entire planet.

The thinking goes even further than that, out beyond our earth into the solar system, the galaxy and on into the universe and possibly even into the fourth dimension of time.

But for now, let's just talk about your breakfast, the cornflakes and milk you had this morning.

Let's think about that carton of milk that you so independently went down to the supermarket to buy.

How many people, machines, animals and micro-organisms do you think were involved in you lubricating your cornflakes this morning?

Let's overlook the obvious ones, the dairy farmer and the cow and get down to the really hard workers who made your simple morning fare possible.

What about the machine that extracts the milk from the cow and the people who designed it, built it and maintain it?

What about the people and machines that produced the parts that made that machine?

And what about the miners and surveyors that located and dug out the ore that made the parts that made the machine and what about the millions of years of atmospheric and environmental conditions it took to produce that ore? Then there is the grass that the cow eats and converts into milk, where did that come from and why does that keep growing?

We have not discussed the transporting of the milk or the pasteurization or the bottling let alone the distribution of it or of all the shareholders in all the companies that are involved in your breakfast.

We are not going to get into the cornflake story as it is all getting too mind boggling and whatever you do don't put sugar on your cornflakes.

Are you not aware of the current problems that the sugar industry is facing today and the amount of people making sugar accessible for you and then there's the cane toads, what about the cane toads?

They have become an absolute environmental disaster in this country all due to the sugar industry and all this because people who think that they are independent want milk and sugar on their cornflakes.

So the outcome is that there really is no independence attached to eating cornflakes.

So what about breathing?

You suck that air in, it goes round and round and you expel the spent air out.

How independent is that?

Well it probably seems very independent until you start to think about the rainforest in the Amazon basin known as ‘the lungs of the earth’ that is producing that life sustaining oxygen that we all need.

Then think about the little Kalahari Bushmen and their re-forestation program.

Then there are the global weather patterns that sustain these forests.

So when you start to think about it, that last breath you just took, you may have had a little of help with it.

I just mentioned the word ‘think’ so what about when you think?

Surely thinking and thought is free and independent.

Well no!

All of our thoughts and concepts and methods of thinking have been instilled in us through our up bringing, our peers and our Western education system. So there are parents, friends and teachers involved in your thought process’s, even elected officials in the education ministry determining

course outlines and public servants in the education department carrying out ministerial decisions.

All these people are involved or have been involved in helping you to think. So if we can not eat, breath or even think without the help of cows, teachers or the Bushmen of the Kalahari, what is there about us that is truly independent?

There is nothing that sustains the body that is truly independent but hidden beneath our intellect and behind our knowledge and our education is our '*Mind-Self*', the entity that is truly you.

We are different and individual and when we get to know each other we come to see and recognize the mind self in each other.

As I said in other parts of this book, every action has a re-action and in this case it's the re-action of our mind self's action that we recognize in each other.

The internal actions of the '*mind-self*' react and manifest as attitude and we recognize this attitude as personality It's our attitude and personality that is different and independent and because our mind self is a living entity it is also changeable.

Attitude, personality and change can be good or bad but they are always independently you.

It is your mind self's choice to become the person who you really want to be and the state in which you wish to live your life.

### *Part Three.*

#### *Preparation for Meditation.*

*Start from where you are,  
devoting what ever time you have  
that you can comfortably  
fit within your schedule.  
But above all meditate regularly!  
Be faithful to your practice.*

*C. Alexander Simpkins. Ph. D.*

*Annellen M. Simpkins, Ph. D.*

## *'Apparel'*

In preparation for meditation, the first thing we must sort out is our physical comfort.

We could be in meditation for an hour or so, so we do not want to be interrupted or discomforted by the digesting of a big meal or getting a wedgie from tight fitting garments, or discomfort from clothes that are too hot or too cool.

This is why you may have noticed in meditation groups, that experienced practitioners wear light, loose fitting clothing and have either a lap blanket or a meditation shawl with them.

Some meditators use a shawl at the start of the meditation session as the room may be cool, but no matter what the room temperature, when the mind calms right down and they then get into '*the zone*', some people may begin to sweat and then it is no great interruption to their meditation to just let the shawl drop from their shoulders.

Others have the opposite problem, they get cold as the session goes on, so if you strategically position your shawl behind you before you begin, once again, it is not a large interruption to your meditation to pull it up to your waist and over your knees or all the way up over your shoulders.

## *'Postures for Meditation'*

The recommended postures for meditation are as diverse and wide ranging as there are different forms of meditation and different practitioners with different ideas.

Sitting with the right hand in the left with thumbs touching and then hands placed in your lap, or hands on the knees facing up or facing down, or fingers interlocked in your lap, hands up around the naval area, or not laying too low in the lap, eyes closed, or eyes open concentrating on an object, or eyes just slightly open looking down along the nose towards the floor without fixing your gaze on anything.

Sitting cross legged on the floor or sitting in a chair or even lying down, the story just goes on and on.

The first thing to always remember with posture during meditation is personal comfort.

Many transmitters of this art will tell you and I understand their reasoning, that you should start as you mean to go on.

They get you into their exact prescribed pose right from the start so that you will not develop any bad habits early.

I think this is fine for those dedicated folk who walk into a meditation group with the intention to get it and get it right, right away, no matter what (known as theserenity now technique) and turn up at every session morning and evening for the next 5 years without fail.

These few are well in the minority and it is not hard to tell they truly do need some calming of the mind and softening of the attitude. It is far more common for new comers to this art, to not even to be sure if they are in the right place or even if they are doing the right thing.

They also have no idea who this person is who is leading the group and more often than not, their partner thinks it is all a lot of hocus pocus anyway.

Many people in the west know that they need stress relief and arrive at a meditation group in a state of stress.

They are even stressed about being stressed and that's on top of their regular day to day business and personal stress.

This is a lot of stress!

The last thing they need put upon them as soon as they sit down is a rigid set of instructions which puts their bodies under physical pressure and into a state of discomfort to hold a particular pose.

It is far more important that these new comers leave the session, not in a state of peace and tranquility and clarity of mind, because this is something that will not happen straight away, but at least leave the session comfortable in body and mind and with a positive initiative to come back again and try some more.

We can work on the posture side of things as time goes by.

So it is for all these reasons that we should always refer back to rule number one -comfort!

*Meditation is best learned by doing,  
not just by reading about it.....*

*Some skills may take time  
to develop;  
others may come more rapidly.*

*What comes easily  
and  
what is more challenging  
vary from person to person.*

*Work with your own individuality  
and  
be willing to be yourself.*

*Sincerity in practice is the greatest help.*

*(C. Alexander Simpkins, Ph.D.)*

*&*

*(Annellen M Simpkins, Ph.D.)*

## *'Sitting Cross Legged'*

Unlike our eastern brothers and sisters, we in the west have spent all our lives sitting in chairs, so when it comes to sitting cross legged on the floor, our knees hurt and at least one of our feet invariably goes to sleep and what about that back ache?

I will discuss other options a bit further on but if you are okay cross legged, here are a few tips.

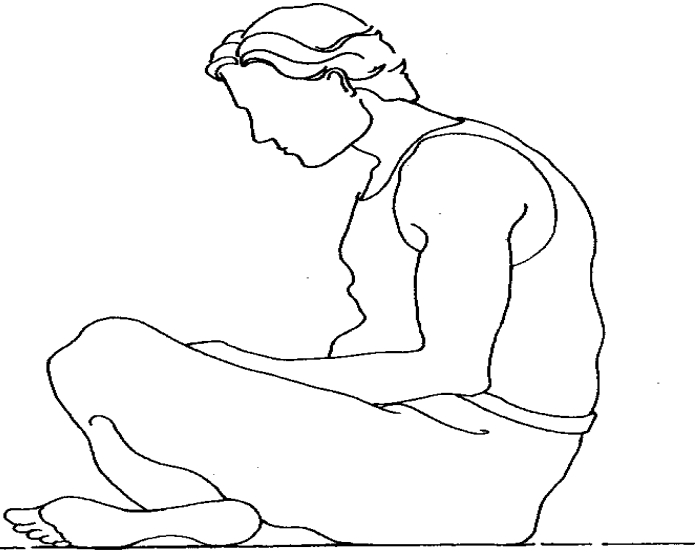
### ***Rule Number One.....Comfort'!***

Left or right leg first depends on your knees and ligaments; technically left leg first is preferred.

The sitting bones in your posterior should be higher than your knees.

You can accomplish this with the use of one or more meditation cushions.

Once on the cushion, straighten your back and just gently rock from side to side and then back and forth and you will feel yourself passing through your body's



If the knees are higher than the sitting bones, the pelvis and lumbar spine must shift backward, and the upper torso assumes a posture of collapse. Like a knotted garden hose that obstructs the passage of water flowing through it, a collapsed body is unable to allow the life force to move freely through its length. Obstruction to the free and unimpeded passage of the life force causes the energy of the body and mind to alternate between periods of sluggishness and agitation.

*Exert from:*

*'The Posture of Meditation'.*

*By*

*Will Johnson.*

natural centre of balance, this center is your spot. It will also make straightening your back a lot easier, which in turn leads to an easier passage for the air flow with the breath.

Now place your hands where they feel comfortable, if you feel that your hands have dropped an uncomfortably long way down into your lap now that you are sitting on a meditation cushion, simply fold up a small blanket or find a small cushion and place it in your lap to comfortably raise and rest your hands on.



By establishing a stable base of support, the body naturally comes into alignment with the directional flow of gravity. Once alignment has been established, the body can begin to become relaxed and resilient. The deeply purifying process of meditation has no choice but to begin.

*Exert from:*  
*'The Posture of Meditation'.*

*By*  
*Will Johnson*

## *'Sitting in a Chair'*

*S*itting in a chair for meditation is not uncommon, in fact if you become comfortable with this way of meditating, it will be advantageous for you if you want to take a five minute mini meditation break on the bus or at the office or have a good one hour meditation on the flight from Brisbane to Sydney.

With this technique, remove your shoes, socks on is okay.

You will need to be able to feel the floor with your feet and not just feel the inside of your shoes.

The chair should not be too low, having your knees around your ears is not a good look and it tends to crunch up your abdomen and the lower part of your lungs and ease of breath is important, we will discuss that topic a little further on.

The chair should also not be too high as your feet should sit comfortably flat on the floor.

If you feel that you must sit back in the chair, then sort out some sort of lumbar support so to help straighten your back

comfortably, otherwise, sit forward on the chair and do the '*swaying thing*' and find your centre of balance, that magic spot.

The placement of the hands will depend on the chair,  
For example: If the chair is high it will relate to your lap and knee position.

If it has arm rests you may want to use them, but in the lap is preferable.

Depending on the chair you may need to use the 'cushion in the lap trick' for your hands and then you are set to go.

## *'Kneeling'*

*K*neeling is a very viable option and there are a few techniques that you can try. Once again it all depends on your physical flexibility in the knee and hip area.

The basic kneeling position is to kneel down with feet together with the tops of your feet flat on the ground and

then sit on your feet and then find your centre of balance and straighten your back for ease of breathing.

There are two variations to this method; the first is the use of a *'kneeling board'*.

The kneeling board is a flat piece of timber set at an angle that goes across the top of your lower legs and has two short and sturdy supports that turn it into a small bridge like object and you sit on the slightly angled cross member.

The advantage of the kneeling board is that it removes the weight off from sitting on your feet and puts the weight on the board and the extra little bit of height helps take some pressures off the knees which in turn assists in the straightening of the back.

The final method is to kneel with the top of your feet facing down and your feet far enough apart to place one, two, three or more meditation cushions between them so to sit on.

This can be a good method of kneeling due to the fact that the extra raising of the sitting height automatically straightens the back.

Weight is also removed from the feet area and pressure is reduced at the hip and knee joints.

As you have reduced the angle and once you find your balance point, your posture feels quite ergonomic

The use of the kneeling board or the cushions can also prevent tingles in the feet and the lower legs if you are prone to pins and needles.

## *'Lying Down'*

*I* have purposely left lying down to last as it should be your final option as a meditation posture.

However, there are people with physical problems and difficulties that are particularly back related and this position is the only viable option for them. If you have a back problem, you will need to find your own way of lying flat on the floor that is safe and comfortable for you.

If you do have a back complaint then you may have heard of the;

*'Alexander Technique'* for back relaxation.

If this is safe and comfortable for you, try it.

The Alexander Technique is to lie flat on the floor with your knees supported with a rolled up towel so that they are slightly bent so that there is no pressure on the knees and hips and a small firm cushion or thick phone book under your head.

(IE: Sydney or Melbourne directory should be fine).

Your hands should be by your side, palms up or down which ever is more comfortable for you.

Do not put your hands across your chest, as lying in this position your breath already has to fight gravity to expand your lungs.

The most obvious downside of meditating lying down is the chance of dozing off and being flat on your back, you will probably start to snuffle or snore and disturb the rest of the group.

## *Time and Place'*

The very short answer to time and place is that the place should be clean, calm and subdued and the time should be on a regular basis and be of a comfortable duration of time.

Now, the long answer:

The place can be quite important especially at the beginning due to the fact that our surroundings can have quite an effect on our state of mind.

A quiet spot in the garden or an out of the way corner of the house with a lush plant or a scented flower will be of far more value in aiding the calming of your mind than, for example; the kitchen or the TV room .

There are differing schools of thought on when you should meditate, one school of thought is quite adamant that it should be in the morning.

This is when the mind is fresh and never in the evening when your mind is full of the day's events, as you will have a lot more work to do in calming the mind before reaching a meditative state

Another recommends later in the evening so, that you can carry the calmness and the benefit of your meditation into your sleeping hours.

However, in relation to timing, all schools of thought agree on one thing and that is that you should practice on a regular basis.

My personal recommendation is to;

*‘Please refer back to rule number one’.*

Find a time and a place that is comfortable to you, but try to get into the habit of meditating at least once every other day and joining a group once per week can be very beneficial

Group meditation is great!

You get a sense of sharing and support and you can pick up some good tips on all sorts of meditation subjects.

Alternatively, group meditation can be a ‘P in the A’ as it is at a set time and in a set place and you have to make an effort to get there on time because to walk in on a meditation late is uncool and when we all open our eyes we will all know that it was you who came in late.

On the other hand a meditation group can be extremely advantageous.

Your mind begins to learn that at a certain time every week you can walk away from the clutter of your life and forget about it for an hour or so and just enjoy the calmness.

*The great thing,  
then,  
in all education is to make our nervous system  
our ally instead of our enemy.....*

*For this we must make automatic and habitual,  
as soon as possible,  
as many useful actions  
as we can and guard against  
the growing into ways  
that are likely to be  
dis-advantageous to us,  
as we should guard against the plague.*

*The more details of our daily life  
we can hand over to the  
effortless custody of automatism,  
the more our higher powers of mind  
will be set free  
for their own proper work.*

*(William James )*

Time and place is one of the most important subjects in this book because if the time and place is of comfort for you then you will continue with your practice.

If it is not of a comfort and ease, then your mind will tell you that ‘it’s all just too hard’ and you will agree with it and then neither of you will get to enjoy the continuing benefits of meditation.

As your meditation experience level increases, it is important to maintain your regular time and place as this is the:

*‘Foundation of your practice’.*

You will also begin to have less and less difficulty doing a meditation anywhere (not while driving please) even in the middle of Kolcutta airport while waiting for a plane that never seems to come, but that’s a story for another time.

### *‘Accessories for Meditation’*

*I* have already mentioned some of the items that are of use for a comfortable meditation session, the shawl and or lap blanket, the cushion and the kneeling stool and even the good old telephone directory, these all relate to the sense of touch and bodily physical comfort.

We have other senses in play as well when meditating, we have taken care of the sense of sight as our eyes are either closed or near closed.

The sense of taste is not involved as our mouth is closed and we should not be eating anything.

That only leaves the sense of hearing, the sense of smell and the abstract sense of time.

## *Hearing @ Time'*

Unless you meditate in a padded cell there are going to be sounds during your session, a bird, a dog barking or a car passing.

I will deal with the way to handle distractions such as these in the section on '*Focus of the Mind*' but for now let's look at a beneficial sound such as music.

In the early stages of your practice music can be useful as a stable and constant background noise especially if it's non vocal and of a repetitive nature and not a meandering melody that your mind could wander off with.

Music also adds an audible buffer zone between your mind and the outside world.

Music can also be useful as a timing device the length of the music is the length of your meditation.

One of the most common distractions meditators experience is the internal conversation about time.

Isn't that an hour yet? That must be an hour by now? I'm sure that alarm clock must be faulty!

Music as a timing device can over come this little talk that you have with yourself, which usually takes place at about the fifty five minute mark, but be careful if you become too familiar with your piece of music you start to have a different internal conversation "Oh I know this bit we are about five minutes from the end".

Either way you will have lost *'The Now'* of your meditation.

Eventually music will become a distraction in its self and you will opt not to use it anyway.

### *'Smell @ Time'*

*A*nother pleasant and silent timing device is a stick of incense.

As well as working on the sense of smell to create a calming aromatic atmosphere, it can also tell you that the time is up when it goes out and you can not smell it any more so then the meditation is over.

An average stick of incense last 20 to 30 minutes, there are larger ones available.

The only other viable option is an egg timer.

Don't place it too close to you as when it goes off you may just have the sudden realization of just how deep your meditation really was without knowing it.

Wouldn't it be nice if they made an egg timer with a lovely 'gong' sound instead of that horrible 'bringggg' noise?

*If you never wholly give yourself up to the chair  
you sit in,  
but always keep your leg-and-body-muscles  
half contracted for a rise;  
if you breathe eighteen or nineteen  
instead of sixteen times a minute,  
and  
never quite breathe out at that  
—what mental mood can you be in  
but one of inner panting  
and expectancy,  
and how can the future and its worries  
possibly forsake your mind?*

*On the other hand,  
how can they gain admission  
to your mind  
if your brow be unruffled,  
your respiration calm  
and complete  
and your muscles all relaxed?*

*(William James)*

*Part Four:*  
*Let's Get Started.*

*Mind and 'Mind-self' are at odds when you wish to  
make changes in life.*

*Permit not one to rule the other,*

*The way to true change is via 'The Middle Path'.*

*If you err from the new way that you wish to cultivate  
return to the chosen quickly and reinforce it.*

*\_\_Steve Allan*

*You* have now read a lot of the back ground information on MFN Meditation and have been told some of the techniques and methods.

You have also been given a variety of comfort options in an effort to accommodate as many people as possible to make MFN Meditation, hopefully accessible to all those who wish to share in it's benefits.

The talking time is now over, it's time to start your practice.

Read through this next section fully first so that you know where you are going and then get a friend or a partner to read it to you slowly as you settle into the meditation.

That way you won't have to keep opening your eyes to check the book to see what comes next.

This should take about ten or fifteen minutes and as you become more comfortable with your sitting position, you

can lengthen the quiet time slowly working your way up to one hour which is the recommended length of a meditation for a practitioner that has some experience.

In many of the studies that I have done and in so many of the books that I have read and the meditation guides that I have heard, at this point they simply tell you to “clear your mind and bring your point of focus to your breath”.

To clear your mind is not as easy as it sounds, especially when you are in the early stage of your practice.

Removing twenty, thirty, forty, fifty or more years of memories and thoughts and all those years of an uncontrolled mind can not just be suddenly sedated by someone simply saying “clear your mind”.

With practice it does become almost that easy, especially on days when there is no extra stress or issues in your life.

For now we are at step one of the first stage of this meditation.

To help you, I have injected a small visualization exercise to aide you during the period of meditation, by the removal of past thoughts and future images.

*(Get your friend or partner to read from here slowly with pauses)*

Find one of the recommended postures that is comfortable for you and do the sway to find your centre of balance

.....

Straighten your back and level your shoulders

Place your hands in an appropriate and gently relaxed position

Your mouth should be closed and your tongue should be resting gently on the back of your teeth where it naturally sits

Your eyes should be closed or almost closed but not focused on anything

Your head should be inclined but not drooping

Just breathe, in a relaxed and natural way

Bring your minds attention to your feet and ankle area and if you feel that you are clenching or holding them, just let them relax

Now move your attention to your lower leg area and knees letting go of any tension as you go

Come up to the upper leg and pelvis area and visualize and feel the muscles releasing and going into a relaxed state as you exhale

.....

And now to the stomach, a source of knotted tightness for many, if you feel that you are holding those muscles breath out and let them go

.....

Next is the extremely high tension area, the upper back, neck and shoulder area, let your shoulders drop so that you are no longer holding them and feel that your head is sitting balanced and that your neck muscles are not holding it rigidly

.....

Now take a moment to let yourself just sit relaxed

.....

Check that your breathing is still at a soft, normal respiratory rate so that it just comes and goes at a comfortable depth, not forced and not restricted

.....

Now we are going to remove visions of the past and images of the future

.....

Visualize with your minds eye, ahead of you and to the left a very large TV screen and on it are old reruns of your life and they are flashing across the screen and changing from scene to scene

.....

Now visualize your left hand reaching out towards the on/off switch

.....

Turn off the switch and the picture disappears to a fine white dot in the centre of the screen and then, it too is gone

.....

Now all that you are left with, ahead of you and to the left is a large dark charcoal grey empty space

.....

Visualize ahead of you and to the right, all your dreams and visions of the future, playing on another very large TV screen, you are doing this and your family is doing that

.....

With your mind, reach out with your right hand to the on/off switch and turn it of

.....

Once again the picture disappears to a fine white dot and then it too vanishes

.....

And now all that you are left with is two large blank dark charcoal spaces, one ahead of you and to the left and one ahead of you and to the right

.....

Now visualize between these two large dark spaces a long thin light grey line

.....

This line is neither, the past or the future, it is “the now”

.....

Bring your minds focus to a fine point coming directly to that light grey line

.....

Now position this line at a point just below the tip of your nose and the centre of your upper lip

.....

Once you have located this spot, drop the line from your mind and as you inhale and exhale bring your single pointed attention and concentration to feel the air as it passes through the nostrils as you inhale and over the top lip as you exhale

.....

For the next ten breaths count them in your mind as they come and go

.....

With out counting, for the next eight to ten breaths say to yourself “in” or “inhale” as you breathe in and “out” or “exhale” as you breath out

.....

For the next five minutes just follow your breath closely with your mind, you are now ‘in the now’

.....

*To common sense nothing is more obvious  
than the fact  
that learning requires concentration,  
effort, sustained attention,  
or absorbing interest.*

*If these conditions are present  
in sufficient degree  
we can learn  
almost anything.*

*(Gordon Allport)*

*Part Five:*

*Analyze How You Went.*

*Life exacts a price for less than full participation.  
We lose touch with the human values and qualities  
that spring naturally  
from a full engagement with work and life:  
integrity, honesty, loyalty, responsibility,  
and co-operation.*

*—Whitmyre*

*A*s you gain a little more experience you will be able to take your mind straight to the two large dark spaces and the light grey line and cut out the past and future TV scenes.

Then with a little more experience and practice you will be able to go straight to the light grey line.

Then with a little more practice you will be able to take the training wheels off all together and you will be able to take up your posture, settle yourself down and then bring your single pointed concentration to the spot under your nose and then centre your mind on your breath.

Analyze how you went, were you able to remove the past and future and come to 'the now' even for a short time?

When those thoughts and the inner self conversation slips back into your mind just revisualise the two big dark blank spaces and the light grey line and bring yourself back to the point under your nose which centers with the line and begin to follow the breath again.

### *Focus of the Mind'*

*D*id you have any other type of distractions?

For example, did a dog bark or a car drive past, or did you get an itchy nose?

All these things are not uncommon and the best way to handle them is not to try and ignore them, because as you try to ignore them you are now thinking about ignoring them and therefore you are no longer in the now and back to the internal conversation.

The best way to handle them is to simply acknowledge them, say to your self ‘dog’ and let it go and use a hand action, throwing it away and then take a breath and refocus your mind and go back to where you were.

When you begin meditation, it is amazing the amount of itchy spots you tend to find, especially your nose.

If you ignore the itch, it will eventually go away but it may take 4 or 5 minutes for that to happen and that is a big waste of meditation time especially if you are only doing a 15 or 30 minute meditation.

It is better to take a few seconds and as you breathe in, raise your hand slowly and scratch the spot and then lower the hand on the next comfortably available exhale and also use that exhale to refocus your mind and go back to the centre and into the now once again.

This is the practice of the first fundamental of the first stage of MFN Meditation.

This first fundamental is the;

***‘Contemplation and Meditation of the Body’.***

The practice of this first fundamental has the ability to ease the thoughts and calm the mind and a calm mind is a clear mind.

Practicing this technique regularly over a period of time also has the ability to soften the attitude and a softening of the attitude is what will stop your mind from jumping upright and preparing to repel all borders when the smallest thing is said or occurrence takes place.

A softened attitude is what will help you evade many of the slings and arrows and pressures and stresses that come your way every day and your mind will simply step out of the way and let the unpleasantness or stressful difficulty go straight past you over your shoulder.

However, watch out for back splatter, if that unpleasantness hits that wall behind you that you have spent many years building up for your emotional protection.

## *'Letting Go'*

*I* briefly mentioned, earlier about the act of:

### *'Letting Go'*

I would like to explain it in a little more detail as it a useful tool in the reduction of emotional stress.

The act of letting go is to let go of the things that are making us suffer and in many cases what we think is causing us emotional pain and discomfort is not really the true basis of the suffering.

If someone says or does something spiteful to us we are upset as our natural reaction is to emotionally take on board the negativity of other people's words and actions.

But deeper than that we are attached to the desire and craving that others should think well of us and it is this emotion that builds up pressure in our mind and causes us to experience what we call heartache.

Initially this may feel like tightness in the chest area but the lasting results end up in the mind.

In the act of *'letting go'* we let go of the attachment to the desire and not the action because its not the hurt that someone gives us that causes the mind contorting and gut stewing stress but rather our attachment to our feelings that causes our suffering which in turn causes stress build up.

Initially, a way to work on *'letting go'* is to take their spite and take your attachment to your desire and place it in your hand, crumple it up like a poorly written letter and with your right hand and your mind, throw it away. Just 'let it go'.

This is not as simple as it may sound especially in the beginning but as you continue with your meditation practice, regularly easing your thoughts and calming your mind and as your attitude softens it becomes immensely easier, and this attachment seems to just slowly slip away over time with out you even noticing it.

## *'Last Words'*

Today, nutritionists tell us "we are what we eat".

Twenty five hundred years ago one of history's greatest figures told us that "we are the sum total of our thoughts", in other words, we are what we think and isn't that what we call our personality.

As we are aware, personality can be good or bad or even falsely put on.

If we ease the thoughts and calm the mind and in doing so soften the attitude, wouldn't that bring us slowly back to our true nature, that of a genuine and peaceful personality?

In the end, it all comes down to action and reaction, your meditation practice is the action and its benefits are the reaction.

Even if you take 'no action' you will get a reaction, a reaction of 'nothing'.

No action and no reaction, so if you do nothing you get nothing, isn't that also equal and opposite?

Forgetting what your lawyer or insurance company may tell you, the fact remains;

***“We are all responsible for our own actions and everyone's karma is their own”.***

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I wish you well with your practice and I hope these writings prove of some value to you.

If you require clarification on anything or more detailed information I can be contacted through the website address.

*Steve Allan*