Meditation Series Overview

• There will be six dharma sessions:
  1. Meditation Basics - How We Will Meditate.
  3. The Buddha's Teachings - The History of Meditation.

• Each session will be a mix of meditation teaching (dharma), calmness meditation (samadhi), and group (sangha) discussion.
• We will meditate each time!
About Your Sangha Leader

• I have been meditating since 2006.
• I meditate 3 or 4 times per week, usually lying down, for 10 to 30 minutes each time.
  • At one point I meditated daily for 30-60 minutes
• I have read number of books on meditation and I have attended several retreats
• I have taught 11 multi-session meditation classes
• I am not a guru or trained as a meditation teacher
• I do this as a volunteer, not as a business

Stephen Troutman
Session #1 Agenda

– Today’s topic:
   How to meditate

– Agenda
   • Learn Samadhi meditation basics
   • Meditate during this class session
Two Types of Meditation

1. Samadhi –
   - Desired Result: “calmness”
   - Approach: turn away from thoughts and the senses
   - Focus on: breath or other object*

2. Vipassana –
   - Desired Result: “mindfulness”
   - Approach: turn toward thoughts and senses
   - Focus on: the troubling thought or emotion

We will cover both in this series, but start with Samadhi

* there are alternatives to focusing on the breath
Our Meditation Practice

• We will meditate for 3 minutes.

  – But only after we complete the detailed instructions which follow.
How We Will Meditate (part 1a)

• Sit comfortably
  – On your sits bones
  – Feet flat on the ground

• Find a place for your hands
  – Anywhere comfortable

• Align your posture
  – Stack bones from hip to head
  – Keep back away from chair, if that is comfortable
How We Will Meditate (part 1b)

• Relax *all* of your muscles
  – Stacked bones posture enables this
  – Do not lean forward or back
  – Relax hands, face, tongue, etc.

• Eyes disengaged
  – closed or staring to a middle distance
How We Will Meditate (part 1c)

- Breath through your nose
- Use diaphragmatic breathing
  - Belly out with inhale
  - Belly in and up with exhale
- Observe your breath*
  - air in/out,
  - shallow/deep,
  - long/short,
  - belly out/in,
  - fast/slow, etc.

* Other things to focus on include; mantras, prayers, counting, candles, or other objects.
How We Will Meditate  (part 1d)

• Focus on your breath*
  • Observe your breathing as it takes place

• Observe only the present moment
  • What is actually happening, right this instant!
  • Being aware of, and focused on, the here and now
  • Ignoring both the past and the future

• Do not judge or hold on to anything

* Other things to focus on include; mantras, prayers, counting, candles, or other objects.

This is a key tenant of Samadhi practice
How We Will Meditate (part 1e)

• When thoughts jump into your mind:

  1. Name them silently
     • (acknowledge they exist)

  2. Let them go
     • (release them from your thinking)

  3. Return focus to your breath
     • (replace the interruption in your mind by returning to observing your breathing)

* Other focus items include; mantras, prayers, counting, candles, or other objects
How We Will Meditate (part 1f)

• You must not:
  • Hold onto any thought (positive or negative)
  • Value or judge any thought
  • Judge your meditation practice or yourself

This is a key tenant of Samadhi practice
What You Might Experience

• You may feel:
  – Physical sensations
    – Twitching, muscle tightening or release
    – Dull headache, pressure in your scalp
    – Feel like you are getting big or are floating
  – Mental sensations
    – Seeing lights, visions, voices, memories, etc.
    – Feel very relaxed, or have vivid awareness, mental clarity, etc.
    – Various feelings of calmness, well being, sadness, wholeness, etc.
  – Or nothing

• Whatever you feel, *it is normal.*
  – Treat whatever you experience as you would any other interruption
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesh Number</th>
<th>Subjective correlates of state</th>
<th>EEG Brain-wave Monitor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Just beginning to relax. Subject may report difficulty in stilling the mind; the itchy state. Why am I doing this?</td>
<td>Intermittent Alpha and Beta.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>You may find yourself filling your mind with everyday affairs, almost as an avoidance of meditation; (the fear of the mind, to let go from time to space). Subjects have reported feeling dizzy or having befogged consciousness or sensation like going under an anesthetic.</td>
<td>Reduced Beta, continuous Alpha.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Calmness and relaxation; childhood or other scenes from the past recalled as ‘flashbacks’. Focus may not be very sustained.</td>
<td>Continuous Alpha, no Beta, intermittent Theta.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Well defined state. Pleasant bodily sensations of floating lightness, rocking, swaying (may actually move rhythmically). More sustained focus than prior level. Increased and clearer imagery.</td>
<td>Continuous Alpha, but with falling frequency, almost continuous Theta.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Extremely vivid awareness of your other bodily sensations; heartbeat, breathing, etc. Effortless awareness of this moment. Sometimes a sensation of ‘being full of air’ or of ‘growing to great size’ and/or an alternation between internal and external awareness.</td>
<td>Continuous Alpha, continuous Theta falling in frequency (toward 3 Hz range)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Very lucid state of consciousness. Deeply satisfying, intense alertness, calmness and detachment. Feeling of alerted state lacking in previous levels. Extreme relaxation. May have peak, “ah-ha”, experience.</td>
<td>Continuous Theta, Alpha frequency only at very low end (near 8 Hz).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Feeling of union with the universe. Utter peacefulness. Loss of self.</td>
<td>Occasional Delta</td>
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Our First Meditation

• We will meditate for 3 minutes
  – 1 gong will sound every 1 minute
  – 3 gongs will signal the end of the meditation
How to Meditate - Summarized

• Align your posture and sit comfortably relaxed
• Breath through your nose
• Use diaphragmatic breathing (Belly out with inhale / belly in with exhale)
• Observe only the present moment (Not the past, not the future)
• Focus on your breathing*
  • Observe your breathing: air in/out, shallow/deep, long/short, belly out/in, etc.
• When thoughts jump into your mind:
  1. Name them silently (acknowledge they exist)
  2. Let them go (release them from your thinking)
  3. Return your focus to your breath
• This means:
  • Do not hold onto any thought (positive or negative)
  • Do not value or judge any thought
  • Do not judge your meditation practice or yourself

* Note: You can focus on other things such as mantras, prayer, counting, candles, other objects, etc.
Reading List

These two books are highly regarded and cover the basics of meditation practice

- **Mindfulness in Plain English** – highly regarded, basics about meditation
  - Author: Bhante Henepola Gunaratana
  - Wisdom Publications 2002
- **Zen Mind, Beginners Mind**
  - Author: Shunryu Suzuki
  - Weatherhill (Shamabala) 1970, 9th edition 2005

There is also plenty of free information available via the internet

- [https://www.mayoclinic.org/tests-procedures/meditation/in-depth/meditation/art-20045858](https://www.mayoclinic.org/tests-procedures/meditation/in-depth/meditation/art-20045858)
- Mix and match search words on any web search engine:
  - meditation, stress, relief, mindful, samadhi, vipassana, complementary or alternative medicine, Buddhism

Interested in mantra meditation?

- **Natural Stress Relief** – **self study Mantra meditation**
  - This is similar to Transcendental Meditation (TM)
  - One time fee around $45 the last time I looked