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# THE PRACTICE *of Meditation*





# Welcome

Welcome, my wonderful friend, to a sanctuary of tranquility amidst the chaos of our bustling, ever-changing world. I deeply empathize with the demands of your busy and hectic life as you juggle work, family, and a never-ending to-do list. That's why I firmly believe that meditation, the most empowering and time-saving tool for your well-being, is exactly what you need.

You may wonder, "How can I find time to meditate when I barely have time to breathe?" Trust me, I've been there too, seeking moments of calm within the whirlwind of responsibilities. But here's the truth: meditation doesn't demand hours of practice or a journey to a remote mountaintop. You can start exactly where you are, as you are in this moment, unlocking the remarkable benefits from within from this simple yet powerful practice of meditation.



*Daphne*

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# HOW TO USE THIS MEDITATION GUIDE

Discover a practice that enhances your overall health, cultivates calm, and nurtures emotional well-being. This ebook provides you with everything you need to know about meditation and how to start your practice. Find calm amidst the daily stressors with evidence-based mindfulness and meditation techniques seamlessly integrated into your routine with three recorded guided meditations to accompany your practice, insights into its effects on the mind, body, and brain, and a bonus meditation journal for your progress. Let's embark on this journey together, unlocking the wonders of meditation for a harmonious and balanced life.

QUESTIONS?

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# WHAT IS MEDITATION

Meditation is a practice of training the mind and cultivating a state of focused attention and awareness. It involves techniques that promote relaxation, mindfulness, and inner peace.



# THE ART OF MEDITATION

The practice of meditation brings us home to our most natural state of being, one that exists within all of us. The ancient practice of meditation, with roots tracing back thousands of years, transcends cultural boundaries to become a powerful tool for nurturing the mind, body, and spirit. Its origins trace back to ancient civilizations and spiritual traditions across the globe.



Rooted in various cultures such as India, China, and ancient Egypt, meditation encompasses diverse techniques that all share a common goal: cultivating inner stillness, heightened awareness, and a profound connection with the present moment. From early Vedic traditions to Qigong, hieroglyphs depicting ancient Egyptians in meditative postures to vision quests and prayer, meditation is an innate thread woven into the rich tapestry of human culture, connecting us to our ancient quest for inner harmony and spiritual understanding. Through the ages, meditation evolved from its ancient origins to modern practices, adapting to the needs and aspirations of individuals seeking refuge from the chaos of daily life.

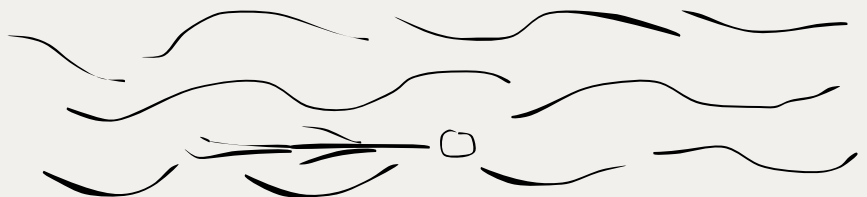


## THE OCEAN OF AWARENESS

Meditation involves cultivating a one-pointed focus, such as tuning into the rhythm of your breath. As you train your mind to stay attuned to this focal point, gently returning each time the mind wanders away to a thought, you gradually settle into a state of expansive awareness.

Picture this awareness as a vast and boundless sea. It stretches infinitely, capable of embracing every wave that arises. Each wave represents a passing thought, feeling, sensation, sound, or emotion. You observe these waves without being swept away by their turbulence, remaining anchored in the vastness of your awareness. This is the art of inner serenity and self-discovery—a journey of learning to rest in the unshakable stillness of your consciousness amidst the ever-changing tides of life.

*Meditation is to practice resting in the sea of awareness, witnessing and accepting the waves that pass by, no matter how calm or turbulent. Eventually, you remember you are the sea.*





## COME AS YOU ARE

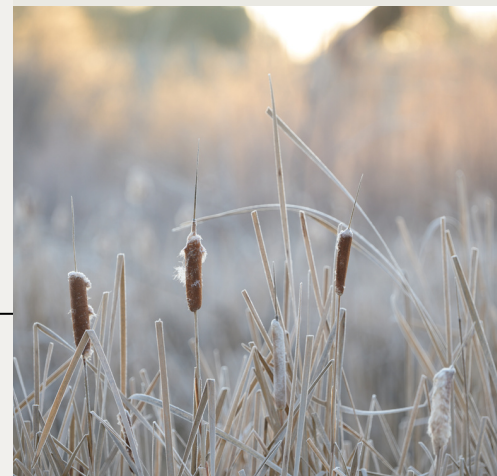
Meditation is a practice that allows you to meet yourself where you are, as you are. The practice does not require changing who you are or striving to become someone new or better. Instead, it gently guides you towards cultivating awareness, fostering compassion, and shifting your perspective to an open and receptive one.

You get to show up as is, with all the thoughts, emotions, and sensations that come with being human. Meditation trains you to observe life within and around you without shutting off your thoughts or suppressing your feelings. As you continue to practice, you might discover a newfound understanding of your thoughts and feelings, allowing you to embrace them with even more compassion and kindness.

The one-pointed focus, which can be the breath, a mantra, a sound, a visualization, or a sensation, repeatedly brings your focus back to the moment with an accepting, non-judgmental attitude. Where our attention goes, energy flows.



*You get to show up  
as your true,  
authentic sense of  
self, with all the  
thoughts, feelings,  
and emotions that  
come with being  
human, minus the  
judgment.*





*Mindfulness is present-moment awareness, while meditation is a practice to cultivate and deepen mindfulness.*



## IS MEDITATION THE SAME AS MINDFULNESS?

Mindfulness and meditation are interconnected practices with distinct characteristics. Mindfulness is being fully present and aware without judgment or attachment, while meditation is a structured practice that cultivates mindfulness. Mindfulness involves consciously directing our attention to our thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations, and environment. Mindfulness encourages us to observe our experiences with curiosity and non-reactivity, fostering a deeper understanding of ourselves and the world around us. It can be practiced throughout our daily activities, allowing us to bring a heightened sense of awareness and intention to our interactions, tasks, and experiences.

Meditation is an intentional technique that focuses on specific objects to develop a calm and focused state of mind. Regular meditation practice strengthens mindfulness during the actual meditation session and long after it is over.



# MEDITATION MYTHS

Let's look at common meditation myths that I hear from many students and people I've talked to about meditation.

## I don't have enough time.

Everything we do in this life is a practice, whether that means mindlessly scrolling on social media for 30 minutes or a seated meditation practice that calms the nervous system. We really want to ask ourselves: what is my current priority?

## Meditation is only for spiritual or religious people.

While meditation has roots in various spiritual traditions, it is not exclusive to any particular group. It is a secular practice with science-backed benefits for the mind, body, brain, heart, and emotions.

## I tried it once, and it didn't work for me.

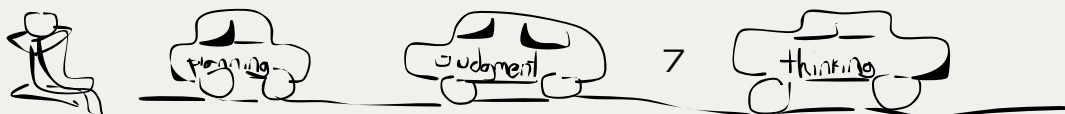
There is no one-size-fits-all meditation practice that works for everyone. You can find a practice that works for you through a diverse array of techniques, from loving awareness to visualization, walking meditation, mantra, and body scans. Choose a technique and stick with it for over a month. I would also ask, "What didn't work?" Did you think the whole time? Did you feel uncomfortable? Did you notice your higher resting heart rate? Because if so, this is normal and part of the practice. Meditation may be a new exercise for the mind-body. Like anything new, it may not come easily, and it takes time and many trials to ease ourselves into the practice, becoming familiar with the technique.



## I can't meditate because my mind won't stop thinking!

This is a good sign; it means you are alive. On average, we have about 12,000 - 60,000 thoughts daily, with 90% repeated and 95% negative! Thoughts will continue to pass through the mind throughout your meditation practice. In the beginning, especially in the first 5-10 minutes, when the mind resists practicing presence, you may be very aware of your thoughts. You are beginning to see the monkey mind jumping from one branch of thinking to the next. Planning, judging, criticizing, making lists, ruminating on old conversations, daydreaming, brainstorming, it feels never-ending, and that's a good thing.

The mind's function is to think. Take a moment right now to notice the mind. Imagine that the thoughts are like the cars on the roadway, and you are relaxing back in a beach chair, just observing the cars passing by. The cars represent your thoughts. They move in a linear fashion, one right after the next. You can notice this when you ask your mind, "What am I thinking of next." Did you notice the gap between thought cars? That gap - the space between thoughts - is what meditation begins to expand. Now, in the practice of meditation, we are sitting back and watching the thoughts pass by, like cars down the road. We don't get into the car and speed off. Instead, we practice non-attachment. Just letting the cars drive by as we stay seated in our beach chairs on the side of the road. We also don't judge the cars, even the Chrysler PT Cruiser that passes by. Instead, we practice non-judgment and notice the thought simply for what it is: a thought. You may even find it helpful to note the thought, such as "planning," "thinking," and "judging."



## Meditation doesn't make me feel calm.

Meditation may not immediately induce a sense of calmness, a shared experience, particularly during the initial weeks of practice. Often, we spend a significant portion of our day anticipating the future or dwelling in the past. Being present is rarely the norm due to the brain's protective mechanism. We fill moments of silence with activities to remain occupied due to the fast-paced modern society, which constantly encourages the mind to seek engagement and entertainment.



Now, all of a sudden, we slow down and hit pause. It may take our body and mind time to catch up to this unfamiliar territory. It's new. It's different. It's uncomfortable. Frankly, if meditation were always enjoyable and easy, we would do it all the time and never get any work done. But being present with your whole multidimensional self, all the thoughts, the array of sensations, the judgments, the critics, it's exhausting. And that is part of the training. Learning how to sit with ourselves no matter what the experience may be.

While the accumulation of a consistent meditation practice can significantly calm the mind and body, it may not immediately happen in one individual session. It is a good idea to go into a meditation practice with no expectations, start small, and understand the science-backed benefits so that the logical brain stays invested in a consistent practice.

### TIP

*Try this calming breath: Take a deep breath in. Pause at the top. Open the mouth and breathe out deeply, forcefully expelling all the breath from the lungs. Repeat three times and notice how you feel.*



# CAN I REALLY MEDITATE?

We are born meditators. Watch any baby witness the world with innate curiosity and wonder, like a sponge absorbing every precious moment unlike any other. That was you at one point. And then we got older, our brains became more active in that thinking mind, stress accumulated, and we acquired things like personality, language, and judgments.

The practice of meditation is simply a remembering of your true nature. Who you are beyond the countless thoughts that move through the mind, the sensations in the body, the judgments and critiques, and the outer experiences—a remembering of the pure enjoyment of being you. When we meditate, we are building a relationship with the most important person in the world: you! So that we can be present with what it feels like to be alive and human, which is our greatest privilege. Sometimes, it's an uncomfortable one, which is why we will learn techniques to ease suffering, calm the mind, and open the heart.

## CONCLUSION

*If you can breathe, you can meditate.*



# WHY MEDITATE

This may surprise you, but it's not to feel good. Rather, meditation offers us a precious opportunity to cultivate an open, compassionate attentiveness toward everything that unfolds in our lives.

It creates a meditative space akin to the vastness of the big sky, where there is room for all experiences to be acknowledged and embraced. This spaciousness allows us to hold whatever arises with a gentle and non-judgmental presence, fostering an environment of acceptance and understanding.

While there are both immediate and long-term benefits to a consistent meditation practice, knowing your why will help you come back to that meditation cushion every single day. Understanding the science-backed benefits of consistent practice enhances our likelihood of practicing meditation daily because we now have our logical brain on board, whether or not we feel the immediate effects.





# Benefits of Meditation



## FOCUS

Enhance cognitive abilities in attention and focus, increase working memory, and improve cognitive flexibility.<sup>8</sup>



## SLEEP

Improve sleep duration + efficiency + quality and reduce insomnia symptoms.<sup>5</sup>



## EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

Reduce emotional reactivity, increase positive emotions,<sup>4</sup> and boost compassion and empathy towards oneself and others.<sup>3</sup>



## PHYSICAL HEALTH

Balance the immune system, reduce markers of inflammation,<sup>2</sup> improve pain management and overall physical well-being,<sup>9</sup> and improve heart health.<sup>1</sup>



## REDUCE STRESS + ANXIETY

Activates and strengthens the relaxation response in the body,<sup>7</sup> decreases cortisol,<sup>12</sup> and reduces symptoms of anxiety and depression.<sup>6</sup>

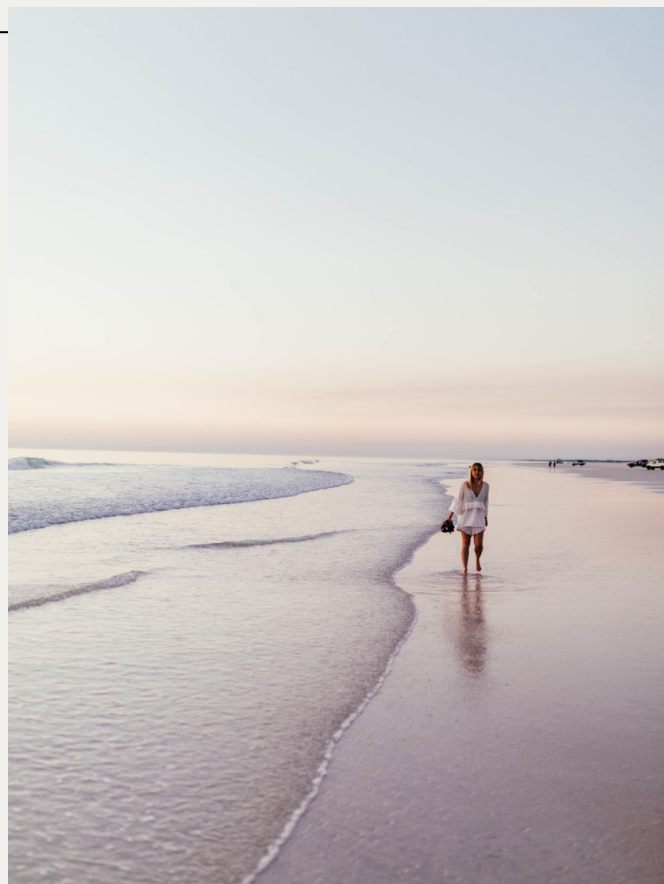


## CONTENTMENT

Increase life satisfaction and enhance overall happiness,<sup>11</sup> contentment, and overall quality of life.<sup>10</sup> Cultivate a sense of meaning, purpose, and connection to oneself and others, promoting a greater sense of overall well-being.<sup>3</sup>

# DO THE INNER WORK TO CREATE THE OUTER IMPACT

The most important relationship in this world is the one you nurture with yourself. When internal rigidity, worry, fear, and resistance arise, they tend to echo in external relationships, manifesting as judgment, blame, and negativity. Yet, a sense of inner stability, groundedness, and tranquility fosters enhanced attunement with those around you, mirroring your internal harmony.



You feel more focused and less anxious. You begin to sleep better and handle stress with more ease. You still go through the ups and downs of life but with greater awareness and perspective. Your creativity and productivity have never been better. Your vibrant, contagious energy connects you with your community. People start asking, "What is your secret." And you feel more inspired and more passionate to change the world.

Meditation begins to break old habits that no longer serve you, eroding urges and reactions that were once seeped in anxiety and self-doubt. Meditation creates spaciousness between your experience and your reaction so that you can choose with more self-awareness how you wish to show up in the world to best support you. When you do the inner work, you create the outer impact of the world you wish to live in.

## WHAT'S YOUR WHY?

*Writing down your "why" for meditation practice fuels  
your motivation and dedication to the daily habit.*

# HOW TO MEDITATE

Meditation is a practice of training the mind and cultivating a state of focused attention and awareness. It involves techniques that promote relaxation, mindfulness, and inner peace.



# THE STEPS TO MEDITATION

## FIND YOUR SEAT

Get as comfortable as possible while remaining alert in a space with as little distractions as possible. Sit upright on a cushion or chair. Allow the hips to be higher than the knees for a tall, effortless spine. You can also rest on your back at a slight incline to avoid falling asleep. Set a timer and place it out of reach to avoid the temptation to check the time (or phone).



## SET YOUR INTENTION

Defining your intention at the start of practice helps align the mind and body, guides your focus, and deepens the purpose and success of your meditation. An intention can be as simple as "I will remain present for the next 5 minutes" or a state of being you wish to cultivate.



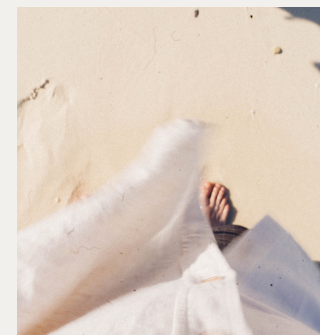
## ONE POINTED FOCUS

Choose one point to focus on, such as the breath. The singular focus of the breath serves to anchor your attention in order to cultivate a state of present-moment awareness. As you inhale, feel the sensation of breath coming into the body, and as you exhale, sense the breath leave the body. It may also be helpful to note the breath: inhale silently, say "in," exhale silently, and say "out."



## WANDERING AWAY AND COMING BACK

The mind will most definitely wander, and that's a good thing - it means you're alive, and the mind is doing its job. When the mind meanders away to a thought, sound, or sensation, notice with non-judgment and gently drift your awareness back to the one pointed focus: the breath—wandering away and coming back over and over again, which is all part of the practice.





# Tips for your meditation practice

Our minds are trainable. Just like working out and wanting bigger biceps, it may take more than one round of meditation practice to begin to feel the benefits.

## WHAT IF I HAVE AN ITCH?

To move or not to move. The stillness of the body helps to still the mind. However, if you are uncomfortable, it is always okay to readjust your body, or you will be thinking about it for the entire meditation practice. Before you move, can you bring awareness to the discomfort and accommodate mindfully?

## WHERE TO LOOK

Are eyes closed or open? Closing the eyes can help tune your awareness inwards. Eyes open can help to quiet the mind. If eyes are open, take a soft gaze out in front (about 3 feet) and relax the face.

## SILENCE OR MUSIC

Should it be completely silent? Silence is excellent and can be uncomfortable. Music can accompany meditation as long as it's not distracting. With guided meditations, you will listen to a voice - some you will resonate with and others not so much. Or you can read the practice directions and meditate independently (self-guided).

## WHAT TO WEAR

You can meditate anywhere, anytime, wearing whatever you are in. It is helpful to wear loose comfortable clothing to help with circulation.

## HOW TO SIT

Comfort is queen. Sit in a chair, on the couch, or get cozy in the car (not while driving). If you sit cross-legged on a cushion, ensure your hips are higher than your knees to keep the spine upright without much effort. If lying down is more comfortable, rest at an incline so you don't fall asleep.



# TIPS ON THE THINKING MIND

You will notice thoughts and the constant chit-chat of the mind when meditating. The mind's fluctuations can feel overwhelming, especially when trying to relax, and intimidating for new meditators.



The good news is that if you notice thoughts throughout your practice and the constant need to repeatedly return to that one-pointed focus, you are doing it right! A thinking mind means you are alive. Our minds are trainable, like going to the gym to get bigger biceps. You will focus on one point, such as the feeling of the breath, and then the mind will wander away to a thought. You will then notice the mind wandering away to a thought, sound, or sensation, and all you have to do is gently draw the awareness back to the feeling of the breath (one-pointed focus) without judgment (as best you can and with a touch of compassion). It's like a bicep curl for the brain. Each time you return to that one-pointed focus, you strengthen your inner wisdom, and the space between thoughts grows.

If the thoughts become too overwhelming, try noting: When you notice the planning and to-do lists, the critics and inner roommates, the rumination and daydreaming, silently label "thinking" and gently guide your awareness back to the one pointed focus.

## CONCLUSION

*The mind will wander to thoughts as that is the function of the mind, to think! Simply notice the thoughts, label them "thinking," and guide your awareness back to the breath.*

# Guided Meditations



## AS YOU ARE

3 MINUTES

A mindfulness meditation to welcome yourself as you are into this very moment through awareness, non-judgment and compassion.

*[Link to guided meditation](#)*



## BREATH AWARENESS

5 MINUTES

A meditation focusing on the sensation of the breath. This meditation will cultivate focus, clarity, and a calm nervous system.

*[Link to guided meditation](#)*



## BE HERE NOW

10 MINUTES

A breath-focused meditation on creating a positive rhythm of breathing, one that activates the relaxation response of the nervous system and calms the mind-body.

*[Link to guided meditation](#)*

# WHERE TO MEDITATE

Find a quiet and comfortable space with minimal distractions inside or out in nature. Meditate in a chair with your feet on the ground or on a cushion with the hips higher than the knees and the spine upright but at ease. If sitting upright is uncomfortable or painful, you can rest on your back on the couch, mat, or bed; make sure to prop yourself at an incline to avoid falling asleep. The important piece here is that the space can be imperfect.

You can meditate anywhere, anytime.

*Try it now: Tune into the feeling of your next breath flowing in and out. Sense the feeling of the breath, the inhale creating space, and the exhale relaxing more.*

The more we worry about the space for meditation, the less likely we will practice. Just sit and tune in. Let your inner space become your sanctuary.



## Wherever You Are



### CAR

Before work in the parking lot or at home in the driveway, take a few minutes to center, let go, and tune in.



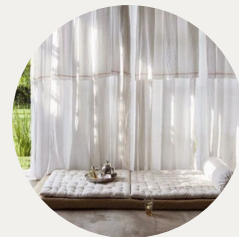
### OFFICE

Take a walking meditation or a practice at your desk to rest the eyes, and bring rejuvenation to the body.



### BED

Also called bedditation. Wake up, sit up a bit, and tune into your breath - perhaps the best way to start your day. This can be tricky because there is a big association with sleep in this space.



### MEDITATION STATION

Is there a corner of the room to dedicate to your practice? Make an altar with everything that makes you feel calm and at peace.



### WALKING

Being out in nature can greatly aid your practice. You can try matching your breath with a slow-paced walk or tune into your senses.



### KITCHEN

Waiting for your morning tea to seep or coffee? Find a seat and meditate until the timer for your coffee dings.

# WHEN TO MEDITATE

Choose a time that fits well into your daily routine, whether in the morning, during a lunch break, or before bedtime. Consistency is vital in meditation, as a regular practice helps train the mind and fosters lasting benefits. Building a consistent meditation habit allows you to experience mindfulness's cumulative effects, improved focus, reduced stress, and greater emotional well-being over time.





# HOW TO BUILD A MEDITATION HABIT

## CHOOSE A TIME

Select a time of day that aligns with your routine; mornings are particularly advantageous since our minds are less preoccupied with daily responsibilities. Our mind is like a car in neutral at the top of a hill: slowing down is simpler at the peak (morning) rather than trying to decelerate at the base (evening).

## SET THE PLACE

Creating a designated meditation space simplifies your preparation, and using the same location daily reinforces a consistent meditation habit.

## START SMALL

If you wanted to get really big biceps and you never worked out a day in your life, would you go to the gym and lift 150lb weights? Not unless you wanted to get injured. The mind is similar, as meditation is a training ground for the brain and body. Start with just 1 minute a day and increase every week when you feel ready to sit a bit longer. The most important thing is to practice daily, no matter if it is a minute or one hour.

*Same time and place.  
Start small.  
Just do it.*

BONUS

*Meditation Journal*

# MEDITATION JOURNAL



A Meditation Journal to increase self-awareness, help organize thoughts, and process your experience on and off the cushion.

A daily journal helps create a lifelong practice by keeping you accountable. It provides space to reflect on the positive and sometimes subtle shifts you may receive from a daily meditation practice.

## WHY JOURNAL

### ENHANCED SELF-REFLECTION AND INSIGHT

Keeping a meditation journal can help you gain deeper self-awareness and insights into your thoughts, emotions, and experiences during meditation. This can aid in personal growth and emotional regulation.

### INCREASED MINDFULNESS AND AWARENESS

Regular journaling about meditation sessions can potentially lead to greater mindfulness and present-moment awareness as you become more attuned to your thoughts and feelings during meditation.

### STRESS REDUCTION AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

Some studies suggest that journaling about meditation experiences may reduce stress and improve emotional well-being by allowing you to express and process your feelings, as journaling connects the limbic system of the brain to the prefrontal cortex.

### TRACKING PROGRESS AND PATTERNS

Maintaining a meditation journal enables you to track your progress over time, noticing patterns, changes in focus, and mindset shifts. This can contribute to a sense of achievement and motivation to continue the practice.

#### TIP

*Print out multiple copies of the journal on the next page to create your own mini-meditation journal.*

DATE

*Mood*

# MEDITATION JOURNAL

INTENTION

INSIGHTS

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NOTE TO SELF FROM INNER WISDOM

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TODAY I'M GRATEFUL FOR

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TODAY I'M LETTING GO OF

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TAP INTO A WELLSPRING OF CONFIDENCE, CALM, AND CLARITY

# MEDITATION COURSE

Create a lifelong meditation practice and transform your life with more ease, resilience, and self-trust. Remember that the path to profound transformation needs consistency, accountability, and knowledge. While this free eBook provides an essential foundation to jumpstart your meditation practice, our comprehensive online Meditation Course offers expert guidance to overcome obstacles and embrace the transformative potential of meditation. Join us to unlock the secrets of creating a sustainable lifelong habit, become an expert at the intricate workings of meditation and stress through the lens of cutting-edge neuroscience, and discover a plethora of meditation styles that resonate with your unique needs. Elevate your practice and life to new heights by enrolling in our Meditation Course today – your gateway to inner serenity, enhanced well-being, and a lifetime of mindful growth.

OPENS 2024

*Get on the Waitlist*

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# Testimonials



"The idea of meditating can feel intimidating or even impractical. Daphne's gentle, but grounded approach creates meditation experiences that leave you feeling better immediately, regardless of your level of experience. I return again and again to her offerings when I need a pick me up or an instant cool down and she never fails to deliver just the right thing! Meditating with Daphne is heart-opening, gentle, and safe - like sitting down for a cup of tea with an old friend."

Chelsea R.



"When I first started my journey with meditation I was incredibly blessed to have had Daphne as my first instructor. Daphne is such a kind, warm knowledgeable person and has had years of experience in meditation and yoga. This can only bring compassion and incite into ones life as it has to mine. Thank you Daphne."

Hilary G.



"Daphne's meditation course is top tier. As a yoga and meditation teacher myself, I appreciate the depth of knowledge she presents in an approachable manner. It is vibrant, inclusive and suitable for beginners and experts alike. I steer all my students to Daphne for virtual learning, knowing that they're in good hands."

Chelsea F.

Your journey to inner serenity and self-discovery is just beginning. Together, we unraveled the secrets and misconceptions of meditation while listening to the guided meditations to truly experience the peace it can bring. Equipped with understanding the benefits of a daily practice so that, especially when you don't feel any different, you still know it's working. Most importantly, you are fostering a beautiful and profound relationship with the most important person in the universe: you.

Meditation allows us to do the inner work to create the outer change. With this newfound wisdom, you can nurture your inner world and, in turn, the world around you. Let's keep this journey vibrant - stay connected, embrace growth, and embark on our Meditation Course to deepen your experience.



*Thank you*

*As the path stretches ahead, we walk alongside each other,  
guiding one another home.*

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