

Davidji - Secrets of Meditation:
A Practical Guide to Inner Peace
and Personal Transformation (2012)
CHAPTER TWO

WHAT IS MEDITATION,
AND WHY SHOULD I CARE?

Hey house
pub.

*"Don't ask what the world needs. Ask what makes
you come alive and go do that. Because what the
world needs is people who have come alive."*

— HOWARD THURMAN

For thousands of years, people have used various techniques to bring their minds to a quieter state of being. Depending on where in the world they have lived and what their culture or society has encouraged, human beings have come up with an extraordinarily rich array of practices for going beyond the ordinary waking state to expanded states of consciousness. Depending on the culture and religious orientation, these ritualized practices include chanting, breathing, ecstatic dancing, healing touch, listening to music, making love, visual stimulation, aromatherapy, and even ruminating on the taste of chocolate. Each technique is specifically designed to move the mind from its current state of activity to one of present-moment witnessing awareness.

You have already experienced the phenomena of present-moment witnessing awareness many times throughout your life, but perhaps you didn't even realize it. These are the moments when you are in the "still zone." It's that moment on a roller coaster when you are screaming at the top of your lungs as your body plunges downward to certain death—or when you are playing sports and every shot you take, every move you make, is the perfect one. It's when you are giving that big presentation and rather than read some memorized script, you spontaneously seem to channel just the right words in an effortless flow. It's when you spontaneously

say or do the perfect thing at the exact perfect moment, cook the most brilliant meal as if you were a culinary genius, make passionate love . . . merging into your partner and surrendering to the bliss of an orgasm. It's the experience of gardening in your backyard and feeling so immersed in the aroma of the soil; the vivid colors in each petal; the beauty of the moment; and the textures of the earth, plants, and flowers that time seems to stand still. And it's the pure joy of laughing so hysterically your belly starts to spasm. These are all states of present-moment witnessing awareness, when we are not thinking for one moment about the past or reaching one second into the future.

When we experience present-moment awareness in a state of restful alertness, we are experiencing the same stillness zone we experience during deep meditation . . . pure unbounded consciousness . . . the realm of no thought, no sound, and no sensation. When you are in that space, you have essentially disconnected from all the things in your world that are in the realm of activity. In the language of many meditators, this is referred to as accessing the space between your thoughts—the gap—a space pregnant with pure potential and infinite possibilities.

When you have a consistent daily meditation practice, instead of only having sporadic tastes of the bliss of present-moment awareness, you begin to experience that bliss more and more in your everyday life. As you meditate regularly, a physiological shift occurs that grows deeper, stronger, and more profound with repetition. Like building any muscle in your body, meditation is a practice that transforms your entire physiology over time. This shift is subtle at first, and as the process of physical and emotional softening occurs, you begin to view life in new and expanded ways. Life takes on a different hue . . . a deeper meaning . . . a more universal understanding that pervades every cell of your being. The present-moment awareness you experience in meditation begins to flow throughout each thought, each conversation, each keystroke, and each breath.

In both ancient and modern writings on the experience of meditation, this change, shift, or transformation of awareness—this

space of *being*—has been referred to by many names, including enlightenment, transcendence, awakening, *satori*, the *aha!* moment, Brahman, rapture, bliss, being in the gap, astral projection, connecting to source, *turiya*, remote viewing, witnessing awareness, *bhagavan* or *brahmi chetana*, cosmic consciousness, God or Christ consciousness, being in the moment, *atma darshan* (glimpsing the soul), one-ness, unity, *ananda*, and *samadhi*.

And when you experience no activity within you or outside of yourself, you actually open yourself to realms of expanded consciousness and a greater depth of feeling that include higher levels of creativity, intuition, personal growth, compassion, subtle empowerment, forgiveness, and peace of mind. Whether this stillness lasts for a tenth of a second, ten seconds, or ten minutes is of no consequence. Touching stillness—even in the smallest of doses—allows you to connect to your unconditioned Self . . . to your source.

WHO ELSE MEDITATES?

All it takes is one meditation and you join the ranks of millions around the world who consider meditation to be a centering practice in their lives and something that connects them more deeply to their inner light. In addition to Deepak Chopra, David Simon, and numerous other human empowerment leaders—such as Jean Houston, Oprah Winfrey, Wayne Dyer, Louise Hay, Eckhart Tolle, Neale Donald Walsch, Marianne Williamson, and Anthony Robbins—the following people have acknowledged the importance of meditation in their lives. Some have been my teachers, others my students, and others are simply famous meditators. We are all part of the same flow, the fabric of the collective consciousness.

Jennifer Aniston, Sean Astin, Aung San Suu Kyi, Orlando Bloom, Kate Bosworth, Russell Brand, the Buddha, Gerard Butler, Jack Canfield, Kyle Cease, Beth Nielson Chapman,

Pema Chödrön, Leonard Cohen, Confucious, Sheryl Crow, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Al Gore, Tipper Gore, Ram Dass, Laura Dern, Donovan, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Mia Farrow, Patrick Flanagan, Benjamin Franklin, Mahatma Gandhi, Richard Gere, Billy Gibbons, Sri Yukteswar Giri, Heather Graham, Ariana Grande, Tara Guber, Herbie Hancock, Thich Nhat Hanh, George Harrison, Goldie Hawn, Phil Jackson, Kathy Jarvis, Andy Kaufman, Anthony Kiedis, Jack Kornfield, J. Krishnamurti, Lao-Tzu, John Lennon, Annie Lennox, David Lynch, Madonna, Ricky Martin, Miten, Alanis Morissette, Caroline Myss, Joel Osteen, Dr. Mehmet Oz, Gwyneth Paltrow, Patanjali, Ezra Pound, Deva Premal, Jon Kabat-Zinn, Jack Kornfield, David Lynch, Moby, Rick Rubin, Meg Ryan, Susan Sarandon, Steven Seagal, Jerry Seinfeld, Swami Sivananda, Howard Stern, Dave Stewart, Sting, St. Teresa of Avila, Henry David Thoreau, The Boston Buddha, Tina Turner, Shania Twain, Alan Watts, Ken Wilber, Tal Wilkenfeld, Tiger Woods, Stevie Wonder, and Paramahansa Yogananda.

Of course, it's not necessary to be a celebrity or have a guru (other than oneself) in order to have a solid and fulfilling meditation practice. It is safe to assume that if all these high achievers meditate, chances are they share the common characteristics of people seeking balance, wholeness, healing, wellness, and the best aspects of who they are . . . their most awakened and divine selves.

The Story of You

Go back to the moment of your birth. Most likely you don't remember, but here's pretty much how it went. You emerged from the womb pure, whole, unconditioned, and perfect—with no earthly conditioning. Perhaps the doctor gently smacked you on your bottom, and from that moment on, every experience and

being that touched your world—doctors, nurses, parents, siblings, best friends, boyfriends, girlfriends, exes, teachers, schoolmates, students, religious leaders, spouses, lovers, ex-spouses, friends, loved ones, bosses, co-workers, people you meet just once, even the barista who sells you your morning coffee—have layered and layered and layered you with messages and impressions. Like the ever-growing layers of an onion, you've responded with conditioning, reinforcement, and new growth . . . covering up that pure, whole, brilliant diamond in the center and influencing, molding, and blanketing you with veneers of emotional and physical conditioning.

And here you are today. It's a few years later and a few million light years from that moment of innocence, purity, wholeness, and perfection, when the light of this world first shined in your eyes. But through your meditation practice, each time you connect to your natural state of stillness and silence, you are peeling away the layers of conditioning and reconnecting to that brilliant source, dipping your toe in—dipping your fingers into that pure, unbounded, enlightened aspect of yourself.

The magnificence of meditation isn't so much the experience during the practice itself, but each time you meditate, you peel back more layers of conditioning, get closer to the radiance of the diamond inside, and bring back into your life a thimbleful . . . a teaspoonful . . . an eyedropper full of what rests at the center of your essence—pure, whole, still, silent, unconditioned, light-filled, unbounded, universal, collective consciousness, where you are not simply you; you are everyone and everything. You are one-ness.

Now maybe that sounds a bit daunting. Maybe you just wanted to learn how to sleep through the night, have less stress, find balance, breathe easier, lower your blood pressure, and live a more peaceful life. You will have that . . . and so much more simply by opening yourself to a daily meditation practice. Developing a regular meditation practice will very quickly give you observable physical and emotional benefits. But meditation is not like taking a Valium; you meditate so you don't feel the need to take antianxiety medication. Your calmness starts before the storm and keeps you

feeling centered even as the winds of chaos swirl around you. And this sense of abiding peace can develop pretty quickly. Meditation can begin to improve your physical health, your emotional well-being, and your spiritual connection with your very first experience. But it will also open up a realm of self-awareness and higher consciousness that will connect you to the more universal and divine aspects of your Self.

Exploring Your Expectations

Before every class I teach, I ask each meditation student to share why they want to learn to meditate . . . what they hope to experience. Why have you chosen to embark on this path? Here's a list of the top 20 expectations and desires that my students have shared over the years:

1. Peace of mind
2. Less stress
3. To slow down the world and stop my thoughts
4. Greater clarity or intuition
5. Less anxiety
6. Lower blood pressure
7. To breathe more easily
8. Enlightenment
9. Deeper connection to Source/Self/Spirit/the Divine
10. Emotional healing and freedom
11. Awaken creativity
12. To calm the storm
13. To stop the sense of being overwhelmed
14. More restful sleep
15. Happiness

16. Deeper, more loving relationships
17. To boost my immune system
18. To ease my pain
19. To develop my ability to relax
20. To empower myself

Are there any desires on this list that resonate with you? Is there anything that you'd like more of in your life? Less of? You get to create it. Meditation can help you experience everything on this list and your deepest desires. It simply requires a daily practice. And I can comfortably assure you that within only a few days, your life and those people in it will benefit in every moment on every level from your embracing this gentle practice.

What's the reason you want to establish a daily meditation practice? What is *your* expectation? Write it down right now on the My Intentions page at the end of this book and date it. When you check back in a month or two, you'll see how you've manifested this desire in your life! I also recommend that you start keeping a journal or begin making notes throughout this book, so you can reflect on your practice when you are not reading. Try it for 30 days and see how your life unfolds.

Getting Started

Right now you have everything you need to meditate, so let's give it a go. First, find a comfortable place to sit—on a chair or couch, on the floor, a park bench—anywhere you will be relatively undisturbed by external activities.

Once you have found the place, get comfortable, relax into it, and simply become aware of your breath. Don't breathe any differently . . . just allow your awareness to drift to your breathing.

As you read these words, feel the air flow in and out of you. Feel your lungs stretch and relax. Feel your chest rise and fall. Now close your mouth, and gently breathe in and out, solely through your nose. Feel your belly fill as you inhale. Feel it release as you exhale. Again, don't consciously do anything to alter your breath other than closing your mouth and breathing both in and out through your nose. Just observe your breath for about a minute . . . simply be aware that you breathe in, hold it in for a moment or two, exhale for a moment or two, and hold that out for a moment or two before you inhale again.

As you breathe, silently notice *I'm breathing in, I'm holding the breath, I'm breathing out, I'm holding the breath*. Maintain this awareness for the next few minutes.



Now become aware of your physical body . . . how does it feel? Are you hot or cold? Relaxed or tense? Do parts of your body hurt, and are there other parts you don't even feel right now? Notice that as your awareness drifts over different parts of your body, you become more aware of your physiology. Let's make our calves tingle right now. Feel the tips of your nostrils without touching them. Become aware of your lips. Isn't it funny how our awareness truly does dictate our experiences?



Look at your hands right now. Look at your palms. Rest them on your thighs, and feel them come to life. Out of sight, out of mind . . . but within sight, within mind. Now bring your attention to the blood flowing into your hands. Keep your focus on your palms. Feel the blood move into your palms. Feel them begin to get warm in the center.



Where attention flows, energy goes. Do you see how as soon as you become aware of something, your mind starts to interpret your experience? Do you notice how your mind instantly wants to define it, label it, categorize it, or assign it meaning? Do you see how your awareness is connected to your body as well?

Now move your awareness beyond your hands and down to your feet. Start on your right side. Flex your right foot. Wiggle it a bit. Roll your ankle around for a few moments. Now relax your foot. Feel each toe as you move your attention from each toe to the next and then from one side of your foot to the other. Feel that flow of attention move from your toes down the sole of your foot into your heel. Then move your attention slowly up the back of your calf until you arrive in your mind's eye at your knee. Now, gently breathing in and out and using only your mind, massage your kneecap in a circular motion and move around to the back of your knee. Now move up your right hamstring and energetically feel the front of your thigh without touching it. Let a relaxing sensation radiate from the top of your thigh. Slowly breathe in as you keep the attention on your thigh. Feel it. Close your eyes for a few moments and gently breathe. Feel it. Feel all the sensations and interpretations you are experiencing in your right leg.

Now bring your awareness to your left foot. Flex it. Wiggle it a bit. Roll your ankle around for a few moments. Relax your left foot, and feel each toe as you move your attention from each toe to the next and then from one side of your foot to the other. Feel that flow of attention move from your toes down the sole of your left foot into your heel. Then feel it slowly move up the back of your calf until you arrive in your mind's eye at your knee. Now, gently breathing in and out and using only your mind, massage your kneecap in a circular motion and move around to the back of your knee. Now move your awareness up your left hamstring and energetically feel the front of your thigh

without touching it. Let a relaxing sensation radiate from the top of your thigh. Slowly breathe in as you keep the attention on your left thigh. Feel it. Close your eyes for a few moments and gently breathe. Feel it. Feel all the sensations and interpretations you are experiencing in your left leg.

Now let's bring our awareness to both feet. Wiggle them. Roll both ankles around a bit. Now relax your feet and let them melt into the floor. Now feel each toe on both feet as you move your attention from each toe to the next and then from one side of your foot to the other. Feel that flow of attention move down the soles of your feet into your heels. Remember to keep breathing as you drift to each part of your body. Then feel it slowly move up the back of your calves until you arrive in your mind's eye at your knees. Now, gently breathing in and out and using only your mind's eye, massage your kneecaps in a circular motion and move around to the back of your knees. Now slowly move your awareness up your hamstrings and energetically feel the front of your thighs without touching them. Let a relaxing sensation radiate from the top of your thighs. Slowly breathe in as you keep the attention on your thighs. Feel the energy in your thighs. Sit there for a few moments and gently breathe. Feel it.

Now move your attention to your pelvis. Sit with that feeling for a moment or two; simply observe it as you consciously move all of your awareness to your pelvis. Feel the blood flow in and out of your pelvic region. Feel any discomfort you have get lighter as you witness the area from the tops of your thighs to your belly button becoming more vital and warmer from the attention you place on your pelvis. Sit with this sensation for a few moments with your eyes closed.

Now drift your awareness up into your belly. Feel the blood flow into your belly. Do you see how subtly shifting your awareness has actually brought blood flow and other physiological changes to these areas? Feel the blood flow against gravity from your pelvis up into your belly.

Simply awakening the lower half of your body with your mind has brought all these body parts into your awareness. Moments ago your attention was on reading. Where attention flows, energy goes. Pretty interesting, isn't it?

Now with your breath, see if you can gently breathe and move your awareness from your belly, up your torso, to your heart. Feel the power center of your physical body—your heart—become more open and more full. Notice how right now you are able to take a deeper breath than you could before. Your ribcage can expand more with every inhale. Once you truly feel full in this region of your body, breathe in again, and as you exhale, move your attention even higher up your chest. Breathe in and pull your energy from below your heart to the area around your heart; feel the sensation in your chest. Sit with that for a few moments. Feel your heart fill with love. With gratitude. With compassion. With forgiveness. With joy. Notice as you do this . . . a smile unfolds on your face.

Now push it up even further as you inhale. At this moment, you are experiencing present-moment awareness. As your attention goes, there you are in that moment. Not thinking about the past . . . not thinking about the future. Totally present. Totally here. Right now.

Now lift your eyes from the page after you've read these directions. Look around, and take in all your eyes observe. Don't judge; just witness . . . like a video camera simply absorbing all it sees in total witness mode. Take in the colors; see the depth and shade of everything around you. The shapes . . . the distances between objects, their

shadows, how the light is falling, their denseness. Just stay with this for a minute or two as you receive all these waves and particles of light that you are turning into meaning.

What do you hear in this moment? Are there noises around you? Music? Sounds of nature? Sounds of a busy world? Any internal noises, like your stomach rumbling? Or the sound of your breathing?

Remember to keep breathing through your nose as your awareness heightens. Are you aware of any aromas? What is the smell of your surroundings? Keep breathing and bring your awareness to some part of your body that feels tight or heavy or constricted. It might be your heart, belly, temples, back, legs, arms, throat, or any other area. Don't do anything other than drift your awareness to that place and ask yourself how it feels. Now with your awareness on that place, breathe in deeply to the count of three. And slowly exhale, bringing even more attention to this area. Let's do this again.

Now slowly breathe in and out three times with your eyes closed. I'll wait.

How did the experience change with your eyes closed? Did you feel a difference? Did you become aware of your thoughts? Were you thinking more or less? Did you visualize your surroundings on the back of your eyelids? Did your other senses become more aware? Did you hear better? Relax more? Did it seem comfortable or unfamiliar in any way?

And what does the area of the body you focused on feel like now? Is it a bit lighter, looser, more open? As you begin to answer this question, your mind is drifting into the past. But the present-moment awareness you experienced only moments ago is now part of you here . . . now . . . in this present moment. This whole exercise took fewer than five minutes. A daily meditation practice can deliver this to you

in much greater doses on a consistent basis. Imagine how beneficial this could be.

MEDITATION CONTINUED: EYES CLOSED

Most schools of meditation instruct practitioners to close their eyes so that they will take in less activity from the visible world. We'll discuss visual meditations a bit later, but for now, let's get ready to close our eyes again. We'll be following our breath for a few moments here, so get comfortable, gently breathe, and silently notice *I'm breathing in, I'm holding the breath, I'm breathing out, I'm holding the breath. I'm breathing in . . .*

As each aspect of your breathing occurs, notice it . . . witness it . . . observe it. Feel the rising, the falling, the in, the out, the pauses between each inhale and exhale . . . and keep doing so for a few minutes. If you drift away to any other experience—such as thoughts, sounds, or physical sensations (and you will)—gently remember to return your attention to the breath and the observation that *I'm breathing in, I'm holding my breath, I'm breathing out, I'm holding the breath out*. If you'd like, you can shorten it to *In. Hold. Out. Hold*. But don't just say it robotically; actually observe each part of your breath, and narrate the experience as you live it.

Now put down your book and close your eyes. Let's meditate together using this breathing practice for three full minutes. Don't worry about timing yourself, but feel free to place a clock in front of you or look at your watch. And feel free to go longer, if you like.

Okay, I'm guessing you're back now. How did that feel? How do you feel now? Any changes? Thoughtfully answer these questions:

- Did the time seem longer or shorter than it actually was? Did it feel like 20 years? Or 20 seconds?
- Were you bored? Restless? Antsy?
- Did you feel more relaxed at any time?
- Did you feel any settling down?
- Did you fall asleep?
- Did you become aware of your thoughts? Your emotions? Your body?
- Did you find yourself judging the experience?
- Did you feel a wave of a particular emotion or physical sensation wash over you?
- Did you experience a separation or disconnect between your breathing and your repetition of "In. Hold. Out. Hold"?
- Did your awareness drift away from the breath at any time? Did you remember to gently drift your attention back to your breathing and to follow your breath?
- Did you become frustrated? Did you become lost? Did something become clearer?
- Did you see anything in your mind's eye?
- Did you notice any particular thoughts, sounds, or physical sensations that became a part of your awareness?
- Did you open your eyes to check the time or your surroundings?
- Did you see anything or feel anything that was different from what you expected? Did you notice any difference in your awareness when you were silently repeating, "I'm breathing in, I'm holding the breath, I'm breathing out, I'm holding the breath"?

All these sensations, emotions, thoughts, sounds, and experiences are part of meditation—witnessing awareness. You were actually just meditating! This type of meditation is known as breath-awareness meditation, and you just did it. What you experienced is exactly what you were supposed to experience: drifting back and forth between your breath and thoughts, sounds, and physical sensations. And when you turn this into a daily practice, your mind calms down and finds it less necessary to engage the thoughts.

Imagine if you were receiving a text or phone call every five minutes, and your ringer was on really loud. You would notice the calming effect of turning the ringer softer, even if the calls continued. And then if you turned the ringer on silent mode, even though the calls still came in every five minutes, you would be unaware, undistracted, undisturbed. Ultimately, you'd calm down and have less anxiety or stress over the incoming messages, because they wouldn't be persistently alerting you. Meditation helps you turn your personal ringer on silent mode to separate you from your thoughts and the external swirling of life. It doesn't take you out of this life; it connects you more deeply to it.

Meditation actually allows you to experience yourself more deeply without the frenetic onslaught of your mind and the external world relentlessly picking at you. Everything you thought was swirling around is still out there. But now you see it differently—more universally; you respond differently—more consciously. It is in these moments that transformation occurs. And when you can go deeper . . . and deeper still . . . so deep that there is no world, no body, no thing. For just a moment . . . a second . . . a minute . . . you transcend this time-bound body . . . you go beyond this ego-based mind. You experience pure one-ness . . . pure, unbounded consciousness . . . infinite unity. The experience isn't describable. It isn't explainable. It's beyond human comprehension and language's ability to express. We use words like *stillness*, *peace*, or *whole* to describe what we experience in meditation, even if just for a moment. But words fail in the invisible realm of pure, unbounded consciousness. Only the direct experience of non-duality . . . of

being . . . of experiencing one-ness can genuinely convey the true definition.

Giving yourself a few breaks each day from the persistent nonstop of the realm of activity is all it takes to create major shifts in your life. I call it taking a "time in," a term first coined by Andy Kelley, "The Boston Buddha," a student of mine and a powerful meditation teacher who teaches kids in schools to connect to their own stillness and silence. The shift begins with this relatively effortless practice in which we subtly introduce stillness, which then interrupts the conditioned pattern of nonstop activity. The result is that suddenly, amid all this reinforcement of activity, there is a blip . . . a virtual millisecond of nonactivity. And it has a profound consequence.

You connect to that millisecond of stillness and silence and bring it back into this world . . . into this life . . . into each thought . . . into each moment. That's the magnificence of meditation—not what happens during the meditation but what happens in every other moment of your day. It becomes a part of who you are, and it's cumulative; it builds and builds with each sunset and sunrise, with each meditation, with each new day, with each conversation, with each person in your life, with each new thought, and with each new choice.