

Meditation is a Quiet Revolution

For over 30 years, I have been meditating. For almost as many years, in workshops, consultations, friendly conversations, and writing, I have been encouraging, teaching, or leading people to meditate and create quiet times. During this time, the world has changed considerably, and so have I. My most important learning is: everyone is different. Certainly there are commonalities in meditating, but each individual is unique. I consider that meditation is one of the most empowering practices that anyone can engage in.

A "quiet revolution" is an oxymoron, of course. Meditation is generally a private, quiet practice. In North America its acceptance has changed dramatically over the last several years, although it is still not universally accepted. As with most revolutions, an underground is established before, during, and after the outward manifestations of the awakening. In this culture which I know, more and more individuals are speaking and writing about their meditation practice.

Meditating in groups is also common and very powerful, and yet each meditator still has a unique, quiet, private experience. In the workplace, meditation is rarely practiced openly, nor is it discussed, except in safe, small groups or among friends. When I was a frequent workshop presenter, I had many participants speak to me privately in hushed tones at break times to confess that they meditate. The voices may not be as hushed these days, but still there is a quietness, even a silence, about the practice in many settings.

I am comfortable with the variety of words used to describe meditation. My own purpose for meditation is to connect with the Divine and be replenished by the Source. Some speak about mystical experiences and higher consciousness, while others are more comfortable talking about relaxation, calmness, and resilience. Heightened awareness, intuition, imagery, and vision are frequently used to describe experiences of meditation. I find that helping others to express their own meditation experiences is a powerful process for them, even when the words do not flow smoothly.

Long-time meditators can find other long-time mediators easily. Meditators give off signals or vibrations that are calmer and more aligned with self than those who do not meditate or do not have a meditative-type practice that taps into higher consciousness. Gardening, yoga, certain athletic activities, and regular relaxation can achieve the same soothing signals when practiced in ways that achieve harmony with self.

No matter how or where you meditate, you must make a choice to meditate and practice it regularly in order to benefit fully. Full benefits come with regular practice over a period of time. Meditating only when stressed may certainly be beneficial in the immediate situation, but the long-term benefits of a regular practice include general well-being, health, a strong immune system, longevity, clarity of thought, and balance.

Meditation is sometimes associated with certain religions. Meditation can be practiced in any and all religions, but the two are not synonymous. In my work, I keep meditation distinct from religion; if my clients choose to join the two, that is fine. Those with strong religious beliefs gravitate to the types of meditation that fit their beliefs. Wikipedia has a comprehensive listing of [meditation methods](#).

Regardless of the chosen method, the benefits of regular meditation, over time, are as varied as the individuals who meditate. It is quite common for long-time meditators to acknowledge they benefit physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually.

Recently I received an email message from a long-time meditator in India talking about her meditation experiences. It was a delight to read. It became clear to me that she has integrated the same elements that I encourage people to discover and use.

She uses her breath to relax. She has several processes to handle mind chatter and stress so that she is not disturbed by them in her meditation. She has two different "focal points" for her attention. One is a visual focus, a traditional Indian lamp, which she visualizes as divine light that lightens her heart. Another focal point is one of the most famous mantras, Om, which she chants repeatedly, finding that it takes only a brief time to achieve the state of consciousness that is her purpose for meditation. And she has a regular practice.

Her message was a beautiful summary of what many long-term meditators might report. While working with both new and long-time meditators, I have discovered that the most difficult aspect of meditation is to practice it regularly. All the elements of meditation are easy to understand, but to sit and do it challenges many new meditators.

If you have not meditated before, it may seem mysterious. However, meditation is simple. I recommend a maximum of twenty minutes for new meditators. Here are the elements:

Arrange time when you will not be disturbed;

Sit in a comfortable position and relax;

Close your eyes, unless you prefer an open-eye meditation;

Breathe intentionally for a few breaths;

Choose a focal point, such as music, a chant, a pleasing image, a guiding voice;

Stay with the focal point; if your mind wanders, gently return to the focal point;

Bring the meditation to a close and return to your activities, refreshed.

If this is your first time meditating, you may feel that "nothing is happening" during the first few times you sit to meditate. That is a common sensation. At the end of your chosen meditation time, simply get up and continue with your day. The benefits are cumulative, which is why I advocate a regular practice.

If you want to meditate, yet are not meditating or are not meditating as frequently as you want, please be gentle with yourself. While it is true that only you can sit down and do it, you can also find ways to make it more appealing. In order to have a meditation practice, you must practice meditation. Above all else, follow your heart and trust your own inner guidance.

What about you? Do you want to be part of this quiet revolution? Are you already part of the revolution but wanting to meditate more regularly? If so, meditate one session at a time until it becomes a natural part of your life.

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About the Author

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