

Your Life as a Meditation:

Practical Suggestions for Developing the "Habit" of Meditation

by Lisa Hepner

Gandhi said, "Peace, to be real, must be unaffected by outer circumstances." What if you could truly experience inner peace regardless of what's going on externally?

How would it FEEL to...

- * be non-reactive,
- * be non-judgmental,
- * be non-attached to outcome
- * be free from incessant mind chatter,
- * live fully in the moment?

Most of us would like to experience true inner peace and the joy that comes from living in the moment. Most of us would like to be free from our incessant mind activity. Yet many of us don't know how. Or, we know how but haven't quite "mastered" living from the inside out.

Meditation is the key to experiencing true inner peace. I know we've all heard this.

Yet how many of us meditate on a daily basis? How many of us meditate while we're waiting at a doctor's office? How many of us meditate while doing daily activities? How many of us can say that our life is a meditation?

Honestly, I've been writing and speaking about inner peace for years and am aware of the benefits of meditation. Yet I had not fully developed the daily practice of meditation, until recently.

Now, my life IS a meditation. I want to share with you the practices and resources I've used to make the transition from meditating once every month or so and being a "victim" to my thoughts, to having my life "be" a living meditation and become an "observer" of my thoughts.

Before I share with you the missing piece to develop the "habit" of meditation, along with the various practices and techniques, I want to share with you an experience I had recently.

FREEDOM FROM THOUGHT, LIVING FULLY IN THE MOMENT

I was at the grocery store buying groceries. I was fully in the moment. I was sort of in a trance state, though I didn't label it as this until afterward when I reflected back on the experience.

Anyway, I was fully in the moment, shopping for groceries.

EVERYONE that walked by me, smiled at me. I smiled back and didn't give it much thought (again until afterward). It wasn't just one person that smiled at me, literally everyone that passed me, smiled. Everyone was so friendly.

Then I walked outside and noticed the beautiful sky. I noticed the friendly people, the pavement, the colors of the cars in the parking lot, the feel of the breeze in the air.

Then suddenly a thought rushed into my mind, "You haven't been thinking for a long time."

I had a thought that came in that told me that I wasn't thinking!

It was amazing. I had been free from thought for quite a while, fully present in the moment, in complete peace and joy while grocery shopping!

And that's what meditation does for you. It helps you become the observer of things going on externally, while your awareness is completely inside. You eventually even become the observer of your own thoughts! (Instead of the reactor).

What freedom!

And it's all because I have developed the "habit" of meditation. My life is a meditation.

And here's how I did it...

THE MISSING PIECE TO DEVELOP THE HABIT OF MEDITATION

In order to develop the habit of meditation and reap the benefits, you **MUST: Commit to meditating every day for 21 days, and do it with a partner or join a circle.**

It has been proven that it takes 21 days to make a habit. If you want to develop the "habit" of meditation and reap the wonderful benefits, you **MUST** commit to meditating daily for 21 days.

Now, for me, accountability is a HUGE factor, so I started a 21 day meditation circle via teleconference from the comfort of your own home. To find out more about it go to: <http://www.peacefulearth.com/meditationcircletwo.html>

You can join a meditation circle like the one I started above, or you can get together with a friend, partner, spouse or colleague and commit to 21 days of meditation.

If you try to do it on your own, you'll most likely come up with excuses or get too busy, but when you have others that have committed to the same practice, you're more likely to succeed.

Find a time that works for you and commit to it. Schedule the time and put it on your calendar for the next 21 days. Amazingly, you can do it over the phone. Don't let location be a factor for committing to the practice of meditation.

You may want to sign a "commitment form." (I ask people participating in the meditation circle to sign a commitment form of their intent. If for some reason they have to miss the call, they agree to listen to the replay line or meditate on their own independently. This really sets the intention to develop the habit of meditation).

The great thing about having a partner or joining a circle is that **it holds you accountable**. If you know that other people have made that commitment WITH you, you are more likely to show up, even on days when your mind says that you're too busy to meditate. (And there will be days when your ego doesn't want you to meditate...)

So the most important step to develop the habit of meditation is to hold yourself accountable to meditate daily for 21 days. And you have a greater chance of succeeding if you join a circle or find a partner or two.

YOUR 21 DAY MEDITATION PROGRAM

The following are suggestions to start your 21 day meditation practice:

FIRST 7 DAYS

For the first 7 days of your 21 day journey you may want to oscillate between the THREE techniques for accessing your inner essence described below. A "facilitator" will gently facilitate this process by asking the questions and reminding you to focus on your breathing.

TECHNIQUE #1

Observe your breathing. Just feel your breath on the inhale and exhale. Feel your belly rise and lower as you inhale and exhale. Feel the air move in and out of your body. Try this for 15 minutes. If a thought comes to mind, just notice it, release it and go back to observing your breath.

TECHNIQUE #2

The question that I use to access my inner essence, as suggested by Eckhart Tolle author of the *Power of Now*, is:

"Without touching or moving my right foot, how do I know my right foot exists?"

Then just feel the energy of your right foot. Or it can be your right hand, or your left hand, or your left foot.

See if you can bring your awareness toward feeling your inner body. You can start at different locations throughout your body. Then see if you can FEEL your whole inner body. This is a powerful meditation. I can feel my body tingle with aliveness when I do this meditation.

TECHNIQUE #3

This question has been used by Eastern practitioners and is another way of accessing your inner body, or inner essence.

“What’s going on inside my body?”

Just feel the energy of your inner body. If a thought comes to mind, ask the question again, and just FEEL the energy of your inner essence.

AFTER DAY 7

After day 7, you’ll want to try adding SILENT meditations to your 21 day practice.

You’ll basically just set a meditation timer for 15 minutes and use one of the three techniques on your own to access your inner body.

It’s pretty powerful meditating with a group over the phone, because even when it’s “silent” you know that your meditation partners are with you doing the same thing!

Then you can always go back to basics by using one of the three techniques, then doing a silent meditation and so forth.

AROUND DAY 10: BECOMING THE OBSERVER

You’ll want to incorporate this technique at about day 10 or shortly after.

A wonderful technique to help you keep your awareness inside while still focusing on externals is to do one of the inner body techniques suggested above, and then half way through ask your partners to open their eyes and look around the room while feeling their inner body.

And you may want to try this more and more toward the end of your 21 day circle.

This helps us to practice “observing” things while keeping our attention within.

Eventually, we get to the point where we become the observer of even our thoughts. So we’re less reactive to them and we’re more of the “watcher” of our thoughts.

After day 10, you’ll want to challenge yourself and your partner, (I do this with the meditation circle participants) to meditate frequently throughout the day.

Start observing and doing things with your awareness inward. Feel your inner body and its' aliveness, while doing the dishes, grocery shopping, waiting at a doctor's appointment.

Again, it doesn't require thought. Just observe things with your awareness fully directed inward. So you're observing things externally, while your awareness is focused within.

Even when you're "doing" things, be fully present. So that you are aware of your inner body while you're doing any activity.

REAPING THE REWARDS

The greatest reward from developing the habit of meditation is that you live your life from the inside out. You become the "observer" instead of the "reactor." You begin to fully experience joy, peace and love in each moment and you become free from incessant mind activity.

What better gift could you give yourself or humanity?

ABOUT LISA HEPNER

Lisa Hepner is the founder of Peaceful Earth, LLC and the creator of all the resources and products to support people in experiencing peace in their lives, their relationships and the world.

She is the facilitator of ongoing 21 day meditation circles to help others "develop" the habit of meditation. For more information and to sign up for a meditation circle:

<http://www.peacefulearth.com/meditationcircletwo.html>