

Why Is Meditating So Hard?

It can be *easy* if you take the right approach.

Even when there are no distractions, the mind will resist focus. The frisky monkey mind takes our attention and bounces it from image to idea to sound to thoughts to gotta-do's to everywhere but where we want to focus. The resulting frustration from not being able to control your mind really shouldn't be all that surprising.

If you began your first efforts at meditation by sitting down to *meditate* that was probably the worst way to develop your meditation skills. You wouldn't tackle the black run on the ski slope without first learning how to snow plough. And you certainly won't develop your ability to meditate until you develop your skills of concentration and focus.

Most Common Obstacles When Learning to Meditate

There are several complaints that are repeatedly noted as obstacles when learning to meditate. They include:

- *Inability to quiet the mind* – you can call this the Frisky Monkey syndrome. Every time you try to quiet the mind, calm your inner awareness, your mind begins to betray you and your goals by day dreaming, by becoming intrigued with your mental to-do list, by listening to sounds around you and following those resulting thoughts down the trail to anywhere but your focus, and so on and so on.
- *Lack of focus* – not the same as quieting the mind, focusing is the deliberate attention paid to a distinct idea, concept, image, sound, or value. But when you can't maintain a focal point, you can't reach your mental/meditative goal. This is the Monkey Mind skating across your mental ice rink one more time.
- *Finding the time* – the world is so busy these days for *everyone*. How did we manage to find the time to get anything done 10 years ago? 20 years ago? No doubt there's a conspiracy of time compression going on worldwide. Regardless, if you don't take the time to do the things that improve your life, you are not respecting yourself at some level.
- *Getting Distracted* – once you have arrived at the decision to take the time for yourself, if you can't sink into yourself on command and you let the sounds and urgencies of others take over, you are still not showing the self-respect required to develop strong meditation skills.
- *Physical Discomfort* – the ability to release stress is not always easy and it certainly can be a distraction when your muscles feel strained. For this reason it is so important to spend time initially in your meditation training to focus on your body and learn to release tension to achieve a deeply relaxed state.

No one said it would be easy, this is true. But there is a logical and effective path to developing a deep meditative state. It starts with releasing tension, relaxing the body and controlling the breath. Next follows the technique of focusing on the *distracted mind* rather than trying to control all thoughts first.

So many who want to explore the path of meditation to a deeper awareness of self are natural nurturers, compassionate individuals who are, if anything, hyper-responsible people. This personality type finds it difficult to let go. The absolute first step is to *decide* that now is the time to learn to meditate. And the person who is so easily attracted to meditation is the same one who has the most difficulty putting themselves first.

Control is the keyword

We are not turning the Universe, the earth, the galaxies, the day. We are being turned in the Universe, on the earth, through the galaxies, within the day.

At what point does the need, the desire and the obsession to control the outcome of absolutely *everything* become an appropriate *goal*. Logically, it should be **never**. But in reality, we just want the World, the Universe, to listen to us. “Listen! Pay attention to me!” we cry out.

Take a deep breath, step back and wake up. You are of the Universe and the earth and the many galaxies, and the day’s events. You are not separate from these realities. Lean back just a tad and absorb this Truth. You are part of the Universe. One grain that cannot on its own move the beach back one tiny bit. But without your one existence as that grain of sand, you would change, through omission, the very direction and nature of that beach.

Every single cell in your body is an important puzzle piece, just like your very existence is an important influence on every other person. How you touch the day, changes the day. Yet as powerful as you are in your influence, until you learn to flow through the energy of your existence, rather than endlessly pushing and pulling through your molecules, you will make no real impact. The Universe -- as a whole, the sum of its parts -- cannot allow a single cell to disrupt that precious balance.

To the Universal Harmony, you can add; but you are only able to detract negatively from that Harmony in small, insignificant ways because the whole and the sum of its parts are *always* in perfect balance.

The question becomes, then, are you influencing powerfully or as a small annoyance?

Meditation

It becomes a matter, then, of deciding where you want to put your attention; determining whether your life will express proactively or only in reaction to the world about you.

As you develop breath control, deep relaxation and improve your ability to focus, you are ready to face what may seem impossible: controlling your thoughts. The method that is the most effective centers on observing your thoughts, identifying the source of these thoughts and accepting these thought patterns as your own. You may have also to find a way of allowing yourself to be human, forgiving the disappointments and accepting the limiting nature of some of your behavior.

It is through observing and truly seeing your patterns that the secret to developing new life patterns by choice rather than by chance reveals itself.

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