

A Beginner's Guide to Meditation

Taking a Step Towards Inner Peace



www.bevjanisch.com

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Introduction

The purpose of meditation is to make our mind calm and peaceful. If our mind is peaceful, we will be free from worries and mental discomfort, and so we will experience true happiness. But if our mind is not peaceful, we will find it very difficult to be happy, even if we are living in the very best conditions.

-Kelsang Gyatso

Welcome to the world of meditation and congratulations for taking this one step that could quite possibly change your life in ways you can't even imagine!

Many women are drawn to meditation because at some level we begin to realize that as the inner conditions of our lives change, the outer circumstances will fall into place.

There's something in us calling and propelling us to be more in the areas of our lives that matter most to us. We know that having and doing more isn't the answer and won't make us happier and healthier.

Quite frankly, we're tired of feeling frazzled, reactive, irritable, stressed out, depressed, anxious, sleepless, unhealthy and like we have lost ourselves along the way.

Many of us realize that we never really learned ways to cope with the demands of our lives in a way that nourishes and restores us. The truth is we have very few ways to deal with stress from the inside out, so we turn to stress eating, shopping, a glass or two of wine or any other number of habits to unwind and distract us from the inner discomfort.



When I was a young woman and juggling my nursing career with being a mom, wife, friend, sister and decent human being, I wish I had more tools. I really had no idea that there was a whole world inside of me that was waiting to be explored. I was so busy focused on others and just getting through the day that I was quite oblivious to the fact that there was another way.

Realizing that we have the ability to deal with our stress and thrive in the midst of our lives that can at times be challenging is a very empowering feeling. We don't need to be victims of our stress. We can become more resilient so that our health doesn't suffer and so that we feel emotionally strong. **There's nothing better than feeling like we're fully thriving in our lives. In other words, we feel vital, in tune with others and ourselves and know that we are spending our time in meaningful ways.**

That's why I'm so excited that you're going to begin a meditation journey.

Meditation literally changed my life and that's why I'm so passionate about sharing it with you. Meditation gives us a way to bridge the gap between who we are and who we're meant to become.

It gives us a powerful set of tools that opens us up to a whole new world of self-discovery. We get to know what our soul most needs from us. Many of us spend way too much time looking outside ourselves for answers when in fact, all the answers and everything that we're seeking is inside of us.

As Matthieu Ricard, a Buddhist monk who is believed by researchers to be the world's happiest man says:

*Nothing goes right on the outside
when nothing is going right on the inside.*

You're about to embark on a journey to makes things right on the inside!!

With so much hype about meditation these days, it can be very confusing about where to start. That's why I've put this guide together for you.



Let's get started with the first step to bring your health, emotions and life back into alignment.

The first step is to practice the 5-minute meditation that's included in this guide. You may be saying that "I can't do that" but I've made it easy for you by including a guided meditation to help you.

It's hard to believe that it will make a difference, so you need to trust me on this.

Spending 5 minutes with yourself every day will begin to transform your life. It will increase your peace of mind, reduce your stress and get you on track to reconnect with who you are and what makes you happy.

Meditation will help you become more aware of what's important to you and what matters in your life. You will get to know yourself and what you need to do to be happy.

You may wonder why it's so important for you to become more aware. If you want to change something in your life that's not working for you, you need to become aware.

What you think and how you feel totally runs the show in your life. If you're like me, you have a lot of ideas about what you *should do* and how you *should feel* and you've lost touch with what you *do want* and how you *do feel*.

Learning to settle your busy mind, and becoming aware of who you are is empowering beyond belief.

You don't need to start with a big time commitment and anything complicated, you start with 5 minutes a day.

If I can do it, anyone can.

I began meditating to deal with stress, sleep issues and a mind that at times would drive me crazy. I was feeling lost and confused about many things in my life.

I resisted the idea of meditation for a long time because I really didn't think I could do it. After everything else that I tried didn't work, I thought I'd give it a whirl. I started with just 5 minutes a day.



I had the same misconceptions about meditation that many people have and thought I couldn't do it because I couldn't stop my mind from thinking.

I also had no idea about the benefits and just couldn't see myself doing it. I was pretty busy and couldn't imagine how I could fit one more thing into my already full schedule. Especially since I thought meditation was sitting there "doing nothing."

Like most things we think we "should" do like exercise and eat nutritious foods, we find it hard to find the motivation. It's no different with meditation. We know it's good for us, but we just don't seem to do it.

But here's the thing. That changed for me when I said, "I'm just going to try this for 5 minutes a day and see what happens". I'll do it for 21 days and that's it. After those 21 days, I'll decide if it's worth spending the 5 minutes a day. I took on meditation as an experiment.



During those 21 days, I had no expectations because I really didn't know what to expect. Before long, I was feeling calmer, my mind was less scattered, I worried less, was sleeping better and for the first time in my life, I was really getting to know me.

That's why I'm excited to share it with you. So, let's get started!

Let's start by answering 3 common questions people have about meditation:

"WHAT IS MEDITATION AND HOW WILL IT HELP ME?"

"HOW DO I DO IT"? AND,

"HOW DO I KNOW IT'S WORKING"?



What is Meditation and How Will it Help Me?

First, let's explore what meditation actually is. If you've Googled "meditation," you've probably noticed that there is no shortage of information out there. While in some ways that's great, it may leave you wondering where am I supposed to begin?

Meditation is a name given to the many techniques that turn your attention inward. There are many types of meditation- each one asks us to engage or focus our attention. You've probably heard of these: visualization, contemplation, walking, chanting, watching your breath, silent mantra meditation and mindfulness. There are many others.

One of the most common questions is: What is the difference between meditation and mindfulness? I created this diagram in order for you to see that meditation is the broader term under which many different practices arise. From this, you can see that all mindfulness practices are considered meditation, but not all meditations are considered mindfulness.

MEDITATION		
Buddhist Zen ("seated meditation") Vipassana ("insight") Mindfulness <ul style="list-style-type: none">• formal• everyday Loving Kindness ("metta")	Hindu Mantra Transcendental Yoga <ul style="list-style-type: none">• chakra• gazing• kundalini• sound• tantra Self-inquiry	Christian Contemplative Prayer Contemplative Reading "Sitting with God"
Chinese Taoist Quigong		Guided Traditional Imagery Relaxation & Body Scan Affirmations Binaural Beats



Meditation techniques have been practiced for thousands of years. Meditation was originally practiced so one could deepen their understanding of the sacred and mystical forces of life. Though meditation may be spiritual for some, the practice is not necessarily religious in nature. Meditation is now becoming mainstream, probably due to the high amount of stress our modern day lives can create. It is practiced by millions of people around the world.

Meditation is recommended by almost every health professional because it provides a proven way to give your mind and body a rest and to reduce stress. Your mind is a powerful tool that has a huge impact on the health of our bodies as well as the quality of our lives. The single most effective way to detoxify the body is to detoxify the mind.

Millions of people are now meditating and research has demonstrated the physical, social, emotional, psychological and spiritual benefits of meditation. In this fast-paced world where stress is the new “normal” people are becoming increasingly inspired to learn to meditate.

Research has demonstrated the benefits of meditation in many areas:

- DECREASED BLOOD PRESSURE AND HYPERTENSION
- LOWERED CHOLESTEROL LEVELS
- REDUCED LEVELS OF STRESS HORMONES SUCH AS CORTISOL AND ADRENALINE
- INCREASED PRODUCTION OF THE ANTI-AGING HORMONE DHEA
- IMPROVED IMMUNE FUNCTION
- DECREASED ANXIETY, DEPRESSION AND INSOMNIA
- ENHANCED CONCENTRATION, MEMORY AND THE ABILITY TO LEARN
- IMPROVED CREATIVITY AND PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS



Perhaps the greatest gift of meditation is the sense of inner calm and peace it brings into your daily life.

Meditation can be easy if you are taught correctly. It is not about stopping thought: that would be impossible. Meditation is going beyond or transcending thought to find the quiet that is already there.

Whichever type of meditation you choose, done correctly, it allows your body to reach a naturally occurring rest state. According to research, this rest is different from sleep. It is much deeper, and at the same time, you are more alert.

I was personally drawn to a method that included a number of techniques that are based on ancient practices and current research but are not aligned with any particular spiritual or religious beliefs. I wanted to practice a method of meditation that was simple, effective, and universal.

MEDITATION IS FOR YOU IF you feel that stress is impacting your life, you'd like to feel more peaceful and/or you're confused about who you are and what you want in life.

You may notice that you feel anxious at times and that you have a mind that just won't stop. You may find that it is difficult for you to sit quietly with yourself and you prefer to keep yourself really busy. You may also find that you have difficulty falling or staying asleep.

Are you aware that meditation can help you with all of these struggles that you have? And don't worry, you don't have to sit cross-legged like a pretzel or change your diet or spend tons of time. You just need 5 minutes and your brain. That's it!

What you'll notice is that as you begin to get control of your mind, you begin to feel more peaceful. You become more aware of who you are and what you want in your life.

You will be able to tap into your intuition and make better decisions. You'll be able to hear that little voice inside helping to connect you with your purpose.

You'll learn how to love yourself and how to deal with any anger and resentment that may creep into your life.

On top of all the health benefits, you feel a sense of inner calm and peacefulness more of the time.



You will become more resilient and less affected by negative emotions. You will notice you're more skilled at managing your thoughts and feelings and feel like they don't run the show as much.

There's no doubt that meditation would be a great addition to your life.

Assuming you're on board to give it a try, all you need to do is commit 5 minutes a day. I'm sure that even if you're busy you can afford 5 minutes. Trust me, you won't regret it.

Take it on as an experiment and see what happens!

Before I give you key pointers about how to meditate, I want to tell you about Marlene. Marlene was a successful young woman who went back to work in her corporate job when you daughter was six months old. Before long, Marlene found herself getting sinus infection after sinus infection and couldn't figure out why she was always getting sick.

Marlene also noticed that she was becoming weepier and was finding it difficult to feel good a work. She was very confused because she had always been that competent, together and successful woman.

These feelings didn't subside so Marlene decided she had no choice but to take some time off to "figure it out." That's when I met Marlene. She needed a way to look inside herself to find some answers. She also needed to become physically stronger so that she wasn't always getting sick.

I think you know where I'm going with this. Marlene started to meditate and everything changed. As she got out of the "fight or flight" stress mode, her body began to heal. She wasn't getting sick anymore. As her mind and body began to settle, she was able to see some things more clearly and decided that she needed to make some changes in her career path.

Her corporate job wasn't aligned with her deepest truths and this was literally making her sick. As she began to bring her life back into alignment with who she was and not who she thought she should be, she began to thrive again.

I have countless stories like this one. Bringing our lives back into alignment with our hearts and souls needs to come from inside of us. And there is no better tool than meditation to do just that.



How Do I Meditate?

1. PICK A TIME OF DAY THAT WILL WORK FOR YOU. IT MAY BE FIRST THING IN THE MORNING, 5 MINUTES AT WORK OVER YOUR LUNCH HOUR OR 5 MINUTES WHEN YOU GET HOME FROM WORK.
2. FIND A QUIET PLACE WHERE YOU WON'T BE DISTURBED AND LISTEN TO THE **5 MINUTE GUIDED MEDITATION**.
3. SIT COMFORTABLY WITH YOUR BACK UPRIGHT. MOST PEOPLE PREFER TO MEDITATE IN A CHAIR RATHER THAN CROSS-LEGGED. WHAT'S MOST IMPORTANT IS THAT YOU'RE COMFORTABLE AND YOU WON'T BE IN A POSITION THAT WILL CAUSE YOU TO FALL ASLEEP (ALTHOUGH IT'S OKAY IF YOU DO FALL ASLEEP).
4. SET A TIMER OR LOOK AT YOUR WATCH TO DETERMINE 5 MINUTES. MY FAVORITE TIMER IS THE **INSIGHT TIMER**, WHICH IS A FREE APP THAT TIMES YOUR PRACTICE AND LETS YOU KNOW HOW MANY PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD ARE MEDITATING WITH YOU. IT ALSO TRACKS THE NUMBER OF DAYS YOU'VE MEDITATED IN A ROW. THIS IS GREAT MOTIVATION, ESPECIALLY WHEN YOU'RE TRYING TO CREATE A NEW HABIT. IN ADDITION, IT HAS THOUSANDS OF GUIDED MEDITATIONS THAT YOU CAN ACCESS FOR FREE.

Listen to the 5 minute guided meditation that I've provided until you get the hang of doing it yourself.



Download my favorite meditation app (Insight Timer) for thousands of free meditations.



5. CLOSE YOUR EYES AND BRING YOUR ATTENTION TO YOUR BREATH. BREATHE IN AND OUT AND NOTICE WHERE YOU EXPERIENCE YOUR BREATH. FOR MOST PEOPLE IT'S IN ONE OF THREE AREAS: YOU MAY NOTICE THE AIR MOVING IN AND OUT OF YOUR NOSE, OR YOUR CHEST RISING AND FALLING OR YOUR BELLY MOVING IN AND OUT.
6. CONTINUE TO FOCUS ON YOUR BREATH AND WHEN YOUR MIND WANDERS TO A THOUGHT, SENSATION OR SOUND IN YOUR ENVIRONMENT, GENTLY BRING YOUR FOCUS BACK TO YOUR BREATH.
7. IT DOESN'T MATTER HOW MANY TIMES YOU NEED TO BRING YOUR MIND BACK, JUST KEEP BRINGING IT BACK TO YOUR BREATH.
8. CONTINUE FOR 5 MINUTES OR UNTIL YOUR TIMER GOES OFF. GENTLY OPEN UP YOUR EYES AND START GOING ABOUT YOUR DAY.

CONGRATULATIONS! You now have a meditation practice.

Now that you've mastered the five minutes, you can slowly increase the length of time to fully experience the benefits. While there are lots of differing opinions about how long and frequency you should meditate for, there is solid evidence that 20-minutes twice a day is a great goal.

I always meditate first thing in the morning for 20 minutes and then again later in the afternoon for the same amount of time.

When I have to miss a session, I'm kind to myself and remind myself that: I'm going for progress, not perfection. In actuality though, meditation has become like brushing my teeth and I just feel off and less fresh when I don't do it. It will begin to feel that way for you too, once you get in the habit.



Is It Working?

Now that you're meditating, you will likely begin to notice some changes in you. Notice how you feel when you're finished you're 5 minutes. Over time you will likely experience even more things and it's important to notice them.

What I found was that when I began noticing some changes, it further motivated me to keep my practice going. Now when I miss a couple of days I can feel the difference in me. I just feel more tired, frazzled and less grounded. Things set me off easier and I worry more.

I want to share with you what happened to one my clients, Susan when she began meditating on a daily basis. Susan was a young stay at home mom. Although she loved being at home and was grateful she was able to do that, she felt like she had lost her freedom. She also felt like she had lost herself in her roles of being a mom and wife and didn't know who she was anymore. Because this inner stress felt so uncomfortable for her, she would try and numb it by stress eating. Unfortunately, this just made her feel worse.

She was game to try meditating, not because she liked the idea of meditating, but because she wanted other ways to cope with her inner stress that resulted in stress eating. Within a very short amount of time, Susan was able to break the habit. The meditation practice had helped her deal with her stress in a way that she didn't need to turn to stress eating anymore. That was the beginning of some amazing changes in Susan's life.



One Other Thing You Need to Know...

There are five essentials of meditation that will help you be successful with any meditation practice. When you're not aware of these five things, you may assume that you're doing it wrong or set yourself up with unrealistic expectations. The following five things are key:

1. THOUGHTS ARE OKAY DURING MEDITATION. THE GOAL ISN'T TO "STOP YOUR MIND FROM THINKING." IT'S ABOUT REDIRECTING YOUR MIND BACK TO THE BREATH OR WHATEVER YOUR FOCUS IS. IT DOESN'T MATTER HOW MANY TIMES YOU NEED TO DO THAT.
2. STICK WITH IT. EVEN IF YOU DON'T FEEL THE BENEFITS RIGHT AWAY, IT IS WORKING. THOUSANDS OF RESEARCH STUDIES HAVE PROVEN THAT. IT'S ALSO IMPORTANT TO STICK WITH THE TIME THAT YOU COMMITTED TO. THAT'S WHY WE START WITH FIVE MINUTES AND BUILD UP FROM THERE. YOU CAN DO IT!
3. BE KIND TO YOURSELF. AS WE SIT IN MEDITATION WE GET UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL WITH OUR MIND AND OUR THOUGHTS. AS WE'RE WORKING WITH OUR MIND IT'S LIKE WE'RE TRAINING A PUPPY. WITH KINDNESS AND CONSISTENCY.
4. DON'T TRY TOO HARD. THE POINT OF MEDITATION ISN'T TO TRY SO HARD THAT YOU GET A HEADACHE. IT'S A GENTLE AND SOFT FOCUS ON THE BREATH.
5. LET GO OF EXPECTATIONS. THIS IS A HUGE ONE. WE HAVE ALL SORTS OF IDEAS ABOUT WHAT SHOULD HAPPEN WHEN WE'RE MEDITATING AND WHEN IT DOESN'T HAPPEN WE GET DISILLUSIONED AND EITHER THINK WE CAN'T DO IT OR IT DOESN'T WORK. IT'S VITAL TO LET THAT GO. THE POINT IS TO DO THE PRACTICE AND THEN GET ON WITH YOUR DAY.

(Adapted from Sarah McLean's teacher training resources- The McLean Meditation Institute).



Remember: We're going for progress, not perfection!!!!

One more story I'd like to share. One of my clients, I'll call Betty had an inner knowing that her marriage was in trouble. She had two young teenagers and was experiencing a great deal of emotional distress when she thought about whether her marriage was going to work out. She spent a great deal of energy trying to pretend that everything was okay and kept hoping that things would get better.

She was feeling so much emotional distress in her life that she decided to go to her family doctor to discuss it. Her doctor decided to put her on antidepressants and suggested she go and see a therapist.

Betty went for therapy and after a while began to feel like she was going in circles and still couldn't make a decision. Her health was beginning to suffer and she developed chronic back and knee pain. She then started going to see a chiropractor and also receive acupuncture to relieve the pain.

Betty felt like her life was spiraling out of control and so to unwind at the end of the day she'd have a glass of wine and then pop a sleeping pill in order to sleep at night.

This was when I met Betty. Betty like so many of us decided that she needed to get a handle on what was going on inside of her. She began a meditation practice and slowly she began to get clear about what she needed to do. The meditation practice shifted her out of "survival mode" in order to begin to see her life from a clearer perspective.

As her mind settled, she could hear her inner voice that she had been ignoring. She knew what she needed to do in terms of her marriage and while it scared her to death she moved forward one step at a time.

Betty faced her fear and listened to her inner wisdom and in the process, she began healing. She came off antidepressants, started an exercise routine and has never looked back. Betty is the first to say that "it wasn't easy, but it was necessary". She now feels like she's thriving.



I know that it's hard to believe that five minutes a day can begin to create this ripple effect of healing, but it can and it does. I believe it's because the universe responds when we turn our attention inward in order to do the inner work that we're meant to do.

Loving ourselves enough to create space for ourselves is what we are being called to do. As Thich Nhat Hanh so beautifully pointed out:

“Go back and take care of yourself. Your body needs you, your feelings need you, your perceptions need you. Your suffering needs you to acknowledge it. Go home and be there for all these things.”

Meditation is about returning home and I'm so grateful you're on this journey home with me!





About Bev

Bev Janisch worked as a nursing leader for more than 25 years. Her career has taken her from working with seniors to palliative and end of life care. She received her bachelor's degree from the University of Alberta and her master's degree in nursing from the University of Calgary.

She decided to retire a few years ago to travel the world and explore her passions beyond nursing. Her adventures took her to the top of Mount Kilimanjaro and while standing on one of the highest mountains in the world; she realized that was being called to embark on a new journey. The journey inward to get to know herself, her soul and what was missing in the midst of an abundant life.

Bev learned that the self-discovery that is required to bring greater contentment, happiness, vitality and fulfillment is well worth the journey. She also knows that her inner transformation would not have been possible without the practices of meditation and mindfulness. To support her own inner journey, Bev became certified as a meditation and mindfulness teacher, through the McLean Meditation Institute.

After undergoing her own transformation of healing and growth, she was inspired to start a business to teach and mentor women who are being called to align their lives with their souls.

Bev is a speaker and author, with an award-winning blog and a forthcoming book, **Awakening A Woman's Soul: The Power of Meditation and Mindfulness to Transform Your Life.**



As a meditation teacher and transformational coach for women, Bev brings her compassion, experience and countless tools to help women look inward to connect with themselves, their passion and their inner wisdom.

She believes when you combine love with powerful transformative tools, a miracle will happen.

She is well known for saying,

“When you shine the light of awareness on your heart and soul, you will find the answers you are looking for and your path will appear before you.”

Bev lives with her husband, Mark and her dog, Molly in Calgary, Alberta, Canada



Links & Resources

5 MINUTE MEDITATION

INSIGHT TIMER APP WITH THOUSANDS OF MEDITATIONS

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND RESOURCES
VISIT **BEVJANISCH.COM**

