

Zen Meditation



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Zen, in its simplest and purist form, is about being in the Now.

Right here, right now in this very moment. Considering this moment is the only one we actually have, given that we can't go backwards or forwards in time, it is amazing how little time most people actually spend in attendance!

Our minds often flit from thinking about the past; what happened, why it happened, why she said that, what you should have said or done and the unknown future; what will happen, what if he says this, what if they do that, what should I make for dinner? For many people being present in the moment takes a great deal of effort when it should in fact be our natural state with memories and plans for the future being a conscious and productive choice we make at certain times.

When we are living in the moment, we are switched on and alert. We feel awake and motivated. We see things for what they really are rather than distorting them through fear of what happened once in a similar situation or what might happen next. We are calmer, more peaceful and more in touch with our own truth. We make better choices, wiser decisions and act rather than react.

Learning to live in the NOW or re-programming your brain to do what it is meant to do (serve you rather than continually abduct you like some eccentric time lord) is much easier than it can seem. Our brains love habit and create all sorts of scenarios to keep us supporting those habits. We hear people say things like "I can't help it! I was born this way!" But we can all help it. The brain is not the operator it is the tool.

Zen meditation is about being present in the moment. It is fairly easy for most people to practice because it is our natural state. You are not trying to learn a new skill you are simply allowing what is meant to be. That is, for you to be here, in this moment, alive...right now.

One of the many wonderful things about Zen meditation is that you can practice it almost anywhere at any time. You can multi-task it which is wonderful for people with busy lives and you receive all the benefits associated with any other style of meditation.

The best part about Zen meditation is that it has a very valuable side effect. When you practice Zen regularly you start to teach your brain a new habit and remember the brain loves habits! You start to develop the habit of being in the NOW. So even when you are not intentionally practicing Zen, you start to be naturally awake and present in the moment. Our senses provide a great anchor for practicing Zen meditation; observing sound, smell and feel all help us to be in the moment.

So, I suspect you are now very excited about incorporating Zen into your daily life. Even if you already practice Zen or any other style of meditation regularly, these simple exercises below are going to fast track you to a more peaceful and more present mind.

Zen Shower:

Every time you take a shower you have a beautiful opportunity to practice Zen. While you are in the shower focus on the experience you are having in that moment. Listen to the sound of the water; smell the fragrance of the soap as it mingles with the steam; feel the warm sensation of the water on your skin. Focus on what is happening right there in that moment. If you catch your mind wondering on to other things outside of the moment, gently refocus on the sounds, smells and sensations in the present moment.

Zen Sound Meditation:

To sit in Zen sound meditation, get comfortable and close your eyes. Simply sit and listen to the world around you. Observe the noises you can hear. First in your immediate vicinity and then stretch your hearing out, listening for the sounds in the distance. Stretch your hearing even further, to search out the most distant and faintest sounds. Just observe and note what you are hearing. This a great way of being in the now because your mind is kept active searching for sound and is less likely to wander and the thing it is occupied with is happening in the now...Zen.

This meditation is also great for people who have difficulty in finding quiet or peaceful space for meditation. The kids can be yelling, the traffic zooming past or other people on the bus chatting and they only.... contribute to, not detract from your meditation time.

Enjoy!

Namaste
Isabelle