



Introduction

“What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us” - Ralph Waldo Emerson

- While meditation will likely help you live a longer life and enhance your level of health and wellbeing it does not lead to immortality! The effects of meditation practice vary according to practitioner’s engagement, and deepen with commitment and length of practice. An occasional meditator may resort to meditation in times of stressful or difficult times; the regular meditator will be building a level of stress resistance than the occasional person will not have. Moreover, the relaxed awareness of meditative state will flow over into daily life and with consistent practice will give deep insights about life and our role in it. The ‘professional’ meditator (several hours a day) will almost certainly have these insights and experience states of bliss and happiness. This also brings in change of traits - the principal one being seeing more and more clearly how things really are.

The course review

Using your meditation diary come up with a 1-2 sentence summary of where you were before we began the course.

Come up with a 1-2 sentence summary of your experience of meditation and mindfulness on this course.

By the end of your 8 weeks you will have been practicing meditation for 56 days.

Come up with a plan how you can extend your practice over the next few weeks to take you up to 100 days. Make sure that you include all the things you found useful on this course in a sustainable combination.



In this session

- In this session we have introduced the following concepts:
- The level of engagement in meditation practice will produce corresponding effects: e.g. the regular meditator will build a level of stress-resistance that the occasional meditator won't have.
- Key concept - meditation as a journey: Zen practice is a life-long process, and regular practice is essential in order to develop deep insight which then changes your life. It is an adventure with many surprises and insights along the way. But Zen places emphasis in finding the Truth in your ordinary life.
- Happiness as a way of caring for others: the more we forget about ourselves, the happier we become, and eventually serve with our life.
- Changing your life: outward life may be the same but there are changes inside - a true Zen practitioner is content/happy regardless of external circumstances.

Commitment

Committing to 20-30 minutes of practice every day for the duration of this course, including still meditation, writing a meditation diary, movement practices, and daily mindfulness exercises.

Homework

Continue your sitting meditation. Review all practices at least one time and update meditation diary. Take some time for mindful movement/stretching. Continue practicing and noting your daily life mindfulness activities. Continue to find time every day to do a three- minute mini-version of your practice. Note the effects this has in your meditation diary.

ideas for a meditation timer

- An alarm clock, a mobile phone on vibrate
- Online meditation timer <http://bell.fungie.info/>
- Insight timer app for smart phones (<https://insighttimer.com/>; look for ZenWays group)



Moku Sho/Fusho reminder

Come into a comfortable seated position with a stable triangular base. Sway side to side to find that middle position where your spine is as upright and erect as it can be with the neck long. Tilt your head down as if you were holding a rubber ball beneath your chin. Have your eyes lowered and either open or closed, hands in your lap, and your tongue broad and resting on the roof of your mouth.

Moku sho means “silent reflection”. In this silent stillness you just allow anything at all to arise and pass and you just remain aware and present in the way that a mirror is just present with all that is reflected in it. Fusho means “unborn”, referring to all of these things that arise and pass - thoughts, memories, sights and sounds. By the fact that they arise, they are born, but this mirror-like awareness itself is unborn. Just rest in this open awareness, this quality of presence, reflecting all that arises and passes.

Anytime you feel yourself getting involved in these things that arise and pass then just let go, and come back to the quality of awareness, the quality of presence itself. If you're aware and relaxed, allowing things to arise and pass, and doing your best to let go when you feel yourself attaching or getting involved with things, then you're doing this meditation correctly.