



# The Art of Meditation 2.0

*Everything you need to  
begin a fulfilling practice*

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## Dedication

To everyone who believes that life comes from a place outside of the thinking mind.

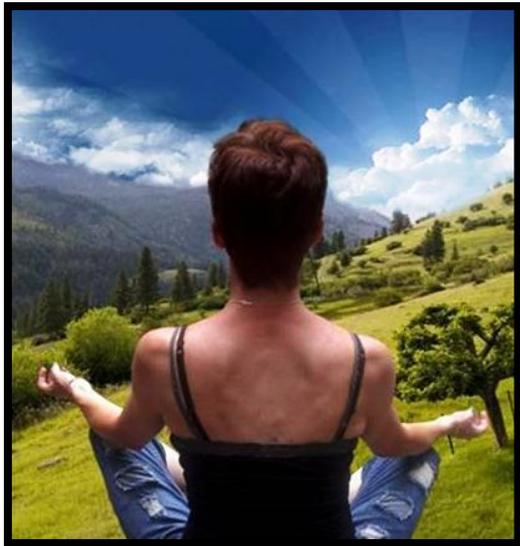
To the artists, dreamers, and those just trying to get through another day.

*Special appreciation to Jason, Angelo and Elyse. I'm a better me because of you.*

## Contents

Introduction .....	4
What is Meditation? .....	5
Why Meditate? .....	6
The Art of Stillness Meditation .....	9
Starting with your Breath.....	10
Mantra Meditation or Centering Prayer .....	10
Centering .....	11
Insight Meditation.....	13
Guided Meditations .....	13
Silence.....	14
The Art of Movement Meditation.....	15
Walking Meditation .....	15
Labyrinth Walking .....	16
Yoga and T'ai Chi Chuan.....	17
Contemplative Dance and Authentic Movement.....	17
The Art of Creative Meditation .....	19
Singing or Mantra Meditation.....	19
Music Meditation.....	20
Contemplative Art.....	20
Sand Mandala .....	21
Brushwork.....	21
Generative Meditation Styles for Beginners.....	22
Metta Meditation .....	22
Tonglen Meditation .....	23
Lectio Divina.....	24
Prayer.....	24
Ritual Meditation Styles for Beginners .....	25
Vision Quest.....	25
Building an Altar or Sacred Space .....	26
Ceremonies Based on Religious Tradition.....	27
Sweat Lodge.....	28
Personal or Family Rituals.....	28
Namaste.....	30
The True Sound of Truth .....	30

## Introduction



Entrenched in mysticism, meditation is a profound art form that is exceptionally simple, yet deliciously complex at the same time.

If you are interested in the history, it is thought that formal meditation began well before 3000 BC in India. This reflective practice was originally included in a system of Yoga that was passed from guru to guru through word of mouth.

It took many years before this highly revered system was recorded on paper or parchment, or released to the rest of the world for edification.

As meditation began to mature in India, it also began to develop roots in Buddhist and other Middle Eastern religious and spiritual practices. The Christian form of meditation, which would come many years later, is more commonly known as contemplative prayer.

While meditation can certainly deepen any spiritual practice, it is not a religious pursuit and it is not “owned” by any specific dogma. Instead, meditation is a system developed to unify the body, mind and spirit. It is a pursuit toward total self-knowledge, and it does not matter what your spiritual beliefs are, or are not.

For those of us who meditate regularly, the benefits are very clear. It feels good! It helps us live better, healthier, happier lives. We think better and loved ones like us better because we are calmer and more effective in every aspect of life.

The benefits of this gentle practice affects all levels of the physical, emotional and mental systems. While those particular benefits can create deep meaning and fulfillment in life, they are not as important as the fact that meditation is so important - **it could quite literally save lives.**

That's a bold claim for sure, yet there is truth behind it!

For further verification, ask your physician or someone who meditates regularly.

## What is Meditation?

Meditation is any activity that focuses your awareness.

Focus on what you may wonder? It does not matter. It could be a mantra or saying that you repeat over and over to yourself. It could be an object or a picture you gaze upon. Or, it could be your own mind or your breath that you rest your awareness on.

No, not television, but music can certainly be used during meditation if you enjoy it and it helps you.

The bad news is that maintaining focus on anything in particular is an exceptionally challenging pastime. The good news is that there are MANY ways to meditate. This means, you can find a method that is the best for you and we will explore them all. You will learn everything you need so that you can create an enjoyable meditation practice for yourself that will bring you all the benefits available through this inspiring art.

Ultimately, no one else can tell you the best way to meditate. You will find the meditation techniques that work best for you by trial and error. When you find what fits, you will find a life-enhancing, and possibly life-changing pursuit that will improve every aspect of your being.

## Why Meditate?

You may already know why you want to start to meditate. Perhaps your doctor suggested it as a way to relieve stress or lower your heart rate. There are literally hundreds of benefits to be gained. Here are just a few:

- Increases grey matter concentration in the brain
- Regulates Moods
- Decreases depression, anxiety and other behavioral health challenges
- Improves psychomotor vigilance
- Enhances ability to generate gamma waves in the brain
- Reduces alcohol, substance abuse and other forms of self-medication
- Improves focus, attention, and ability to work under stress
- Improves information processing and decision-making
- Increases mental strength and resilience
- Increases emotional intelligence
- Increases pain tolerance
- Reduces pain better than morphine
- Improves memory and self-awareness
- Helps allocate limited brain resources
- Improves visuospatial processing and working memory
- Increases awareness of your unconscious mind
- Enhances creativity
- Significantly reduced risk for mortality, myocardial infarction, and stroke.
- Reduces blood pressure
- Decreases inflammatory disorders
- Decreases cellular-level inflammation
- Prevents asthma, rheumatoid arthritis and inflammatory bowel disease
- Helps treat premenstrual syndrome and menopausal symptoms
- Helps manage the heart rate and respiratory rate
- Reduces metabolic syndrome

- Creates a state of deep rest in the body and mind Increases feelings of compassion and decreases worry
- Decreases feelings of loneliness
- Reduces emotional eating

### **So where do you start?**

One part of creating your own meditation practice will be to determine what the best time is to meditate.

Please don't try to do this while driving or operating machinery!

Other than that, there are no hard rules with what time is the best to meditate.

You might find that quiet times of the day are the best to begin with. Some of us choose meditation as a lifestyle and practice it continually throughout the day. You may choose that path in your life as well, but at first choose at least one specific time during the day to begin.

Even one minute of deep meditation a day will show significant benefits, so do not sweat it if you feel pressured for time. As meditation becomes more important for you, you will find more time to practice.

Another question many beginners have is where to meditate. You may choose to create a sanctuary for yourself in a room or corner of your home. Sanctuary areas are nice, but not necessary. You can meditate at home, at work, in your bathtub, in your bed, on your couch, on the floor or in a park. Try to meditate in different environments and see what is most fulfilling for you.

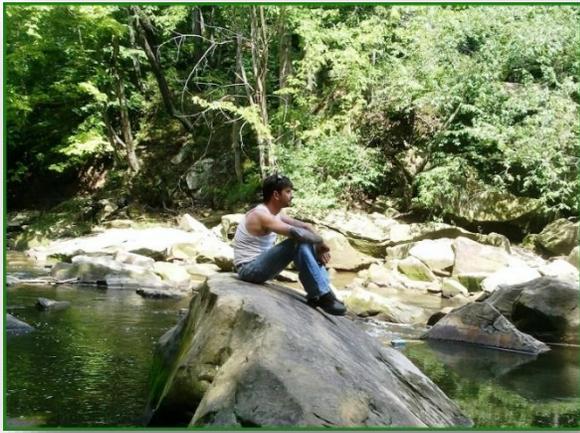
Now that you know the why, what, when and where of meditation, take a few deep in and out breaths. Allow yourself to fully experience each breath.

Feel the air coming into you, softly and naturally into your belly and then slowly and naturally let it back out.

Let your thoughts go here, there, everywhere, you do not have to mind them right now. Just return to your breath. Do this as long as you like. Repeat as often as you like.

This is the most basic form of How to Meditate. From this point, you can become the creator in developing your own art of meditation.

## The Art of Stillness Meditation



The most typical image of stillness meditation has a person sitting cross legged on the ground. Their hands may be in a prayer position, or in resting on their knees and their eyes are usually closed. That is an accurate image of how many people choose to sit in meditation, but it is not the only way to do it.

Some people prefer to lie down to practice stillness meditation and others will prefer to sit up in a more comfortable position on a chair. Having a straight body posture (sitting or lying down with a straight spine) and feeling comfortable are the only important points to consider when you are trying out what position will work best for you.

Stillness meditation practices are some of the more challenging types of meditation for many of us due to their very nature. We as humans are simply out of practice of being still. At the same time, this form of meditation is the most powerful practice for dissolving inner blocks and transforming the false understanding you may have of yourself.

I typically recommend a beginner start with three minutes per day of some form of stillness meditation practice. Repeat this twice a day if possible. That may not seem like much time at all, but even one minute a day of complete awareness can work miracles.

With stillness meditation, and all other forms of meditation, it is important to remember that this practice is never about forcing yourself. Gentle persuasion is encouraged.

Set three minutes aside each day and try out one the stillness meditation practices in this chapter until you find the one that feels the best for you. You may find several that work and that is great. You can mix them up however you like.

### **Starting with your Breath**

To keep from sounding redundant throughout this guide, please make a note of this now: **Every meditation starts with your breath.**

When I start with my breath I notice how the air feels as it passes into my nose, into the center of myself, filling my belly and continuing into my legs and throughout the rest of my body. I feel how there is a gentle breeze as the air enters my nostrils and how my shoulders or other parts of my body gently move as they accept the air.

With an inhalation, you are nourishing and sustaining yourself. With an exhalation you are releasing toxins from your body. This nourishes and sustains the world around you. Sit still and become present to that in-and-out process of breathing. Allow your breath to slow and deepen into a naturally relaxed state.

### **Mantra Meditation or Centering Prayer**

Mantra meditation can use can be spiritual or secular, it doesn't matter which way you choose. Centering prayer meditation has a higher emphasis on connecting with Spirit or any religious entity of your choice.

Both of these styles of meditation are the easiest methods of stillness meditations. Choosing one or the other to start your practice with will give you somewhere to focus your attention.

A mantra can be a word or a sentence. OM (Oh-MMMM) is a sacred word and is thought to contain the vibration of "ALL". Take a slow, comfortably

deep breath in and then draw the word out through a natural and relaxed exhalation. Allow a deepening of your breath and the word as you settle into your relaxation. Repeat this for as long as you like, from deep in your voice. When your mind wanders, gently bring it back to the word.

With centering prayer, you may decide to use the name of your religious entity, or words that resonate with you on that level. You may also choose an emotional word to help you center. “Center” could be your mantra, or “I am at Peace”.

What matters most is how the mantra helps you, so choose anything at all that has a meaning for you.

## Centering

This is another easier form of stillness meditation, similar to using Mantra, because it gives you something to do. This form also stimulates your imagination and visualization skills. Start with simply relaxing and taking slow breaths.

As you become present to your breathing, visualize that your breath is coming from, and being released, deep into the ground, like tree roots reaching into the earth.

These roots will come from the top of your head down through your spine, down through your hands and feet. Reach deeper into the earth with each out breath, and begin to imagine energy from the earth’s core coming up into your body with each out breath.

Feel how you are connected to the earth and that it is accepting all your stress, worry and other negative feelings. The stress is melted away from the heat of the center of the earth and comes back to you as peace.

Just as your exhalation nourishes the earth, and your inhalation is a gift from the oxygen produced by the trees, energy from feelings creates the same give and take response.

When you release stress, anger, and other negative emotional energies into the earth it acts as nourishment. This energy is then transmuted into positive ions which are then available to you and others. All of that may sound like a bit of a head game for you if you do not have a background in physics.

To put it as simply as possible:

*Anything that exists is made up of measureable energy, including thoughts and feelings. Anything that exists can never - not exist. So something will never turn into nothing, it will only change into something else.*

With this in mind, the energy of your thoughts and feelings exist. You can feel them in your body and they will affect everything and everyone around you. Therefore, using meditation to transmute negative energy into positive energy is an activity that can improve your mind, body and spirit health as well as improve your environment, including those around you.

As you can now understand: Using centering meditation to help release negative energy through your exhalation, and receive positive energy through your inhalation can have life changing benefits. The more you practice, the more you will be able to do this outside of a formal meditation session. This is an especially essential tool to develop if you suffer from anxiety or depression, or through the occasional high stress moments in life.

## **Insight Meditation**

Insight meditation can be done sitting or lying and focuses on the breath, as all the other stillness meditation practices. To practice this style of meditation, breathe slowly and naturally and just watch what comes up.

If thoughts come up, and they will, just notice them without judgment and allow them to pass by while you gently return to following your breath.

Insight meditation is a practice of curiosity in connecting with the part of you that “watches” your thoughts and your senses. In essence, you are watching the watcher without thinking about it, just experiencing it in the moment.

It can be helpful with this meditation if you visualize your mind as a clear blue sky. Thoughts are the clouds that cross through the mind. Some clouds are the fluffy white kind. They float through easily and may be happy thoughts.

Other thoughts are heavier and darker clouds. Those can be worry thoughts and are typically harder to shake. Stay in the clear blue sky and just watch the clouds without becoming a part of them.

## **Guided Meditations**

There are a variety of guided meditations that address many topics that can be listened to and/or watched. YouTube for instance has a huge variety for you to try on for size. These types of meditation are helpful in reaching deeper states of meditation or attaining a specific meditative goal. Some of them are definitely better than others.

While guided meditations can be very effective, they should only be used as an occasional enhancement with other forms of meditation. Your mind will

grow much stronger, and your meditation will become deeper if you can rely on yourself instead of being guided.

## Silence

Being silent in meditation, without the mantra's, centering or using guided meditation is an advanced skill. I suggest giving it a try regularly throughout the week, alongside other forms of meditation. This is because it may take some practice until this method seems more comfortable or natural.

You can begin silence meditation by starting with Mantra or centering prayer, then go into silence meditation after the mind calms down a bit. Sitting down after doing Yoga can also help your mind/body system warm up to sitting in silence.

You will want to make sure to turn off all noise, or at least as much as possible before you begin to sit in silence. You can lie down or sit down, whichever you are most comfortable with and just be in the quiet, with your breath.

You will inevitably hear sounds, just let them pass.

Your mind will decide to think, allow thoughts to pass. Do not strain or struggle with this, just gently return to a place of silence and start with about one minute at a time.

If you can sit in silence of the mind for one minute, that is an excellent feat even though it may not sound like long.

Once you feel comfortable with one minute of silence, increase the time slowly. It may take a long time to feel strong for even one full minute. The longer you practice though, the better it gets. Eventually it will become easy for you and you can then continue on to longer time periods.

## The Art of Movement Meditation



Many people love the ease and flow of movement meditation. Incorporating movement into your meditation practice can add depth that is not available with being still. When moving, we have something to focus on that allows an awareness of the present moment.

Movement meditation also incorporates the mind and body connection in a way that creates a much greater sensitivity to how our bodies relate to the space it inhabits.

### Walking Meditation

Walking meditation uses the act of walking as a meditative tool. Start with simply standing and connecting with your breath. Move your head into alignment, centered over your heart and stretch upwards through your sides and ribcage. Relax your shoulders. Root your feet firmly into the ground and center yourself into your body.

Then, walk. Keep your steps slow and deliberate. Allow your body to move how it feels the most natural. If your arms or hands feel awkward, hold them in prayer position or place them to cover your area between your heart and stomach.

Become aware of your feet as they move, one in front of the other. Ask yourself how your feet feel moving and how they feel on the ground.

As you walk, you can continue your awareness up throughout the rest of your body. Balance the outward experience and inward experience. Focus on your breath and what you see, without thinking about it, simply look.

There are many things you can notice when you are meditating and walking, at the same time, challenge yourself to consistently return to your breath and how your body feels moving on the earth.

### **Labyrinth Walking**

Labyrinth walking combines walking meditation with a creative, intuitive and visionary practice of going from the outer self into the inner self, and back into the outer. There are more than 2,000 labyrinths in the United States today. You can locate one at Labyrinth Locator (Just type that into Google), or create your own.

Finger labyrinths have also become a popular substitute for creating a similar meditative practice. You can use the following sample to experience the meditative quality of this on your own. You can use your finger, or a pen, but try to do this with your non-dominant hand as it takes more focus.



## **Yoga and T'ai Chi Chuan**

Gentle forms of Yoga and practicing T'ai Chi are both beautiful ways to create a meditative practice. Gentle movements and a focus on breathing combine together to tone, strengthen and relax. These practices connect you to your mind, body and spirit and release toxins from your body while naturally improving your posture.

While practicing yoga or T'ai Chi, the focus goes into your poses and gently encourages your body into different configurations. There are many yoga and T'ai Chi studios for you to explore or you can search on YouTube to find online training videos you can do at home.

While a home practice in these arts can be beneficial, taking some outside classes will help you gain a firm foundation in the proper posture and correct ways to move through the poses.

## **Contemplative Dance and Authentic Movement**

Very similar to walking meditation, contemplative dance and authentic movement meditation uses forms of dance and body movements. There are not as many resources for this type of practice, although sometimes you will be able to find local classes or groups.

You can also experience contemplative dance and authentic movement meditation on your own if you like. Start with standing and connecting with your breath. Turn on music that speaks to you on an inspirational level and move with it. Experience how it feels to commune with the music that way.

I encourage you to take some time to try some of these movement meditation styles. You can also become very creative and use just about any task that you are doing as a movement meditation style. Washing dishes, folding laundry or any pastime that is active, but does not require a lot of concentration to perform.

You can use movement meditation as a standalone practice, or to help settle into a stillness meditation style. You can also rotate moving meditation with stillness meditation depending on your mood and what you feel would be most beneficial for you at the time.

The more you practice this style of meditation, the more you will feel refreshed and fully alive within your space in our world.



## The Art of Creative Meditation

Tapping into the creative part of your mind and spirit can lead to amazing meditative sessions.

Creative meditation works to help stimulate other parts of the mind that are not activated through movement or stillness meditation styles.

There are many ways to practice creatively. We will cover a few that you might want to try the next time you are working on making a big decision, or need to divert yourself from negative thoughts and emotions.

## Singing or Mantra Meditation

Singing and Mantra meditation styles use a phrase or song that have specific toning and vocalizations. This is a bit different than a Mantra that you would use in stillness meditation because you would choose more than one word. In group creative meditation you may practice while singing rounds or in harmony.

Not all songs have to be slow or contemplative, you can choose lively songs. The goal is to use singing and/or chanting to help reach your inner core.

The most popular and well known mantra is a Sanskrit Mantra, “Om Mani Padme Hum” (Oh-mmm Ma-Knee Pahd-mee Hum). While this is a famous Mantra, especially with Tibetan Buddhists, it has no exact translation. It has some specific qualities that are thought to create joy and peaceful vibrations.

## Music Meditation

Playing a musical instrument or listening to music can help bring about an incredible meditative experience. There are many meditational songs that you can look up on YouTube, or you can use your favorite music. Sit or lie down and allow yourself to be carried away, or use music as a prelude to helping you settle into stillness meditation.

This practice can also be combined beautifully with movement meditation. If you play an instrument, create your own meditative music to record and listen to.

## Contemplative Art

Contemplative creative meditation can be done with any sort of art. Drawing, painting, doodling on scratch paper, chalk art, origami or any other creative can become contemplative art. The beauty of it is that you do not have to have a specific idea or goal in mind at all.

Try this; crumple up a piece of paper as if you were going to toss it into the trash. Instead, unfold it and trace the lines, then color or shade some of them. Allow your mind to relax completely and focus on creating your artwork.

You can also use images for contemplative art. These can be wall hangings, screensavers or pictures to reflect on if you aren't feeling particularly artsy.

Some people will light a candle and use the flame to focus on. The idea is not to become dazed by what you are looking at, but to rest your mind and reach a meditative state.

## **Sand Mandala**

Making and then destroying mandalas created from colored sand is a Tibetan practice. You can do the same with colored sand from your local craft store and a container such as a tray or box top lid that will successfully contain the sand.

You can also draw, paint or create the mandala from other materials. For instance, you can tear different colors of paper and arrange them into a mandala pattern.

Typically, a chanting session would be done before you start your mandala work to get centered. Then, you can use whatever meditation feels best for you. Simply create the outline of the mandala, start from the inside and work outwards.

Destroying your work is optional and can be symbolic and cathartic.

## **Brushwork**

Painting and calligraphy to help focus the mind have been popular meditative pursuits for centuries. You can use a variety of different size brushes, paints, papers and allow yourself to observe what comes up as you create. There are calligraphy tutorials online that you can use if you'd like to learn more about this art form.

With creative meditation styles there is no room for judgment or criticism because it is not about being an artist. This type of practice will create beauty of a stronger inner core, a stimulated yet relaxed mind, and a connection to your source.

You can use your smartphone to practice this meditative style when you are out in public, or carry a notebook and pens with you.

## Generative Meditation Styles for Beginners



While this form of meditation is called Generative Meditation, it is also regenerative.

This style of meditation is effective in bringing you back to your true essence. It helps you to release with forgiveness, and remember what a beautiful world we live in. It will fill your heart with love and compassion for self and others.

Generative meditation is a practice in cultivating and strengthening positive qualities such as love, compassion, and patience. It is also about releasing yourself from resentments, guilt and shame through forgiveness for yourself and others.

If you are working on acquiring the qualities of self-love and forgiving yourself and others, this is an excellent practice to incorporate.

### Metta Meditation

Metta translates as “Loving-Kindness” and you will sometimes hear it called “Loving Kindness Meditation”. It can be easier to understand if you think of it as “wellness wishing” meditation. This is unconditionally wishing safety, happiness, good health and comfort of all living beings, including yourself, plants, animals, the earth, air, water, groups and specific people.

To practice Metta Meditation, begin with stillness meditation or a meditation that will help you connect with your center. When you are calm, begin to imagine that health, happiness, safety and comfort are yours. Some people

like to envision themselves enveloped in white light, or green healing light, others just repeat the words to themselves “I am safe from inner and outer harm, I am happy, healthy and comfortable”.

You can use any words that resonate the most deeply for you. When you are ready, imagine sending those same visions and words out to the rest of the world. Start with your loved ones first and spread outward from that point.

## **Tonglen Meditation**

Tonglen Meditation can be loosely translated to mean “Giving and taking” meditation. This meditative practice focuses on the suffering and relief from suffering of yourself and others. It allows you to sit with suffering, but to also sit with the recovery of suffering.

Tonglen Meditation is a bit different than Meta Meditation because you first sit with suffering before sending out wishes of wellness. It is an excellent practice to work on to increase your levels of acceptance.

Start with stillness meditation to center yourself. Then choose yourself or another person to focus on. Let’s say for example, your best friend is depressed about a break up. Breathe in her sadness, and breathe out wishes of healing and happiness for her.

As you deepen with this practice, include others in your home, your neighborhood, your community and eventually the world.

It is important when practicing this style of meditation to sit with the suffering, with the understanding that suffering is a part of life and can create miracles. There is no need to become attached to the suffering with an attitude of misery, approach it with acceptance and hope that it will bring better things.

## Lectio Divina

Lectio Divina is literally translated to “Divine Reading”. For Christians, reading and meditating on passages in the Bible would be an example of this. You do not need to be Christian or religious in order to practice this meditative style though. You can use any inspirational or motivational writings.

To experience this, choose a passage, page, or paragraph from your favorite inspirational book. It might be the Bible, a book of poems, or even lyrics to a song.

Start Lectio Divina by centering yourself with stillness meditation or your preferred meditation style. Read the passage you chose and then allow yourself to sit in mindfulness with the words. This form of meditation can bring additional peace, inspiration, creativity or any number of benefits.

## Prayer

Prayer or Petitionary prayer can be included in meditations if you are spiritual. Petitionary prayer asks for specific requests or petitions. You may pray for any number of things or use it along with Metta meditation or Tonglen Meditation.

There are many styles and methods of prayer depending on your faith and beliefs. No way is wrong. You can pray to God, Goddess, Spirit, Universe, or even your own higher self. Whichever way you choose, it is a powerful form of meditation.

Generative Meditation can be mixed and matched with any other form of meditation. When you work it into your regular meditation practices, it will help you be at peace with yourself and fellow earth inhabitants.

## Ritual Meditation Styles for Beginners



Any form of meditation can be created to become a ritual. In fact, the more you ritualize your practice, the more likely you are to stick with it.

This type of ritual would be based around a particular time of the day, or week. Other rituals are only done occasionally.

Rituals add a depth to any meditation practice that help to inspire and motivate a deeper connection to the meditative state. It makes your time meditating

special and you begin to value it more.

### Vision Quest

A vision quest is designed to help reconnect with your inner self, higher self and Universal Consciousness, God, or however you see something that is larger than yourself.

Some people will travel to a destination and some people will begin their quest in any area that is personally special. Do whatever is the most meaningful for you because there are no rules.

To begin a vision quest, choose a place and time. The time can be for a full day, half a day, or even just an hour or so. Where you choose for your vision quest is not as important as making sure to leave your normal environment.

We become attached to our home and it feels like an extension of ourselves. There is nothing wrong with that, but removing yourself from that extra attachment, into a place where you are alone with your physical, mental and spiritual bodies is going to be more powerful for you.

Some people will fast during their vision quest with only water for sustenance. If your health doesn't allow for this, that's okay. You may instead choose natural raw foods and eat lightly. This will allow you to maintain a lighter feeling in your body.

Before you begin your Vision Quest do regular stillness meditation and create a plan for what you will do. Include specific music, types of meditation you want to practice during your quest, prayers, yoga, journaling, or other activities. Anything that you choose will add significance to this ritual.

Sometimes there are group led Vision Quests. These quests can be empowering and help you learn how to better do them on your own. At the same time, being able to venture out on your own, without a guide, is the best way to completely connect with your innermost self.

### **Building an Altar or Sacred Space**

Creating an altar or sacred space to use for meditation can be as unique as you are. There are "How to" guides or articles that will tell you specifically how to do it. Using your own creativity to come up with something that is meaningful for you will be more powerful.

Some altars will have one item each to represent air, earth, fire, water, and spirit. Some will have religious items such as pictures of Saints. They can also include books, candles, or incense. Anything that has a meaning to you is appropriate.

Creating an altar or sacred space allows an area that is designed to help you reach a meditative, connected state just by entering the area. When you light

candles or incense and settle in to the style of meditation you will be pursuing at the time, it can trigger a response that makes it easier to reach deeper states of meditation.

You do not need an altar or special space in order to meditate.

You can choose anywhere that is comfortable. Choosing one or two spaces for your regular meditation is helpful in creating a routine or ritual of your practice. Choose one or two of them and experiment with different sitting or lying positions.

Some people feel better facing the east when they meditate. Find what works best for you.

### **Ceremonies Based on Religious Tradition**

Holy days, Shabbat, Sabbat, and other religious traditions offer ritual meditation opportunities if you subscribe to a specific religion.

If you are interspiritual (Not subscribing to one specific religion, but open minded to some or all religious teachings), combining traditions and ceremonies from different traditions can create a rich and rewarding new personal or family tradition.

Some people who are not religious will choose significant days such as birthdays or days that have specific nature events, such as the first day of spring in order to implement sentimental occasions in with their meditation styles.

Create a calendar of days you might be able to use to organize special meditation events for yourself, your family or your meditation group.

## **Sweat Lodge**

A sweat lodge is used for spiritual cleansing by creating the environment for the body to sweat. Many will fast for a specific time before the sweat lodge session will begin. Some sweat lodges will have chanting, drumming or other meditative activities, and some will be silent.

For health reasons, I caution you to use good judgment if you decide to pursue a sweat lodge event as a ritual meditation. The fasting along with the high heat is rigorous on the body and you may end up in a physical emergency.

A short term in a sweat lodge may be a wonderful experience to start off with, but staying in one as long as veterans of this activity is foolish if your body is exhibiting symptoms of dizziness, nausea or an increased heart rate.

Check with your doctor and stay sensitive to your body if you want to experience a sweat lodge. Do not stay in one any longer than you feel comfortable, even if others encourage you to hang in there. There have been unfortunate deaths because of this.

## **Personal or Family Rituals**

Some of you may decide to create meditative traditions by yourself, or with family members or a close group of friends. It could be your ritual to meditate for fifteen minutes every day to segue between work and home life. It could be a weekly meditative time with your family before the evening meal.

Creating these traditions can help keep you motivated to pursue meditation practices. It will also create more bonding as a family or friendship group.

Ritual meditation styles can be as casual or formal as you would like them to be and include a broad range of activities. You can create rituals for any occasion or none. Incorporating art activities, music, movement and other

styles of meditation can create a rich tradition that everyone will look forward to.

As you can see, there is a great variety of options you can pick and choose through in order to create the type of meditative adventures that will bring you the highest benefits.

Ideally, you will meditate daily, with longer meditation practices done regularly. The important thing is to create a consistent practice, no matter how you choose to pursue it.

## Namaste



Namaste is a Sanskrit word. It means I bow to you. You will hear that often.

The loose translation for Namaste is, “As the spirit in me sees the spirit in you is the same and I bow to that.”

This is a typical greeting for hello and good-bye, which is what I am bidding you now.

By this point you should feel as if you can choose different meditation styles. You should have a well-rounded idea of the

benefits of meditation and which meditation styles are most helpful in a variety of situations.

Knowing how to meditate also means that you know there is no wrong way to do it. You can combine different meditative styles, use one at a time or come up with your very own form of meditation.

The biggest goal in meditation is to have a bridge that unites your mind, body and spirit. It unites you with the Cosmic; however you choose to see it.

I will leave you with a story. This story is helpful to remember that meditation is a personal path. Your path is perfect for you.

### The True Sound of Truth

After years of concentrating on a particular mantra the self-acclaimed guru began to teach others to meditate the “right” way. He heard of a famous old man that lived alone on an island nearby. He was known for his meditative lifestyle. The guru wanted to challenge him to see if his meditation was “right”.

The guru made the journey to the island, where the old man invited him for tea. The conversation was directed to meditation and they each shared their styles. The guru felt acknowledged hearing that the old man used the same mantra he used. He was then horrified to hear how the old man said it completely wrong.

Noticing the look of horror on the guru's face, the old man asked him what was wrong. The guru said, "You have foolishly wasted your entire life saying the mantra wrong. Your meditation is simply no good." The old man raised his eyebrows in concern and asked the guru what it should be instead.

The guru proudly repeated the mantra the "right" way. The old man thanked him graciously and their visit continued uneventfully. On the way off the island, the guru shook his head thinking it was a shame that the old man had been wrong his entire life.

When the guru was in his boat in the middle of the lake, the old man appeared out of nowhere. It seems as if he had forgotten what the guru had told him about the mantra. In complete shock, the guru repeated it to him. The old man thanked him and left.

The guru stared in astonishment long into the night, at the point where he lost sight of the old man. The old man slowly disappeared from view, repeating the mantra the "right" way as he walked on the surface of the water back to his island.

## *Namaste*



### **About the Author:**

Tracy Morrow wants to encourage others in their pursuit of health and happiness, whatever that may personally look like. You can learn more about her at [OmLifeLab.com](http://OmLifeLab.com).