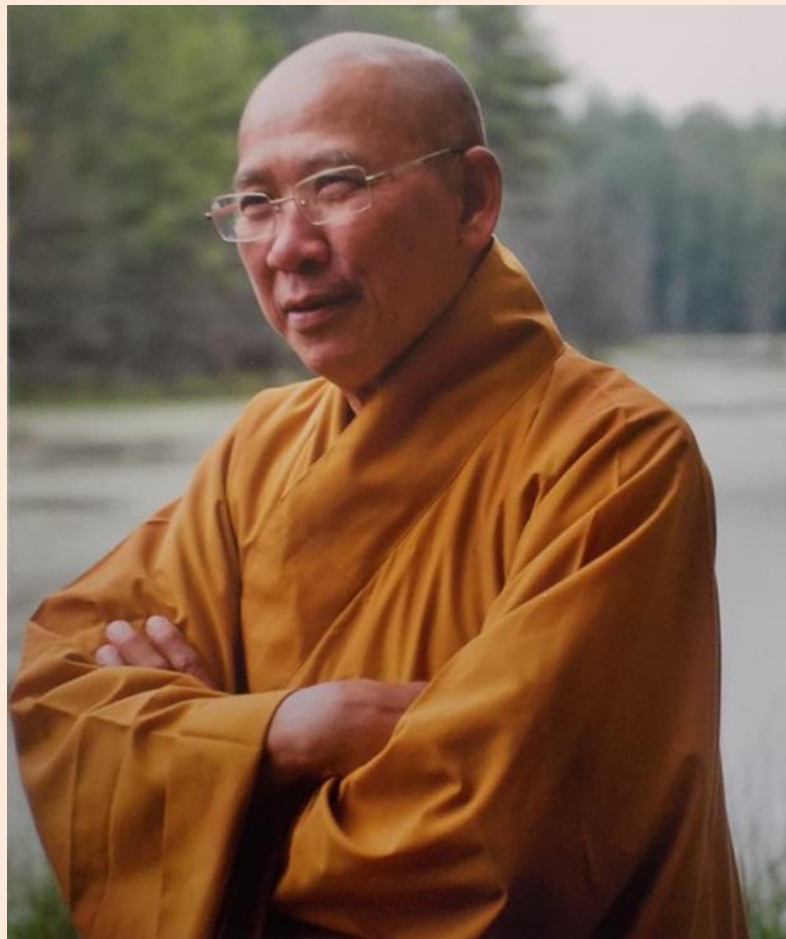


Wake Up! Here and Now

How to Recover your True Self
before your Life is Over



By Ven. Thich Thong Tri

With: Martin Avery

Table of Contents

PART ONE: WHY MEDITATE? WHAT IS MEDITATION?	1
Step 1: Why Meditate?	1
1) The Environment	1
2) Consumers	2
3) Habitual Worry	2
Step 2: What IS Meditation?	4
1) Reflections Of The Six Desires	4
2) Mirrors	4
3) Habit Mind versus True Mind	5
4) The Water Cycle	5
Step 3. You Could Die Laughing	8
1) Free Computers!	8
PART TWO: HOW TO MEDITATE	9
1) How to Meditate	9
2) What Meditation Looks like	9
3) The Short-Cut	11
PART THREE: HOW TO RECOGNIZE WHEN YOU “WAKE UP”	13
PART FOUR: HOW TO WAKE UP AGAIN AND STAY AWAKE	14
AFTERWORD: AFTER YOU WAKE UP	16
An Introduction to Meditation	17
Sitting Meditation	17
Massage after Meditation	17

Part One: Why Meditate? What IS Meditation?

Step 1: Why Meditate?

1) The Environment

Meditation is like the environment.

If you live in a polluted environment, with dirty water, dirty air, pollution everywhere, the trees die and then the people will die.

Today, many people are worried about the environment.

It's bad.

More and more people are waking up to the idea that we have to take care of the environment.

Some people say it's too late, already, and the planet is too polluted. Our cars burn gas and oil, we are afraid we are running out of fossil fuels, a big oil spill in the ocean has caused a lot of pollution, with serious consequences for the marine life of the region and for the people there.

It could happen again wherever they drill for oil in the ocean.

It could happen in the North Sea or off the coast of Newfoundland.

The Arctic ice is melting, so they are thinking of drilling for oil in the Arctic Ocean.

If there is an oil spill in the Arctic, where it is colder, the conditions there mean the consequences will be much more serious than in the over-heated Gulf of Mexico.

We burn a lot of our garbage, including a lot of plastic, and that's bad for the environment.

We make a lot of things out of plastic, which is a by-product made from refining petroleum, a fossil fuel, and then we get rid of it by burning it and burying it and throwing it in the ocean.

There is so much plastic in the Pacific Ocean, there is a huge swirling vortex of floating plastic the size of the state of Texas, and it takes a long, long time to break down, and causes a lot of problems for marine life.

The chemicals in plastic we bury leech into the ground, causing ground pollution that affects the food we grow and eat and it affects us.

We know we have to take care of the environment. We've known that for a long time. But we still have serious problems with pollution and waste management and using up all the fossil fuels.

Not everyone believes our pollution is causing global warming or changing our climate in a way that will have disastrous effects on people all over the world, but many people believe that's true, including many scientists. Lots of people argue about that.

Meditation is like that.

How?

We'll get to that!

Meditation can be compared to the environment.

People are affected by both.

If people live in a good environment, they are healthy, or have a better chance of being healthy, if they breathe clean air, drink clear water, eat food that come from land that is not polluted, they will be healthier than people who drink dirty water, breathe polluted air, and so on.

If the human mind is in a bad environment, it can also be very harmful.

People whose minds are affected by a bad environment can do a lot of harm to themselves and to others.

Everyone knows the environment is very important, as we have discussed, but people do not know the mind is like that.

That's what meditation is for.

2) Consumers

We are called 'consumers'

We believe we need a lot of things. We think of ourselves as consumer and we worry about what we are consuming.

Sometimes we think we shouldn't consume so much.

Sometimes we think we need more things.

We have a lot of ideas about this. Some believe it's good, some think it's bad.

We worry about how it will affect our lives. It creates a lot of worries.

We worry about it so much, it causes mental problems.

Some people just can't stop thinking about shopping and worrying about being consumers and their thoughts force them to do things that aren't good for them.

Too many worries causes destruction in your mind.

Worrying becomes a habit.

This habit of mind can cause a lot of problems.

People worry about these things all day and then dream about them at night.

They are busy day and night, worrying about these things.

They wonder why they fell tired. They go to bed tired and they wake up tired. They get exhausted.

Many people complain about low energy these days or say they have 'no energy'.

They wonder why.

They worry about that, too.

What is the problem?

Their thoughts are exhausting them and even driving them crazy. They do a lot of things, driven by their thoughts, and that tires them out even more.

What is the solution?

Meditation means balancing the mind.

3) Habitual Worry

When your mind is clear, your action have a positive effect.

You tend to be nicer, more polite, and may be very helpful to other people.

Your mind is in a good environment!

But when your mind is cloudy, or polluted, you get mixed up, and the things you do are not so good.

Your actions reflect your state of mind.

If your mind is not clear, you may do or say thing that hurt other people or do harm to yourself.

You could do things and say things that cause a lot of harm in the world.

After that, you feel terrible. Your head hurts. You get headaches, you repent and apologize. You say, "I'm sorry!" and you feel terrible.

And then you do it again.

The same thing happens over and over.

You know it's not good for you or for anybody else, but it becomes a habit.

You do it again and again because it has become a habit of mind.

Meditation means purification of the mind.

Meditation means tranquility for your mind.

That's what meditation is.

Step 2: What IS Meditation?

1) Reflections Of The Six Desires

The mind is the world.

If we have a million people, we have a million worlds.

That's a lot of thoughts and a lot of worlds.

All these thoughts, wherever they come from, cause a lot of problems.

Your thoughts drive you from place to place to place.

They create a bad environment in your mind.

Your perceptions become cloudy, mixed up, disturbed.

What are thoughts?

A thought is a reflection.

Thoughts are the objects or reflection. They come from our senses.

We hear with our ears, see with our eyes, taste with our tongue, feel with our hands and our bodies, and we think with our minds.

These thoughts are called the **Six Desires**.

They come from our senses and from our minds.

We see, hear, smell, taste, and touch, and we think.

The six desires cause a lot of thoughts.

Our senses and minds nurse our desires and our thoughts that come from the six desires.

Meditation means understanding our desires.

With meditation, we can stop our thoughts that come from these desires. We can cut off the cause of these desires.

We can avoid the causes of our thoughts and desires.

These thoughts are illusions.

That's what a thought is: **An Illusion**.

2) Mirrors

The mind is like a mirror. It's like a clear mirror, or what is called a true mirror.

But it does not mirror the truth. It does not show us our true selves.

The six desires are what create our thoughts, the mirror reflects only illusions.

Following the thoughts caused by these desires can be exhausting. We get tired, following our thoughts and desires.

The six desires can lead to thoughts that are destructive. We can become self-destructive.

Some people's thoughts lead them to commit suicide.

So, you have to know what thoughts are and where they come from.

Thoughts that are reflections of our desires appear to be real, but the mind is a mirror, and those thoughts are just reflections.

Our minds mirror whatever is in front of them, any phenomenon or any thing.

We call this “**Dharma**”.

These things appear real but they are not real.

It is important to remember that the objects of our desires, which are our thoughts, are not real things, even though they appear to be real in the mirror.

There is a well-known Zen saying about mirrors and reflections. It is the ancient story about seeing the moon in a bucket of water.

If the surface of the water is clear, it may reflect the moon perfectly.

It looks like the moon is in the bucket.

But, of course, it's just a reflection.

If you don't know the difference between the moon and its reflection in a bucket of water or that your thoughts are reflections caused by the six desires, or the six senses. Well, this is called “**Ignorance**”.

With this type of ignorance, your thoughts will control you. With this type of ignorance your thoughts will force you to do things, and you will feel tired, even exhausted, and you will always feel unsatisfied.

If you know your thoughts are just reflections in the mirror, you can “**Wake Up**”.

That's it!

That's the key to understanding what meditation is all about.

If you know the mirror makes an object look like the real thing, you may already be awake!

If you know thought is illusion, your true mind spontaneously awakens right away, “just like that”, as they say. There is no waiting for a minute.

You don't have to sleep on it or go away and thinking about it. You wake up “just like that!”

3) **Habit Mind versus True Mind**

Habitual thoughts are referred to as “**Habit Mind**”.

True mind is something quite different. True mind reflects the true self. And then there is the mastermind, that covers everything.

This is why we meditate: If you know your thoughts come from reflections, they won't force you to say things or do things. If you know your thoughts come from reflections, you will get the benefit of your true mind, and that means you will be transformed.

Are we writing in water? Are we drawing pictures in the sky?

Maybe an example will help.

4) **The Water Cycle**

We all know how the water cycle works:

Moisture from the ocean gathers as clouds that are transformed into rain, precipitation, and the water falls on the land, where it gathers in lakes and rivers, and it travels back to the ocean, It starts in the ocean and goes back to the ocean.

More specifically, the water cycle is also known as the hydrologic cycle or H₂O cycle. It describes the continuous movement of water on, above and below the surface of the Earth. Water can change states among liquid, vapor, and ice at various places in the water cycle. The sun, which drives the water cycle, heats water in oceans and seas. Water evaporates as water vapor into the air. Ice and snow can sublime directly into water vapor. Water transpired from plants and evaporated from the soil. Rising air currents take the vapor up into the atmosphere where cooler temperatures cause it to condense into clouds. Air currents move water vapor around the globe, cloud particles collide, grow, and fall out of the sky as precipitation. Some precipitation falls as snow or hail, and can accumulate as ice caps and glaciers, which can store frozen water for thousands of years. Snow packs can thaw and melt, and the melted water flow over land as snowmelt.

Most water falls back into the oceans or onto land as rain, where the water flows over the ground as surface runoff. A portion of the runoff enters rivers in valleys in the landscape, with streamflow moving water towards the oceans. Runoff and groundwater are stored as fresh water in the lakes. Not all runoff flows into rivers. Much of it soaks into the ground as infiltration. Some water infiltrates deep into the ground and replenishes aquifers, which store fresh water for long periods of time. Some infiltration stays close to the land surface and can seep back into surface-water bodies and the ocean as groundwater discharge. Some groundwater finds openings in the land surface and comes out as freshwater springs.

The creek in the Zen Forest flows into the pond and from the pond it makes its way to the Skootamatta River, which flows into the Moira River, and into Lake Ontario, which flows into the St. Laurence River and into the Atlantic Ocean. Over time, water returns to the ocean, where our water cycle started.

Thoughts are like clouds.

The ocean is like true mind.

Clouds come from the ocean.

Thoughts come from reflections from the true mind.

If the mind is clear, it shines like the surface of the water in a bucket that reflects the moon.

The water is real. The moon is just an illusion.

If you don't follow your thoughts that come from the six desires, or from the senses, and if you come back to your true mind, instead of the reflections, you get a great reward: You come back to your true self.

If you know how to meditate, that is your reward.

We have fresh water because we have oceans. Clouds travel the world and then it rains and we drink the water, along with the plants and animals, and it's recycled and eventually goes back to the ocean.

The benefits of meditation are like that.

The oceans make clouds and clouds make rain, and rain makes lakes and rivers and help people, and make the planet green, with a good environment.
If you know how to meditate, you benefit just like that.

If you miss learning that, the system of nature that sustains the world will be finished and people will go the way of the dinosaurs: Gone: No more dinosaurs!

Step 3. You Could Die Laughing

1) Free Computers!

True mind means clear like a mirror and we call that “emptiness”.

This “emptiness” makes all things possible.

It’s like a cup you can fill up with anything you want.

It’s like a digital camera and can take and store millions of images.

It’s like a computer.

We need this emptiness so that anything and everything is possible.

When you empty your mind, you have what we call “perfect understanding”.

You have great clarity of mind. You have wisdom. You have what is called the power of mind.

That is the benefit of meditation: “You can use your wisdom. You can access your wisdom and use it for everything you do. Your everyday activities will be done with clarity of mind and wisdom. You can make decisions with clarity. You can make discoveries and much more.

You should be able to know what is true, what is the truth, and then be happy.

You can be creative and you can invent things. You can make discoveries and inventions the way scientists create wonderful things that help people.

And your life becomes peaceful, and joyful, because you and your life are not forced to do anything by those thoughts that are just reflections caused by your senses and the six desires.

Meditation is a daily activity, not just something you do when you have time. You can do it anytime.

When you are cooking, or cleaning, or driving, when you are with friends, when you are with your girlfriend or boyfriend, even when you are going to the bathroom, you can meditate.

When you are in a relationship, when you get hurt, or when you get old, and when you die, you can meditate.

With meditation, you can laugh as you leave the world.

You can die laughing!

Part Two: How to Meditate

1) How to Meditate

Meditation means bringing your life into balance with your true nature and your true mind.

Waking up through meditation is like waking up after sleeping. You dream, while asleep, and then wake up to find the dream is not true.

The dream may seem very real. You may want the dream to be real. But you wake up and you realize you were dreaming.

When you are awake, you can understand what's going on around you, but not when you sleep and dream.

Being awake means you have awareness. You are aware of your thoughts, action, speech, and what happens around you. Any movement, Anything you can detect with your senses, you perceive very clearly.

When you are awake, you are aware of what is going on around you.

Meditation brings you to your true mind. It brings you to your absolutely true mind. It is like waking up from a dream into daylight.

First we'll talk about what meditation looks like and then we'll describe how to practice meditation.

We call meditation "practice".

2) What Meditation Looks like

Meditation brings you back in line, so your life and your true mind are aligned.

Meditation brings you back to where you are and it means you stop dreaming.

You can stop the dream you were living.

Dreaming pushes you to do things that follow your dreams. If our dreams comes from the six desires, sooner or later your actions will cause suffering.

We have a treasure. Everyone has this treasure. But people forget they have this treasure and they think they are poor. They forget they already have this treasure, so they go back for more treasure, and for more and more treasure, and they do this every day until they are exhausted, or until someone reminds them they already have a huge treasure.

Meditation reminds you and brings you back to your true mind and your treasure. And then you can stop acting like a hungry ghost. (A hungry ghost has a big mouth and tiny, narrow, little neck, so it is always hungry and can never get enough. It suffers a lot because it has a huge appetite and is never, ever satisfied.)

Your treasure is your true mind. When you discover that, your mind is peaceful and you are happy.

Your true self is a great treasure. It is permanent potential power and the greatest source of energy.

Your true self is this great treasure and storehouse of energy day an night, when you are awake or asleep or even unconscious. But most people don't recognize this.

If you just follow those thoughts that come from the six desires, which are the objectifications in your mind, you don't recognize this treasure and you don't have access to the power or the energy.

We call this **impermanence**.

When you follow impermanence, you forget permanence.
You act greed, and you suffer.

True mind is **permanent** and has the potential to make your energy permanent, and we call that “**Nirvana**”. Nirvana means formless and formlessness.

When you wake up, you experience nirvana whenever and wherever you contract anything through your senses.

Everything you see, touch, hear, taste, and so on is nirvana.

You experience it as nirvana because those thoughts that come from the six desires do not affect the mind.

Even though you have ‘true nature’, you can’t appreciate it if all you see is reflection, like the moon in the bucket. It’s a dream. It’s far from the truth.

This is how to meditate.

Meditation is not just sitting. Meditation can be done in any posture: sitting, walking, lying down, standing, talking, working...

You are always aware of what you are doing and don’t follow any of those thoughts that are just reflections of the six desires.

That’s meditation.

Those reflections may flash in your mind, but you don’t follow them.

If you are aware, like that, you can understand anything that happens. You can understand it in that moment.

You might think of the past, or the future, and those thoughts will drive you out of the present moment. Meditation brings you back.

When you think of the past or the future, let those thoughts go. Be aware of the thought, but let it go, so you are only doing what you are doing and you have just one thought instead of a lot of thoughts.

While writing, just write. While driving, just drive. When peeling a potato, just peel the potato. Whatever you are doing, do it with full awareness and without other thoughts.

People follow other thoughts all the time, while doing everything. That is the problem.. It is a big problem in the world today. People follow a lot of thoughts even when they don’t want to.

The thoughts aren’t the problem.

If you don’t follow them, you can stay in nirvana.

The more you practice this, the more those thoughts disappear, leaving you to your true nature.

Thoughts drive you to other worlds when you want to stay in this world.

When you are busy at work or with any activity, be aware of your thoughts and what you are doing, and focus on what you are doing.

The power of those thoughts is transformed into the power of your true self so you can use it for energy.

For example, when you intend to drink tea, the power of your true nature controls your action. It controls your hand moving to the tea cup, with full awareness, but if you are not aware, you won’t drink the tea, and your karma energy takes control. Your habit mind takes control. You can’t enjoy the real taste of the tea.

Your mind is ripped away. It's like a boat with no anchor in a river that is flowing fast.

Any moment you are aware, your energy comes from true nature and it is very clear and peaceful. Otherwise, any action, any movement, while you follow those other thought, pushes you out of your true nature.

If you are following those other thoughts, you are not awake, you are dreaming. You are a dream. We call you a dreamer.

So, stay aware of what you are doing. In any and every activity, stay aware of what you are doing.

Don't be scared of your thoughts. And don't worry about your thoughts. Just don't follow them.

Just follow the thoughts that bring you back to your true self.

If you follow the thoughts that bring you back to your true self, you get all the benefits that go with it. When you are working and you hear a sound, you just understand the sound. When you see something, you just see it.

Don't add any thoughts.

If you just see, for example, a dog, you know the dog.

It's difficult, sometimes.

It's a habit. It's like driving a car at high speed: You can't stop right away. It takes time.

As you practice not following those thoughts, they become thinner and thinner and thinner... and one day those thoughts will no longer appear in your mind at all.

At that moment, you will realize your true nature.

We call that "**Awakening**".

And that's what meditation looks like.

3) The Short-Cut

Every night, before you go to bed, to sleep, avoid following thoughts.

Give up any of the thoughts you get, good or bad.

Do the same thing during the day.

When thoughts come to you, while you are doing something – any activity – avoid following them. Just let them go.

To meditate, you can sit or you can lay down, depending how your body feels. It doesn't matter if you sit or stand. What matters is that you remind yourself that those thoughts are illusions and you don't follow them.

As those thoughts show up, again and again, remind yourself "thoughts are illusions", and then you will be able to fall asleep and enjoy a peaceful, very deep, sleep, and the next day you can wake up refreshed.

Instead of going to bed tired and waking up tired, you can wake up with a lot of energy to start the day. It will look like a fresh new day.

After you wake up like that, you can make a plan for the day, create your schedule for the day, and then follow it.

When you make your schedule, you can select the thoughts you want, to make your plan.

When your planning is done, stick with the plan, and don't follow your thoughts, Just follow your schedule.

In your free time, practice sitting meditation. Rest your body, use any posture that feels good. Breathe in and out and be aware of your breathing. Take a deep breath and let it out slowly. Breathe in deeply and let it out slowly. Let your body relax and focus your mind on following your breath and ENJOY breathing. This way, you will have oxygen for your body.

Do it for five or ten minutes, whatever time you have or want to use on meditation.

Meditate until your body is tired of being in that position and then give yourself a massage, from head to toe.

It's very good to follow meditation with massage. Breathing deeply will give you oxygen and the massage will help with your blood circulation, to feed your body and your mind as blood circulates to your brain and everywhere in your body.

Part Three: How to recognize when you “Wake Up”

If you practice meditation, with massage, and don't follow those thoughts that come from the six desires, and maintain your awareness as you do your daily activities, one day your mind will be clear and thoughts will no longer grab you.

Those thoughts split your mind. They will no longer appear in your mind. And at that time, you will wake up! Nirvana appears. It's your state of mind.

The moment feels indescribably great. You might laugh, or cry. It is like being hungry for one hundred years and finally getting food. It is difficult to describe or to understand. It has to be experienced in order to be appreciated fully.

Only a meditation practitioner understands.

You might burst into laughter at the moment you wake up and, after that, there will be no more suffering, for you, for the rest of your life.

Try to imagine what your life would be like without suffering, without those thoughts and all the energy you waste following those thoughts.

It is like getting lost in a dark forest for a long time and finally finding a big city with bright lights, with great food, and everything a great city has to offer. You've been in the dark forest for 100 years. Finally you get out!

In that moment, you cry, you laugh, you go wild, crazy, nuts, with happiness and excitement as you have never seen anything like it. It's so great!

It comes as such a big surprise, there are no words to describe it. There are just tears, or laughter. And, at the same time, you know what to do with the rest of your life.

Part Four: How to wake up again and Stay Awake

After you wake up, it is not so hard to wake up again, and then to stay awake.

Here's how: Don't follow those thoughts!

In any daily activity, have one thought.

While driving your car, just drive.

And one day, you 'll wake up like that.

Don't be a slave of thought and you will discover, or recover your true nature, or nirvana.

Don't worry.

Also, don't expect your mind to have no thoughts. That moment when you wake up will happen, sooner or later, and your mind will be clear.

It is difficult to explain this quality as you have it already.

"Just stay home!" we say.

From that point, you understand more and more of your true nature.

And from there, you can help a lot of people, not just yourself.

When you 'practice', breathe deeply. Take a deep breath and let it out slowly. Inhale deeply, exhale slowly.

Don't hyperventilate!

Walk slowly.

Do everything slow, but fast.

To you, it may appear almost as though you are moving in slow motion, but others will see you moving quickly.

Try doing things slowly and with great awareness and you will go fast!

Whether you are walking, standing, lying down, always keep a quiet mind, don't follow those thoughts, and you will stay with your true nature.

When you 'wake up', you will cry or laugh or whatever because it is indescribably good.

And the your practice is done!

You are ageless, body-less, and ego-less.

Joy comes to you.

You experience ageless, ego-less, nirvana.

This is what we call nirvana.

It is the nirvana of life.

This is the ultimate nirvana.

You don't have to die.

That's good news!

The nirvana you experience while you are alive is the real nirvana.

We don't know about death, or what happens after you die.

Nirvana is here and now.

Heaven is here and now.

Your Buddha blesses you.
It is not the Buddha in India who blesses you.
You bless you!

A lot of people pray to things outside of themselves, but it is your true nature that blesses you.

So, anyone who wants to wake up, they are welcome to come here, to the Zen Forest, carry boulders, wash bowls, feed the goldfish and the catfish in the Zen Forest pond...

Afterword: After You Wake Up

The Buddha world is ageless, formless, awareness. It is full of quiet understanding and is very helpful.

Nirvana is here, now, when you get away from 'those' thoughts.

People have lots of thoughts about nirvana, but it's here, now, and it's ageless formlessness.

Your body ages, but your understanding doesn't age.

You have the same understanding at all ages and stages of your life.

You understand hunger, death, and so on, at every age.

Understanding never dies.

It grows by itself, like a baby grows.

We hope you come back to your true nature.

Don't wait until tomorrow.

If you wait, you may get older, get sick, and die.

Tomorrow never comes.

If you get to nirvana, you don't reincarnate into the six worlds – the worlds of the hungry ghosts, hell, animals, human beings, deities, and devas.

There are no more rebirths.

Those are illusions!

They are objectifications.

Stop worrying about that!

You wake up, have a good breakfast, enjoy it, and ... No more dreams!

Dreams are like that. Suffering is like that.

We will call you Buddha.

Don't worry about the six realms: the realm of devas and heavenly beings, the realm of hungry ghosts, hell, the animal realm, the human realm ...

The next book we write will be about what causes you to be reincarnated to the different realms.

People wonder about that, a lot, so we'll write a book about it.

Thoughts take you to the six realms.

That's it!

You won't have to read that book.

We'll call that book "You Don't Have To Read This Book: or the title will be "Don't Read This Book:.

The book you have here is the book you have to read.

Thoughts are like the wind on the water, making waves.

You are alive, you are here, and after you wake up you can see, taste, touch, et cetera, more purely and with much greater enjoyment. That is Nirvana.

An Introduction to Meditation

Sitting Meditation

The goal is to still. How still? As still as the dead.

Meditation has been described as practicing being dead.

Step One: Sit on the floor in the full lotus position.

If you cannot sit in the full lotus position, don't worry. Sit in the half lotus position.

If you cannot sit in the half lotus position, don't worry. Sit cross-legged.

If you cannot sit in the cross-legged, don't worry.

If you cannot sit on the floor, sit on a chair.

Most people sit on a pillow, on a mat, and use cushions to prop up their legs.

Some use a blanket to hold their hands comfortably in their laps.

If you choose to sit on a chair, sit on the front edge, keeping your back straight.

If you cannot sit on a chair without leaning back for support, try meditating in a Muskoka chair.

Use the cushions to get into a comfortable position so you don't have to move for twenty minutes or so.

Step Two: Keep your eyes open and look at the floor about three feet in front of you.

Step Three: Try to keep your back straight. If you cannot find a way to sit comfortably on the floor, try leaning against a wall.

Step Four: Your left hand should rest in the cup of your right hand and your thumbs should touch lightly.

Step Five: Focus on your breath. Pay attention to your breathing.

Step Six: Count breaths. Breathe in and count 'one' as you exhale. Breathe in and count 'two' as you exhale.

Step Seven: Count to ten, breathing in and out, and start over again.

Step Eight: Thoughts arise naturally during meditation. Try not to follow your thoughts. Let them come and go. Focus on your breathing. Don't engage with your thoughts. Watch them come and go as though you are watching a movie.

Step Nine: After meditating, massage your sore muscles and then do some exercises to get your energy going again.

Step Ten: This step is for advanced meditators. You don't have to count your breaths. Just follow your breath as it goes in and out.

Put your awareness at the tip of your nose or on your belly. Stay aware of your breathing.

When we are aware that we are breathing, the mind and the body are one, and monkey mind ends. We are not thinking about the future or the past – just the present moment.

If you are a very experienced meditator, focus on your true nature.

Massage after Meditation

Massage after meditation spreads chi or energy all over your body.

Start by stretching one shoulder then the other, then moving the head up and down, rubbing hands over face, head, back, legs, and feet.

Do what you feel needs to be done to restore circulation. Some people feel a need to stand and stretch, or even walk a bit to get ambulatory again.

Self massage is better than having someone else give you a massage. It's free and it is better to spread your own energy than to take in someone else's energy. The person who massages you may have the type of energy that is not good for you.

While massaging yourself, don't forget to breathe!

Start by lifting one shoulder and taking one breath. Then lift the other shoulder and breathe in and out. Stretch one shoulder and then the other, remember to breathe, so each shoulder is stretched five times.

Next, look to one side and inhale and then look to the other side and exhale. Stretch your neck and exercise your neck muscles by turning your head to the right then the left five times and don't forget to breathe.

Rub your hands together, especially the heels of your hands, below your palms, until they are heated then press your hot hands on your eyes. Go through the motions of washing your face, using your warm hands instead of soap and water.

Massage the back of your head after washing your face.

Massage your ears, holding your fingers over your ears and your thumb behind your ears.

Gently press in on your eardrums ten times.

Massage your throat, chest, and belly, or your throat chakra, heart chakra, and belly chakra.

Think about massaging your lung, your heart, your thymus, and your thyroid, while your hands massage your body on top of these organs.

Massage your back in the same way, starting with the adrenal glands, moving down to the kidneys, and finishing with the liver.

Remove the zafu you were sitting on, lean over, lace your fist below your tailbone and massage vigorously.

Massage your hip joints and then move down to your thighs and your knees, your shins, ankles and feet.

If any of those places is sore, after meditation spend extra time massaging there.

Measure four finger widths below the hollow where your shinbone meets your knee bone. There is a spot here that may be sensitive if the chi is blocked at this point. Press hard with your knuckles, massaging with a circular motion, ten times clockwise and ten times counter-clockwise, to stimulate your immune system.

Give your foot a thorough massage, especially the sole of your foot. Use your fingers stiffly and press hard on the areas of your foot identified by reflexology to stimulate all your organs.

Massaging yourself from head to toe might take five or ten minutes.