

So You Want To Learn To Meditate

The subjects of mindfulness and meditation are currently attracting a lot of attention. Many of us are seeking relief from stress, anxiety and depression as we try to manage challenging situations. As scientific and anecdotal evidence continues to show the many benefits of mindful meditation, more of us are seeking guidance in establishing a meditation practice. So how do you begin? And how do you maintain the practice? Can you benefit even if you meditate only a few minutes a day?

Meditation begins with awareness of the breath. Your breath is happening in the present moment and your body is always in the present moment. When you give your attention to your breath and/or your body, you begin to align with the present moment. That is the beginning of meditation and this can happen within a breath or two. Try it now, if you like. Read the next couple of sentences, then stop reading, gently close your eyes and just pay attention to your breath while feeling your chest rise and fall with the breath. You may discover very quickly that your breathing slows and deepens and you may feel your body begin to relax a bit. Congratulations! You just meditated.

The Vietnamese Buddhist monk, Thich Nhat Hanh, says – *“In our daily lives, our attention is dispersed. Our body is in one place, our breath is ignored, and our mind is wandering. As soon as we pay attention to our breath, as we breathe in, these three things – body, breath and mind – come together. This can happen in just one or two seconds. You come back to yourself. Your awareness brings these three elements together, and you become fully present in the here and the now. You are taking care of your body, you are taking care of your breath, and you are taking care of your mind.”*

Beginning and nurturing a meditation practice can be compared to planting a seed. Sometimes it's wise to get advice from a master gardener so that your seed gets a strong start and you feel confident about how to nurture it. Attending a Beginner's Meditation Workshop can provide you with that strong start and give you the confidence you need to nurture your new meditation practice. Building a meditation practice takes some diligence, but the benefits of meditation quickly make the effort worthwhile and enjoyable.

Scientific research is showing that even a few minutes of daily meditation has many benefits; including improving attention, memory, and creativity; relieving anxiety and depression; contributing to psychological well-being and much more. Brain scans of meditators show that the brain benefits even when the meditator thinks her/his meditation was not a good one.

The Dallas Meditation Center has been offering Beginner Meditation Workshops for about 20 years, (with a few exceptions such as time during the pandemic of 2021 – 2022). Each workshop includes instruction in walking meditation, guided seated meditation, silent seated meditation, and posture while meditating. Instruction is followed by time to practice, ask questions and share insights that arise from the practice. Learning is enhanced by interaction with others in the workshop as your energies support one another in the small group setting.

You can learn more about the Dallas Meditation Center, our classes and events at our website, www.DallasMeditationCenter.com. Learn to meditate with us! You'll be glad you did!

Bobbie Perkins, Meditation Instructor
Dallas Meditation Center