

TJ Nelson: How to meditate. So with meditation simple is better. If you try to make things complex, it's not meditation. Meditation is just a simple focus of the mind, and that's where it's so tricky because we want to complicate things so much as human beings, and that's where meditation just cuts through all that because meditation is that simple practice, that simple focus, and that's all your trying to do.

So with meditation, what you're trying to do is you're just trying to focus on one thing. With meditation it does not matter how good you do it. It does not matter how efficient or skilled you are at bringing your mind to that focus, and that's the good news. All that matters in meditation is how persistent you are and how hard you try. So it doesn't matter how good you are at it. All that matters is how persistent you are and how hard you try. That point is very important. It took me years to realize how important that is in effectively meditating and bringing it into your life.

So you'll meditate, you'll be focusing on this one thing and then you'll go off track and you'll be like, "Oh crap. I'm not doing it right. Oh I suck." And you think it's a bad meditation, but that's where it's kind of crazy. A bad meditation, there's no such thing as a bad meditation. There's no such thing as a failed meditation as long as you tried and you did it every day, you were persistent. Because the thing with meditation is what you're doing is every time, so you have your one focus, every time your mind wanders off one way and your mind wanders off the other way, all you do is gently bring it back to that one focus. Gently bring it back to that one focus. So if you have a bad meditation, every ten seconds you got to, you're, "Oh, I'm off track. I'm not focusing." And you bring it back to the focus, the whole point of the meditation is bringing yourself back to that focus, that one point of focus, is what strengthens your brain.

It's kind of like weightlifting in a way. If you go to the gym and you just lift an easy weight. It's going to be easy. You're going to be able to pump out a lot of reps and you did a good job but it defeats the purpose. If you go in and you go really hard and you can only do like five. You're working everything. You're recruiting all your muscles to just try and get that last one in, that's what bring growth. It's the same thing with meditation. All you're doing is trying as hard as you can to just focus on that one point and every time you come off, you just gently bring yourself back. Again, when you lose your focus, you just bring yourself gently yet firmly back to what you were focusing on.

Here's three forms of meditation. One form of meditation is called the bubble technique. It's where when you're sitting there, all you do is when you sit, you just watch your thoughts and each thought that arises you imagine it's in a bubble. You're sitting at the bottom of an ocean. Every thought that comes up is a bubble, and you see the thought in the bubble and then the bubble just rises

up and then the thoughts gone. The next thought comes in. It's in the bubble, and that rises up, focus on it, and then it's gone. With that meditation, what you're doing is you're not just noticing the thought, noticing the next thought, noticing the next thought, noticing the next thought. What you're doing is you see the thought and then you focus on the thought for about five seconds. You let the thought rise up and you just see that thought. You let it rise up and then gone, and then you just move on to the next one and you just move on to the next one.

Don't try and associate anything with the thought. Don't think, "Why am I thinking that thought?" Or "That's kind of weird." Or "I wonder what that means that that thought's coming up during this meditation?" Those are all distractions. Your only goal is to see the thought as it arises, let it drift out of your focus for five seconds, and then let the next one come in. If the same thoughts keep coming up, like "tree", "leaf", "bark", and they're all related and they keep coming, just don't think anything of it. Just as a thought arises, you let it come up and then you let it dissipate. You let each one about five seconds and then dissipate.

The second meditation technique you can try is just focusing and feeling the breath. So as you breathe, you just, as when you're breathing in, you feel the breath come in and you feel the breath hitting the back of your nostrils or the back of your throat and you feel the breath filling you up, and then as you breathe out, you feel the breath leaving you. You kind of feel that cold, emptier feeling as the breath leaves. All you're doing is feeling the breath coming in and feeling the breath coming out. That technique, it can kind of be more complicated because more thoughts are coming in and it's kind of hard to just focus visually on your breath, but a lot of people they get a lot of benefit just, not trying to see their thought or anything, but just breathing in and breathing out and all they're doing is feeling their breath.

Third meditation technique which is the most simple and is going to be the easiest to implement, in my opinion. One of the meditation teachers I've known, he's done this for 20 years straight, is you just count every out breath up to four and then you restart. So you breathe in and you're not thinking anything. Then when you breathe out, you think "one" and then on the next out breath, "two", the next out breath, "three", the next out breath, "four" and then you restart. This one is great because it's so simple. All you're doing is just focusing on counting the breaths. You want to be so involved in counting the breaths you forget about anything else.

So every other thought that comes in ... so say you're breathing out and you go "one", and then you start breathing in and you're like, "Oh man. I've got to work today. I've got to do some other stuff," and then you go, "No, no, no." Come

back, "two", "three". You'll notice you'll just lose count. All of the sudden you'll be off thinking about something else, thinking about hiking or whatever and then you just bring yourself back. You kind of laugh. You go, "Oh, that my mind's going this way," and you come back to the focus of the out breath and counting the out breaths. Another thing that you're going to notice is happening is all of the sudden you're going to be like, "Nine, ten" and you're like, "Wait. I'm only supposed to go four and then restart." So it's so easy for your mind just to wean off the path, and all you're doing is counting each out breath up to four and restarting.

Now, very important to keep in mind, once again, is with meditation all that matters is how hard you try and how persistent you are at it. A bad meditation, once again, can be more beneficial than a good one, because all you're doing is just focusing on one simple thing. If you are meditating and all of the sudden, you might get crazy stuff happening. You might all of the sudden, "Oh, that's what I should do in my business." Or, "Oh, that's what I should have said during this confrontation." Or you start getting all these answers, all these insights. Again, what you want to do, is you get those and you kind of, "I'll get to those later." Come back to the breath. Come back to your focus.

With those three meditations it's important, just choose one. Don't do one, then do one the next day, then one the next day, because then again, you're losing focus once again. You want to choose one of those meditations and just do that. Forget about the other ones. Just do one meditation for at least one month every day. Meditation, not only does it reduce the stress levels, but it's almost like giving yourself therapy, because as you're going through the meditation, afterwards you'll learn all sorts of stuff about yourself. You'll have some thoughts coming up or you'll have insights come up, and every time an insight comes up, you might notice, "That's what distracts me." Then later you might be like, "Well maybe that's because every time a new idea or something pops in my mind, I want to chase after it. I want to chase after the new flashy object rather than just focusing on one central aspect of my life."

Another thing that was huge for me was when I was meditating, every time I came off track I would get just mad. I would be like, "Come back to focus!" And I'd start beating myself up. I'd be like, "You suck at meditation! Come back! Come back to the focus!" Then afterwards I realized, you know that's not so healthy, and I realized that was more of a magnified version of what I was doing every day at everything. So in my job I would be like, "Oh, you suck. You didn't sell anything today" or "You missed a workout. You suck!" I'd try and be more forceful on myself because I thought that was what I had to do to keep myself disciplined.

What meditation taught me is as I was going off the track and I was just beating myself up, forcing myself to come back to my focus and my out breath, and I realized you don't have to do that. What I realized what I can do is I can gently bring myself back rather than harshly and it does the same thing. So that gave me more self compassion and it taught me that I was doing this kind of unhealthy thing in life, and it taught me that I needed, instead of being harsh myself, to just be gently, compassionate and still bring myself back onto the path.

It's like you imagine, instead of being so harsh, it's like I would imagine, so say you're a parent and you have a kid and you're walking down a path. So the kid's walking down the path and you need to stay on the path. You need to go to the store or you need to go home, and as the kid's walking, he sees like a butterfly and he kind of runs off and starts trying to chase the butterfly, and you go, "No, no, no. Kid, come, all right come back." You don't yank your kid's arm back on the path. You go, "Oh no. That's just what kids do." Bring him back onto the path lovingly and gently. Then all of the sudden he sees some flowers to the right. He starts looking at those. "Nope. Those are just ... you need to stay on the path." Or he sees some other tiny little path and he's like, "Oh, maybe I'll try that." "Nope." Bring him back, back to the path gently yet firmly.

It took me a long time to realize that about myself but after I realized that from a meditation session, I was able to be more compassionate with myself, I was able to take better care of myself, which helped alleviate my depression and improve my life quality.

Another example of how meditation can bring these things up is I have a friend and I taught him the meditation technique. I purposely only told him about counting the out breath, one, two, three, four, because he's the type of person who kind of has ADD, where he wants to jump around from idea to idea to idea, rather than focusing on one and really pursuing it and really building it out and getting the results that comes from just dedicated action every day from one goal. So when he started meditating, like halfway through the meditation, he'd be like, "No, I've got to do a different technique so I can make it better." Then he kept asking me, "Oh well, what's a different technique I can do?" Or "I need to change it up so that I can get more benefit from meditation." And he'd only done it for like three days.

So I asked him, I was like, "Well okay, so you're meditating and while you're meditating you keep wanting to switch your focus, but that is, in itself, not being able to focus. So why do you think you want to just jump from meditation technique to the other so quickly?" We were kind of talking, and he realized, "Oh wow! Instead of jumping from one business idea to the next, I've got to just really focus on one business idea, take dedicated action towards that, and that's

what's going to bring results." So meditation not only reduces the stress, but when you do it right, when you just bring yourself firmly and just remember all that matters is how hard you try and that you persevere every day, that it's going to give those effects. It really does more than just alleviate depression, and it really strengthens those personality characteristics within yourself.

You have three basic techniques you can try out. Just pick one. If you don't like those, you can look up some other ones, but the most important thing is just pick one and do it for at least a month every day. Now, if you can't do 20 minutes twice a day, I don't blame you because there is now way I could've done 20 minutes twice a day when I started meditating again. I started meditating again seriously about four or five months ago, and what I literally did was I told myself all I had to do is meditate two minutes a day. That's it. All I had to do is meditate two minutes a day. So again, just like with the exercise, all you want to do is just do it every single day.

No matter how small an amount of time you need to be able to do it every day, that doesn't matter. All you're trying to do is persevere, build the habit, and then when you do sit down, to be able to do it. Twenty minutes twice a day, if your mind's anything like mine, it will come up with any possible reason it can to not sit down and meditate. So that's why it's important, look, if you can't sit down for 20 minutes, just do it once a day, five minutes, two minutes a day, and what you'll find is that after a while maybe you'll start to like it more and you'll increase the time. Or you don't even have to increase the time, but what you're trying to do is just do it every day and make sure when you actually sit down that you try as hard as you can to focus.

Most people, they like to do it in the morning and at night. So the best time to do it is right when you wake up in the morning, because right when you wake up in the morning you still haven't gotten involved in all your other activities, you still haven't gotten involved in all this other stuff that's going to make it really easy to say, "No, I don't have time to meditate." So right when you wake up in the morning, just meditate five minutes, whatever much time you can do and just do it right when you wake up.

Now for me, that's the perfect time because with some of those amino acids, if you remember, you need to take them on an empty stomach. So if you meditate first thing in the morning, let's say five, ten, twenty minutes, you can wake up, take your amino acid that needs to be taken on an empty stomach, and then meditate. It's the perfect time for that amino acid to digest and absorb in your body without eating food. Wake up ten minutes earlier, meditate first thing in the morning, right after you take your amino acids, and then after that make yourself some food and go on with the rest of your day.

So again, choose one of those basic meditations, focusing on your breath, watching your thoughts go by, or just counting your breaths. Make sure you do it every day and as you meditate, all that matters is how hard you persevere and all that matters is that you focus on that one thing, nothing else. Gently, firmly always come back to that one focus.