

## Some Meditation Ideas

The Basic Elements in all of these practices are:

**Object of Focus** - Giving our “thinking” mind something to focus on help to keep the random thoughts of the monkey mind at bay. This focus is not the goal, but a step on the path to transcending the “addiction” to the thinking mind.

**Letting Go** - The idea of “letting go” is key to allowing the “thinking mind” to release. While we can sometimes feel apprehensive or fearful of this letting go process, it can be comforting to know we do it everyday. Every night as we go to sleep our brainwaves cycle down from our thinking mode and through meditative modes and into deep sleep. The idea when going to sleep IS to lose consciousness. Then, we open our subconscious mind and begin to dream. Similarly, with meditation we want to allow our mind to go through the same cycles. However, with meditation the ideal is to stay conscious (awake) through this process and begin to bring our subconscious mind awake and into harmony with our conscious mind. So, in a way, it’s almost like dreaming while we are awake. ..or perhaps what we thought was reality is the dream?

### 1. Just sit and Breathe

Sit in a comfortable position with your back straight, so that you can breathe comfortably from your diaphragm. Focus on taking deep and slow breaths. Allow yourself to focus on only the breath. (This is your object of focus). Give the thinking mind a vacation and enjoy the simplicity of just focusing on the breath. Realize you are the energy behind the breath. Let go. Instead of breathing, allow yourself to be breathed. If the mind interrupts, return to the breath. Be patient and don’t get frustrated if the mind keeps interrupting. Part of getting to the relaxed space is releasing attachment to what you “think” should happen.

### 2. Sound the Bowl

This one is just like #1. However, instead allow your “object of focus” to be the “beat” of the bowl. The “beat” is the repetitive “wah wah wah” of the oscillating tone. Allow yourself to concentrate on this beat as it dissipates. Then strike the bowl again as you wish. You can begin to develop a sort of rhythm to the strike as well. Eventually, you may want to let the bowl drift into silence while internalizing the beat of the bowl in your mind. Allow this beat to continue on in your mind as you drift into deeper states of meditation.

### 3. Using a Mantra

Use a repeating word or phrase (internally in your mind) as your “object of focus”. This is one of the more effective ways to begin to short circuit the thinking mind. The words can be anything. Some ideas: “I am Love, I am Peace, I am abundance...” or it could be as simple as “I AM”. Allow yourself to develop a rhythm with the words as you repeat them over and over. Eventually you may feel the words, “disappear” as you slip into deeper states of relaxation. If the “thinking mind” returns with distractions, just return to the mantra.

### 4. Toning

Toning is just using the voice to sing or “Ohm” on the out breath. The tone itself becomes the object of focus. Allow your consciousness to merge with the sound. You are both producing the sound and experiencing it. Envision your mind as the clear blue sky. Your thoughts are like the clouds. Your “tone” is like a wind that pushes the clouds away, leaving only clarity. Allow the clarity to continue as you inhale to prepare to tone again. If thoughts come, it’s OK. Allow the outbreath and tone to clear the sky (your mind) again. Because toning is also using your breath and physical body, it is a powerful way to begin to recalibrate the nervous system.

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I like to alternate between these depending in what I feel is right for me at the moment. I also recommend using more than one in a session.

It takes time for the mind to begin to settle and for the nervous system to begin to find a place of balance. Sometimes this happens easily, other times it takes a little longer. be patient with yourself. Simply allow what is, to be.

An idea for a sample practice might be: Tone for 15 minutes, use a Mantra for 30 minutes, and sit and breathe for 30 minutes.

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Ultimately, the idea is to consciously find deeper states of relaxation and allow the “thinking mind”, which is strongly tied to our survival instinct, to relax. Sometimes in the beginning this can be unnerving or bring emotional issues up to deal with (or just observe) as the body readjusts. (We also tend to store subconscious traumas in our physical memory.) This survival instinct is concentrated in the brain in the amygdala (reptilian brain), which is strongly connected physiologically to our fear, or “fight or flight” response. With a consistent meditation practice, we can instead strengthen the connection with the frontal cortex, a brain region that is associated with calm thinking, creativity, compassion and Love.

Above all, remember that the only time that truly exists is right NOW and to always choose Love, not fear. Only you have the power to choose!

Ultimately meditation is practicing the art of returning to NOW, in harmony with the pulse of Life. Tune in.

