

MEDITATION MASTERY

BREATH WATCHING MEDITATION



**IMPROVE FOCUS
AND EXPAND YOUR AWARENESS**

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Introduction

The more responsibility you have in your life, more is the need of meditation. The busier you are, the less time you have, the more work you have, and endless desires you want, is the more you need to meditate. This is because meditation not only relieves you from stress and anxiety. It enhances your abilities to face challenges. It brings better health. Meditation is also referred to as food for the soul, energizes the mind, lifeline for the body that helps you get in shape, helps your mental alertness and improves your perception. This also helps you to express yourself properly. It helps in creating a non-violence society, a disease-free body, confusion-free mind, and sorrow-free soul. Meditation is very simple yet very profound; A rare combination of simplicity and depth.

Behind every random thought that runs through your head is a complete story that if you latch on that thought it's like taking a certain attention from your mind and gradually unfold that into pieces of details. This allows you to make an inner dialogue with yourself regarding that inner experience. With this, your meditation now leads to somewhere not quite the comfort zone and is not doing the actual definition of meditation, so you need to focus again and clear those

thoughts so you can get back to the fact that you are meditating so you won't think of any other things.

Within the next page, you would know the most basic yet most important of all the methods used in meditation - the breath watching meditation.

Chapter 1:

Breath Watching Meditation Explained

It has been proved that the root of everything is energy. It may lead to a higher divine intervention or a scientific approach of physics but it won't change the fact that energy has its own source. Buying that fact that there is the source of this energy, study shows that most of our lives, we focus on things that are outwardly. By this, a question needs to be answered - How do we realign ourselves in order for us to put attention on that energy?

The only thing in the world being done to accomplish such is through meditation. Stilling the mind and calming the body. In this area, the focus is not to meditate just to reach some enlightenment or a spiritual idea that you can attain, it's a meditation to drive your attention in your inner expression rather than allowing your focus to continually chase outward objects.

Breath watching method is a very powerful technique and can be done at any given time and place. This method only provides a simple exercise through carefully observing your breath. You can do this by just sitting still and watching how you breathe. This can be done through hours, leading you to a deeper state rather than leading you to see emptiness. Placing your mind in a state of neutrality that gives you the capability to experience your outer life and your inner one as well. An excellent tip for expanding your awareness is through breathing. The more we watch you breathe naturally and manipulatively, the more you mind slows down and your body starts to

calm down. Harmoniously, as you watch your breath, your mind enters the state of being still and only giving full attention to breathing and non else. In order to reach this is that, you need to consider different breathing patters and not to be able to do things or hear sounds that may interfere with you as you observe your breathing. All you have to do is witness how you breathe over and over again and try it to be more usual and as normal as possible.

After observing how you breathe in and out, try now to watch the gaps in between. There you'll be experiencing difficulties in focusing, but don't worry, you can always start again from the beginning and try to seek out calmness in between gaps without self-condemnation.

HISTORY OF BREATH WATCHING MEDITATION

Breath Watching Meditation or otherwise known as Anapanasati is derived from "sati" meaning mindfulness and ānāpāna that refers to inhalation and exhalation. In was said, from the books that teaches Buddhism to the schools of Tibetan Zen, that the tradition of keeping the mind and body stay calmed is through proper breathing. It is in the sensations formed from harmonious relationship between inhaling and exhaling.

Anapanasati is a form of meditation that gives the central focus on traditions of Buddhism in general, since the main objective is to achieve peace of mind as well as the body. From the ancient times that this form has been using to the modern era where all are part of technology, it is still most likely to be experienced by some due to its effective way of healing. They say that the attention given to the body, or parts of it, in quietude is deeply recommended to cultivate and provide an inner expression to find stillness. It also said in the traditional meditation, this serves as a practice wherein you release yourself from tension and suffering. They say that Buddha used the same meditation to achieve enlightenment during his quest for it. A well developed concentration made to practice full absorption.

A traditional method found in the books of Buddha suggests that in order to attain the balance, you need to go somewhere you can concentrate, according to the book its in a form of forest, you need to sit beneath a tree and observe your breath. You then notice how long or short your breathing takes place accordingly.

When doing the Breath Watching Meditation, the meditator practices the following great things:

- He then trains his mind to become more sensitive in giving attention to other parts of the body.

- He also trains his mind to concentrate in a certain thing to dispose negative traits such as inconsistency and relinquishment. And;
- He satisfies the mind by slowing things up.

Chapter 2: Scientific Approach In Breath Watching Meditation

Chemotherapy nowadays has been the ultimate recourse in the field of medicine; it has given hopes to those individuals suffering from malignancies. One of those individuals that was diagnosed with a stage 2 lymphoma was 44 year old Danilo Ramirez. He has no other choices but to take the risk of getting better through chemotherapy and radiation. He already knew what kind of treatment that is, and what side effects he will undergo.

Ramirez said that it was really hard on him not just physically but more on the psychological aspect. He also mentioned that there were nights that he couldn't sleep at all, knowing that the he had to face the treatment over and over again. This is because Danilo is also claustrophobic - a great amount of fear when it comes to small spaces. During radiation procedures, the patient needs to wear a large mask that protects that part of the body to avoid harmful effects of the radiation, with this, Danilo said that he is too claustrophobic to tolerate the radiation treatments.

Mr Hoffman, Ramirez's doctor and the medical director of radiation oncology at Roy and Patricia Disney Family Cancer Center in Burbank California, insisted that he should take the medication and don't refuse the treatment so that the risk of getting a potentially curable cancer would not increase.

The doctor also alleged that with the absence of the treatment, he would die. The doctor thought that bringing Ramirez into the initial radiation therapy could calm his anxiety and can control his phobia, but it seems that his anxiety got only worst and the standard sedatives did not worked as expected.

In the process, Ramirez suffered panic attack and kept on crying the whole time. With this, Hoffman decided to make a different approach so Ramirez could overcome his fears. He then proposed that Ramirez should attend to Meditation classes. In the medical field, it is not just Hoffman, among all the doctors and physicians, who is suggesting that patients should undergo meditation procedures before battling the treatments to help cure the ailments, there are also famous individuals in various health departments that are allowing and recommending patients to see professional meditators to seek peace of mind.

Some of the patients that are suffering from much worse diseases, they are strongly advised to use alternative medication such as therapies. As the Archives of Internal Medicine researched; therapies, for a long period of time, has provided both emotional and physical relief to many patients having different sickness. There are so many forms of therapy that patients could use and choose for their own.

These practices include yoga, meditation, acupuncture and so as other activities that affect the body as well as the mind.

Through experimental meditation, a lot of ailments are being treated with different meditation procedures. Procedures and techniques varying in the attention of details or focus on the desired part of the body which is desired to be cured. Meditation is recognized as an alternative medication which the field of medicine has been focusing on building establishments and departments providing activities enabling the body and mind to become active.

Due to the fact that this kind of procedure is just experimental, how the meditation reacts would vary on the certain individual performing the type of meditation he chose to accomplish. This suggests that the chance of curing an ailment through this alternative medication is high when an individual execute the meditation properly.

Ramirez was sent to participate in such alternative medication. He rendered different types of meditation techniques, but the only meditation that really focused on was the breath watching method. After a few weeks, when his schedule for radiation treatment began, he was able to stay calm and be treated the whole time without panicking. He can totally say that his phobia was gone, allowing him to feel better during the treatment process.

Chapter 3:
How Breath Watching Meditation
Helped Me

There are so many living proofs that testify to the greatness of meditation and it eventually serves as a catalyst for change in one's life. Here is a very inspiring story about Arden, a business woman, and how she found the way meditation.

“It can be tough, grueling and boring” she said but also added that once she woke up in the morning, she never hesitates to start the day with her meditation that could long for about 45 minutes.

The following are subtopics including the discussion and her side of issue.

Networking VS Meditation.

In my line of business, I have often promoted networking as a strong point in encouraging young minds to ensure their growth and success. Of course we do this all the time in my company. This is because, over the years, networking has been referred to as a power that enables you to make great things. But for me, I consider meditation to be the best thing that ever happened to me.

I have experienced a lot of great things when I started practicing meditation, I compare this kind of method to a person attending a GYM session - lifting and burning out fats. The similarity between the

activities is that they are both considered to be work outs. In the GYM, you manage to work on your body parts such as biceps, chest, and so on, like in meditation; it is also working out the brain. By meditation, the front parts of the brain is being strengthened, creating a mental awareness in all sorts of situations and allowing you to stay focused and balanced at the same time when some things turn bad.

How did meditation found you this kind of Profession?

I once knew a man that wanted to hire me at a certain company, probably sharing that experience is really relevant.

It was 2010 and I was just returning from a long period of meditation. My way of meditation is called “Breath Watching Meditation”. It is series of observation with your own breathing without letting anything to interfere with you. Hours of not performing any unnecessary movements, actions, and even leisure’s. It just pure observation, you can attain this with the most common position which is sitting still, or walking. It has been 8 days already of finding the inner experience and calming the body as well as the mind. I have learned this kind of meditation at Insight Meditation Society, which is located in Barre, Massachusetts. It has been considered to be one of the pillars in terms of the Meditation field. During my stay there, I

remember a certain moment; it was when I was in a long line of 100 people, all in the waiting list.

As I stood up in the line waiting for my turn to give my choice of food in the counter, suddenly, a thought rushed into my mind - "what if I ordered a double serving of lasagna, how is it gonna look?", then mentally, I had this inner dialogue in my mind that it feels like I am asking myself and at the same time trying to answer them. I just thought that whatever it's gonna look, atleast they be happy. After that dialogue, I found myself in the middle of realization in which at first I thought about insecurities, and then I thought about the happiness it could bring to others.

This has been the result of meditation I have been doing. It has opened my deep consciousness, allowing the stream of inner thoughts to be express widely and accordingly.

I received a job offer from a big time business company, I was invited to come to the big boss's Office for some tea time and as well as job interview. Not knowing that the actual interview would be in form of writing. He said that I need to write things about how I would start upon hiring with the company. I felt so confident about it, since I have managed to learn the breath watching meditation, I can easily meditate at any given place and time. Right there and then I meditate,

after being relaxed and stilling the mind, I began writing. All the words came through my mind and kept on jotting it down. I was not surprised when they liked my writing and instantly gave me the position I was offered to apply. I believe that I could not have done that if I did not have the ability and the knowledge of meditation.

Upon meditation, how to attain the level of focus?

To achieve the level of focus is also very difficult, but, during my stay in the meditation center in Massachusetts, we are incorporated about a certain practice involving your thumb as well as your attention to details. You need to focus on the thumb and should not be able to get distracted, in comparison, you need to represent your thoughts as like clouds in the sky, they pass by, but would not affect you or draw you into it. In relevance with my work in the business industry, in our culture, we were all educated in the field of capitalizing any distraction.

When did you start meditating?

I was in my senior college in 2005, I was already meditating during that time but it was a really different method of meditating, that I have read about some Buddhism that at first, I was hesitant in being attach in that kind of level. But accidentally, I picked up a certain Vietnamese book written by a Vietnamese monk named Thich Nhat Hanh.

When I opened the book, the first page says that life is full of suffering but you don't have to suffer. If suffering can be avoided, it would be a great thing. It just suggests that there are also other things to consider to life than suffering. With those words of wisdom, I instantly became connected and attached to the book. During those years, I always feel alone, depressed, and other words that corresponds with the word unhappy. At that particular day when I got the book, I started meditating. Sitting on the floor of my dorm room. It took me a couple of years to meditate properly using the sitting posture and then once I did, there was one type of practice that I was doing by my own where I hold my breath, count to 10, and then when you get to 10, you then again start from 1. This helps you settle, focus so that it would give your mind the idea of concentrating. Counting to 10 is very difficult and would take a lot of practice and time to master such concentration and energy. Supposedly you don't get into 10, you then start from 1 until you reach 10 or your maximum number if you cant get to 10. For me, it took me several weeks before I finally get to count from 1 to 10 without forcing and distracting myself.

To some people, the idea of meditation is just giving yourself a hard time focusing and yet starting to fail and be distracted, not allowing them to experience the inner expression and the feeling of inner peace. They are all tied up in the thought that it would cost them too much time in order for them to experience such greatness - and it's true, it's just as normal as why the table is hard and the tissue is soft.

How can you get through work with the help of meditation?

What I literally do in a day is to supervise everything, understanding the present situations and problems as well as reading all the news feeds every now and then. I am no excuse when it comes to distractions, I myself also get distracted, and after all, my work is all about cultivating the different ways in creating a different approach for the business insider. Although I get distracted, meditation taught me something useful that I have been using for the past years of working here in the business industry - it's the muscle memory or repetition. It is like a defense mechanism by the mind that when you are being bombarded with different stress and as well as endless pressure and too much instructions and desired goals to achieve, your mind then tells your body, or somehow reminds you at the back of your head, to slow down and take a break. I notice this kind of action when I felt so distracted that I am falling apart, I just then realized that I need to sit down and think of this a couple of times and try to

figure out the best way possible to resolve it. If you have experience the same, I believe that it would be easier from now on to access such meditation and even the flow of life. This kind of result from meditation is only achieved by constant practice.

Morning routine?

Upon waking up in the morning, I start the day by sitting in a cushion with my phone with some meditation software. It comprises of one soothing Zen music that helps me to get relaxed and also, upon the fading music, it only signifies that 45 minutes has already passed by. Even though that after all the meditating experiences I had, I already know the feeling after 45 minutes. I rely it on the sound for it would be distracting if ever I display a time showing the countdown. So it would be more appropriate to use the sound.

I start with breath watching meditation, wherein I am using my breath as an anchor for my attention, with this, I can be able to focus on one single thought in my mind and give so much attention to that until I become relax enough to sustain balance and to keep away on being distracted, relieving the stress and anxiety I am feeling. The idea of breath watching is not just simply or literally focusing on the breath just for the sake of the knowing how breathing works but more importantly to notice what's also happening in the mind.

What would life possible be with the absence of meditation?

First of all, I won't have the same level of self-awareness that I have at the moment for people are not born self-aware. Practice makes perfect, to achieve such mental alertness and other awareness, you must consider unvarying practice of meditation, but if not, then you can't think well and do things as great as you can do when you meditate properly.

Meditating won't necessarily mean that you know every piece of background where it all started, all you have to do is sit for a couple of minutes a day and witness how it works.

You can compare meditation to everyday exercise - you can choose among the thousands of applicable ways to accomplish it. A piece of advice, for beginners, try to do the breath watching meditation, watching your breath and finding your own inner thoughts and I hope that works for you.

Chapter 4:
Step By Step Breath Watching
Meditation

You need these 2 steps to attain the maximum potential of Breath Watching Meditation.

STEP 1: LOOSEN UP

Achieving relaxations comes in handy when you try to tighten up your body first. Afterwards, you try to remove those tensions by relaxing bit by bit all the way. Breath watching meditation is more prolific when you practice these following exercises. **First**, you inhale, tense the body, then breath out, as the time the air comes out, relaxation begins to occur, releasing the tension and giving relief to the meditator. **Second** is to inhale slowly, and now, you begin to incorporate counting. You need to inhale, consuming 8 counts, then hold your breath for the same figure, when exhaling, you also need to consume the same count again. This is called the “even count breathing”.

STEP 2: ACTUAL BREATH WATCHING

In this step, you continuously practice the same count method, breathing in and breathing out. You will notice a sudden and spontaneous relaxing sensation all over your body. Inhale deeply, and then slowly exhale. Wait for the breath to come in of its own accord, and watch its flow. Simply watch the breath. Don't watch your body breathing. Observe the breath itself only.

You have to consider the observation points wherein you inhale, hold, and exhale. These points are very crucial to the meditation. You can do this for 10 minutes or more. After the meditation, you can enjoy the calmness of your mind, stillness of your body, and a nice quiet surrounding.

Chapter 5:
Experiencing The Breath Watching
Meditation

Settle things slowly till you realize that you are in a complete “simple be” state of mind and body. Pay attention to the things happening within the present time such as other sensations like noise, feelings, thoughts, with the absence of movement.

After that, you can now focus on the breathing. Follow your breathing as you inhale and exhale the air flowing into your body. Observation is the key in this kind of meditation. Always be natural and remember not to force yourself in observing how you breathe. You must be aware of the air going inside your nose as it find its way down to your chest.

The mind will wander away from the breath — that’s fine, it doesn’t matter. That’s a part of the meditation! When you notice that you are no longer observing the breath, easily bring your attention back to it.

Let all of your experiences — thoughts, emotions, bodily sensations — come and go in the background of your awareness of the breath. Notice how all of your experiences — thoughts, emotions, bodily sensations, awareness of sounds and smells — come automatically and effortlessly like the breath.

In time, you can become aware of the tendencies of your mind. You will see how it resists certain experiences and tries to hold onto others. The natural settling down of the mind allows you to notice these underlying tendencies and creates the possibility to let them go. If you experience a resistance to what is occurring, an attempt to change what is happening, a tendency to hold on to some experience — let it go.

This is a variation on the Breath Awareness Meditation that you can try if you find you are able to watch the breath for periods of time. Start as above and when you are settled into the process of observing the breath, become aware of the point at which the breath turns the corner from the inhalation to the exhalation and from the exhalation to the inhalation. Notice what is there. It is not a thing — it is a gap between the breaths, nevertheless there can be awareness of it. It is a kind of “still point”.

Continue to bring your attention to that still point, bringing your attention back to the gaps in the breath whenever it has wandered away. As you continue practicing this meditation, you may find that the stillness is no longer experienced as discrete gaps between the breaths, but is a more continuous experience. This cultivates the awareness of the stillness that is present in the midst of activity, and can create a profound experience of peace.

If you are to go to a certain retreat that focus on meditation here are the following patterns of teachings.

FIRST ONE TO FOUR DAYS: Achieve some calm (Samadhi) with concentration on breathing. When the mind and body are calmed somewhat, you may start watching the sensations associated with breathing (like pressure, cold on the nose, etc.)

NEXT DAY: Watch breathing and add awareness of bodily sensations like cold, hot, burning, tingling, pressure, aching, etc. You do not think about them, you just observe.

NEXT DAY: Add awareness of sound. For instance, If a bird tweets, you just notice the tweet. Do not think about the sound, or judge the sound.

REMAINDER OF RETREAT: Add awareness of thoughts. You just notice: There's a thought. "Hey, look, a thought is occurring." Do not pursue it, or elaborate on it. Just notice that a thought appeared and passed away. Go back to noticing. If you notice that you have been lost in thought for a while, just notice that and go back to the practice.

In a slightly different type of Insight retreat, meditators start with awareness immediately and let the calm feeling of samadhi emanate from the concentration of focused attention. For instance, some teachers might teach starting with awareness of breath and then quickly open the awareness, noticing the other sense doors (bodily sensations, hearing, smell, taste, thoughts, and sounds) as perceptions arise and pass away. Sometimes the concept of "labeling" is taught as an aid. Here, when something arises, you notice it and label it in your mind gently. For instance, you notice a sound, say to yourself "hearing" and let the sound pass away without thinking about it. Or you may notice you are off on a thought or series of thoughts, and label "thinking" and let it pass away.

If you are not in a long retreat, you must decide what is best for you. This is one idea: You take your 30 or 45 minute sitting and start it with breathing concentration to get yourself calm and then open the awareness to just one sense door. For instance, you can concentrate on noticing the breath. Then if a sound appears, notice it and just go back to the breath. After some experience in meditation you may want to start with awareness of breath and then notice all the other sense doors as they arise and pass away, always returning to the breath as an anchor. You stay with the breath unless awareness of some other sense door appears. Consciously decide what is best for you and **STICK WITH IT.**

Different Insight teachers teach slightly different methods, possibly because they were taught in a certain lineage of Insight practice. They are all really teaching the same thing: Calm down and BE HERE, NOW, IN THIS MOMENT. Do not follow thoughts into the past with memories or into the future with fantasy.

One final caveat is that one should not constantly judge one's progress. Take it easy on yourself. The definition of a good sitting is that "you did it." The mind is always different and the practice unfolds over time with many ups and downs.