

Freeway Zen

Meditations for Modern Times



Discovering the footsteps
From the Zen parable, "The 10 bulls"

Along the riverbank under the trees,
I discover footprints!
Even under the fragrant grass I see his prints.
Deep in remote mountains they are found.
These traces no more can be hidden
than one's nose, looking heavenward.

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Introduction.

This is a book to practice, not a book to read.

It is written to help you see yourself deeply. The exercises are based on 35 years spiritual practice by the author. They are taken from Zen Buddhist practices, and the Self-inquiry practice taught by Ramana Maharshi in India in the last century.

These meditations let you take moments of your daily life that are often filled with frustration, your commute, and transform these moments into some of your most precious times, suffused with inner peace and joy. Once you learn these practices you can apply the same approach to other moments where people commonly get impatient, like standing in line at the grocery store, or at a movie, or even in the dentist chair.

In these practices you are not “doing” anything, rather you are simply “looking” within. Spiritual teachers from around the world since time immemorial have said that our greatest treasures are to be found within, but most of us do not know how to go about this looking within. This book is intended to show you how to start this process. You may find, once you start, that it changes your life.

Practice these exercises with an open mind and an open heart.

I recommend that you stick with each exercise for a while, perhaps a week (or more), until you become familiar with what you find. Like all other areas of life, there are skills involved. As you practice, you gain skills at practice. You will also find that as you gain skills, you will be able to go back to beginning exercises and repeat them, and they will become deeper.

You may also find that you want to practice in sitting meditation, not just driving. That is fine, and a good sign. Just sit your body someplace where it is comfortable and you can be still and meditate.

I noticed something funny sometime after I started this practice. I sometimes got upset if there was not enough traffic, so I arrived at my destination too soon, and the time for meditation was over. If you notice this, it means the meditation is starting to work. Meditation is starting to become something that you want to do.

This meditation goes to a deeper level than just the mind. You will be looking within, holding a question where you want the experience, NOT the “answer” to the question. You do continue to use the mind (until the meditation gets much deeper), and you want to use your intellect to support your meditation, not to limit the meditation to your mental concepts. You use the mind by choosing to practice, and by the deep discrimination that you will be taught in this book.

The traditional approach to spiritual teaching is:

Listen (or
read), Reflect,
Then deeply meditate.

You may start to notice that your experiences in meditation “flow” together parts of your life. This is natural, and is a sign that you are taking this in deeply.

I also want to give credit to my own spiritual teacher, Nome, at the Society of Abidance in Truth, in Santa Cruz, California. I had studied Zen on my own for many years. When I started to hear Nome’s teaching of Ramana Maharshi’s wisdom, I started to understand in a much deeper way all that I had read before. His teaching has brought me to much greater depth than I was able to find on my own.

Finally I started my own serious meditation practice. For years now I practice sitting meditation every day (at my best time of the day), practicing self-inquiry. I also engage in ongoing meditation during much of my day’s activity. My goal is to meditate all the time.

If there is any wisdom expressed in these pages, it is more likely to be that of my teacher than my own.

Freeway Zen

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Modern Times.

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Freeway Zen

Preliminaries

This is meditation
with the eyes open.

The number one rule of Freeway Zen is: Don't
run into the car or object in front of you.

This meditation is one of awareness, Not
unconsciousness.

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Where do I look?

Eyes open.

Not fixed on any car or object,
Not fixed on the road.

Eyes open.

Relaxed, Aware.

I watch, open and relaxed.

I see the road ahead.

I am aware of the flow of traffic.

I see the rear view mirror.

Not focused on anything

I see all.

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The first step, Mindfulness

Turn off the radio.

Do nothing (other than drive)

Now do

Nothing.

Just be with yourself.

Listen to the sound of the car and the road.

Listen to your own silence.

Don't do anything, Just listen, Just be,

Freeway Zen

Now

Turn off the radio.

Just listen to the sound of the tires and the road.

Pay no attention to anything else.
(As you continue to be aware of the road and traffic)

If you notice a thought starting, just let it drop,
you do not need to finish it.

Just listen,
And be.

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And now

Turn off the radio.

Just notice you breath.It

flows in and out.

Notice when the breath is out (up),
Before in goes in (down).

Just notice,
In and out.

Notice when the breath is in (down),
Before it goes out (up).

Just notice,
In and out.

Just watch your breath.

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And now

Turn off the radio.

Stay in the present moment.

Do not look at your watch or car's clock.

Do not worry about being late.

You will arrive when you will,

This is determined by when you left and the traffic.

Stay in this moment.

If a thought comes,

Or a memory,

Or some imagination,

Notice that they pull your attention awayFrom

this moment.

If it helps to stay in the moment,Listen to

the tire noise

Or watch your breath.Just

stay in this moment

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You are now ready for a special exercise:

Fill up your tank.

Head away from town.
A lightly travelled freeway is best. Little
traffic, no signals or stops.

Just drive.
Radio off (naturally). Quietly
be with yourself.

Just let your thoughts rise and fall naturally.
Do not avoid them,
Do not seek them,
Just let them be.

After a while,
Maybe one hour, maybe two, You
will feel a shift,
You relax, open and become deeply at ease.
Enjoy this.

Now it is time to turn around and go home.

What next?

If you can be quiet
when the radio is off
and you are just with yourself,
then go to the next section.

If you still cannot yet be quiet and still within
More practice may be needed.
Start again
from the beginning.

This meditation
Is for your experiencing,
Not for your thinking.

If your thinking is still too “loud,” Then it
is good to practice
being quiet.

The next step: Where is within?

Turn off the radio.

Notice that you exist.

This is something that does not change. Your
sense of existence is the same today
as it was in your first memory.

Look for yourself
and see, "Is this true?"
"Is this my experience?"

In this meditation
we find out what is really true
for ourselves.

"The truth is within"

Let's find it!

More

Turn off the radio.
Notice that you exist.

Have you ever been happy?
Yes. (Even in deep sleep last night.)

Ask yourself,
“What is the source of my happiness?”
“Where does the experience of happiness come from?”

Do not answer with your mind. Do
not provide a mental concept.

Look within yourself and see
Where does this happiness arise?

We think it stems from some desire that was fulfilled, But
Where does the happiness
really come from?

We all want to be happy.
Where does it come from?

See for yourself.

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