



"Meditation, Motivation and More"

by Mary Havelock

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About the Author – Mary Havelock

Mary Havelock has two young children.

She and her husband used to work for the same large corporation.

They planned that Mary should stay home when their son was born and they could get along with just the one salary.

Then, their daughter arrived and they had greater pressure on their finances and lifestyle.

Mary and Keith have used motivation techniques through their working lives and found them very useful.

The meditation and other procedures that Mary explains in this book have helped them and people they know to cope with the increasing pressures of modern life.

Mary is not a trained teacher and the material she presents is from experience, not formal training.

She said that they are both now happier and better focused, free of unreasonable worries and enjoying every day more.

She hopes that this material will be equally helpful for you and your family.



Part I: Meditation

Why Meditate?

When a friend suggested to me that I should try meditation, some negative feelings came to the surface in my mind:

- I thought that it was associated with some religion that I knew little about.
- I felt that I did not need it because I had regular sessions at the gym, and my small son and husband kept me very active when I wasn't rushing around at work.
- I just didn't have any time for it!

Then, my friend told me some of the benefits which she had got from meditation.

Like us, she and her partner worked long hours and had a busy social life.

But, she had been looking for some way to reduce the effects of stress on her body and their relationship.

She said that meditation was:

- ✓ Inexpensive
- ✓ Suitable for almost everyone, whatever their physical condition

- ✓ Easy to fit into the busiest schedule (that was a real surprise to me!)
- ✓ Something that I could start without a lot of preparation
- ✓ Something which might produce some benefits in weeks rather than months or years.
- ✓ Not tied to any belief system.



I am very grateful that my friend suggested that I try meditation, although she was concerned that I might start to think she was a bit weird.

My own experience has shown there are other benefits to this as well.

Meditation can help to put you in better control of your own emotions.

It can also help you to get more enjoyment from the positive aspects of your life.

If you do it regularly, it will help you to reduce the effects of stress and other negative influences on your physical well-being.

Many people have reported that meditation helped them deal with the effects of serious illnesses.

Now, let's go, together, through the simple steps needed to bring those benefits into your life.

The Core Benefits

While it will require some minor adjustments to set up even short meditation sessions in your current schedule, I believe that you will soon experience benefits that will show the effort is worthwhile.

One major improvement will be when you see how meditation can help you to better control and influence your internal conversation.

This can give you more control over two major factors that negatively affect our level of happiness and even our health:

- 1) A negative self-image and
- 2) accepting high levels of stress as normal in our society.

Most of us have to deal with plenty of negative influences in our professional and personal lives. The next section will help you to overcome current and past negative conditioning.

Polishing Your Image

Many of us have been conditioned to believe that we should never expect to have a better life than we have now. We may have been taught from an early age that whatever bad things happen, it's our fault.

That's why you might hear some of your friends say, "I've always been hopeless at that!" Downplaying their abilities and potential in that way is not modesty, it's just an excuse. Often, they could change their success rate in that activity with a little extra effort and self-confidence.

But, those comments almost ensure that they'll never improve in that area either.

That negativity can increase their internal stress and unhappiness which will affect everyone around them over time.

Even people that have achieved great material success, or were brought up with access to every benefit that wealthy parents could give them, sometimes make themselves and those around them unhappy because of their negative self-image.

You should see, over time, a distinct improvement in how you handle the upsets and disappointments which are part of everyday life.

The degree of happiness in our lives is closely related to how we feel about ourselves.

Reduce Stress



We all have a fight-or-flight response which developed among our earliest ancestors – those that survived long enough to produce our forefathers anyway!

In our urban environment, that response is often triggered by relatively trivial hassles that we have. It might be a reckless driver that cuts us off on our way to work or our boss putting the blame on us for something which was not our doing.

Many of us react strongly to the smallest triggers and there are plenty of them. Our bodies and our mental health can be affected over time by these constant calls on the fight/flight response.

You will probably see some improvement in how you handle small upsets after only a short while, provided you are consistent.

Meditation is not the universal answer to every doubt and upset but it can help.

Connecting to Here and Now

Many people get the impression that meditation is intended to remove them from the stressful situation that they are in to a “higher plane” and a carefree existence.

But, meditation is actually a means of clearing obstructions from your thinking and helping you to focus better on the positive aspects of your life so that you are better able to handle the stresses and disappointments which we all have.

When you use the exercises and suggestions that I provide in this book for a while, you should find that you see your life and relationships in a more positive way.

Where and How to Meditate



The meditation exercises that I explain in this book are simple and short. I am not a professional teacher – I am just sharing what I feel have been the most beneficial for me and people that I know.

They are what I, along with family and friends, use because they fit in with our varied, busy lives.

I recommend that you discuss meditation with your doctor before you do any of the exercises here. It is just common-sense. Your doctor will be able to advise you because they will be aware of your general health and medical history. Never take chances with your health. You won't need any special clothing or equipment. You may want to try them first when you have some space and privacy.

The only other requirement is that you should choose the exercises which you can expect to complete without interruption.

After you have gained a little insight and confidence, you will be doing some of them during your lunch hour, while watching your partner's favorite television show or while listening to someone present a report!

Some teachers suggest that some of the very simple exercises can be used to help keep stress down while you are waiting for a traffic light to change, but I don't recommend that.

I think that driving in many areas requires our full, undivided attention. Many accidents are caused by unexpected circumstances.

I believe that regular meditation will improve your ability to cope with the stress and effort required to drive safely.

And, if you are driving a reasonable distance, a short stop, a little exercise and a few minutes meditation would definitely help you to get to your destination in better shape.

How to Meditate

The first couple of times you do an exercise, I suggest that you sit in a comfortable chair with a firm back and seat. Make sure that your feet are flat on the floor and that your knees are bent at right angles.

Do not cross your legs as this can interfere with blood circulation and, over time, may lead to serious problems.

Keep your arms loose, either hanging down or resting lightly on your knees. Don't cross them over your chest because you want your breathing to be regular and unrestricted.

I don't recommend that you do any meditation while lying down unless you have to for medical reasons. This makes it harder for you to complete your exercise without drifting off to sleep.

This will probably reduce the benefits of the meditation, unless your goal was to use it to help you sleep better.

Don't over-do your meditation. I seem to get the best results from consistency rather than making the sessions longer.

Keep your sessions short and focused. This helps to keep you connected with your current surroundings so that you can answer the phone or soothe a crying child.

Hit the Habit, not Yourself

If you want to use meditation to help break a bad habit, it's important to focus on positive aspects.

I know people that have, for instance, tried to re-enforce their efforts to diet within their meditation sessions. But, what seems to happen is that by filling their mind with negative thoughts and images of flab, decayed teeth etc, they downgrade their own self-image. It's like they start blaming themselves for being weak and unable to reduce their eating or giving up sugary snacks.

I'm sure that they could get better results if they focused on the benefits of feeling healthier, having sweeter breath and more cash after giving up their snacks rather than the negative images.

Going Further

If you want to develop your knowledge and your usage of meditation techniques, seek out a qualified, reputable teacher that will guide you and be on hand when you try longer sessions.

Simple as Breathing

You're almost ready for your first meditation exercise.

I want you to focus on your breathing. This exercise can help us to improve how we breathe so that we get more benefit from each breath.



Sighs

Have you ever sighed deeply and immediately felt a little better? It works for many people and is so simple.

Try it – three or four deep sighs is plenty. The effect is not long-lasting but it's a good way to use a spare moment. And, when you notice the benefit you get, you can do it again straight away if you have the time.



You can get the same effect with a deep yawn. That was recommended to me some years ago as a quick way to increase the amount of air, especially oxygen, I was taking in.

This is not something you should do in company because the other people may think your sigh or yawn is a negative reaction to their presence or conversation.

Although we've been doing it all our lives, many people don't breathe well. We take short, shallow breaths and we hold our bodies in positions which constrict the flow of air to and from our lungs.

Many of us also smoke, which doesn't help.

Good breathing means taking in enough air with each breath to really fill our lungs. You can feel the effect by lightly placing your hand on your belly. If you don't notice any increase in pressure there, then you are only taking shallow breaths which don't get below the top part of your lungs.

It's not essential for your breaths to be all of the same length. Try to make the exhale longer than the inhale.

The most important factor is that you remain as relaxed as possible.

Count to Ten

This is your first real meditation. It is simple to do, but not many people find it all that easy when they first try it.

For your first few sessions, do the exercise when you have a bit of privacy and can expect not to be interrupted for the few minutes it will take.

Sit yourself in a comfortable chair with a firm back.

Now, you just focus on your breathing.

Count each breath as you inhale and then, slowly, exhale.

Concentrating on those breaths will help our mind to switch away from the troubles of the day for a short while.

But, it probably won't happen straight away because your mind is following the pattern you've set up over a period of years. So, thoughts about your lunch appointment or your shopping list will probably intrude during the first sessions.

That's normal. Just start your count again ... and again, however many times it takes.

We are not used to concentrating on something as simple as our breathing for any length of time. We want to be doing and experiencing more important or interesting things all the time.

But, this simple exercise will deliver noticeable benefits if you just stick with it as you progress from being only able to focus for, say, five breaths until you can do it for up to five minutes at a time.

With experience, you'll find that you can do this exercise almost any time when your active participation is not required – while waiting for a plane or during a boring presentation.

Don't Think too Much



With the constant bombardment of images and sounds during almost every waking moment, plus the relentless increase in the demands of the workplace, it's little wonder that most of us find it harder than ever to switch off and let our mind rest.

One effect of this is when people start talking to themselves.

Many other people have a constant flow of mostly useless thoughts rushing through their minds almost every waking moment.

Meditation can help us to break out of that pattern, which is growing more powerful every year as media and advertising experts find new ways to push their messages into our heads.

Just pausing long enough for a sigh or a yawn before you start your next task (starting the car or answering the phone) can give your mind a chance to change gear rather than just overlaying demands of the new task over those of what you were doing previously.

If you always rush to answer the phone on the first ring, give yourself, and the caller, a couple of rings to collect your thoughts before answering.

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