

Meditation?

Meditation

Meditation is easy and has many benefits. In this chapter I'm going to discuss why meditation is so great, how it can help in your quest to meet women, and how to do it. And then, you're going to meditate. Really.

Why Meditate?

We live in a stressful world, and that stress gets even higher when we are approaching women we want to meet. This is called approach anxiety, and it is common. It's ok to get a little stressed out, but you don't want it to prevent you from making the approach, or cause you to blow it once you make the approach.

While I'm not suggesting you should plop yourself down in the lotus position before the woman of your dreams, I am suggesting that you can find that place of inner peace more easily once you've spent some quality time there.

Meditation is a great way to relax and deal with stress. It's also a great way to get in touch with yourself and the reality that we're all a part of. We tend to live our lives in patterns, playing the same programs over and over. Get up, eat cereal, brush teeth, get on train, go to work, and so on. It's possible to find a richness in every task, every moment. Meditation helps show you the way to that inner richness. It gives you a place from which to observe yourself without all the usual programs playing. Unpeel the layers of delusion and you'll find something amazing inside, something that was always there, but you weren't paying attention to.

Meditation Helps You Learn To Notice

Notice what? Everything. Stop and smell the roses, see the green grass and the blue sky. Pay attention to everything around you. These skills will directly help you when you're talking to a woman. Learn to listen when people are talking instead of just planning out the next thing you want to say. Get into the flow of the conversation, instead of being stuck in "I talk, you talk."

Notice the way she's standing, what she's doing with her hands, the way she's looking at you, and still pay close attention to what she's saying. Sound difficult?

Not if you are in the moment, just being there with her, being completely aware. Meditation gives you a taste of this being in the moment stuff. And it does so in a safe environment, away from the daily stress of life. Once you experience this, you can bring it to other aspects of your life, including your conversations and interactions with women.

You'll also learn to be aware of your own thoughts. Are some of these thoughts negative messages that have been holding you back? Maybe it's time to replace them with positive thoughts. That's not some New Age mumbo jumbo; the power of positive thinking is real and you can use it to improve your self-image and the way others see you. Who would you rather talk to, someone who perceives himself as boring or someone who feels alive and interesting? Would you rather hang out with someone who brings you up or someone that

brings you down? The key is not to block out or ignore negative messages. Rather, you can confront them, examine them, spin them around, and send them drifting off. Realize them for what they are, just ideas. If you think you're too fat, that's not necessarily a negative thought. If you focus on the thought and feel depressed and eat a bucket of ice cream, well, that's not so good. If you think up ways to lose some weight and become healthier, then that is good. So being aware of what's going on in your head, and examining those thoughts, is an important process.

Don't cling or attach to those thoughts. See them for what they are, and move on. Find what's helpful and learn from it. Discard what's harmful and holding you back. Look for positive solutions to the problems you face, and act on those solutions.

There are many more benefits to meditation, but for our purposes the main idea is this. You need to become more aware of yourself and the world around you in order to interact more effectively and live more comfortably in that world. You and the world aren't two separate things, it's all one thing. Feeling that, knowing that, comes from meditation, and the benefits that result will directly help your efforts to meet wonderful women and develop relationships with them.

We'll revisit these ideas and flesh them out as the book progresses, but you need to be meditating or you'll miss a lot. So let's get you meditating.

How to Start?

Meditation is very easy, and the more you do it, the easier it gets. I suggest you start out meditating 5 minutes a day, every day. Then increase that to 10 minutes, and so on, till you get to about 30 or 40 minutes a day. If that's too much, do it for less time, but do it every day. You'll realize the best results that way. Better you should meditate 5 minutes a day, every day, than 40 minutes every other day. Make this a natural part of your life, just like taking a shower in the morning. Here's what you need to do:

Sit in a comfortable stable position

You don't have to sit in a full lotus position, although if you can, that's a very stable position to sit in. If you choose to do a full lotus, use a thick pillow to sit on so your butt is higher than your knees, and your knees are on the floor. There are other positions you can use on the floor such as half lotus and Burmese. To learn more, take a look at the pictures at:

<http://www.mro.org/zmm/teochingslmeditation.php>

If you don't want to sit on the floor, sit on a chair. You still might want the pillow; it can help get you in a comfortable position. Sit slightly forward on the chair, and don't lean back against the backrest.

The important thing is to find a stable sitting position that won't have you squirming around and fidgeting. You need to sit still and breathe, so find a position that allows that.

Head tilted slightly down

Your head should be facing forward and tilted slightly down. This should feel comfortable and natural. If your head is tilted so far down that it's interfering with your breathing, you're tilting too much.

Eyes almost closed

Your eyes should be almost but not quite shut. Look at a spot on the floor a few feet in front of you. This should feel comfortable, not strained. Your eyes should be relaxed.

Hands in cosmic mudra

Your hands should be resting in your lap, right hand first with the palm up, then left hand on top, of the right, palm up. Your thumbs should be close but not quite touching, with enough

space to just pass a sheet of paper between them. This hand position is called the cosmic mudra. There are other mudras, but this one is good for our purposes. It also has the coolest name.

One way to check if you've got your mind on your meditation is to check the thumbs. If they are pressed together or are far apart, get them back in the right spot, almost touching, and continue.

Back upright and comfortable

Your back should be upright, but don't strain to make it perfectly straight or arched. Just sit up in a comfortable position. This might take some practice. Before you start meditating, you can rock from side to side till you find the mid point. Then rock forward and back in ever decreasing arcs to find the balance point in the middle.

Don't slump forward as this will affect your breathing.

Don't tighten the back muscles as this will get painful fast. Over time this will become easier. In the beginning it will take a bit of trial and error. It's all part of the process, so don't let it stress you out. You are learning. Just pay attention and stay open to what's happening.

Breathe down to your belly

Many of us get in the bad habit of breathing into our chest rather than all the way down to our belly. Your stomach should gently rise and fall as you breathe.

Don't try to slow down your breathing, just breathe at a comfortable rate and be aware of your breathing. You can focus either on the feeling of the air going in and out of your nose, or the feeling of the air making your belly rise and fall. As your meditation continues your breathing will naturally slow down. That's fine. Don't try to control it, just be aware of it.

How does it feel?

Your breath is always with you, so it's a nice thing to focus on. All living things are breathing with you, even the trees and the grass. The universe is breathing. It's a universal meditation that's going on all the time, and you're tapping into it, plugging back in.

Mind aware of thoughts

Your mind will do its normal thing, which is to think think think. You will get distracted, and ride off on this tangent and that. That's going to happen. Once you become aware of it, gently bring your mind back to your breathing. Ultimately, you will be able to see your thoughts floating by like clouds, rather than getting wrapped up in them and carried off.

This takes time and is a process of constant improvement. Don't worry if you keep getting distracted. Just come back to the breathing. Again, don't let any of this stress you out.

From the very first moment you sit to meditate, you are doing it right, and will continue to improve.

Count Your Breaths

One way to keep your mind focused on your breathing is to count each breath. At first, you can count up from 1 to 10, counting each in and each out breath. Then start over at 1. This is harder than it sounds, but will become easier. Your mind will tend to drift. Just bring it back to the counting.

When that becomes easy, which could take weeks or months, start counting just the out breaths, 1 to 10, 1 to 10, on and on. Really focus on each number as you say it or think it silently in your head.

Breathe in, then out: oooooonnnneeee.

Breathe in, then out: twooooooooooooo.

And so on. If you lose the count, and you will from time to time, start over at 1. This is not a contest, it is a process. It becomes easier with practice, and you'll find it another great way to monitor how well you're focusing on your breathing rather than getting lost in thoughts. Eventually, you might want to stop counting, but some people continue this for years. This is still real meditation, even if you do the counting. Sometimes you will notice what's happening between the numbers.

This might be a calm feeling, or it might be a deep feeling that has no name. Just notice it all. Let it all be part of your experience. There is no right or wrong here. Just let it be.

Problems you might encounter

Feeling uncomfortable

At first, just sitting still for this long will be hard. Your body wants to move around. But only by quieting the body can you quiet the mind. Sit very still, and focus on your breathing and your counting. Stay with it. This does get easier, but only if you stick with it.

Itching

If you feel an itch, focus on it. What does it feel like?

What is an itch? Don't try to make it go away, just let your mind focus on it. Don't scratch. If you scratch one itch, another pops up somewhere else, and so on. Just let it go. This is very hard to do. It's also great training for focusing the mind and staying in the moment. You can be aware of what's happening without it controlling you. Right? Keep at it. If the itch is really driving you nuts, go ahead and scratch, but don't let it turn into a scratching fest. Take a deep breath and get back to focusing on your breathing.

Lost in thoughts

This is the biggy, and although I've already mentioned it, I want to emphasize that your brain just isn't going to shut up. What it will do, eventually, is calm down.

Rather than hurling 50 ideas per second at you, it might just be an occasional thought, floating by. You can be aware of that thought, consider it, and let it go.

Effortlessly. This takes time. Meditate every day and you will see progress. If you find yourself getting lost in thoughts, do not get angry at yourself or scold yourself.

This is part of the process. You're human. Humans think a lot. You'll be amazed how much thinking your brain does. It's really something. Let it do its thing, you do your thing, and it will all work out.

Other types of meditation

There are many types of meditation, perhaps thousands. I'm teaching you one. It's all you'll ever need. If you want to try other kinds, be my guest. I would warn, however, that if you are under active psychiatric care, you should consult with your psychiatrist before getting into meditation. The type of meditation I'm teaching you is called Zazen, and if you go to a Zen temple this is the type of meditation you'll see people doing. Eventually, you can leave off the number counting and just sit. Or you can focus on solving a koan, which is a sort of Zen riddle. Here's an example of one:

"Huineng asked Hui Ming, Without thinking of good or evil, show me your original face before your mother and father were born'."

If any of this interests you, I want to remind you, life is short. Don't wait for "some day" to seek out a Zen teacher. Do it today and learn more. It's a great way to meet people. And meeting people is a good way to work on the social skills that you'll be using as we progress through this book.

See how it all connects? Start noticing that more in your life. The universe is one big connected happening and we're all part of it. Just a big stew of atoms floating around. If you don't want to study Zen, study physics and astronomy. It's practically the same thing.

Whoops, see how my mind got lost on a tangent. Weird. Let's get back to business. While we're on the subject of meditation, I want to briefly tell you about another type of meditation that might interest you, and then I'm going to give you your first assignment.

Mindfulness meditation is being aware or "mindful" of stuff. What stuff? You know ... stuff. Trees, birds, grass, sky, table, the taste of your food, how it feels to walk, how the wind sounds rustling the leaves. Be aware of the present moment. As with Zazen, you'll notice that the mind likes to chitter chatter. You can see those thoughts for what they are without comment or judgment, and then let them go.

You can be mindful while walking around the block, or strumming a guitar, or doing the dishes. Feel free to experiment with focusing on something in your immediate surroundings and staying present in this moment, it can be very relaxing. But that's not the assignment. That's extra credit. The assignment is as follows.

First of all, I want you to start meditating every day. Give it a try.

Come on, humor me.

You have nothing to lose and so much to gain. Do Zazen meditation as described in this chapter every day for at least 5 minutes.

Second of all, for one whole day I want you to focus on people. People you pass on the sidewalk, people you interact with, people you see driving by. What do they look like? How do they stand, walk, sit?

What do they tell you with their body language, with their posture, with their expression and tone of voice?

Could they change any of these things if they wanted to? Would it change your reaction to them? Can you change these things about yourself? How is your posture, expression, tone of voice? Can you consciously change them? For how long? What are your "default" settings? Pay attention to this stuff and think about it.

This is important stuff. We communicate an awful lot to each other without even opening our mouths.

Humans are very perceptive. Tap into that and see what you learn from the process. You might want to carry a notebook and write down your observations. You might make this a daily habit.

One more thing. If you happen to see a woman you like, notice what it is about her that caught your eye. Her hair? Her smile? Her body? The way she moves? Her energy? Was she laughing? What attracted you? Why? Did you manage to catch her eye? How did that feel? Was there a little charge of electricity? Fear?

Excitement? Be aware of this stuff. You aren't trying to change your natural reactions. Just become aware of them.

In summary then, be aware.

Now.