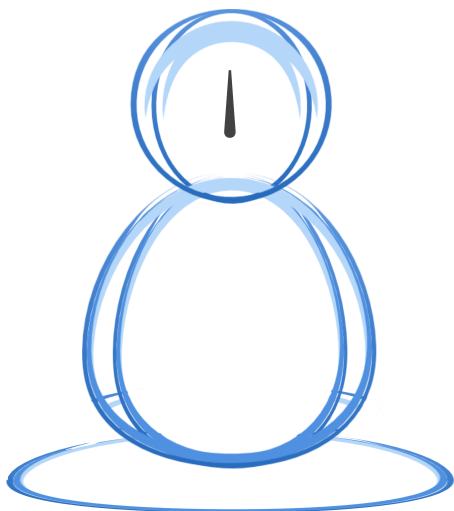


Meditation



❧❧Welcome❧❧

*«**Meditation** is one of the most extraordinary things, and if you do not know what it is you are like the blind man in a world of bright colour, shadows and moving light. It is not an intellectual affair, but when the heart enters into the mind, the mind has quite a different quality: it is really, then, limitless, not only in its capacity to think, to act efficiently, but also in its sense of living in a vast space where you are part of everything.*

***Meditation** is the movement of love. It isn't the love of the one or of the many. It is like water that anyone can drink out of any jar, whether golden or earthenware: it is inexhaustible. And a peculiar thing takes place which no drug or self-hypnosis can bring about: it is as though the mind enters into itself, beginning at the surface and penetrating ever more deeply, until depth and height have lost their meaning and every form of measurement ceases. ... This **meditation** cannot be learned from another. You must begin without knowing anything about it, and move from innocence to innocence.» -J.K.*

We wish you a pleasant journey into " *the most extraordinary things.*"



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I
stand
at the peak
of the pyramid
supported by all of
you, named & unnamed,
that have passed previously.
To each of you, I bow humbly in
thanksgiving, offering an inadequate
thank you for the Herculean effort you
have expended steadying my erratic compass
and keeping this barque afloat on the tempestuous
ocean of existence. To all of the countless of you, I say:
Thank you from the depth of my being.

I thank my wife Agetsu for her critical reading of the text and
her other contributions to the creation of this booklet.

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☸☸Meditation☸☸

Meditation is for everyone. It doesn't matter how young you are or how old you are. Meditation has nothing to do with your religious beliefs. Every major religion has meditation practices of one type or another. You can start at any time in your life, the sooner you start the better.



☸☸What is meditation?☸☸

Meditation is experiential. Meditation is experimental. Meditation is in the doing of it. Meditation is a state of being. Meditation can be described in word and picture. But the word and picture is not meditation.

You don't learn to meditate. No one can teach you meditation, anymore than someone can teach you what a fresh wild strawberry tastes like.

Someone can point out to you where the strawberry is hiding but the tasting is all yours to experience. It is the same with meditation. Someone can point out things to you but the tasting is all yours to experience.

The following quotations will give you descriptions of the meditative state. Remember they are only words. To prove the truth of these words you will have to experience meditation for yourself.

«In meditation there is no activity of the will. Do you understand the beauty of all this? When there is no measurement, no comparison, no achieving or becoming, there is the silence of the negation of the self. There is no self in meditation. So a mind, a brain, that is in the act of meditation is whole. The whole of life is meditation, not one period of meditation when you meditate. Meditation is the whole movement of living.» —J. Krishnamurti (J.K.)

For some of us, *«The moment the word «meditation» is mentioned, one thinks of an escape from the daily activities of life; assuming a particular posture, like a statue in some cave or cell in a monastery, in some remote place cut off from society; and musing on, or being absorbed in, some kind of mystic or mysterious thought or trance.»*

—W. Rahula (W.R.)



☸☸ **Some Common Misconceptions** ☸☸

Meditation is...

- Only for people who are on a spiritual search.
No. The benefits of meditation are manifold. Chief among them are the ability to relax and to be aware without effort. Useful tools for just about everyone!
- A practice to gain «peace of mind.»

No. *«Peace of mind is a contradiction in terms. By its very nature the mind is a chronic commentator. What you can discover through meditation is the knack of finding the distance between yourself and the commentary, so that the mind, with its constant circus of thoughts and emotions, no longer intrudes on your inherent state of silence.» – Rajneesh (R.)*

- A mental discipline to control the mind.

No. Meditation is neither a mental effort nor an attempt to control the mind. Effort and control involve tension, and tension is antithetical to the state of meditation. Besides, *there is no need to control the mind, only to understand it and how it works.* —R.

- Focusing, concentrating or contemplating.

No. Focusing, like concentrating is a narrowing of awareness. You concentrate on one object to the exclusion of everything else. By contrast, meditation is all-inclusive, your consciousness is expanded. The contemplator is focused on an object – perhaps a religious object, a photograph or on an inspiring aphorism. The meditator is simply aware, but not of anything in particular.

- A new experience.

No. *«Meditation is a natural state and one that you have almost certainly tasted, although perhaps without knowing the name of the flavor.» —R.*

Meditation is not running away from the world. Meditation has nothing to do with any religious belief system or sects. Meditation is the state of being fully present *in* the world but not being *of* the world. It is *«Be(ing) here, Now»* (after) Ram Dass (*R.D.*)

It might be a good idea to read the above quotes more than once. You are embarking on the adventure of your lifetime and it might be prudent to know what you are embarking upon. If you think you are going to "optimise" your life or to find something that will allow you to be more "effective" in the straitjacket of your current lifestyle you will be seriously frustrated and disappointed.

**Meditation does not adapt to your lifestyle.
It is the other way around.**



❧❧ Why should I meditate? ❧❧

Asking this question is a bit like asking "Why should I eat" or "Why should I bathe?" or "Why should I pursue a sport or body training activity?" or "Why should I rest the body?"

You eat, hopefully, healthy foods in order to nourish your body. You nourish your body in order to survive in this world. No eat, no drink, no body, simple as that.

You bathe to free the dust and dirt of the day from the body and promote it's health and well being.

You pursue some sort of sporting activity to keep the body fit, supple and flexible.

You sleep in order to allow the body to regenerate and heal itself.

Your mind is subject to the same stress as the body. In this world, for many people, the mind is stressed even more than the body.

We engage it what we call thinking, without pause, 24/7. There is not a moment's rest. Our ears are stuffed with the latest ear-buds, to listen to the latest mind numbing music/chatter brought to us by the latest electronic toy. We are on constant alert for the latest email or SMS from

the legion of friends we have never met. Our bosses, our masters, are free to contact us at any time of day or night in order to remind us that they own our body and soul. A bit insane isn't it?

«It is no measure of health to be well-adjusted to a profoundly sick society.»

J.K. penned these words 50 years ago. It hasn't gotten any better in those 50 years. It is only gotten worse. We live in a profoundly sick society. Most of us don't know it because we are so deeply enmeshed in the sickness ourselves.

Don't you think the mind deserves a break from all this? Some time each day set aside so it can recover its balance, its equilibrium... its sanity?

If you agree that today's world is running you in circles, that your sleep patterns are disorganised, that your mind is constantly on call, that you are literally «running on empty» then please read on.

If on the other hand you think your world is in order and you are in control then please read on.

«We have met the enemy and it is us.»

—Pogo

☸☸Where should I meditate?☸☸

Find yourself a nice quiet spot in your home/apartment. Dedicate this spot as your meditation corner. Don't clutter it up with objects. Keep it simple.

You can also join a group and meditate regularly with the group. However do not limit yourself to meditation with a group. You should practice more often than the group meets.



☸☸When should I meditation?☸☸

Begin by setting some time aside each morning before your "official" day begins. Mornings are especially good for meditation because the mind is normally at its quietest then. *(For example the hours between 4am and 6am are especially quiet according to some "experienced" meditators.)*

Get out of bed. Don't allow your mind to begin planning your day or dealing with problems. Take care of your toilet needs. Stretch a bit, find your meditation spot and sit down.



☸☸Let's get started...☸☸

Now that you've decided to look into the art of meditation, you, of course are eager to get started, eager to accomplish something, eager to attain a quiet mind. A commendable set of goals but definitely not a recommended approach. Meditation has no goals.

Please keep in mind that any goals, plans, timelines, schedules you set for yourself on this journey into meditation will all be counterproductive. You will soon discover that for yourself. So what should you do?

Don't keep a scorecard, become passively aware. Be aware of what is going around you and within you but do not chase every thought, every sensation, every desire, every sound, every smell. Just sit down and watch it, hear it, smell it, feel it... as it dissolves into something else. Can one do that? Can one observe without opinionating? Try it.



Passive awareness is the direct experiencing of something without the experiencer giving that something a name.

♀♀ Sit down - physically ♀♀



Chair



Bench



Seiza



Burmese



Half-lotus



Full-lotus

• Posture

Most "meditation" is done while being seated. That does not mean that meditation cannot be done while walking or standing. For example, there are a number of "walking-meditation" techniques used in the Zen

traditions. Laying down and trying to meditate is not recommended for obvious reasons. Try it.

• **Sitting**

Sit up straight, don't slouch. Keep the spine erect in its normal curvature. Keep the neck centered on the spine and the head centered on the neck. If you are not sure how you sit ask someone to observe your posture. You can also sit straight with your back against a wall. Do you touch the wall with the base of your spine? Do your shoulders touch the wall? Does the back of your head touch the wall? Is your ribcage open? Does your breath flow naturally?

Mentally scan the body. Pay attention to any tightness, pain, cramping, numbness. Make minor adjustments. Work with your body as a partner and not as its overlord.

There are a number of recommended ways to «just sit down.» The important thing is that you are stable and comfortable. It may take some time before you find your most comfortable posture. Take your time. No one cares if you sit in a chair or if you sit in full-lotus.

Sitting is not a marathon sport. Don't expect to be able to sit an extended period of time without moving or adjusting your position. Gradually increase your sitting

time from 5 minutes to 15 minutes then to 30 minutes then to 45 minutes and then to one hour. You can do it, if you proceed intelligently.

- **Hands**

With your shoulders relaxed, arms relaxed let your hands rest on your thighs. You can also clasp the hands in what is called a mudra. An example of which you see in the «Full Lotus» posture. There are many such mudras. Don't get involved with mudras just yet. You've got enough to do with just learning to sit bodily-quiet. There will be time for mudras later should you wish.

- **Breath**

Many people do not know how to breathe. They use only a limited portion of the lung capacity, roughly the middle $\frac{1}{3}$. You should know that you inhale and exhale through the nose. Open mouth breathing is not recommended. If for no other reason that the mouth dries out and causes the mind to become irritated.

- **Back & Head & Neck**

Don't slouch. You will collapse the lungs and find it difficult to breathe.

Don't slouch. You will begin to have shoulder and neck pains.

Don't slouch. Your upper body will be out of balance. Your mind and body will be occupied with trying to regain balance.

Don't slouch. You will be putting pressure on your legs. They will fall asleep. You will not be happy.

Don't slouch. Slouching creates a negative psychological effect on your entire environment.

- **Eyes**

The eyes should not be fully closed and they should not be fully open. Let their attention be directed to the floor in front of you. Don't try to focus just let them relax. It won't be long before they go out of focus. Don't worry about it. You are still here.

- **Mouth**

Close it without strain on the jaw muscles. Let the tongue rest on the upper palate just behind your teeth. Relax any muscle tension in the jaw and neck muscles.

With a bit of patience and practice, you will soon find that the body will find its way quite naturally into a comfortable upright sitting position. You may even discover that your sitting habits at work or in school or on the tram benefit from your newly adopted — sit upright from tail-bone to the top of your head. You may

even discover that when walking your head is no longer forward of the body but centered on top of your neck which is in turn centered directly on your spine. Your lungs will revel in their ability to fill to their full capacity without having to work against a compressed ribcage, the result of leaning-forward. Your step will be slower and lighter. Your legs will no longer be trying to keep you from falling over forward because of a head that is forward of the body.



☺☺**Sit down - mentally**☺☺

You will probably find, at the start, that it is easier to sit down physically than it is to sit down mentally.

«One's mind,» the same mind that so enthusiastically decided that a meditation practice is what one needs at this time in one's life will go into a state of anarchy when «one's mind» has decided to quiet «one's mind» with some meditation technique chosen by «one's mind» for that purpose.

«Meditation is neither a mental effort nor an attempt to control the mind. Effort and control involve tension, and tension is antithetical to the state of meditation. Besides,

there is no need to control the mind, only to understand it and how it works.» —R.

In other words one does not try and suppress the anarchist, the anarchy. One tries to understand the anarchist and the anarchy. How does one attempt to do that?

J. Krishnamurti says it this way, «*When there is no measurement, no comparison, no achieving or becoming, there is the silence of the negation of the self.*»

How does one come to «*no measurement, no comparison, no achieving or becoming*»? One does that by becoming passively aware. When one is passively aware one forgoes one's assessments, assumptions, attitudes, conceptions, conclusions, conjectures, estimates, estimations, fancies, feelings, guesses, hypotheses, inclinations, ideas, imaginings, impressions, inferences, judgments, notions, opinions, persuasions, point of views, postulates, presumptions, presuppositions, reactions, sentiments, speculations, theories, thoughts, views, viewpoints, suppositions, surmises, suspicions, theorems, theses. When one forgoes the above litany of mental behaviors then... «*There is no self in meditation.*» -J.K.

«Do you understand the beauty of all this? When there is no measurement, no comparison, no achieving or becoming, there is the silence of the negation of the self. There is no self in meditation. So a mind, a brain, that is in the act of meditation is whole. The whole of life is meditation, not one period of meditation when you meditate. Meditation is the whole movement of living.» —J.K.

**Meditation does not adapt to your lifestyle.
It becomes your lifestyle.**



☺☺Mind Games☺☺

It could be that after reading the first 15 pages of this text, you may be wondering what it is you've been reading. Yes, the physical preparations were quite clear and understandable but then when you got to the «Sit down - mentally» part everything got sort of soft and mushy. There was very little of «do this» or «do that» or «expect this» or «expect that.» And the reason for that is,

«In meditation there is no activity of the will. Do you understand the beauty of all this? When there is no measurement, no comparison, no achieving or becoming,...»

—J.K.

When there is no «do this» or no «do that» in order to-achieve or to-become or to-not-achieve or to-not-become then there is no activity of the will.

This is uncharted territory. And that is the problem. We don't like uncharted territory. We like to tell ourselves what to do next. We like to formulate plans and strategies. We like things in neat little boxes, properly labeled and in their proper place. Why? Because then we think (and the big word here is "think") that we are in control of the situation, thing, person, or ourselves. Are we in control? Really?

Your «mind» is a place where thoughts play. If you stopped thinking, where would your «mind» be? If you stopped thinking, where would «you» be?

«Meditation is neither a mental effort nor an attempt to control the mind. Effort and control involve tension, and tension is antithetical to the state of meditation. Besides, there is no need to control the mind, only to understand it and how it works.» —R.

Ask yourself who is responsible for the mental effort or for the attempts to control the mind? Ask yourself what kind of controls you would impose on the mind. Ask yourself how you would impose those controls.

Try this:
«I command you to Stop thinking !»

Spend the next meditation period repeating the sentence you have just read. Observe what is going on when you mentally utter those words. Has the thinking stopped? Why not? What understanding has this experience brought with it? Could it be that you have discovered that:

«...there is no need to control the mind, only to understand it and how it works.» —R.

As Rajneesh says so clearly:

«Peace of mind is a contradiction in terms. By its very nature the mind is a chronic commentator. What you can discover through meditation is the knack of finding the distance between yourself and the commentary, so that the mind, with its constant circus of thoughts and emotions, no longer intrudes on your inherent state of silence.»

«Your inherent state of silence.» Some synonyms for «inherent» are built-in, essential, fundamental, innate, natural. You are not the circus of thoughts and emotions that make up the «your» mind. What a relief to discover that FACT.

Meditation is the state where the I is not.

☸☸ Dealing with the Demons ☸☸

- **Restlessness**

Most of us spend our lifetimes on a carousel powered by our desire to-be or to-not-be something or someone. Stepping off of this spinning carousel into what is in reality a new reality consisting of physical and mental stillness is bound to cause attacks of restlessness. Don't worry about it. If you don't give in to your primitive desire of more and more of whatever makes your carousel spin you will soon find that restlessness will disappear of its own accord.

- **Pain**

For many of us that are not used to sitting upright on the floor with our legs bent at the knees pain will be an unwelcome guest in our meditation. We may have old knee and back injuries that are going to create a «hell on earth» for us. **Do not aggravate these conditions.** Take your time, maybe months, to find a comfortable way of sitting. Remember that you are not going to quiet a mind that is sitting with a physical body wracked with pain. Change positions. Sometimes only a millimeter makes a world of difference.

Even if you don't have a history of bone and muscle injuries to deal with, take your time to let the body re-

adjust to your new sitting positions. Let the body decide how long it should take. Keep the mind out of it. Be passively aware of what the body is about. Be passively aware of how your mind is trying to have its way. How your ego is demanding the body acquire the posture of the Buddha statue you saw in a shop window the other day. These will be your first experiments in passively watching the mind play its everlasting games. Watch them without mental commentary. Learn from them. When the mind finds itself exposed for the tyrant it is, it will skulk away into some dark corner to await a chance to try again. You can bet on it. Stay alert.

• **Drowsiness**

Once your restlessness falls away, your drowsiness will take up the cause of keeping you from staying passively aware of the present moment. It's all part of the game. Don't worry about falling over if you will fall asleep, you won't. Observe how the body snaps you back into wakefulness. Try it.

Above all don't condemn your sitting-without-sleeping efforts because you've dropped into drowsiness. The blame-game is one of the mind's most common ways of getting it's way with you. Know it for what it is.

• **Mental Disturbances**

The good news is that restlessness, physical pain, drowsiness are soon be old news. You will survive these irritations.

It is from this point forward that your career in meditation begins. It is now that your mind unleashes it's wrath, in full volume into what seems to be the confines of your head.

I'm not going to bore you with the details of the nature of the thoughts, dreams, fantasies, horror stories flavored with various intensities of desire, anger, hate, and fear that are going to be running through your head.

What I am going to tell you is that it is quite normal to experience this circus. Actually the circus is not new. It's been there all of the time. You've just been too busy to give it your full attention.

For example, you haven't come to hate someone or something just because you are now «meditating.» It is just that now that many of the other distractions are no longer there that *hate* can show its true self. The same goes for your angers, desires, fears, impulses, opinions, etc.

What is going on? Nothing. You are beginning to see the unvarnished «me» that lives behind the mask. You are beginning to *«know thyself.»* And that is what meditation is all about. It is about knowing yourself because only in knowing yourself can you come to the state of «quiet mind.»

You now are beginning to see how your various mental behaviours manage your life, make your decisions, plan your future, reconstruct your past, and get you into and out of trouble. Amazing isn't it? And all along you thought that you were in control, didn't you?

But now that you've discovered some of the trash that is directing your life you have something concrete to work with. Right? Something you can change. Right? Something you can «make better.» Right?

For example, you've come into contact with a solid bit of «hate», We do not wish to be known as hateful, do we? Let's get rid of this «hate.» Let's change «me.»

Which method would you choose?

- Attack the hate with anti-hate. (maybe blame it on someone or something, for example?)
- Run away from the hate. (maybe blame it on someone or something, for example?)

- Do nothing except passively observe it.

Rule #1

If you are going to fight fire with fire, you are going to just create a bigger fire.

Rule #2

If you are going to fight fire with flight, you are going to just create a bigger fire.

Rule #3

If you are going to *passively observe* the fire, the fire will soon go out because it has been starved of sustenance.



☺☺Special States☺☺

This category includes all of the visions of heaven or hell, angels or devils, gardens of paradise or moon landscapes, dancing girls or dancing boys, enlightenment or ignorance, that you may experience in your «meditative» journeys. The word meditative is in quotes because none of the visions have anything to do with meditation and all to do with your playful mind. If you discover yourself in the middle of some mental heaven or hell, you've discovered that your passive awareness is back in working

order because you've just discovered that you were in the middle of a heaven or hell.

The more *passively aware* you are the sooner you will discover yourself slipping away into some mental fantasy corner. Do not follow the thought. Let it pass.

When you discover that you are in a corner, you will then no longer be in the corner because you will have regained the «passively aware» state. Try it. Words don't reach it. It's the self-experience that counts.

The more *passively aware* you remain the sooner your mind will quit playing with itself and the sooner you will enter into a meditative state. (Words like «sooner» or «later» are only used figuratively. They have no literal meaning.) You won't know you are in a meditative state while you are in it because:

«When there is no measurement, no comparison, no achieving or becoming, there is the silence of the negation of the self. There is no self in meditation. So a mind, a brain, that is in the act of meditation is whole.» —J.K.

You will know you have been in a meditative state only after you have «come back» from the meditative state.

How will you know that? 😸

❧❧A Life in Balance❧❧

That is really what it is all about... a life in balance.

Although meditation doesn't have a goal, it does have a manifestation. Over time, if you are consequent, if you strive to remain passively aware in your waking hours, you will find that the world takes on a different hue. The product of a quiet mind is a palpable experience. Your discoveries are your own, of course. Keep them that way. Your discoveries are not to be fodder for the social media.

We have used quotes from three well known people; J. Krishnamurti, Walpole Rahula, and Rajneesh on the theme of meditation. Each has *described* his experience of meditation. The *descriptions* are there to guide you on your own journey. They are not the journey but only a description of the journey. The journey is experienced and not conceptualized. The journey is personal.

Over time your interest in «self-knowing» may cause you to search for more information about «self-knowing.» As you might imagine there are literally thousands of books, articles, cds, dvds, seminars, private tutors, at your beck and call. Most organized religions devote time to meditation courses.

If, instead of, sampling the huge variety of teachers, guides, gurus, charlatans offering their understandings you might just go to the source of it all. Why not call on the teachings of the historical Buddha?

We are not going to go into the Buddha's teaching in any detail. If you are interesting in getting a good overview of his teachings, you would do well to read *What the Buddha Taught* by Walpole Rahula. It may still be available on the WWW in pdf format. It is also available as a reasonably priced hard-copy book.



☸☸ **What the Buddha is about** ☸☸

Siddhartha Guatama was born into a royal family. His father was king of the Shaka tribe. Siddhartha lived the life of a Prince. He was married and had a child, a boy, which was named Rahula. When he was 29 years old he left the comforts of his princely life to pursue a life as a wandering ascetic. He had chosen this life in order to pursue the answer to the questions: «Why does humanity suffer?» «Why is the human life cycle composed of birth, sickness, old age and death?»

After six years of wandering, alone and with others, he sat down under a Bodhi tree in Bodh Gaya and vowed to

sit in meditation until his questions would find answers. This all-night meditation has come down to us, in history, as the time of Siddhartha's Enlightenment. After this «journey» into Reality, Siddhartha achieved Buddhahood. In other words, he now understood everything that was worth understanding because he had personally experienced this understanding.

After some time, he was able to translate this understanding into words. The words became his teachings. He repeating this message for the next 45 years. Thousands of beings heard the message and were moved by it to achieve their own Buddhahood.



☸☸ **Before the Buddha's message** ☸☸

Before we narrate the Buddha's teaching, you should be aware of a couple of things.

The first awareness is that the Buddha was not a god. He never ever said he was a god. He was a human being.

The second awareness is that the Buddha was not a Buddhist anymore than Christ was a Christian. The religions that were created around the teachings of these two beings are made by men and women other than the teachers themselves.

I am telling you this because if you are presently tied to some belief system and you think that this tiny book is going to try and get you to switch to another belief system, you are wrong.



☸☸ **The Buddha's message** ☸☸

«The Buddha said that the "human condition" is the condition of Dukkha. Life hurts; happiness ends in sorrow; birth ends in death; all is transient; nothing is permanent; and we are Fata Morgana. It has been that way for millions of years. And so it will remain until we, individually pull ourselves out of the swamp of Samsara.

- The **Origin of Dukkha** states that we are the sole cause of our problems and that we must be the sole un-cause of our problems. Blaming someone else for our fate is not an acceptable solution. Finding someone "godly" to carry the load is also not going to work, and neither is someone else's method going to do the job. Our ignorance and its dissolution is our responsibility, period.
- The **Cessation of Dukkha** is the good news because it tells us there is a way out of this self-created maze. Unfortunately, it requires an effort on our part, and as

humans, we are not known for our effort in areas which do not promise immediate profit or pleasure. And it is because of this that we are still Buddhas in the making.

- The **Eightfold Nobel Path of Liberation** from Dukkha is the way out of the maze. But it is not a path. It doesn't start somewhere, and it doesn't end somewhere else. That doesn't mean that it is static. It is not a set of commandments. It is not a list of "do and do not." It is in constant motion in all directions in every moment, and it takes a keen intelligence, which means an open mind, to "walk" this non-existent path. J. Krishnamurti said it so well, "Truth is a pathless land." Our journey of a lifetime consists of an ever more intimate understanding through our own experience of the eight facets of the Noble Path of Liberation. It is this experience of understanding that dissolves Ignorance, dissolves Dukkha.

The Four Noble Truths are the Buddha's core teachings. The thousands of sutras, the recorded words of the Buddha, all deal with one aspect or another of the Four Noble Truths.»

— *The Eightfold Noble Path* RWH

The fourth Noble Truth is the Buddha's teaching on how to get out of the rabbit-hole. And you, because you have decided to establish a meditation practice for yourself may find what he had to say of some value.

We can expand the 4th Noble truth into what is commonly called the *Noble Eightfold Path*.

«The Noble Eightfold Path
leads to the
Cessation of Dukkha
which removes the
Origin of Dukkha
which leads to the
End of Dukkha»

The Eightfold Noble Path RWH



☸☸ **The Noble Eightfold Path** ☸☸

Right View
Right Intention

Right Effort
Right Mindfulness
Right Meditation

Right Speech
Right Action
Right Livelihood

«*The Eightfold Path* is called *Noble* because it is not ignoble, base, common. It is instead, an elegant set of principles so crafted as to get one out of Samsara through one's own non-doing. Each of the elements is preceded by the word "right." "Right" is defined as *skillful, wise or wholesome*.

It is said in the Nagara Sutra, that the Buddha while in deep meditation "saw" an ancient path. A way that had been trodden many times before by Buddhas past and present. This narrow way had a name; it was called *The Noble Eightfold Path*. The Buddha saw this path to be the "middle way" between the one extreme of searching for happiness through the pleasures of the senses, and the other extreme of searching for happiness through different forms of asceticism.

We know that our senses can wallow in pleasure 24/7 without being satiated. And as for the suppression of desire ...well we all know how that works out. Maybe the Buddha got it right, right?

"Although it is called *The Noble Eightfold Path*, it is only *one path* with eight named components. It can be

compared to a "stranded electrical cable" which consists of individual strands of copper wire bound within an insulated casing. The bundle of strands is considered to be one electrical path. All the elements of the *Eightfold Path*, the strands, exist in parallel to one another, in contact with one another, in support of one another, dependent on one another and not hierarchal to one another.»

—"Form is... Emptiness ...is Form"; Chapter 17; RWH

The cable is endless. The strands of wire become finer and finer. They weave themselves into what we call "our life" replacing the im-perfected elements. We become human beings, slowly shedding our barbarian natures. It happens without any fanfare much in the same way as a fine wine becomes a fine wine in a nondescript oak cask. It may take lifetimes, or it may happen in a flash, who knows. But then one never knows, does one. Just don't look for a path, don't look for something to accomplish, don't keep score. Observe your every moment in light of the eight elements and the rest will unfold of its own accord.

"This is *The Noble Eightfold Path*, friend Visakha: right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration. Is *The Noble Eightfold Path* fabricated or un-fabricated? *The Noble Eightfold Path* is fabricated." - Culavedala Sutra

The Buddha then proposed that the eight elements of the Eightfold Path be grouped into three categories:

- Śīla: virtue/ethical conduct
- Samādhi: mind/meditation
- Prajñā: wisdom/discernment

He gave us three distinct, easily graspable, bite size, thought objects that we can focus to conquer our Dukkha dominated natures. The Buddha called this a "threefold training" program.

He said that anyone that pursued this "threefold training" program would succeed in the abandonment of the three poisons (kleśas): Moha (ignorance, delusion, confusion), Raga (greed, sensual attachment), and Dvesha (aversion, ill will). No hocus-pocus; no smoke and mirrors; no stick and carrot; just a direct, logical progression of training the barbarian ego-mind into non-existence.

The three poisons are represented in the center of the Bhavacakra as a pig (Moha), a bird (Raga), and a snake (Dvesha). The Bhavacakra Mandala represents, in Buddhist cosmology, a summary of the elements of our cyclic existence in this earthly reality. It is a roadmap of the human cycle of life; birth>illness>old-age>death and back again, ad infinitum. Ad infinitum means we go round and round until we break the chain of dependent arising (Pratītyasamutpāda). The word Bhavacakra translates, literally, into Wheel of Becoming (Bhava = Becoming, Cakra = wheel). One also

finds it referred to as "wheel of life" or "wheel of cyclic existence."

Representations of the mandala are found, painted, on the walls of many Tibetan Buddhist temples throughout the world. The sole reason for the paintings is to teach people about the transience of life and to remind them of the many pitfalls that await anyone that conducts their life outside the Buddhist teachings of the Four Noble Truths.

According to the Divyavadana, the Buddha himself created the first Bhavacakra mandala. It is written that King Rudrayana had offered a gift of a jewelled robe to King Bimbisara of Magadha. King Bimbisara did not have anything of equivalent value to offer as a gift in return. Bimbisara went to the Buddha for advice, and the Buddha gave instructions to have the first drawing of the Bhavacakra made, and he told Bimbisara to send the drawing to Rudrayana. It is said that Rudrayana attained realization by studying this drawing.

In the Culavedala Sutra the connection between the "threefold training" and the Eightfold Noble Path is expressed as follows:

'The three aggregates (*Sīla, Samādhi, Prajñā*) are not included under *The Noble Eightfold Path*, friend Visakha, but *The Noble Eightfold Path* is included under the three aggregates. Right speech, right action, & right livelihood come under the aggregate of *Śīla*. Right effort, right mindfulness, & right concentration come under the aggregate of *Samādhi*. Right view & right resolve come under the aggregate of *Prajñā*.' »

— *The Noble Eightfold Path* RWH

That is the Buddha's teaching in a nutshell. It is logical. It does not depend on belief. It requires you to experience each step for yourself. And the only way to do it is through meditation. And you may also find that the whole thing is a bit overwhelming because all you wanted to do is make some sense of your life. Well, that's all Siddhartha Gautama wanted to do, isn't it?



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J. Krishnamurti: (J.K.) (1895-1986): <https://jkrishnamurti.org/>

Walpole Rahula: (W.P.) (1907-1997) was a Sri Lankan Buddhist monk, scholar and writer. The book *What the Buddha Taught* is an excellent introduction to what the Buddha taught.

Rajneesh: (R.) (1931-1990) Osho. There are many websites with Osho's thoughts on meditation.

R.W.H.: A number of quotations on the theme of the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path have been taken from the book with the title *Der Edle Achtfache Pfad..*



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