

MEDITATION 3. The Buddha taught the *Four Noble Truths*:
The Truth of suffering - suffering is a fact of life for most of us.
The Truth of the cause of suffering - our desires and attachments.
The Truth of the path to the alleviation of suffering - with the help of meditation we renounce desires and our attachment to sensual cravings that are dictated by our mind, our ego.
The Truth of the end of suffering - the attainment of nirvana, when we experience freedom from desires & worry and the disappearance of ego, delusion & ignorance; when we see the true nature of reality, which leads us to inner peace & happiness.
Mindfulness meditation is a method of self-observation through contemplation and introspection - where we observe our out-of-control mind and pay attention to what arises - as is Vipassana. In the language of India at the time of the Buddha, *passana* meant seeing in the ordinary way, with one's eyes open; but *vipassana* is observing reality as it actually is, not as it appears to be.

see also BUDDHISM, MINDFULNESS, THE TRUTH 4

An acronym describes mindfulness meditation: RAIN. Recognize the feeling. Accept the feeling (rather than drive it away). Investigate the feeling and its relationship to your body. The N stands for non-identification or non-attachment ... which, after all is the Buddha's recipe for the cessation of suffering.

Robert Wright: Why Buddhism Is True

Vipassana meditation involves a breathing regime, followed by a practice of observing various body parts. Its purpose is the healing of human suffering and to bring highest happiness to practitioners.

S. N. Goenka, the teacher of Vipassana, emphasises the importance of continuous practice, as do all spiritual disciplines. Furthermore, Goenka said in his address to the 2000 UN Peace Summit:

"One who has love and compassion with a pure heart experiences the Kingdom of Heaven within. This is the Law of Nature, or if one would rather, God's will." For more info visit www.dhamma.org

Other than the spiritual meditation designed to bypass the mind, there are meditation practices in which we observe the mind for tangible benefits, such as reducing stress and anxiety.

There are many techniques and they are often accompanied by breathing exercises ('breathe in goodness, positivity and health - exhale nervous tension') or other yoga practices.

All these meditations can provide better health, relationships or career prospects - any benefit one may aim for; twenty minutes a day may be enough, but success depends on consistency.

However, beware: when engaging in meditation - as with any spiritual, religious or in fact any activity - avoid practices that promise vague, imaginary and illusionary goals to the seeker, who then potentially spends a lifetime chasing those goals.

Jiddu Krishnamurti (1895 - 1986), teacher in psychology and philosophy and awareness of the nature of the mind, dismissed sustained, repeated mental training; he said a profound insight thoroughly changes the mind - not gradually, but instantly.

see also KRISHNAMURTI, SATORI

I favor a simple meditation, in the half-lotus pose, accompanied by yoga exercises. While I use a mantra, I aspire to suspend all judgmental thinking. The goal is to let thoughts pass, without getting involved in them; ultimately to stop thinking - to still or empty the mind.

see also WHY MEDITATE