

Open Your Class with This

10% Happier: How I Tamed the Voices in my Head, Reduced Stress, without Losing my Edge, and found Self-Help that actually Works: Dan Harris

Directions: For those new to meditation, here is a link to a 20 minute guided meditation. Below is a link and directions that will take you through a guided meditation. As you improve your practice, you can take the parts that work for you and lead yourself through the meditation. The key is to try to block out all intrusive thoughts and concentrate in what is happening in the present by identifying what you are experiencing in all of your senses.

<https://www.mindful.org/everyday-mindfulness-with-jon-kabat-zinn/#meditation>

1. **Take a few moments to settle into feeling the body as a whole.** Sitting and breathing, or lying down and breathing, ride the waves of the breath moment by moment while resting in awareness. This is an awareness that features the entirety of the bodyscape and the breathscape as they express themselves.
2. **And when you're ready, if you care to, let go of the breath and the body** as a whole. Allow them to recede into the background or rest in the wings, still very much present but less featured while we invite the whole domain of thoughts and feelings and mood states to be center stage in the field of awareness.
3. **For a time, attend to the stream of thought rather than being carried away** by the content or emotional charge of individual thoughts. Instead, rest comfortably on the river bank of the thoughts, or the thought stream itself, allowing individual thoughts if and when they arise to be seen, felt, recognized, and known as thoughts or as events in the field of awareness. Recognize them as mental events, occurrences, secretions of the thinking mind independent of their content and their emotional charge.
4. **See any and all of these fleeting thoughts as bubbles,** eddies, and currents within the stream, rather than as facts or as the truth of things. Whatever the content, whatever the emotional charge, whatever their urgency or their tendency to reappear, whether they are pleasant or seductive, unpleasant or repulsive. Or neutral and therefore harder to detect at all.
5. **Expanding the metaphor, look at any and all of these evanescent thought events more like clouds in the sky** or bubbles coming off the bottom of a pot of boiling water. Or like writing on water, arising in a moment, lingering for the briefest of instances, and dissolving back into the formlessness from whence they came. Relating to their content as if it were of equal importance and relevance to say what you had for dinner three nights ago.
6. **For now, just let any and all thoughts come and go.** Just let sounds come and go. Not preferring some to others, nor pursuing some over others, not pursuing anything. Just resting in an awareness of thinking itself and the spaces between thoughts. Moment by moment, breath by breath, as we sit here or as we lie here.
7. **It might be helpful to be especially sensitive to the steady stream of commentary** and advice you may be giving yourself as you sit here, and recognize it

as such. Recognize it as scaffolding or running commentary. Take a position in relationship to it that resembles turning down the sound on a television set, so that you're just watching the game and aren't being sucked into the endless stream of commentary and interpretation and opinion that is so characteristic of televised sports events.

8. **Rather, you now detect the commentary** on your moment to moment experience merely as thoughts. Watch how easily thoughts manufacture or fabricate views, opinions, ideas, beliefs, plans, memories, stories, and how easily they proliferate. If we feed them one thought morphing into the next, then into the next, we suddenly realize that we've been carried downstream and are no longer aware of the stream itself.
9. **Allow all of this to be held to bear attention in awareness**, breath by breath as we sit here resting in the awareness. Recognize thoughts as thoughts and feelings as feelings. Accept thoughts as thoughts and feelings as feelings. Whatever their content, whatever their emotional charge, just experiment with cultivating greater intimacy with what's on your mind and in your heart.
10. **Observe carefully rather than identify with the content of thoughts** and feelings. Look at them more impersonally as weather patterns or ripples and waves on the surface of the vast and deep ocean of the mind. For the remainder of our time together, rest in an awareness of the arising and passing away of thoughts and feelings in the mindscape.
11. **Let your thoughts and feelings arise on their own in the field of awareness** to whatever degree they do. Moment by moment, and breath by breath, as you sit here or as you live your life.