



AHEAD Online

Why do I need to meditate?

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Guest Professor

Why do I need to meditate?

Common obstacles on our path towards becoming a good student



- Lack of concentration
- Lack of memory
- Lack of self-confidence
- Stress/Anxiety about the future
- Overthinking
- Laziness
- Addictions

Meditation helps to

1

Harness the wandering mind

2

Evoke Creativity

3

Instill Self-confidence

4

Grow in Emotional Maturity

5

Heighten your Memory Power

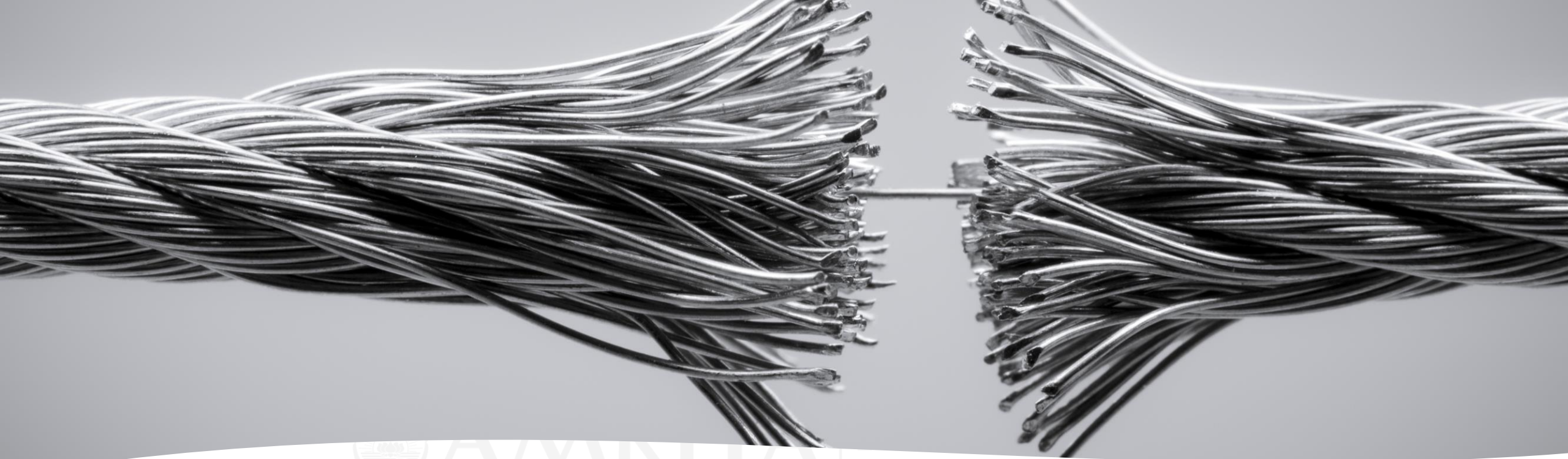
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Tap into your true potential



There is a big difference between physical and mental health. The more we move our body, the healthier we become. On the other hand, our mental health depends on how still we can keep our mind."

- Sri Mata Amritanandamayi Devi (Amma)



VISHWA VIDYAPEETHAM | Online

Normally, when we reach the end of a rope, what do we do? “Hang.”

But meditation helps us to ‘hang-on’ and not give up easily and use the energy of every emotion as a stepping stone.



Meditation takes you to heights...

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- Harness the wandering mind

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- Evoke Creativity

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- Instill Self-confidence

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- Grow in Emotional Maturity

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- Heighten your Memory Power

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- Tap into your true potential

Harnessing the Wandering Mind

- I am sure you will agree with me that our mind is more restless than a monkey. A monkey may be able to jump from one branch to another or from one tree to another and may cover a forest. But our minds can jump to any distance. One minute we are here watching this video, the next second we can be in US, the third second we can go for a safari in Africa, the fourth second on a space mission, so on and so forth. When we are attending classes or sit to study by our own, this monkey mind of ours hardly allows us to remain focused. With the messages and updates that keep popping up in our phones, it has become more challenging. Recently, one of the youngsters said to me, “Swami, my mind is like my Web-browser. Nineteen tabs are open, three are frozen, and I have no idea where the music is coming from.”
- This wandering nature of our minds also will never allow us to complete any task properly, and we may end up with many unfinished tasks.

- In the morning, a youngster decided to wash his motorbike. As he started to walk towards the garage, he saw a stack of mail lying on a table. He thought, “Let me first just quickly go through the mail.” He put the keys on the table and started opening the mail. Suddenly he exclaimed, “Oh, my God! Today’s the last day to pay the fees for the IAS entrance exam! Where did I put my credit card?”
- As he frantically searched for the credit card, he noticed the dirty glasses that were lying around from the previous night after the friends had come together. He forgot about the credit card and started taking the glasses to the sink. As he started washing them, he happened to look out through the window and felt sad to see that the plants in the garden were in a sorry state and needed water. He put the glasses by the side and went out into the garden and started watering them. Suddenly, he remembered about the credit card again and went back into the house. Eventually, it was too late to pay the entrance exam fees—he didn’t wash the bike, go through his mail, wash the juice glasses, find the credit card, or water the plants. In short, nothing was achieved. His friend called me on the phone and asked, “Hey, how is your day?” The youngster replied, “Don’t ask. I have been so busy...”
- I am sure many of us relate to this story.

How does meditation help?

- When we sit for a few minutes a day, focusing on the breath, or a form, or a mantra, or just silence, it helps us grow in this capacity of remaining one-pointed. It is not that it just stays in one place during our practice. But, every time it wanders, we need to bring it back. This continuous practice helps us to keep up the one-pointedness in all the actions we perform. We are able to keep ourselves in the moment. The body and the mind become integrated. They don't travel in different directions. And this helps us to be effective in everything that we do.
- As Amma says: “There is a difference between physical health and mental health. For physical health, the body needs to move. We need to do regular exercise. For mental health, the mind should not move. More still the mind, better the mental health.”

Evoked Creativity

- To excel in our student life and later in our career, we need to be creative. In more and more occupations, creativity is an important part of the job description. We all have creative potential within but it has never been tapped into. Inner silence is the source of creativity and the place where solutions to problems are found.
- Maybe it is not visible to us, but there is a connection between creativity in life and inner silence.
- Once a professor asked one of his students, “What would happen if someone cut off your ears?”
- The student answered, “Oh, I would not be able to read.”
- The professor asked, “What! Do you read with your ears?”
- The student replied, “No, sir, without my ears, I would not be able to wear my glasses.”
- So, even though the eyes and the ears are different, they are connected. It is the same with creativity and silence. Though one is in the realm of action and the other is non-action, without inner silence the outer creativity will never leave a mark. If you take a painter, musician or a scientist, the real masterpiece or invention comes out only in the moments where there is self-forgetfulness and silence. Meditation is the way to achieve this state of inner silence.

- The latest survey amongst the CEOs shows that most of them get new, innovative ideas when they are in the shower. Why? Because the mind is very relaxed and relatively silent while standing under the shower. So, just imagine the creativity one can experience through real relaxation experienced through meditation.
- Hence, multinational companies and firms like Google, Apple, Goldman Sachs, and many more have introduced meditation practices to their employees. Most of the sports teams practice yoga and meditation. It benefits the executives and the players to manage stress and be creative. Their work outputs are much more and they are also more peaceful and happier.
- Our rishis are the best examples of how creativity can blossom through inner silence. Not only India has been the beacon light of spiritual knowledge to the world, it was also the forerunner in its contributions in fields of material sciences. May it be physics, astronomy, metallurgy, medicine, architecture, so many inventions came up from this land. How did the rishis manage to contribute so much? They did not have the gadgets or laboratories or telescopes that we have today. But they knew the science of how to tap into the source of creativity within and hence could come up with such amazing discoveries.

Instils Self-confidence

- Another major handicap that many students face is the lack of self-confidence. We very often hear youngsters make statements like 1. I don't think I have it in me to achieve great heights 2. I am not gifted like the others 3. I know I will fail in the interview 4. I always have bad luck. It all comes from this lack of confidence. Somehow, we have got conditioned to the idea that we are inadequate and incomplete, and limited in our potential, which really makes us turn to the outside for strength and support. There may be times that we may have to seek support from outside, but we need to make use of this unfailing source of power within us also. When we realize that we are a reservoir of strength and love, we will never see ourselves as inferior and we will be truly confident in life. Meditation is a process of unfurling these curtains of wrong notions covering the treasure that we carry within. We begin to experience the presence of this inner strength and the dependence on the external factors starts reducing. Every atom in this universe is positive in the center. The electrons are all in the periphery. The nucleus is always positive. We may see many shortcomings and negativities within us. But they are not our true identity and we have the power to overcome them all.



Grow in Emotional Maturity

- Life is never a bed of roses; it is a mix of favorable and unfavorable experiences. When setbacks come in life, be it a failure in your studies, or a breakup in a relationship or a tragedy in the family, the majority find it very hard to overcome the emotional disturbances. They spread their inner frustration to others as well. For example, you are angry at a near and dear one. Normally, it does not just stay towards the person. You express it towards your friends, your institution, towards things around you... the list goes on. You are not only hurt mentally, sometimes you are hurt financially as well as you might have smashed your phone on the ground.

How can meditation help us in this?

- It helps us by not allowing disturbing emotions to find a permanent parking space in our minds. It does not mean that you suppress your emotions. You see them, acknowledge them, but do not identify with them.



- With the practice of meditation, you are able to see the emotion rise and you hit the pause button before you say or act. You don't allow your emotions to spill out towards all, or affect every situation. You see things clearly and respond to the situation. I know a devotee of Amma who came as a student at the Ettimadai campus. He finished his Computer Engineering course and also had the opportunity to learn IAM, Intergrated Amrita Meditation during his studies. Unfortunately, his father was a drunkard and gave a very hard time to the family and finally this habit led to his early demise. He also left a lot of debts. The youngster was in deep anguish with the situations in life, but did not allow them to overwhelm him. He took a resolve that he would never become like his father and used all his energy to study well. He passed his Engineering with flying colors and is now employed in a multinational in the US. When I met him the last time, he visited Amritapuri, he mentioned that his brother, unfortunately has become like his father and blames the life situations for making him a drunkard. Both the brothers went through the same situations. But, one who had the right maturity could turn the scars into stars. This alumni student of Amrita is so thankful for having received the opportunity to learn meditation as a student.
- Normally, when we reach the end of a rope, what do we do? “Hang.” But meditation helps us to “hang on” and not give up easily and use the energy of every emotion as a stepping stone. As per neurological research, meditation decreases the volume of the amygdala – the part of the brain responsible for emotions such as stress, fear, and anxiety. This makes us emotionally more stable.
- I am sure most of you have seen the movie “Three Idiots.” We see the main actor tapping his chest in the face of challenges, saying, “All is well.” When we have emotional maturity, this can be said in every situation of life.

Heighten your Memory power

- Among the FAQs from students, the most common is the question, “**What do I do to remember my lessons?**” You may have studied a lot, but it is a challenge to retrieve the information—and that too at the right time. Why is it that what we have learnt just vanishes in no time? Neuroscience has done a lot of research on this and they come up with the following conclusions:
- Parts of the brain can fall asleep for a few moments or longer without our even realizing it. At any given moment, some circuits in the brain may be off-line and slumbering. As long as we’re not calling on them to do something for us, we don’t notice. This is why we misplace or lose a lot of things, as we do not remember where we put them. This part of our brain that should be attending to where we put them is either asleep or distracted by something else.
- Another reason why our memory is unreliable is because the untrained brain has a crappy filing system. It can be compared to the closets or cupboards in most of the rooms of youngsters. The brain takes everything that is given and throws it all into a big closet. When you go in there looking for something, all you can find are the things that you don’t really need. You can’t really find what you really need.

How does meditation help?

- It awakens awareness in us while performing every action and hence we are never absent mentally as we do them. It is like when the boss of an organization is present in his office cabin. When he is there, every employee works with a lot of attention. It is not the same when he is not there. Awareness is like the presence of the boss, which helps us do every action with diligence and such actions don't lead to forgetfulness.
- Also, meditation helps us to bring an order to the useful thoughts and remove the unwanted thoughts from within. Just like we clean the cache and malware from the computer as it eats the memory of the system, a lot of the clutter of unwanted thoughts and impressions is removed through meditation.
- In a study done by the *Journal Psychiatry Research*, a team of researchers found that eight weeks of a meditation-training programme increased the cortical thickness (grey-matter concentration) of the hippocampus—the part of the brain responsible for memory and regulating emotions.

Tap into your true potential

- Imagine that someone presents you an iPad and you use it to click pictures alone. It is just a small part of what a tablet can do. In fact, it has so many features that you could manage a whole office with it. In a similar way this human life is not meant to be “A tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing,” as Shakespeare said. This life of ours is a valuable gift given to us by the Divine with the purpose of being infinitely happy, peaceful and strong.
- When we use the expression, “Oh, I’m just human,” we normally mean, “I’m just helpless, weak and prone to making mistakes.” We need to change the context of what it means to be human. When we say, “I’m human” we must mean, “I’m strong. I am the embodiment of supreme love. I’m capable of doing wonderful things.” We’ve chosen to make a human being into a miserable specimen who just fights for his or her survival throughout his life.
- Simply having a guitar doesn’t make one a guitarist. It takes years of training to learn to play well. Likewise, just having a mind isn’t enough. We must learn to master it with sustained, systematic practice. The art of meditation is most important not only for seekers, but for every single human being.

- We all have heard from our parents this sentence: “Don’t just sit, do something.” But we are now in a stage where we have to tell ourselves the opposite: “Don’t just do something, sit.” This sitting for even 10 minutes a day will make all our doing, all our actions more productive and effective.
- Dear sisters and brothers, just as we take trial subscriptions for so many things like software packages, OTT platforms, etc, let us be open to experiment with meditation as well. I am sure, if done with sincerity, it will be a life-changing experience for all of you.
- When we take the first alphabets of the six points we discussed it becomes the word “HEIGHT.” May this knowledge help you reach great heights in life.

