

Personal Reflections on Meditation

AGU Ocean Sciences Workshop

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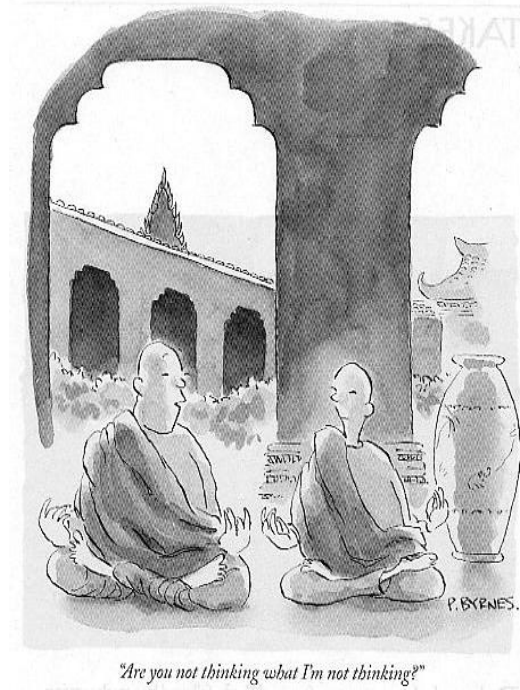
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Why meditation is in my life

- ❖ Daily morning practice exercises/stretches my mind by stilling the mind fluctuations.
- ❖ It broadens perspectives to experientially appreciate that mind & awareness are more than thoughts.
- ❖ Meditation complements thinking by nurturing space and insight.
- ❖ It fosters an awareness of the way things are rather than how we think they are (great skill for scientists!)
- ❖ Meditation is a systematic method to investigate subjective experiences: e.g., “Who am I ?”
- ❖ Stress = viscosity * strain. Meditation helps to reduce “viscosity” so that life strains are less easily converted to stress.



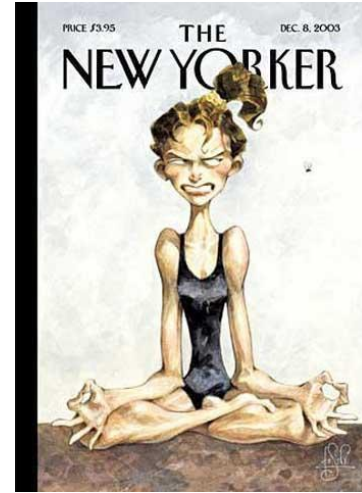
Some meditation methods/styles

- ❖ Vipassana & Mindfulness (awareness)
- ❖ Contemplative (koan, non-rational conceptual)
- ❖ Movement (yoga, walking, whirling, swimming, surfing)
- ❖ Breath/Mantra/Chant/Kirtan (concentration, devotion)
- ❖ Metta/Loving-Kindness (compassion, empathy)



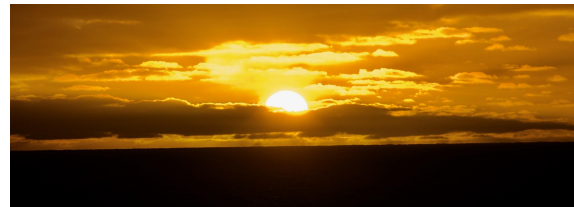
Meditation practice: what has worked for me

- ❖ Daily practice: mind & body need training to open up to stillness. It gets more natural with practice (just like science).
- ❖ Early morning before the mind is overly engaged in activities.
- ❖ Modest start (e.g., 10 min) built up to 60-90 min after year(s).
- ❖ Seated posture (bum higher than knees) w/ crossed legs to keep body balanced & aligned.
- ❖ Meditation time is balanced with family time.
- ❖ Judgements can arise (“I’m no good at this!”). Yet patience & persistence payoff. It is called meditation practice after all!
- ❖ Group meditation & teachers can be very useful.
- ❖ Anytime is a good time to develop a meditation practice.



Selection of books

- ❖ [Posture of Meditation](#): practical details for the mechanics of sitting in meditation.
- ❖ [The Mind Illuminated](#): manual for the vast array of meditation stages and styles from the perspective of a neuroscientist and practicing meditator.
- ❖ [Why Buddhism is True](#): straightforward language with a psychological perspective on meditation.
- ❖ [Altered Traits](#): evidence-based research on how meditation changes (helps) the mind.
- ❖ [Mindfulness in Plain English](#): Just as the title says!



Many thanks!

