

## Informed Consent Agreement

*IRB-SBS Protocol #2013-0407-00*

*Approved from December 9, 2015 to October 31, 2016.*

Please read this consent agreement carefully before you decide to participate in the study.

**Purpose of the research study:** We are interested in studying the effect of meditation on your mental health and your experience of complete mental silence.

**What you will do in the study :** You will answer the same questionnaire at 7 day intervals. On the first occasion, you will answer 51 questions. On the remaining occasions, you will answer 47 questions. If possible, please respond to the survey promptly after you receive an invitation email because we carefully time the measurement occasions to collect information most efficiently for our statistical model. It is not catastrophic if you inadvertently miss a measurement occasion. Please resume responding at the next opportunity. You can skip any question that makes you feel uncomfortable and you can stop answering the questionnaire at any time.

**Time required:** Most participants finish the questions in 12 minutes. As you become familiar with the questions, you may require less time.

**Risks:** There are no anticipated risks in this study.

**Benefits:** We expect these data will help us rigorously measure the effect of meditation and validate a new measure. You will receive partial course credit for your participation.

**Confidentiality:** Your responses will be handled confidentially. When the study is completed and the data have been analyzed, the data will be anonymized. Your name will not be used in any report.

**Voluntary participation:** Your participation in the study is completely voluntary.

**Right to withdraw from the study:** You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

**How to withdraw from the study:** If you want to withdraw from the study, simply close your browser window. There is no penalty for withdrawing. You will still receive full credit for the study. If you would like to withdraw after your responses have been submitted, please contact Joshua Pritikin (434) 218-2280 <jpritikin@virginia.edu>.

**Payment:** You will receive partial course credit.

**If you have questions about the study, contact:**

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**If you have questions about your rights in the study, contact:**

Tonya R. Moon, Ph.D.  
Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Social and Behavioral Sciences  
One Morton Dr Suite 500  
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Website: [www.virginia.edu/vpr/irb/sbs](http://www.virginia.edu/vpr/irb/sbs)

By clicking continue, I agree to participate in this study.

## Demographics

In what year were you born? (enter 4-digit birth year; for example, 1976)

Are you male or female?

☐ Male

☐ Female

## Warwick-Edinburgh MWBS

Below are some statements about feelings and thoughts. Please tick the box that best describes your experience of each over the last week

	None of the time	Rarely	Some of the time	Often	All of the time
I've been feeling optimistic about the future	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I've been feeling useful	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I've been feeling relaxed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I've been dealing with problems well	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I've been thinking clearly	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I've been feeling close to other people	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I've been able to make up my own mind about things	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

# W

Please rate each of the following statements. Select the response that best describes your own opinion of what is generally true for you.

	never or very rarely true	rarely true	sometimes true	often true	very often or always true
I perceive my feelings and emotions without having to react to them.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I watch my feelings without getting lost in them.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In difficult situations, I can pause without immediately reacting.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When I have distressing thoughts or images I am able just to notice them without reacting.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When I have distressing thoughts or images, I feel calm soon after.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When I have distressing thoughts or images, I "step back" and am aware of the thought or image without getting taken over by it.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When I have distressing thoughts or images, I just notice them and let them go.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am good at resisting temptation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have a hard time breaking bad habits.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am lazy.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I say inappropriate things.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I do certain things that are bad for me, if they are fun.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I refuse things that are bad for me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	never or very rarely true	rarely true	sometimes true	often true	very often or always true
I wish I had more self-discipline.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
People would say that I have iron self-discipline.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pleasure and fun sometimes keep me from getting work done.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have trouble concentrating.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am able to work effectively toward long-term goals.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sometimes I can't stop myself from doing something, even if I know it is wrong.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I often act without thinking through all the alternatives.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## TIES Record

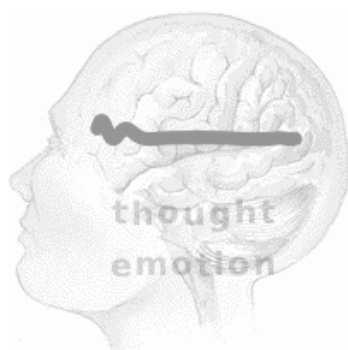
Complete mental silence is a specific experience in which the compulsion to engage in thought is diminished.

The stream of thoughts that usually occupies our attention recedes until there are no thoughts at all.

What remains is a sense of inner silence.

We are still fully alert, aware, and in control.

Usually during these experiences, we feel positive and calm.



## Familiarity with complete mental silence

How familiar are you with the notion of complete mental silence?

- ☐ This is the first time I have thought about it.
- ☐ The notion has crossed my mind, but I'm not sure what it means to me.
- ☐ I have discussed it with friends.
- ☐ I have read something about it.
- ☐ I have an interest in this topic.

Prior experience

	Agree	Agree somewhat	Not sure	Disagree somewhat	Disagree
At some time in my life, I experienced complete mental silence.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In my childhood, I experienced complete mental silence.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If you have never experienced complete mental silence, are you interested in learning how to experience it?

- ☐ No.
- ☐ Not sure.
- ☐ Yes, if it was easy to learn.
- ☐ Yes, I am moderately curious.
- ☐ Yes, I am keenly curious.
- ☐ I have experienced complete mental silence.



## Disposition toward complete mental silence

Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with the following statements.

	Agree	Agree somewhat	Not sure	Disagree somewhat	Disagree
I never slow down long enough to experience complete mental silence.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My life circumstances prevent me from experiencing complete mental silence, currently and probably during the next 1-2 weeks.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am too emotionally preoccupied to experience complete mental silence, currently and probably during the next 1-2 weeks.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Disposition toward complete mental silence

During the past week,

	Agree	Agree somewhat	Not sure	Disagree somewhat	Disagree	I don't understand this question.
I created favorable external conditions to allow myself to experience complete mental silence.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I allowed myself to experience complete mental silence.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I taught (or helped teach) other people how to experience complete mental silence.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If you don't understand any of the above questions, please skip the rest of the questions in the survey. Otherwise please continue.

## Structured sessions

**Many people structure their time and allocate specific time slots to (try to) experience complete mental silence.**

During the last week, how often did you allocate time to experience (or try to experience) complete mental silence?








- ☐ More than 2 times a day.
- ☐ 1-2 times a day.
- ☐ 4-6 times a week.
- ☐ 1-3 times a week.
- ☐ I didn't specifically allocate my time for complete mental silence.

During the last week, how much time did you set aside per structured session to experience (or try to experience) complete mental silence?

- ☐ Less than 10 minutes.
- ☐ 10-20 minutes.
- ☐ 21-30 minutes.
- ☐ 31-45 minutes.
- ☐ 46-60 minutes.
- ☐ More than 1 hour.
- ☐ I didn't plan any particular amount of time
- ☐ Not applicable, since I do not allocate time for structured sessions.

**If you did not allocate time for structured sessions, skip the rest of this page.**

During recent structured sessions, what percentage of the time (e.g. 80 for 80% of the time) were you physically relaxed (not fidgeting, not uncomfortable)?

Your Level of Mental Activity	
	Complete mental silence
	Occasional thoughts separated by longer periods of silence
	A few thoughts separated by brief periods of silence
	Slowing of my usual thinking
	My usual rate of thinking
	Somewhat more frequent thoughts than usual
	Much more frequent thoughts than usual

Referring to the chart above, what was your typical experience in recent structured sessions, before and after the session?

	before	after
Complete mental silence.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Occasional thoughts separated by longer periods of silence.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A few thoughts separated by brief periods of silence.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Slowing of my usual thinking.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My usual rate of thinking.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Somewhat more frequent thoughts than usual.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Much more frequent thoughts than usual.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

During recent structured sessions, I thought about ...

	continuously	frequently	occasionally	not at all
How much time was remaining in the session.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The future.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The past.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

In what percentage of these structured sessions did you actually experience complete mental silence (e.g. 30 for 30% of the sessions)?

During recent structured sessions, approximately how long did your longest experience of complete mental silence last?

- ☐ I didn't experience complete mental silence.
- ☐ A moment (e.g., a second or shorter).
- ☐ Longer than a moment but shorter than 10 seconds.
- ☐ Between 10 seconds and 1 minute.
- ☐ Between 1 minute and 10 minutes.
- ☐ Between 10 minutes and 2 hours.
- ☐ More than 2 hours.
- ☐ I have no idea of how much time elapsed.

During recent structured sessions, what percentage of the time were you asleep (e.g. 10 if you were sleeping for 10% of the time)?

During recent structured sessions, to what extent were you aware of your physical location?

- ☐ I consistently felt that I was sitting in the room.
- ☐ Sometimes I was sitting in the room and sometimes I lost track of the boundaries of my physical body.
- ☐ I consistently lost track of the boundaries of my physical body.
- ☐ The distinction between self and other dissolved.
- ☐ I felt a sense of oneness with the whole.

If your sense of physical location was changed, how long did this feeling remain with you?

- ☐ I didn't feel any change in my sense of physical location.
- ☐ Up to 1 minute.
- ☐ Between 1 minute and 10 minutes.
- ☐ Between 10 minutes and 2 hours.
- ☐ More than 2 hours.

In recent structured sessions, to what extent did you express your conscious will? Which of the following 5 descriptions happened to you most often (and 2nd and 3rd most)?

	most prevalent	2nd most prevalent	3rd most prevalent
I had to struggle and force myself to get through the session.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I had to make a moderate effort to attend to what I was supposed to do during the session.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I drifted between effortfulness and effortlessness during the session.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I enjoyed some relief from the feeling of conscious will and simultaneously attended to the session.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I enjoyed the stillness of not consciously willing anything and simultaneously attended closely to the session.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

After a typical recent session, how long did the feeling associated with the lack (or reduction) of conscious will remain with you?

- ☐ I didn't feel any reduction in conscious will.
- ☐ Up to 1 minute.
- ☐ Between 1 minute and 10 minutes.
- ☐ Between 10 minutes and 2 hours.
- ☐ More than 2 hours.

## Debriefing

Do you have any comments about this survey? If you have questions for which you wish to receive a prompt answer, send me email [jpritikin@virginia.edu](mailto:jpritikin@virginia.edu).

*IRB-SBS Protocol #2013-0407-00*

*Approved from December 9, 2015 to October 31, 2016*

Thank you for participating in this study!

We are developing a new measure to examine disposition toward mental silence. You have completed measures related to this construct so we can examine correlation through time between mental silence and these other measures.

Meditation has two distinct meanings. One meaning of meditation refers to a psychological centering device such as mantra recitation, focus on the breath, mindfulness, or a visual focus. Psychological centering devices help one feel more relaxed and centered. The other meaning of meditation is the experience of complete mental silence. Traditionally, the purpose of centering devices is to achieve complete mental silence. Although the dual meanings of meditation have been documented since at least 1977, most studies involving meditation focus on centering devices and ignore the question of whether participants experience complete mental silence.

Remarkably, the experience of complete mental silence is practically unstudied in psychology. An educational benefit of this questionnaire is to demonstrate how to ask people about ephemeral psychological states like mental silence.

Participant responses will be analyzed using Item Response Theory to develop a scale that other researchers can use with confidence. To the best of our knowledge, no scale has been developed to assess this construct. A psychometrically investigated scale will permit exploration of many questions such as the distribution of familiarity of mental silence within various populations. Another an educational benefit of this study is to suggest Item Response Theory as a suitable analysis technique for the kind of data obtained in this questionnaire.

Thank you for your participation in this study. If you have further questions about the study, please contact Joshua Pritikin [jpritikin@virginia.edu](mailto:jpritikin@virginia.edu) +1 (434) 218-2280 or Karen Schmidt +1 434-924-0694. In addition, if you have any concerns about any aspect of the study, you may contact Tonya Moon, Ph.D., Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Social and Behavioral Sciences, One Morton Drive, Suite 500, University of Virginia, P.O. Box 800392, Charlottesville, VA 22908-0392. Telephone: +1 (434) 924-5999.

### Additional Reading:

- Forman, R. K. C. (1997). *The problem of pure consciousness: Mysticism and philosophy*. Oxford University Press.
- Rubia, K. (2009). The neurobiology of meditation and its clinical effectiveness in psychiatric disorders. *Biological Psychology*, 82(1), 1-11.
- Ready to experience complete mental silence? There are many paths, but you might try <http://coolcheck.org>

Please proceed to the next page to fully complete this study. (You will be taken back to the participant pool web site.)