

# Guided Meditation on the phone? Any for beginners?

## [www.BasicMindfulness.org](http://www.BasicMindfulness.org) ~ Shinzen Young

00:00:00 Meditation on the Phone

00:00:05 But there was something you referred to earlier on

00:00:09 in terms of teaching meditation to people on the phone.

00:00:16 And that piqued my interest a bit,

00:00:18 and I wasn't sure, I don't think I've ever heard of anyone

00:00:22 teaching someone to meditate on the phone.

00:00:25 So could you just tell me a little bit about what you mean there

00:00:29 and how that happens?

00:00:31 Well, I wanted to create a fully modern delivery system.

00:00:37 After I had sort of reformulated the techniques

00:00:41 in terms of the five ways, which was one tier or level of creativity,

00:00:47 then I turned my attention towards the issue of,

00:00:51 well, now I've got a modernized version of the classical paths to enlightenment,

00:00:58 how do I make this easily available to people around the world?

00:01:03 And so if you think about it, traditionally what people do is

00:01:13 they do some daily practice, maybe 10, 20 minutes,

00:01:17 a half an hour a day, what have you,

00:01:19 and then they do periodic intensive retreats,

00:01:23 which typically would be a day or a weekend or a week or two weeks

00:01:29 or three months or in Tibet, three years, three months,

00:01:33 and three days in a cave, et cetera, et cetera,

00:01:36 some combination of day-to-day practice

00:01:39 plus some sort of periodic intensive practice,

00:01:43 typically done with a group, although not inevitably.

00:01:48 That rhythm of practice is the standard formula.

00:01:53 If you maintain something like that,

00:01:58 then the passage of time will mark the process of psycho-spirituality.

00:02:03 That's the six months to...

00:02:05 When you talked about how long it takes for us to begin to see the results

00:02:09 and you said it might be six months to a year.

00:02:11 Six months to a year.

00:02:13 That's not including this three-month retreat thing.

00:02:16 You don't have to do three months, certainly not three years.

00:02:21 But I think that a person does need to do

00:02:25 some day-to-day practice on their own.

00:02:29 I tell people the minimum is 10-4,

00:02:35 10 minutes most days of working on your own,  
00:02:38 then at least four hours of continuous intensive retreat once a month.  
00:02:45 And what does that mean, four hours of...  
00:02:49 No, you don't sit without moving,  
00:02:51 but you have unbroken practice for four hours,  
00:02:54 but you may get up and stretch and do things like that.  
00:02:58 So it occurred to me that most people in the world  
00:03:04 are not in a position to take even four hours out to go to a center.  
00:03:11 They have a family situation, they have a work situation,  
00:03:18 they probably don't live near a mindfulness center,  
00:03:25 they can't incur the expenses, the lost wages,  
00:03:32 the travel expenses, the expenses of being in a venue  
00:03:36 where you have to get lodging and meals if you do residential retreats.  
00:03:41 So a way to make all of the features of a group residential retreat  
00:03:50 available to anyone in the world and circumvent these problems  
00:03:56 would be to pipe it into the individual's home in four-hour blocks.  
00:04:03 And that would be with a conference call.  
00:04:07 Is this a recording?  
00:04:09 No, it's live. It's me or my facilitators live.  
00:04:15 So the way it works is you go to [basicmindfulness.org](http://basicmindfulness.org)  
00:04:19 and you register for a retreat.  
00:04:24 The programs are always on the second weekend of the month.  
00:04:30 One two-hour program on Friday evening,  
00:04:33 two four-hour programs on Saturday separated by an hour,  
00:04:37 and then two four-hour programs on Sunday.  
00:04:40 So that's the second weekend of every month you know that you can plan ahead.  
00:04:44 Do you have to do the whole, are they sequential?  
00:04:47 No, they're completely independent of each other.  
00:04:49 So I could just do four hours on Sunday?  
00:04:51 You could do just two hours on a Friday.  
00:04:54 So it can be as short as two hours on Friday,  
00:04:57 and it can be as long as Friday, two four-hour periods on Saturday,  
00:05:03 and two four-hour periods on Sunday,  
00:05:05 since you've taken the whole weekend for practice,  
00:05:08 and anything in between.  
00:05:10 The programs are all independent.  
00:05:13 You register for them individually.  
00:05:16 And so it's sort of like dharma on demand.  
00:05:22 You might say you decide what you're interested in.  
00:05:26 But it's all unified around the five ways.  
00:05:31 I'm sorry, are you sitting there holding a phone to your head for eight hours?  
00:05:35 No, you don't hold the phone.

00:05:37 You either use a speakerphone or you get from Radio Shack a hands-free headset with a microphone.

00:05:45 It costs you \$20.

00:05:47 You put that, replace your handset with the headset so that you've got a hands-free operation.

00:05:53 If you're going to do the programs with consistency, it's worth it to buy the headset or to get a speakerphone.

00:06:00 So you're sitting there, your eyes are closed,

00:06:04 and everybody calls in to the number.

00:06:12 There's from 40 to 90 people on the call, depending on various factors.

00:06:19 From all over?

00:06:20 All over the world.

00:06:22 All at the same time?

00:06:23 All at the same time.

00:06:24 Oh, how neat is that?

00:06:26 And many of them know each other because they've been on site programs together.

00:06:34 Because I also go around the country and run residential retreats, so people know each other.

00:06:40 I know who's on the call.

00:06:41 Yeah, well, everybody introduces themselves.

00:06:44 So you see, people thought, well, gee, it's telephone, it's going to separate people.

00:06:50 But actually, we found that it very much unites people.

00:06:53 It creates a virtual community of practice.

00:06:57 So what happens is it starts precisely at the posted time,

00:07:04 but people typically call in 15 minutes early, and there's just free schmoozing and socializing.

00:07:11 Schmoozing is important.

00:07:12 Yeah, that's an ancient Sanskrit word.

00:07:16 It builds community and builds a camaraderie so that when the guidance starts,

00:07:24 well, I claim to take the mist out of mysticism, and I don't like things to be mystical schmistical.

00:07:31 But there are some mystical schmistical things.

00:07:34 I can't really explain how that bonding takes place, because after all, it is just people on a phone.

00:07:44 But somehow, it's like you're in the same room.

00:07:48 It's really weird.

00:07:50 Just knowing that they're there and the fact that you've had this socializing before and what have you,

00:07:56 it's like you sit really strong, and you've sensed the presence of these other people.

00:08:03 Plus, you usually have your eyes closed most of the time anyway,

00:08:06 so even if they were in the room, you'd have your eyes closed.

00:08:09 Yeah, something happens that is a synergy that's more than I expected.

00:08:16 So what happens is you call in, and you choose the program you want,

00:08:20 and every month there's an intro program so that you can start up any time.

00:08:27 I call it the Home Practice Program.

00:08:30 You get it off of [basicmindfulness.org](http://basicmindfulness.org) to register and to find out about it.

00:08:36 But the way it's set up is you can begin any month.

00:08:42 There's always a program for first-timers that's an intro to one of the five ways,

00:08:51 and you can begin with any one of the five ways.

00:08:53 So if I've never meditated before, once a month there's some way I can call in

00:08:59 and have someone guide me from scratch, like I have no idea what to do.

00:09:03 Any of the programs that say Part 1, so Focus In Part 1, Focus Out Part 1,

00:09:09 Focus on Rest, Change, and Positives.

00:09:12 Those are the five ways?

00:09:13 Those are the five ways.

00:09:15 All the Part 1 programs require no previous experience whatsoever.

00:09:20 Great.