



Coherence Meditation: Common Practice Questions

BODY

Q: What posture do I take for meditation?

A: Most importantly, take a posture that feels comfortable, supportive, and allows for the release of tension in the body. For many people, this means sitting in a comfortable chair or couch. For some, it may even mean lying down on the floor or bed with support under the knees (a pillow or rolled blanket).

Q: What do I do if my breathing rate increases or decreases dramatically?

A: The breath is an excellent indicator of what is happening in your meditation practice. As the breath slows down, you may notice that you feel more calm and relaxed. But you don't need to try to manipulate the breath into a slower and deeper. Breath rate is not a measure of your success in meditation. See what you notice and move on.

Q: What do I do about tightness in my chest, neck or back?

A: As a general guideline, we don't resist anything in meditation. If you have pain, tightness, etc. do your best to allow it into your experience. Notice if there is any part of you that is trying to push that experience away and replace it with a more positive experience. This in and of itself is a negative experience because you are not allowing yourself to feel what you're feeling. Experiment with allowing those uncomfortable sensations and see if it changes.

Q: I experience body discomfort during meditation. Am I doing something wrong?

A: First, make sure that you're taking every opportunity to create a comfortable posture for your meditation (IE sitting in a comfy chair or perhaps even lying down). If you still experience pain and/or tension in the body then let it in. Don't resist your feelings. Notice if you can make space for this discomfort and be with it, as you would be with an injured child or pet. Welcome it without needing to change it.

Q: What happens if I fall asleep during meditation?

A: It may simply mean that you needed some sleep! At the beginning of your practice, you are allowing the body to rest deeply it will use this time to reorient to a more balanced energetic center. Sometimes this involves sleeping. This can be an extremely relaxing and rejuvenating experience. If you are new to meditation welcome and savor this experience. Also, keep in mind, your mind is not familiar with what you're trying to do. Up until now, when you intentionally relax the body and close your eyes your consciousness recognizes that as a sign to sleep. Don't get frustrated, just keep practicing and see if you notice yourself becoming more alert during practice. If you've been meditating for a while and you're still dozing off, you might want to try changing your posture. If you're lying down, try it seated.



Coherence Meditation: Common Practice Questions

MIND

Q: I have a hard time getting myself motivated to meditate.

A: You can't force yourself to meditate, it's counter to the whole practice! But, you can take a few steps to make the habit-building process easier. Find a consistent time and place where you can meditate every day to start. It's easier to start a habit by having consistency in your routine. Ultimately, meditation should be enjoyable. Once the habit has enough momentum and you notice the impacts on your mental outlook, emotions, and life, you'll want to do it every day.

Q: How do I quiet my mind?

A: The purpose of meditation is not to quiet the mind, per se, but to become more absorbed in the feeling sense so that the mind becomes background noise. At first, the thoughts may be very overpowering and a huge part of our practice. But over time, as we develop greater skills of attention, we may have a better ability to tune into the thoughts or away from them. As you continue to practice, you may find that you lose interest in the thoughts quite naturally and gravitate towards feelings of comfort, calm, and ease.

Q: What happens if I get lost in thought?

A: Be happy that you've noticed you're in thought! Seriously, it means you're increasing your skills of awareness. Refrain from placing a value or judgment on the thought, as this reaction brings more resistance and tension into your body and mind. Whenever you notice you're away from the mantra (or object of focus) you simply acknowledge and move back to the mantra. It's that simple.

Q: How do I know I'm doing it right?

A: You'll know if you're on the right track based on how you feel outside of meditation. Whether we feel like we've had a 'good' meditation, in which our mind is relatively calm, or a 'bad' meditation, when our thoughts are turbulent and uncomfortable, it doesn't really matter in the long run. What matters is that you've practiced today and you'll do it again tomorrow. Our meditation is what it needs to be, it can be no other way! Use your life as the litmus test, if you feel good, if you're 'in the flow' and feeling comfortable, then you're doing something right!

Q: When I meditate, I experience negative thoughts and emotions. Is this normal? Will they go away?

A: This happens, especially when if you've turned to meditation to reduce stress and anxiety. What's happening is that you're becoming more aware of the subconscious thoughts/feelings you're having. And although it can feel uncomfortable, ultimately, it's a good thing. Negative thoughts and feelings will dissipate over time, but only when you are not resisting those feelings. In other words, you can't make them go away, but if you allow them to be a part of your experience, without judgment, and make space for them, they will pass on their own. We understand that this can be extremely scary at times. If anything ever gets to be too much in meditation, stop. Open your eyes, take a few breaths and see if you can return to your practice.

Q: What if I can't stop worrying?

A: Worry, fear, doubt, and anxiety can be extremely common feelings to pop up in a meditation practice. They can create a very tumultuous experience. To begin to work with these feelings, first, simply notice them. Don't push them away or try to change them. See if you can locate the spot in or on your body where you notice the worry residing? Gently feel into that space and allow it into your experience more fully. If the emotion ever becomes overwhelming, remember that you can always



Coherence Meditation: Common Practice Questions

stop. Open your eyes, take a break, and try again. As a general rule we welcome every experience, but we also never use force. Don't force yourself to be with negative emotions.

Q: I am constantly replaying scenes of things that happened during the day or I am creating new strange things in my mind. Is that OK?

A: This is completely normal. You're just picking up on different layers of thought in the mind. Allow yourself to drift in and out of these thoughts. Don't try to resist them. Be with them for as long as they are a distraction, then gently bring yourself back to your mantra.

Q: I experience weird visualizations and colors in meditation. What does this mean?

A: Nothing. Over time, you may have some interesting visualizations or sensations during meditation. It's just the mind creating a story or the body trying to orient itself in space. It doesn't mean anything important. Simply allow those sensations to be a part of your experience and notice if they go dissipate.

Q: What does it mean to practice without expectations?

A: It means that we do not expect an outcome to our practice. We are not striving to achieve enlightenment or nirvana. In fact, we're not even trying to become more peaceful or calm. We're just observing our experience exactly as it is. We don't need to change or manipulate anything.

Q: How do I encourage others to meditate?

A: I've found that the best way to encourage others to meditate is to involve them in a discussion. To connect with them as a caring friend or loved one. To ask them about their life, how they're feeling and listen deeply with your heart. After many times of suggesting meditation to friends and family, I've found it's best to wait for them to ask me about it. When the time is right, they'll be curious and ask and in response, speak about your own experience. If we project how meditation may be useful for someone else it usually is met with a certain degree of resistance as they may assume you think they are not a relaxed or kind person. It's best to share stories of your own start on this meditation journey and about any difficulties that you faced when trying to start the habit and any advice that you found useful along the way.



Coherence Meditation: Common Practice Questions

Environment

Q: Where do I meditate?

In the beginning, it is recommended to dedicate one place for your meditation. This can be a separate space in your living space, or simply a favorite chair. This will create consistency and ultimately support you on your meditative journey. This doesn't mean you have to find the perfect spot to meditate, just somewhere you feel you won't be distracted, even if there's a bit of background noise. Just remember that the most important aspect is that you feel comfortable.

Q: How often should I meditate?

A: At least once a day. Consistency is one of the most important parts of your meditation practice. When you practice daily you're literally building meditative momentum which may allow you to more easily notice the effects of meditation in your daily life.

Q: How long do I need to meditate for?

A: As a short answer, as long as you're comfortable. At first, start small, perhaps 8-10 minutes a day and gradually build from there. But more is not always better. It's more important that you take the same principles of meditation, of allowing what is, throughout your everyday life than it is to meditate for hours on end. A good goal to work towards would be a daily practice of sitting between 20-40 minutes a day.

Q: Do I need to meditate in silence?

You may find it helpful to meditate in a quiet place at first. This, however, is not a requirement. In fact, the more you meditate properly, the less distracting you will find noise over time. Because we don't deny anything in our experience during meditation, we want to learn to allow the situation to be as it is and be with it. Enjoy the silence and the noise.