

Personal Reflections on Meditation

AGU Ocean Sciences Workshop

19 Feb 2020

Stephen Griffies

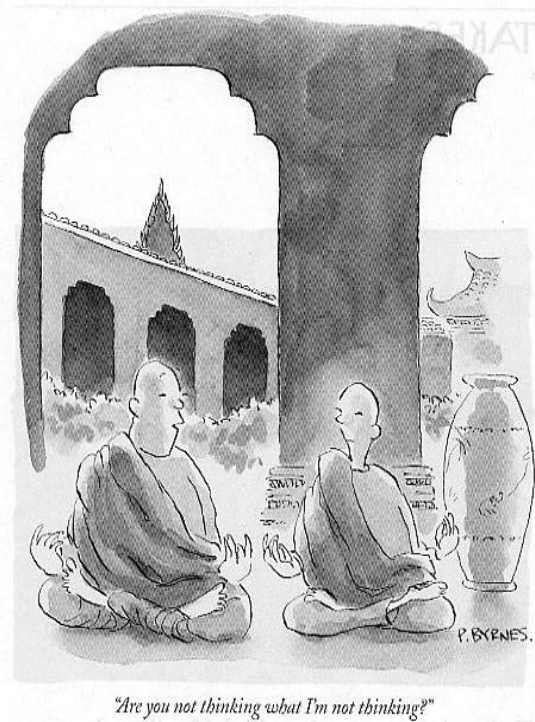
NOAA Geophysical Fluid Dynamics Laboratory

Princeton University Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences Program



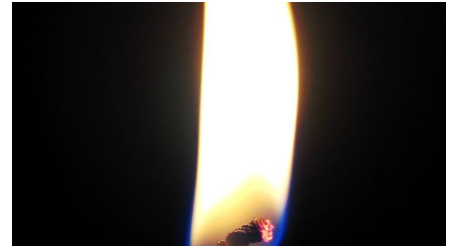
Why meditation is in my life

- ❖ Daily morning practice exercises/stretchers 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)



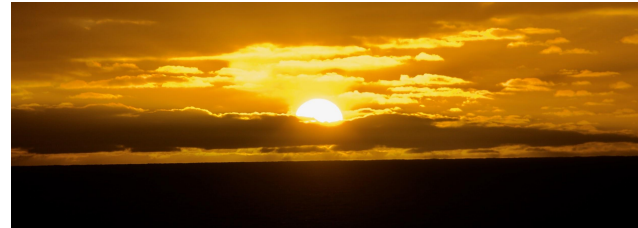
Meditation practice: what has worked for me

- ❖ 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!