



The Real Scoop on Meditation

There is a lot of flowery, poetic language about meditation and what it will do for you. Let me give it to you straight.

Meditation is setting aside a fixed amount of time, even a minute, to do nothing, achieve nothing and be free of daily demands. It is just a space.

Within this space you can calm your breath, practice relaxing and releasing, calm your thoughts, discover something new. OR NOT. Who knows what will fill the space but

- set your timer,
- put your body there
- and see what happens.

Here is a typical meditation session for me and I don't do it every day. I know I should but I'm being straight with you. I set my timer for 10 minutes and this time I settle into a low chair that lets me rest my feet on the floor.

So, I remember to focus on my breathing, in and out, and within seconds I'm thinking about what I want to wear because I'm still in my PJs. This switch happens so fast I didn't even feel it until I realized I was in the middle of it. So I dutifully go back to my breath, this time amusing myself by making it go to one side more than the other side, my elbow raising like a chicken wing. And zap! I'm making a grocery list!

Back to my breathing I remember I'm supposed to learn to relax and I do notice my jaw is tense and my toes curled. I enjoy releasing some muscles and do begin to feel a little softer. Nice.

Zap, incoming judgment where I wonder why I'm bothering to meditate. Does it really make a difference? Back to my breathing, back to noticing tension in my body and then I'm surprised to have the image of my brain as a calm pool of water. Where did that come from?

I sit back and enjoy the calm and notice a couple of worries bubbling up but they are in the water and I'm watching from the side. The water is silver blue and the worries break the surface. Well, what do you know? Both the worries are about someone else's problem that I think I can fix. I wonder if I do that a lot? I let those two worries swim away to their own pool. Zap again but this time it's the timer and I'm surprised because, for a moment, I really traveled inside and forgot I was forcing myself to meditate!