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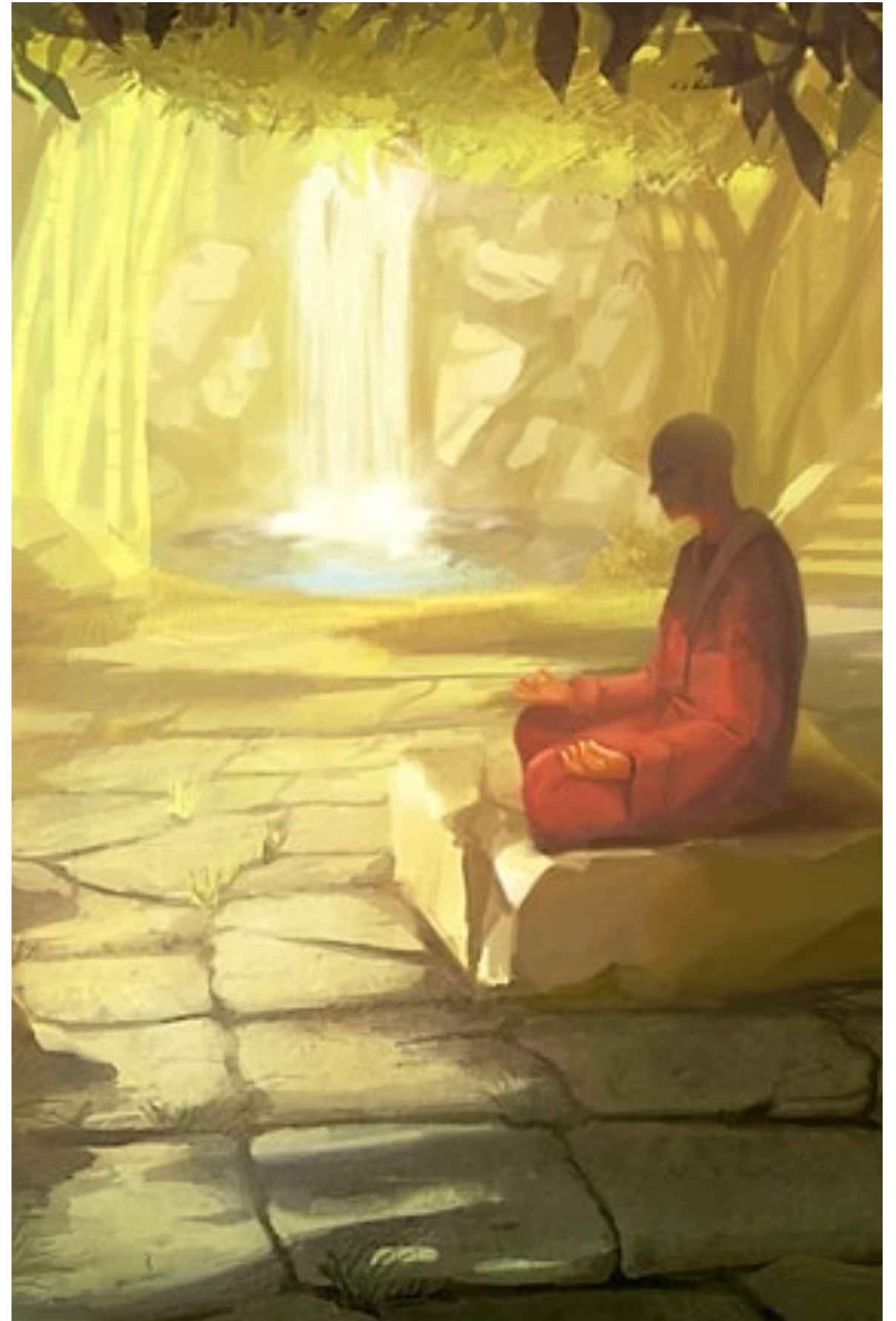
simple meditation  
for busy people



# Enliven your inner peace

*"The gift of learning to meditate is the greatest gift you can give yourself in this life. For it is only through meditation that you can undertake the journey to discover your true nature, and so find the stability and confidence you will need to live, and die, well. Meditation is the road to enlightenment."*

***The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying - Sogyal Rinpoche***



# Introduction

In today's world multi-tasking and busyness have become a part of life. In fact, as a society not only do we expect to be busy we often associate it with success and achievement. But busyness can be a trap.

We plunge into our tasks and activities so deeply that we find ourselves moving at mindless speed. We cram as much into every single day as we can, and are so focused on our external environment that we've lost touch with our true selves. We're not noting the innate wisdom and 'signals' of our body, and we've lost sense of our deeper and true desires for wholeness and wellbeing.

Some see this as a fact of life, something we have to do. But are we really satisfied with this lifestyle? Do we really feel fulfilled? Or, underneath all this activity do we feel that there's something missing; that there must be more to life?

The truth is that many of us do feel a sense of emptiness. We want to get off the roller coaster but we just don't know how. We have somehow reached a point where our lives are so busy that we don't know how to stop and just simply BE. Every day is filled to the brim and we find ourselves getting caught up

in the craziness of it all, along with the duty and obligations we find ourselves servicing.

There's no denying that we all have obligations – we need to pay bills, the kids need to be fed, the dog needs to be walked and it's important to catch up with friends and family. But this constant state of activity and busyness is not only stressful at times, it can be unhealthy and lead to dis-ease and unhappiness.

And, it's taking a toll – a physical, mental, emotional and spiritual toll. We get so caught up in trying to keep our heads above water that we lose sight of what's important and forget to take care of ourselves.

*“As a nation we've tried to fix our problems with everything from psychotherapy and Prozac to positive thinking and politics. Now people everywhere are ready to close their eyes and take a dive — not to escape, but to more fully be”*

**Jeanne Ball, Writer on Meditation for 25 years**

I have experienced first hand the consequences of not slowing down, of not paying attention to the messages of my body - the 'warning' signs, of pushing myself to the limits and taking my body and my health for granted. And I have paid the price - the price of having cancer – not once, but twice.

Through this experience I learnt that I needed to slow down and heed the warnings that my body was giving me. I knew that if I didn't, the consequences would be fatal.

I began by reading countless books on how to take better care of myself, how to reduce stress and how to stop worrying and how to relax. Through this learning I found a common thread, a theme that kept attracting my attention – something that gave me hope that there was a way to find the balance and inner peace that I was seeking.

That theme was meditation and mindfulness. Many of the books I read suggested that meditation can be an effective way of improving health and well being - a way of finding inner peace. In fact research has shown that not only can meditation invoke feelings of calm, loving kindness, mindfulness and happiness – it can strengthen and nurture our immune systems and have many other health benefits.

However, it's one thing knowing that meditation is good for you but another thing knowing how to do it. How do you find that inner sanctuary, that special place of stillness and inner peace - away from all the 'noise' of our busy minds and constant thoughts in our head?

Do you have to sit and chant for hours on end, or go away on a retreat? Do you have to be taught how to get into this state of mind? Do you need special equipment? Do you have to lie down, sit in the yogi position or on a cushion or on your head?

### **And what is meditation anyway?**

This short book provides the answers to these questions. It explains what meditation is and why it is beneficial. It also provides key insights and tips on how you too can still your mind to allow you to successfully experience meditation.

In writing this book I have drawn on my personal experience of overcoming the frustrations of learning how to meditate and the incredible physical, mental, emotional and spiritual benefits that I have gained through my own practice of meditation. I hope you enjoy it and soon get to experience the wonder of inner peace, contentment and serenity.

# What is Meditation?

There are many 'definitions' of meditation. According to one dictionary meditation is a "practice of concentrated focus upon a sound, object, visualization, the breath, movement, or attention itself in order to increase awareness of the present moment, reduce stress, promote relaxation, and enhance personal and spiritual growth" <sup>1</sup>.

Michael J. Baime, a professor of medicine says "Meditation cultivates an emotional stability that allows the meditator to experience intense emotions fully while simultaneously maintaining perspective on them."

Put simply, meditation is any form of awareness that allows our mind to be quiet and experience an oasis of peace and love. It can be an awareness of your breath, awareness of the birds singing or even awareness of an image in your mind. The key is for the mind to be free of the constant chatter and scattered thoughts and focused on a sound, an image, or the breath.

Meditation is the means for bringing us back to ourselves, where we can really experience and taste our full being, beyond all habitual patterns. Because life's patterns reflect our thought patterns, meditation gives us the opportunity to focus our thoughts and follow a more positive path.

All meditative practices have one thing in common - they focus on quietening the busy mind. The intention is not to remove stimulation but rather to direct

your concentration to one healing element - one sound, one word, one image, or one's breath. When the mind is "filled" with the feeling of calm and peace, it cannot take off on its own and worry, stress out, or get depressed.

## Why is meditation beneficial?

Meditation has long been used as a technique to help people improve their health and wellbeing – their physical, mental, emotional and spiritual wellbeing. People who meditate regularly have been shown to improve their focus and reduce stress, anxiety and depression. They have also reported feeling more relaxed, peaceful and happy.

Scientific studies have conclusively proven the benefits of meditation for our mind and body. Research has shown that meditation can strengthen the immune system and nurture other health benefits. Increasingly doctors are prescribing meditation as a way of improving blood pressure, relieve insomnia, reduce chronic pain and assist asthmatics to breathe easier, just to name a few.

A recent trial of men with advanced prostate cancer found that those who took part in mindfulness meditation program were less depressed, less worried about cancer reoccurring and had a better quality of life. Recognising the benefits of meditation and mindfulness, the Cancer Council Queensland is rolling out a free program across the State. This program is successfully assisting cancer patients and survivors to deal with life after diagnosis. Through meditation and mindfulness, people affected by cancer are learning to live in the moment and to just be. They're learning to put difficult thoughts and feelings aside, stop worrying about the future, stop dwelling on the past and making the most of their lives in the here and now.

Research has also shown that meditation is one of the very best ways to cultivate self-awareness, calm and inner peace, loving kindness, mindfulness, and happiness. The practice of meditation helps us reconnect with ourselves and find peace, purpose and meaning.

With today's fast pace of life and increasing commitments, too many of us don't know how it feels to be free of stress and anxiety. It's difficult to relax if we are in pain or we have strong negative emotions or scattered, worrisome thoughts. Meditation helps us find the peace within that is so elusive in our outer world.

When you meditate you experience a deep state of relaxation and become aware of your inner resources of serenity, joy and peace. You can tap into these resources whenever you feel stressed or worried.

Over time it is possible to acquire a habit of detached observation of your experiences. So when something irritating occurs in the course of your day, you view it as a detached observer. You start to understand the 'monkey tricks' of your mind and feel calmer, more confident and more in control of your life.

The peace, serenity and joy that you acquire can become infectious to those around you too. In this way, you influence your environments to be happier, more serene and peaceful.

Meditation gave me back control over my life experience, so that no matter what was happening externally, whether it was positive or negative, I could more consciously choose my thoughts and thus better manage the emotions and feeling directed by my thoughts and my mind.

While we cannot control or eradicate adversity in life, we can master the way we respond to circumstances in regards to our thinking processes, and the meaning we attribute to our experiences. In life, I believe that pain is inevitable but suffering is optional. Suffering is routed in our thoughts. We create our own suffering.

# How to Meditate

Anyone who has tried to meditate but found it nearly impossible to shut off the constant noise and chatter that goes on in our head is not alone. When I started out I tried everything. In fact I found it enormously frustrating to know that many other people could do this and I couldn't. I simply didn't get it.

Invariably I would sit down to meditate and my head just wouldn't let up. Thoughts were constantly churning in my mind - thoughts about myself, my responsibilities in life, my opinions about myself, my desires, and my fears. I was constantly questioning myself - am I doing this right, am I sitting correctly, is my posture ok, am I breathing deeply enough, should I say some special prayer or set an intention, why am I so uncomfortable, why can't I relax, is it supposed to be this hard?

It was crazy, I was totally distracted and had no idea how to turn off the internal chatter and tune into the silence and deep state of relaxation that I so desired.

I persisted and continued to try everything. I tried setting up a special corner in my home with candles, incense and a special cushion. I studied sitting positions and breathing techniques. Occasionally I would get it and I would experience a few moments of silence and peacefulness. But nothing truly worked long enough to allow me to achieve that pure peace and quiet that would enable me to simply be.

One day I discovered drumming – a method of active meditation - whereby I could totally focus on the sounds and the vibrations of the drums and shut out that constant chatter in my head.

This worked for a while, but then after the brain tumor was removed, I found that I couldn't do it without experiencing pain, so I was back to the drawing board. Back to my quest for learning how to still my mind and find the inner peace that I was craving.

I spent time practicing simple breathing techniques, trying to focus on my breath as I inhaled and exhaled. I read that I needed to shut off my thoughts and solely concentrate on my breathing. But like so many others, I found that I couldn't resist the temptation to follow my thoughts and was unable to remain focused on my breath for long. I continued to feel frustrated - almost defeated.

Don't get me wrong, along my journey I found ways to momentarily escape and experience quiet and calm. I discovered that it helped to have a place where I could sit comfortably without being disturbed and that I could use regularly. I found that it is not necessary to sit on the ground, and that I could use a chair and I could sit anywhere - as long as I was comfortable. I could even lie down if I wanted to.

I read that some people find that meditating at the beginning of the day in a state of peace and silence makes the whole day go better. Some people find the best time is in the evening, where the soothing effects help take them into deeper and nourishing sleep. For me I found that meditating twice a day for around 5-10 minutes worked best.

### **I also found the following tips really useful:**

1. Establish a routine. Having a time of the day set aside for meditation helps in maintaining regularity.
2. Most people who meditate regularly find one or two sessions a day to be beneficial. I recommend two sessions a day, for 5-10 minutes.
3. Select a quiet location. Turn off your mobile phone and any other potential distractions. If you have children, you may ask them not to disturb you for that time.
4. Sit with your spine straight in a comfortable chair, or lie on the floor keeping your spine straight and with a comfortable pillow beneath your head, if you like.
5. Gentle instrumental music, with or without meditation voice prompts, can be helpful. Every day I listen to my audio recording of Simple Meditation for Busy People. You too may find this beneficial and can download it at [www.josiethomson.com](http://www.josiethomson.com)
6. The use of essential oils and a vaporizer can create a positive ambience for meditation. However, they are not necessary to successfully meditate.
7. Meditate before a meal, not after. If necessary, empty your bladder before commencing your meditation.
8. Loosen any tight clothing. Remove tight shoes. Take off your glasses.
9. A light blanket can keep you warm if you experience the cold when your pulse rate slows down as you relax.
10. At the end of a meditation sit quietly for a couple of minutes to avoid light-headedness or a dizzy spell.

11. Never meditate while driving a motor vehicle or when undertaking any task requiring concentration.
12. Meditation is not intended as a replacement for medical care. Any person with a condition requiring medical attention should consult a qualified doctor.

### **How I did it**

It was while I was on a trip to Melbourne with my children that I discovered a way that truly worked for me. A way to deeply relax, let go of negative stress and experience inner peace and serenity.

I continued to work on this method until I got it just right. And then my Simple Meditation for Busy People was born.

Simple Meditation for Busy People is a deceptively straightforward process. It is a guided visualisation that helps you relax your mind and experience inner peace and harmony almost instantly.

The meditation can be performed whilst sitting or lying quietly. There are no special cushions, lotions or potions required – all you need is a quiet space where you can listen to it for just a few short minutes - 4 minutes to be exact.

I use this visualisation to meditate for 5-10 minutes every day. For me it is personal prime time to help me feel centered, calm, clear, peaceful and re-energised.

In fact, it has helped me so much that I wanted to create it in a format that I could share with you. I wanted you to know what it feels like to experience inner peace and joyful wellbeing.



Life is a gift, not something to take for granted or waste away. Take charge now. Master your thoughts. Enjoy this Simple Meditation for Busy People and be the peaceful beacon in the eye of any storm or adversity.

I welcome you to start your journey to inner peace and freedom by downloading Simple Meditation for Busy People for FREE now at [www.josiethomson.com](http://www.josiethomson.com)

With Love,

*Josie*

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