

Ep #119: Meditation Series Part 1: Getting Past Mind Chatter



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With Your Host

Susi Hately

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Male Announcer: You're listening to *From Pain to Possibility* with Susi Hately. You will hear Susi's best ideas on how to reduce or even eradicate your pain and learn how to listen to your body when it whispers so you don't have to hear it scream. And now here's your host, Susi Hately.

Welcome and welcome back. Before I get into this episode, I first want to tell you what this episode is really about. This is a multi-part series on meditation. I have a lot of people asking me about a meditation practice to help them quiet their mind, to help their minds be less busy. But yet they face these obstacles with having consistency of the practice and they're a little frustrated and they want some support.

So that's what this meditation series is all about, is to support you in making that process simpler and smoother. If you find that you want to dig into this more, and you want to have more of my support with growing your meditation practice, you will probably love our meditation reset series called Rest and Rejuvenation: Sleep Meditation Series. This can really open the gates to enabling you to get that much more connected into your meditation process.

And you can find that series at www.functionalsynergy/randr. And that's and, A-N-D, R and R. You can read all about it there. All right let's get going into the first episode, part one of meditation.

When I'm outside of my practice and people are meeting me and getting to know what I do and how I do what I do, invariably someone will bring up the concept of meditation. And they'll tell me about how they tried meditating but all they could think of was all the things that they had to do and thoughts would swirl. They'd become frustrated, and just would stop meditating.

Then weeks later inspired to try again, they would resume the practice but as before, the same thing would occur. And they really wanted to make the process easier. And how could they clear and quiet their mind more quickly?

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So I want to dig into really understanding the process of meditation, what it is, what it isn't, and then how to consider it so that if you do have this innate knowing that you want to get into the practice more, then this episode will give you some ideas, as well as the other parts of this series will be able to support you in exploring meditation.

Meditation really is a process in my mind of calming the mind in order to feel that sense of flow, that essence within that gently pulses through you that is all at once calm, and alert, engaged, still, and alive. Some people might call this sense of essence or flow, a stillness, or a happiness, peace, being true to yourself or something else. But it's the essence that is critical that I want you to kind of think about, whatever you name it.

You know that you've experienced it, you know that you've tapped into it, and then you've also known when it's gone. Sometimes it's hidden and suppressed under the tumultuous array of things to do and errands to run and just stuff. Sometimes you don't even notice that it's gone until, huh, there it is, it's gone. And you notice there's a lacking of that essence. Meditation is a way to help regain it.

But there's a catch here because to regain your inner flow, you need to wade through all that has been hiding and suppressing it, which really is the mind chatter about the things to do, the errands to run, and all the things. Which can be tough and disconcerting, and sometimes downright difficult. But the more that you can consistently practice, the easier it will become and the quicker you will return to that essence or that flow, and that's something I can absolutely guarantee.

So the first piece here that's important is that sometimes it will be difficult. Sometimes you have to wade through and be with that chatter in order for the chatter to dissipate. I had a colleague of mine ask me the other day, how do I bust up the resistance I'm feeling? I said, how about you just be with the resistance?

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Oftentimes when we're resisting that very thing that we want to get rid of, it persists, right? There's that line, which I can't remember who it's attributed to, but what you resist persists. When we can be with it though and truly be with it, not be with it like having a timer on our watch being with it, but like truly be with it. Then something changes, something happens.

And that's what the practice of meditation really enables you to have, is this way of being with whatever is there. And then you're able to tap into that essence more quickly. And you'll find that the ebb and flow of that essence is less of an ebb and flow, that it's just more there under the current more consistently. Like you can feel and connect with it more easily.

A piece that I think is important to note though is I like to share with my clients the emotional wheel. And the emotional wheel outlines many of the emotions that we can experience as human beings. And we have the positive ones like happiness and joy, ease, freedom, love. And then we have the others that are more on the side of worry, irritation, agitation, anger, concern, those types.

And I think sometimes as humans we can get into a tricky trap of believing that we should only ever feel the happiness and the joy and all that. When the reality is that we are a human being that has this emotional wheel. That grief happens, sadness happens, irritation and agitation happen, and that's part of the human experience. And when we can be with that, then there's less resistance to that.

I remember listening to a talk that Dr. Jill Bolte Taylor gave my Healing and Revealing membership group and she was talking about how it takes 90 seconds for an emotion to move through us. Now, I want to emphasize that's not putting on your timer, as I mentioned, and then timing this thing. That's not the way it works.

It's when we can be with the emotion and we don't put meaning to it, it moves through us in 90 seconds. The key here is not putting meaning to it.

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The key here is not resisting it. The key is a being with it. And the process of a meditation allows you to be with it.

So whether you are upset, or whether you are happy, or anything in between, if you can be with the emotion it's as if you're being neutral about the experience that you're having. And I want to emphasize something, I'm not saying that you are like stone faced around being sad or happy. No, it's that you're noticing that you're sad or you're happy and you're experiencing the sadness or the happiness.

You're experiencing the emotional vibration in your body. You're noticing all of the experience of whatever emotion that is going on. You're experiencing the mental chatter for what the mental chatter is. And if you're judging yourself for having the mental chatter, if you're judging yourself for being agitated or whichever emotion is showing up, then you're noticing that you're judging yourself for that.

So it's these layers of opportunity of being aware of what you're being aware of. That's what meditation can provide, this opportunity to simply just be with ourselves. And think about it, you have people in your life, perhaps, that you know will just be with you. And you have people in your life who you know will not be with you. Who do you prefer to be with? Those people who can simply be with you in those moments when all you really need is someone to be with you.

That's what the meditation process can support you in developing for yourself. And then when you build that for yourself, you can then be that in all the other things that occur in life, right? That sense of calmness, even in the chaos, there's a clarity that is provided, even when you yourself are in chaos.

Yeah, many layers to this. But to start with, the key is can you consistently practice and just be with what shows up? Now consistency, what I mean by that could be that you practice once a week. It could be you practice daily. It could be you find five minutes each day to do it. It could be that you know

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seasonally that you need to have the practice more often than other seasons.

For some people it's the transition between summer and fall, or winter and spring. Sometimes it's in the depth of winter, particularly if you're in an area of the world that's very dark in the winter. It just depends, you get to play with what makes the most sense to you.

The other key is you don't actually have to sit and meditate. You can stand, you can even walk. In a next episode I'm going to be talking about a dynamic meditation. But the key is, is that there's many different ways of posturing that you can do for the practice. Like I said, you could sit but you don't have to. You could be on a meditation cushion or on the floor or in a chair. You can be on a meditation bench. You can stand, you can walk, you can meditate while you cook.

One of the practices that I have in the fall, I make a ton of truffles and chocolate treats for Christmas every year. And I have a dipping, it's called my dipping practice and I can spend 20 to 30 minutes just in this state of meditation as I dip these amazing chocolate truffles into chocolate. Maybe that's where your practice is.

So the key is that it doesn't have to look a certain way, you choose that which most resonates for you. The next piece is that sometimes when we get into that place where we're sitting quietly or standing or walking, then our brain can be quite active. And so sometimes a tool to help focus your mind is a great place to start.

In yoga we call our chattering mind a monkey mind where the monkey swings from branch to branch. The mind can swing from thought to thought and thoughts just kind of come up wherever. They sort of swing through us. Sometimes they stick to us and sometimes they just kind of pass through. But if you find yourself getting caught and distracted by those thoughts, then what you can do is focus in on a word or a breathing technique.

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So that word might be breathe, or I am, or peace. The breathing technique may simply be noticing your inhale coming in and your exhale going out. Your inhale coming in and your exhale going out, and just simply coming back to your breath so that when you fade away and realize that you are no longer on your breath, you bring yourself back to your breathing.

The training here is to pull yourself back because you will wander, that's just what happens. So the training is to pull yourself back, whether it's to the word or words, or back to your breathing technique. Because that's really the only distinction and difference between a beginning and an experienced meditator, is that the experienced meditator can bring themselves back to their point of focus faster and smoother with less drama than the beginning meditator.

Also recognize that truly the thoughts will arise, because that's what happens in our brain. And that the thoughts, the chatter is simply that. It's not you, nor is it your inner flow. And the practice of meditation is not actually about getting rid of the chatter, because it's not something to get rid of because the thoughts are naturally arising in our brain.

It's more recognizing that it's kind of like the surface. And then as you tune in and as you train yourself, whether through initially words that you're paying attention to or mantras or a breathing technique, that you get underneath that chatter. And you get into that quieter place.

I liken it to diving. So I'm a scuba diver and there are times where I can get into the water and the water is really choppy up top. But then as I go down, it's quieter, there's less chop. And then even when there's current underneath and I can flow with the current, I don't fight the current, right? So the key here is you're recognizing that chatter and then as you tune in and as things settle down, you drop into this other place, but the chatter itself doesn't go away.

So with all of that in mind here is a structure, a framework that you can utilize for a basic practice. And I'll walk you through what the framework is

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and then you can just take your watch and set a timer to three to five minutes and then just begin and tune yourself in.

And if you want my guidance, then I'll stick with you here and I'll just remind you to come back to you, to come back to your breath. And I'll do this over three minutes. So I'll outline the framework and then if you want to shut the podcast off and then go do it on your own, then you can do that. If you want to stick with me and I can guide you through, then stay with the podcast and we'll work together for the next three or so minutes.

So beginning in sitting, standing, or walking, feel yourself breathing. And notice wherever you are in space. So if you're sitting notice where and how your pelvis is sitting on the chair or on the meditation cushion or the bench. If you're standing or walking, notice your feet in your shoes or on the floor. And then focus in on your breathing through your nostrils and the air coming in and out. That's the first phase.

And if you're going to do this on your own, now just set your timer to three to five minutes. And if you're going to stay with me, just stay with that inhale and exhale. If you want to add a couple of words, then you can use words like so hum. And so hum is translated as I am. And as you breathe in you can say to yourself the word so. As you breathe out you can say the word hum.

And if you would like, you can actually combine both of focusing on the breathing coming in and out of your nostrils, as well as the words so hum or I am. And then just stay with this. Stay with the breath moving in and out, with the words, if you're using them. And then come back to your breath.

And then come back to your breath. When we head off into our thoughts, we're thinking about things in the future or in the past. When we're with our breathing we are in the moment now. And in the moment now. And in the moment now. Experiencing that inhale coming in and that exhale going out. Coming back to your breath. Coming back to your breath.

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In a moment my voice is going to fade away and you can stay in this practice, just coming back to your breath over and over and over again for as long as it makes sense for you. And when you're complete, take a few more breaths counting on your exhalation, and then continue on with your day.

And if you do decide to do this each day, notice what begins to happen for you over the course of the week. And if you'd like to let me know what occurs, by all means, send us a note. You can reach us at health@functionalsynergy.com. See you next time.

If this episode has resonated and you're looking to deepen this idea of getting your body back on board, of listening deeply to your symptoms, of listening to the whispers so you don't have to hear the screams and you're looking for one to one support or professional training, then reach out to us at health@functionalsynergy.com where we can customize your learning path. That's health@functionalsynergy.com. Looking forward to hearing from you.