

This book is a simple guide for people of all religions, races, and ages to learn to manage their out-of-control thinking, hear and see God's voice and visions, and get answers to their prayers so they can regain greater peace, joy, and love every day.

Prayer is Talking to God ... MEDITATION is LISTENING!

by Ron Roberts

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LISTENING**

Ronald Roberts



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Chapter 2

Quick Jumpstart Guide and Intro to Meditation

Building a relationship with God, the inner and outer voice,
hearing the still, small inner voice of God,
the battle for your mind

He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most high, shall abide under the shadow of the almighty.—Psalm 91 V 1, 2

In quietness and confidence shall be my strength, in resting and return shall you be saved.—Isaiah 30:15

A True Story

One time after I was studying under spiritual teacher for many years, he said, “Everybody now quiet your mind; tell your mind to be absolutely quiet right now.”

Of course, the exact opposite happened. My mind rebelled and went into high-speed, full blown hyper, out-of-control, wild-monkey-mind rebellious, “don’t you dare tell me what to do” mode. I could hear my mind saying, “Why should I be quiet now? In fact, I’ll be quiet once I am good and ready to.”

Then I hear it saying, “I can be quiet any time I’m ready. I just have to do it. I am definitely under control” (sort of like an alcoholic talking about stopping drinking).

On and on my mind went. It would not stop. It was out of control, just because of a simple request by my brilliant spiritual teacher. I thought more objectively. I will have to reschedule and try this exercise again to learn from it, since it stirred up such a mental hornet’s nest.

The Biggest Problem for Those New to Meditation Experience

Thinking is the biggest problem that every new disciple experiences and often causes those who wish to learn how to meditate to give up before they make any real or lasting progress. The uncontrolled mind racing at high speed round the same racetrack thinking the same thoughts over and over again without our permission is the single largest issue for every human being on the planet. Thinking is such a serious problem that one spiritual leader used to say: “You get more stinking from thinking than you do from drinking!”

Spiritual Principle #3: Everyone who starts out on the spiritual path at first tries to control their “out of control, racing” mind and thinking with more thinking, which just makes the situation exponentially worse.

Managing Your Monkey Mind

Quieting your very busy mind: When you start to meditate, and intentionally try to quiet your mind, the exact and total opposite often happens: your mind rebels and goes crazy, jumping all over the place, running at high speed, non-stop and out of control. Put very simply, your mind rebels and decides to think twice as much, run twice as fast.

There are three reasons why your mind rebels against meditation and starts to run at high speed:

Reason 1: Your mind rebels against meditation because it wants to maintain or regain the control it always had, before you so subtly tried to take it away with your new conscious awareness.

Reason 2: Your mind rebels against meditation because it wants to scare you into stopping your meditation and consider giving up, so mind and Ego can once again remain the king and master, running the ship and making all the decisions based on reactions to the external world and emotions. (Ego is your false sense of self based on your external training and education and reactions to the environment and your sense of identity in the external world.) The goal is to learn to be centered within your inner self and be highly conscious of God’s will and direction for your life so as to be in tune and in sync with peace,

joy, love, and health. (This is just like the way God was showing me how to avoid this stroke, had I been listening more carefully.)

Reason 3: Your mind rebels against meditation because it wants to avoid the possibility of the mind having reduced influence. The mind doesn't want to allow us to simply loosen the control that the Ego and our existing worldly sense of self-identity have over us—the mind's greatest fear.

The Difference between Standard, Traditional Thinking versus Conscious Awareness

Standard, traditional thinking is a function of the untamed mind which decides instantaneously and automatically what thoughts you will think in reaction to the often-chaotic, external environment. And wrong or reactive thinking leads to wrong or reactive spontaneous emotions, feelings, behaviors, and actions that most people often wish they could take back later on—like anger, bitterness, resentment, hatred, or jealousy, and many others.

Conscious awareness is the ability to feel or sense or perceive the deeper true spiritual reality by using or tapping into the natural intelligence found in your heart and gut feelings (in your body—the temple of God) that arise outside the influence of the cerebral out-of-control mind or physical brain. Through meditation, we learn how to divert our thinking and evaluate situations and problems; how to respond to people through the use of inner feelings and sensations; and how to be consciously aware through the heart, which is the most balanced internal awareness zone. Through meditation, we learn to act from the inside instead of reacting from the outside. Somewhere between the external reality of the world and our own inner reality and desires (which up until now have been driven through our uncontrolled thinking), we learn to activate the heart and become aware of our inner self or God directing us. There is a huge difference as we move from self-focused thinking to outward, other-centric thinking and sensitivity to the needs of others, as well as larger systemic awareness (e.g., the larger family, the entire country or world, the larger organization to which we belong, live, worship, or work).

The ability to listen to God requires that we learn how to quiet our conscious mind.

The ability to listen to God requires many years of patient practice and trial-and-error attempts. I cannot tell you how long it will take for you to develop this unique ability. But that is the main purpose of this book: to help you actively gain the expertise to master this unique ability. To hear God's still, small voice, we must first quiet our own mind through discipline and relaxation of our thoughts through meditation practice (and this is no easy feat). And when you listen for God's voice, you seldom hear an auditory voice like you hear from another person. More often, it is a perception, a solid knowing, or feeling deep inside of you, coming as much from your heart or your gut as it does from your mind.

Seven Basic Methods to Quiet Your Ever-Moving, Frenetic Mind

The mind is like a little, overactive, 4- to 6-year-old child who randomly flits from one thing to the next without any plan, direction, or strategy. As any early education teacher or psychologist will tell you, there are two opposing ways to manage this: the hard way and the easy way. The hard way is through increased self-discipline and self-control, including suppression and repression of unacceptable emotions and feelings (similar to many Eastern-style meditations). The easy way is to trick or distract the mind (of this little child) through a focused assignment or task that will calm and redirect his or her mind, allowing God (and Jesus and the Holy Spirit) to lift up and transform and renew his or her mind.

Make your mind still and quiet through non-resistance. Following is a synopsis of several of the most effective methods to calm the mind, which we will go into with much greater detail later on in the book.

1. Deep diaphragmatic breathing: Deep, rhythmic breathing always has a calming effect on the thinking process and the mind (just as when you are excited or chaotic, your breathing becomes irregular, faster, and shallow).

2. Guided meditations: Guiding your inner dialogue is powerfully calming. Praying out loud forces your mind to focus on the actual words you are saying instead of just running wildly. Reading positive,

encouraging Christian books and Bible verses also forces you to concentrate outside of your rambling mind and redirects your thoughts towards God's limitless, healing, restoring power.

3. Guided imagery: Visualization and seeing things as you wish them to be in your positive best future involves seeing the best new outcomes versus visualizing the worst outcome or just accepting the more negative real situation. Seeing the new job after a layoff, being in your new state of optimal health after the doctor gives you a bad diagnosis, visualizing yourself receiving the additional funds you need to pay the bills, or envisioning a renewed, healthy relationship with your significant other—these are several examples of how to achieve a better lifestyle through positive guided imagery.

4. Writing: Writing down your thoughts as they occur gives your mind a break or some white space. Writing causes you to be more objective and detached, and it also slows your mind down significantly. It allows you to stop repeating and rehearsing the same internal dialogue over and over again, giving you time to formulate your thoughts into a written format.

5. Getting centered in your body and heart: Practice being in the present moment (or what is called mindfulness). Center and focus your attention in the area of your heart or deep in your gut near the solar plexus or abdomen; this will help you be focused in your physical body and not think so much. (You have to relax your mind.) This is often combined with a deep breathing technique.

6. Focusing on more ways to help or serve others: The best way to get your mind calm is to get it directed off of and away from yourself, and focused on others and how you can help them or serve their needs. Plus, this type of lifestyle is incredibly rewarding

7. Zoom out, expand your focus, detach: No matter what is going on in your life, try to detach and zoom out, seeing your situation from a broader, more detached, universal perspective. Think how will this situation will affect you in five to 10 years. Or, more simply put: try to see every good or bad experience from a less personal, more universal perspective.

The Inner and Outer Voice

Seeing and experiencing what underlies our consciousness when the mind becomes finally quiet...

The ability to listen to God and your inner voice or intuition comes after much trial and error, practice, and often many years of searching and many successful and less-successful partial attempts and testing. The inner voice is based on God's limitless, all-knowing mind and often seems irrational or difficult to make sense of. It functions through the right side of the brain—which controls the abstract, aesthetic, mystical, intuitive, less rational, less logical awareness. It receives input from the higher or inner self, which is connected to God and His limitless, all-knowing awareness directly.

The outer voice is simply your logical left-brain mind at work, doing its best to guide you through life with its limited information and concrete, linear, sequential approach to problem solving and gathering of knowledge. If you think you hear God's voice leading you, and act on it, and it works when you test it, then you are right; then you know it was God's voice or guidance. If it doesn't work, then you know that you were not hearing God's voice, but, put more simply, you were hearing your own externally driven mind and not your own inner voice.

A Learning Story

Imagine going to a friend's house for a birthday celebration, walking in and talking nonstop, never listening or asking any questions about the host or hostess. After a short period of time, the host or hostess would probably get bored and lose interest in the conversation, start to ignore you, and walk away to talk to others who would listen more carefully. In fact, you might be considered rude!

How do most Christians approach prayer and talking to God? They have a set process or a list of things they have to say to God, or people they have to pray for, or sins they need forgiveness from, or crises they need help with, or they feel they have to pray for a certain length of time (the longer the better); they feel have to finish their prayer list at

all costs to feel complete themselves. However, the truth is that God wants a two-way conversation and, most importantly, wants to build a relationship with us. The problem is that God can't get a word in edgewise because all we do is talk and seldom, if ever, listen. Very simply, I am sure that all God wants is to listen to us and then have us listen to His thoughts, directions, guidance, caring, and wisdom, too. It is quite simple to do: All we have to do is activate our will and quiet our mind by using some of the meditation techniques put forth in this book.

God loves us just as we are—as imperfect, sinful humans. God is love, and God knows everything about us before we even start to talk, meditate, or pray. God is Omniscient (all-knowing), Omnipresent (everywhere), and Omnipotent (all-powerful). So there is nothing to hide! We can just relax a little and quietly listen once in a while without fear of punishment or retribution if we are not perfect. That is the whole premise of being a Christian: the fact that Jesus died for our sins and shortcomings.

He was bruised for our iniquities, wounded for our transgressions: the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes are we healed!—Isaiah 55:5

10 Myths and Reasons Why I Can't Meditate and Listen to God (and the Truth, Too)

1. **Age:** I am too old for all this inner awareness, this touchy-feely gobbledygook. I don't know anything about meditation. And besides, isn't meditation mainly for young people?

The Truth: It doesn't matter how old you are. There is no better time to start than right now. In fact, the older you are, the more wisdom and knowledge you have. The older you are, the more important it is to find inner peace because time becomes more and more valuable. And meditation is geared to help practitioners deal with real-life issues, physical health, mental and spiritual well-being, and many other important concerns, including work, finances, and retirement (not just feelings and abstract unrelated issues).

2. **Hyperactive Mind:** I can't calm my mind down. It just races at high speed. The more I try to relax, the worse my mind gets. My mind just won't stop running, no matter what I do. And besides, I am physically too high-strung and nervous to sit even for a few minutes, let alone shut my eyes.

The Truth: The mind runs nonstop. It is how the mind is programmed. This problem is common to every human being. Meditation is a method of calming your mind slowly over time. It is all part of the process. You will never calm your mind completely until you learn how to put your attention on your heart and on your physical body to become centered and grounded.

3. **Physical Makeup:** I constantly fall asleep whenever I shut my eyes to meditate. I am always too tired. Besides, I don't think I will be able to get up early enough to meditate every day. On top of that, I am uncomfortable sitting in one place too long. My back hurts and my feet fall asleep. I guess I would just be too embarrassed to try this.

The Truth: Meditation can take many forms. It is a state of mind. You don't need to shut your eyes; you don't need to even sit down. As you will see, you can meditate while you walk and ride in your car once you begin to master the techniques in this book.

4. **Fear about Self-Knowledge:** I am afraid of what I might find out (or learn) about myself. I am afraid of stirring up some really terrible or negative childhood memories, some type of abuse, shortcomings, or failures that I may have totally buried.

The Truth: Many people are afraid of learning about themselves or remembering something that is uncomfortable. It is often the last great frontier that we conquer during our lives. But the meditation process is very orderly. Your spirit and your subconscious know what you can handle and only let you see or experience a little bit at a time while strengthening you so that you can handle what you learn about yourself.

5. **Dislike of Change:** I don't like change, so I prefer just not knowing and remaining ignorant of the truth or something that will require me to change. I am afraid that if I learn something new, then I will be responsible for that knowledge, and I will have to change in some way that I don't want to! In fact, I would say I hate change.

The Truth: Meditation is actually the most powerful way to help you cope with change. It is like oil which keeps your car (and your mind) running smoothly and firing on all eight cylinders. It is a method that allows you to change from the inside out. It helps you to accept reality and makes you more agile at anticipating new ways to do things and to adapt.

6. **Nothing Works:** I have already tried self-introspection and meditation quite a few times, and it just doesn't work that well. I keep trying all the meditation techniques that others have shown me, but I never make the connection. In fact, it seems that nothing ever happens, and there is little or no change. I never feel anything spiritually. So I just give up. I am throwing in the towel.

The Truth: Every time you meditate, even if you don't feel like it is working, that activity creates change in your mind and your life and your circumstances, whether you are aware of it or not. So don't give up; don't quit. Continue and keep trying, and you will have success eventually. However, that being said, some people don't respond to the traditional methods of meditating—such as sitting with your eyes closed. You can meditate and commune with your inner self or connect with God while you are walking down the street, driving to work, or lying down to go to sleep. I have some of my best meditation times when I am swimming for 45 minutes a day at the YMCA. It is quiet and very calming when my head is under water for half of my strokes. Just relax and be creative; think outside the box. Don't limit yourself!

7. **Fear of Losing Control:** I am afraid that if I start meditating, I might start to lose the control that I have in my life, or that I might have to change and do something I don't want to. I am afraid that it might mess me up emotionally or mentally.

The Truth: It is the mind itself that, above all, doesn't want you to start meditating, as it is afraid of losing control, and not getting what it *thinks* it wants. Whatever the mind thinks is usually what you as a person seek to do, or carry out. In fact, it is likely that the mind has been on the throne of your consciousness and setting your direction and course for most of your life. But, as can be seen in millions of people's lives, the mind doesn't always make wise choices (I could give hundreds of examples). The only thing that meditation does is bring the mind into harmony with your own higher self and the greater Universe so that you have much more peace, joy, and love both in the short and long term!

8. **Beyond Help:** Nothing can help me. I feel like I am beyond help. My whole life is such a mess, out of control, a failure. I am plagued with financial and relationship problems and addictions (like drugs, alcohol, and even sex). I already feel guilty and angry enough about almost everything in my own life, so I am afraid that meditation would only make things much worse.

The Truth: Actually, no one is beyond help. Everything you are going through is very common to many human beings (but they usually just don't talk about it). Your situation or condition is only temporary, and it will change or pass at some point. It just seems permanent. The fact that you are asking this question shows your dissatisfaction and your desire to change. Meditation can help put you back into a state of harmony more quickly with the world around you. The real fear is only that the mind itself is feeling frightened or losing control. But the opposite is true: Meditation helps you to be a better person and gain control of your mind one small step at a time.

9. **Spiritual Values and Religious Issue at Odds:** I am pretty sure it's against my religion. My religion won't allow me to meditate. It goes against my religious beliefs. I am Catholic/Jewish/etc. and we don't do this. Besides, is meditation even in the Bible? I am Catholic and we are only allowed to read certain books and I am pretty sure that reading about meditation is not one of them.

The Truth: All religions seek to offer their believers and followers the truth. And most of the founders of the religion held and shared the truth. But "mankind" with its desire to improve the core beliefs, often taints the truths and adds certain dogmas, personal desires, altered beliefs that meet certain human desires but reduce the effectiveness of many religions and often cause severe limitations to experiencing peace, joy, and love. Spiritual practice and meditation only bring the true follower closer to God, to being more in harmony with their personal balance points and the cosmic Universe at large.

10. **Spiritual/Psychic Forces:** I have heard that if I start meditating, I might open myself up to some types of unpleasant inner awareness, negative spiritual power, or psychic forces. I figure I am better off not starting with this process at all.

The Truth: Meditation sensitizes you to your inner state of mind. It definitely helps you to be congruent, the same on the inside and outside. It will make you more aware of your inner life, and if there is already a state of disharmony, it may be a little uncomfortable when you initially start meditating. But the truth is that passes very quickly, and you start to experience great peace sooner than later.

In terms of negative forces, if you are following a spiritual teacher or an approved valid form of meditation, you will learn techniques to keep your mind positive, avoiding any involvement in any negative or spiritually unpleasant psychic forces. I often start my meditation by asking God's power to surround me—to go in front of, behind, above, and below me.

I also ask that I be protected by the blood of Jesus Christ. Both of these techniques are powerful methods for experiencing God's protection.

The Battle for Your Mind

There is definitely a constant, ongoing battle in the world for who gets your attention, and where you put your focus, or, put more simply, a battle for who or what controls your mind.

You may think this is silly, to focus on who does control your mind—you, God, or some external event or subliminal unseen force.

Why do you think the major TV station broadcasting the Superbowl can charge an average of 5 million dollars for 30 seconds of advertising? Why do you think companies continually advertise the same products or services over and over again on TV, radio, and Internet? One answer is that, according to psychologists' research and studies, it takes an average of seven viewings before a commercial registers in the subconscious, and urges you on to action to buy their product or service. That is the advertisers' immediate and urgent goal—to get you thinking about and desiring their product or service. It seems like advertisers and Wall Street definitely know the secret of your inner and outer voice, including how your subconscious actually works and registers important information.

Spiritual Principle #4: Remember, all is well.

Learn to relax and accept whatever happens to you. A spiritual teacher of mine told me to just relax on my journey and remember: "All is well with my soul." To explain: You can be sure that shortly after any tribulation or trial, you will likely have some form of new mountaintop experience, and if you are on top of the world with a peak mountaintop experience, you can also expect some type of deep valley experience soon afterward. Therefore, just relax. Affirm and remember that "all is well with my soul." Always remember that God is in control.

It is assured that the rollercoaster of life will bring you many ups and downs—that's just the way it is. The soul learns and grows through a

series of both painful experiences and related high points and insights that follow.

Spiritual Principle #5: There is supernatural power in letting go.

Don't wrestle with or fight with the mind when it bucks against your spiritual directions and objectives like an untrained, out-of-control stallion out in the wilderness. Instead, surrender throughout the experience to gain control. Eventually, the mind will get tired, stop fighting you, and be quiet on its own as you continue to train it and it learns to relax.

Spiritual Principle #6: When you walk into a dark room or have a negative experience, don't start fighting the darkness or punching randomly in the air at the unknown enemy; just turn on the light and all darkness will be dispelled immediately.

Meditate within spiritual journey so with mountains and valleys your heart will knowto be still and know that I am God.—Psalm 4

I will meditate on the glorious splendor of your majesty, and on Your wondrous works.—Psalm 145:5

The Extreme Need for Meditation

...due to exponential change in our world of rapid change

Because of increased communication and TV and news coverage, faster and faster travel, international shipping, and a worldwide information web, everything is instantly connected. That is the good news. The bad news is that because the world has grown smaller and smaller, due to worldwide TV and satellite 24/7, everything is interconnected more and more, and we are all under ever-increasing stress and strain as a result of information overload!

The result of living with prolonged, chronic stress is that we all live in a state of nonstop total-information overload; strained relationships and emotional breakdowns; physical strain and illnesses; constant, unpredictable, and often unsatisfying work; and continual "energy" crises (both internally and externally).

Everyone is looking for greater levels of peace, joy, and love. But finding it seems more and more elusive. So how do we find this and maintain a degree of equanimity, calm, and balance in this age of constant stress and strain?

That is the purpose of this book: to show you a series of simple steps, to help you understand the theoretical path to get there, and to give you many paths to find this relaxed, balanced state of mind!

Spiritual Principle #7: Always take one step at a time and keep your eye on the big picture. When you climb any mountain or overcome any obstacle, like Mount Everest, you do it one step at a time.

Every jigsaw puzzle is made up of hundreds of small pieces, where you can't see the big picture or put the puzzle together, or understand the deeper meaning, until you put it together one piece at a time (unless you zoom out so you have a larger view by looking at the picture on the box). And that, in its simplest form, is what spiritual teachers do: they show you the big picture on the box.

But beware—there are also many false mountain peaks on the way up to the top.

It takes thousands of small steps to make the spiritual journey. It's somewhat like driving a car at night: You can only see about 300 to 500 feet ahead on the road at any given moment, but if you remain in the present, you can drive thousands of miles one small step at a time, through faith that the road ahead is similar to the one you are driving on.

The Purpose of Meditation

What is the purpose of meditation and what are some of the results you can expect? At its core, Christian-oriented meditation is a way of becoming closer to God, by getting used to truly listening to God. Many people arrive at this "meditation destination" because they seek to fill what feels like a hole in the soul. They are dealing with loneliness, emptiness, sadness, feeling isolated, and—in essence—

feeling separate from God. So Christian-based meditation is a way of filling this void as follows.

Many Results and Effects of Meditation

Here are active benefits that are likely to occur through extended meditation practice:

- Finding greater calm
- Experiencing increased peace, joy, and love
- Having more effective stress management
- Loving yourself more
- Loving others more
- Discovering healing and greater physical health
- Developing emotional and mental healing and well-being
- Achieving mental clarity
- Finding meaning in your life
- Discovering the best direction for your life
- Becoming integrated as a person (childhood, adult, past, and present)
- Achieving your goals and objectives one step at a time
- Discovering a reasonable frame of reference that makes life have meaning and purpose
- Getting along with difficult people
- Discovering your key true inner values
- Finding harmony with others and the world around you regardless of the state of affairs
- Increasing discernment
- Overcoming fear, anxiety, depression
- Finding constant balance
- Managing your own critical and judgmental nature
- Being less defensive
- Relinquishing control more easily
- Being more open-minded
- Being guided by your own ethical compass
- Being more patient and having a degree of mastery over time
- Letting go of the past, letting go of hurts and offense
- Accepting reality with greater clarity

Surrendering to the present moment
 Being in the present moment
 Trusting in God for every aspect of your well-being.

Listening to God

My sheep hear and know my voice and I know them, and they follow me—John 19:27

How do we listen to God and quiet our mind effectively? How do we get started? Here are some basic suggestions.

1. **Study** the Word of God as an essential beginning for discerning and knowing the way God thinks and what He might say to us. Through this process, we find it is very important to know when the inner words are not from God.
2. **Trust** that God can influence or guide us through our own thoughts, through feelings or intuitions. We will get to know God's voice by listening to him and knowing His tone and style and intonation; it is different from our own voice and thoughts. God can speak to us through an internal voice or an external, audible voice.
3. **Discover** that God often speaks to us through other people.
4. **Ask** God ahead of time for guidance for the day, throughout the day.
5. **Reflect** back on the day to recognize when God was there or spoke to you or was present and with you, helping you.
6. **Remember** and accept the fact that you cannot do anything by yourself: God is with us all the time.

Peace (Mental), Joy (Emotional/Feeling), and Love (Relationship)

The three major lasting results you can expect from ongoing meditation are vitally important to the soul. They are peace, joy, and

love. Below are definitions and a description of their individual and joint effects.

PEACE is a state where the conscious mind becomes quiet as a result of meditation, thus allowing you to be in a state of equilibrium and calm externally, while becoming consciously more spiritually aware and serene on the inside.

You experience spiritual equanimity, unity, serenity, calm, harmony with nature and the Universe more and more no matter what is happening all around you externally.

You may still have great peace of mind in which you learn to respond more than anything else to your own calm, inner mental state.

Having peace of mind is like sailing or rowing on a calm, still body of water or a beautiful lake where you can look out and see across the entire lake and see your own reflection clearly. The world and external input is like the crashing of random, chaotic, unpredictable waves of the ocean during a storm or an untamed whitewater river, which tosses and turns you about like a log floating freely without any direction, or a boat without a rudder, completely out of control.

Lastly, being filled with peace allows you to easily be in the present moment and make wiser decisions.

JOY is a non-emotional state that occurs when you are responding to the constant, positive, ecstatic feelings and internal unchanging state brought on by meditation, in contrast to the constantly changing, chaotic, up-and-down, emotionally driven, often disappointing, negative, external world of constantly changing circumstances.

Joy is a state of feeling happiness, delight, pleasure, bliss. It releases tremendous positive, optimistic, upbeat feelings as well as unbounded energy and endorphins in the body.

Joy is a natural result of prolonged meditation and feeling in harmony with and being at one with nature and God's good will.

LOVE is a state of being in a positive, harmonious, supportive relationship brought about by experiencing the limitless outrageous harmony within your own being, and with other people, both personally and professionally, and even all of nature as well (such as a cherished pet).

Love is about feeling connected to others and having empathy and compassion for their plight and suffering. It means trying to assist and help others in any way you can, and, as you progress, it can also be about feeling connected intuitively to everything in the Universe on a purely spiritual level—all as a result of meditation practice.

Love is a relational state. It is a sense of being unified, connected. It is the power of thinking more about others than oneself. It is the ability to lose oneself in the connection with another. Very importantly, love is the ability to communicate and connect with the divine through your heart.

The Pace of Change

Time and life are accelerating rapidly due to the exponential speed of change at all levels, as well as advancements in technology (computers), communication (smartphones, internet, and instant availability of all known information), and travel (speed and efficiency shrinking the time needed to travel anywhere on earth).

Spiritual Principle #8: You can never change or control others and life itself, but you can control your own emotions and personal reactions to situations through meditation practice.

There are many examples of where and how and when you will need to apply the calming power of meditation. Meditation helps you maintain greater related peace, joy, and love in the face of constant change, which may appear in any form as follows:

Work issues and difficult colleagues or boss
Getting laid off or losing your job, not getting that promotion
Poor performance at work
Unexpected illness, unexpected disability
Relationships not working
Professional embarrassment
Making a mistake in front of others
Children being disobedient
Teens rebelling
Your own parents doing a poor job
Death of a loved one
War and its effects
Political differences
Religious disagreements

The Goals and Objectives of Prayer and Meditation

Your ultimate objective: Getting there spiritually (finding peace, joy, and love within)

1. Prayer is talking to God; meditation is listening to God

Many people believe in a higher power, and most of those who do also admit to talking to and praying to God. They pray in times of need, stress, financial downturns, sickness, relationship issues, and a whole host of other concerns. However, there is a major problem: Most people ask for God's help, but then go about their business and wind up being pulled by the limitless distractions that plague most of us in modern life. They run from one appointment to the next, dealing with work, family, children, survival, and numerous other life issues that place demands on our time. When this happens, people use what little time they have to occasionally turn to God in a brief, quick prayer.

Through regular meditation, we learn to quiet our mind. In that way, every one of us can learn to hear the still, small voice of God, or, at minimum, to sense God's direction for our life. *Meditation helps to sensitize us to the feelings of God's presence.* When we stop and quiet our mind and listen to God or our higher self or the Universal Self

(whatever you want to call it), then the likelihood of making our best decisions and choosing the best direction for our life is assured.

2. Finding your balance point

A just weight and balance are the Lord's.—Proverbs 16:11 KJV

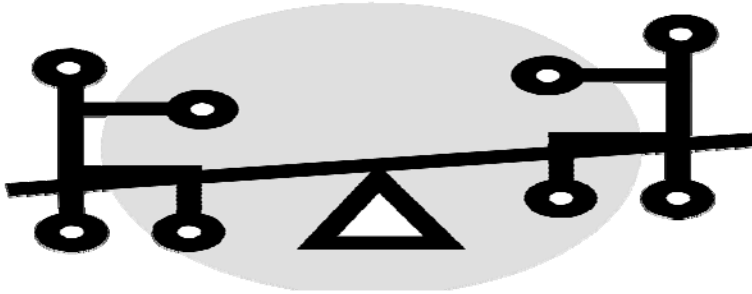
A false balance is an abomination unto the Lord.—Proverbs 11:1 KJV

All over the world, billions and billions of people are struggling to manage their lives. They are running at high speeds to get to work on time, to work extra to get that promotion, to take care of their families, to get the next education degree, to make sure they spend enough time with their significant others and their rapidly growing children, always searching for time for shopping, sports, recreation, visiting relatives, and so on.

Yet, it seems like, even with computers, laptops, and cellphones, we are always running out of time. Things are constantly speeding up and, even with technological advances, we *feel* like we're running out of time. Even the most aggressive and outgoing among us are finding that, without care and balance, it is very easy to experience such high levels of stress that it causes us, our families, and our work colleagues to experience points of emotional and mental slowdown and even temporary process breakdown (like a car with engine problems or not enough oil, causing it to overheat).

Everyone is always trying to find some sense of peace, joy, and love. To find some form of rest, you must constantly and consciously strive to achieve a degree of balance.

The Seesaw Effect: Finding balance emotionally and spiritually is a lot easier when you realize that it is just a matter of balancing out the seesaw by activating your will and making right choices. Once you start to balance your emotions and the effects of the world (and its external programming to indulge in many temptations) with a degree of spiritual feeding from the Bible or audio recordings or good solid Christian TV programming, you gain much more control over your automatic subconscious reactions.



3. Eastern versus Western meditation: a brief analysis

What exactly is Western Style or Christian-Based Meditation (CBM)?

Meditation is simply helping the mind relax and letting your thoughts settle down. CBM is all about helping the mind to recognize and hear the still, small voice of God and learn to trust the Holy Spirit. CBM is about consistently helping the mind to learn to relinquish control to the larger mind of God in such a way that you avoid any exposure to negative spiritual input or the false Gods of the worldly influence.

East versus West: Imagine the mind and the spirit having a simple discussion about their roles and what they think they are supposed to be doing. What would that conversation sound and look like? They might both be stating that each of them is in control or at least that they should be. The difference in Eastern and Western styles of meditation is simply how you determine if the mind or spirit is in control.

Eastern Style is characterized by... repression, suppression of negative thoughts, self-control, awareness of good and bad thoughts, managing the mind through activation of the will, and personally lifting ourselves up spiritually.

Western (Christian) Style involves... devotion, surrender to God, trusting Jesus and a higher power, releasing control, letting go of our own will, letting God lift us up into a spiritual place.

4. Transformation: Jesus is the step down transformer for the high-voltage electrical supply.

Reflection:

Be not conformed to this world but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is the good, and acceptable and perfect will of God.—Romans 12:1-2

Jesus allows us to have access to the greatest power in the world, the same way that a step down transformer allows us to plug into the easily usable 110-volt outlets found throughout any standard house electrical system. When electricity first comes from the power generating plant, it can be at the very high level of as much as 13,000 volts; if you tried to use that, you would damage your electric devices (they and you would be burned and/or destroyed). So, the electricity goes through a series of step down, giant coiled transformers, first to 6500 volts, then to 1000 volts, and finally to 220 and 110 volts, so it is usable in our houses to improve the comfort of our lives.

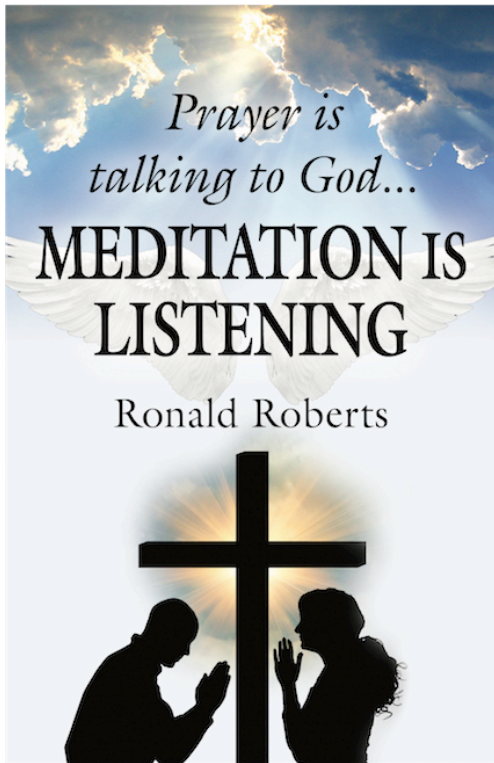
This is exactly what Jesus and daily meditation does to God's all-consuming power: He steps it down to usable portions.

Accelerating Energy Level around the World

After many years of meditation and observation, it is my belief and that of many spiritual leaders, that the earth is experiencing a quickening, an increase in its energy level. God is turning up the amount of spiritual energy and light available to everyone. And there is a general acceleration of the pace of change as well. (I think this is blatantly obvious to everyone.)

Thus people all over the globe must figure out where they want to be in their spiritual walk and make a conscious choice as to which side of the great balancing scale they want to be on: light or darkness. There is a tremendous increase in human trafficking, pornography, and rampant acts of evil, such as the many school massacres, mental stress, and general instability, an increase in those who are in rehab of every kind (drugs, alcohol, and prison), and random killings by ISIS and other terrorists.

We also see leaders, celebrities, and philanthropists giving of themselves to help entire nations and third world countries, individuals giving charitably to help others one person at a time, and increasing acts of random kindness. Those who align with light are more energized to think of others, give more and do more good; they think of themselves and serve their own needs just a little less often and focus more on the needs of others.



This book is a simple guide for people of all religions, races, and ages to learn to manage their out-of-control thinking, hear and see God's voice and visions, and get answers to their prayers so they can regain greater peace, joy, and love every day.

Prayer is Talking to God ... MEDITATION is LISTENING!

by Ron Roberts

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