

WEEK 3: ENDURANCE TRAINING

Motivation to Help You Keep Dedicated

&

Lessons & Solutions to Help Face
Common Challenges

The first thing that I want to mention about challenges in meditation, is that we all face them! So, finding yourself faced with ongoing challenges on your journey inward is NORMAL. I always find comfort in knowing that whatever I'm going through is normal - I hope you do too! I want you to begin the next chapter of your meditation exploration and lessons, by reframing the way that you see your meditation journey. Begin to in fact see meditation, as a long interesting journey, not an isolated event that you experience once and leave. This is journey, that you need to train and prepare for (like an ultra-marathon event), and if you were training for an ultra-marathon, you would know that you need to train for a long time before competing, so from this mindset, think of each of your meditation sessions as your daily training! Your body and mind are training, for a long journey into meditation. You will have all sorts of experiences on this journey and some will be very comfortable and some are certain to be uncomfortable. There will be some "wow" moments, just like on any great journey or training program, where you have an above average experience and there will be many "normal" moments of just showing up, experiencing what is happening and moving on. The key lesson here is however the training and dedication to showing up! This week I have posted a variety of resources for you to track your progress, ideas to help keep you motivated, and inquiries to reflect upon when you face challenges! These resources can all be printed and saved for your future reference! During the 21 day challenge, you have received enough material to help prepare you for beginning a lifetime journey into meditation! I am always available for support and guidance on your journey. Yours ∞
Nadine

10 COMMON CHALLENGES & SOLUTIONS TO MEDITATING

1. **COMFORT** I want you to be able to feel like a king or queen on your throne during meditation. Seated or standing tall, shoulders back, chest lifted & confident! Use as high of a chair or as many pillows and cushions necessary to support your seat, knees and so on to achieve this! Yoga and Stretching can help prepare and train the body to become more comfortable in various seated postures, but if you are beginning and rather tight, simply choose your favorite chair and then work your way to the ground in time.
 - If you choose a chair, come to the front so you are not leaning back, but instead sitting tall - Feet under knees, hips raised on a blanket or pillow so they are slightly higher than the knees. Arms relaxed, perhaps resting hands in the lap, or on thighs or knees.
 - If you notice that physical discomfort arises or you are distracted by the body, clothing or environment, try to learn about what is coming up and make adjustments. If the body is painful, tight or other - can you also learn about these conditions by focusing on them, rather than resisting the discomfort. This is very interesting to do. Move toward the discomfort and distractions with a soft awareness and be with them rather than resisting. Life is full of discomfort and if we can learn more about being in discomfort, this can change our experience of how we approach life!

- For physical tightness or pain that you feel meditation brings - note: you will strengthen or stretch over time and probably begin to feel more physically comfortable with consistent practice!
2. **CONSISTENCY!** The more consistent with the frequency and time of day you meditate, the easier it will become. It takes 21 days to form a new habit. We all stumble in life, but try to get back on the cushion and not give up when you miss a session. I like to recommend these tips:
 - Use a tracker to keep you motivated. I use insighttimer.com however you may use a piece of paper or calendar.
 - Motivate yourself with “treats” or rewards for consistency! Set up a reward system where when you achieve X number of days, you get a reward!
 - Find a buddy! Joining a meditation group or finding an accountability buddy can be helpful.
 3. **NODDING OFF.** If you nod off or fall asleep entirely during your session meditating, please know that this is normal, but can be avoided by choosing a seated position, rather than lying down. When seated, you may still nod off, but you will be less likely to fall asleep. You may also want to accept that you are accomplishing a deep state of relaxation and perhaps your body and mind need rest! This is your journey.
 4. **FINDING TIME.** If you are having difficulty finding uninterrupted time in your day for meditation, I would like to just recommend a morning practice. Dedicate yourself to awaken, 10-15 minutes earlier each day, ideally before your household has risen. This can be a life changer. For more on learning to awaken early (especially for those who aren't “morning people (like myself) check out this book/method: *The Morning Miracle*, by Hal Elrod - it is a life changer! We want meditation to become a habit in your day, just like brushing your teeth! So inserting one or two sessions per day into your daily routine will be helpful!
 5. **RESTLESSNESS** - If you find your mind or body becoming restless and preventing you from staying in your meditation session, consider 10 minutes of exercise or yoga before you sit. You may even go for a run or morning walk and follow it up with a seated meditation session of 2-15 minutes (or longer). You may also find walking meditation, the use of prayer beads or a finger counting method helpful for providing a mindful movement experience that can help you become more still.
 6. **SPACING OUT.** It is very normal for the mind to wander. Meditation is effecting for developing focus and learning to catch your mind wandering. There are a few methods that can be helpful - using the breath as a focus tool: “*Breathing in I know that I am breathing in. Breathing Out I know that I am breathing out. REPEAT.*” Focusing on the flow of the breath is very helpful to bring you back to this moment. Another method that you may find benefit from is a mantra. A mantra is a short series of words or phrases that can help you focus and remain present, this can be helpful for shifting habits (negative self talk) or bringing in other intentions, but a mantra can also help you stay present, by repetition of words. See this week's handout!
 7. **VISIONS / LACK OF VISION.** Some of us are very visual and find a guided imagery or visual meditation helpful for bringing a positive mindset and deep relaxation. Some of you may even see colors, shapes or other images appear when meditating. Others, may see nothing and have difficulty forming images in guided meditations. These are ALL NORMAL. You will have your experience, no one else's. The key is to not seek out an experience or expect any images or absence of images; because this is the opposite of what we are trying to do. We are just going to be with what is and notice. If you are trying too hard to

form an image or stop images, you will face internal struggles and become frustrated. Just try to be with what is and notice.

- 8. LIST MAKING & INSIGHT... BRILLIANT IDEAS AND THOUGHTS ABOUND!** If you are finding that meditation brings you clarity of mind and insight into your daily life, that is fabulous; but it can be distracting when you want to “remember” these ideas, but not become involved in them and forget that you are meditating and trying to quiet the mind. One tactic that you might like is to keep a notebook beside you and give yourself permission to pause and note whatever is bothering your mind or coming up, then return to your meditation. If you can let go of the need to do that over time, you also could allow yourself time at the end of your session to journal or note any ideas or experiences for your life or day that arise. Whatever brings you peace! Remember, meditation is for training our mind and refocusing our thoughts or tendencies to think and overthink, so just don't get confused that meditation is the same as a brainstorming session.... we want to calm the storms of the mind!
- 9. DIFFICULT EMOTIONS.** Anger, sadness, worry, frustration, boredom, anxiety, panic, fear... all sorts of emotions come up during our meditation sessions and you know what, these are all emotions that we face in life. Emotions are a guarantee in life and common in meditation. I find that just accepting this is helpful, and you may be responding “just accepting” with a laugh of knowing and disbelief, responding that “just accepting” sounds easier than it is. Try this.
- Visualize emotions as clouds passing over or through you. Just like clouds in a sky, all kinds of emotions pass over us each day. Have you ever been truly stuck for the rest of your life in happiness or anger? In the moment it can feel uncomfortable or blissful and we can feel like it will be that way forever, but what we know is true is that something else happens and a new sensation of feelings enter us. Find comfort in the knowledge of impermanence.
 - Like the solution for physical discomfort, try to move towards the emotional discomfort. Learn about it, by being with it! Rather than trying to escape fear, anger, jealousy, etc. by running from these emotions, try to befriend them! This is in-fact interesting and life changing!
- 10. DOUBT!** There may come a time when you feel doubt or disbelief that the benefits of meditation will ever find you or that you will every attain consistency or peace. These are the same patterns that we notice in any mindfulness practice that can take the form of negative self-talk and patterns that prevent us from achieving greater mindfulness. I like to see these as the tricks of the mind which will certainly prevent me from achieving peace if I fall into their traps! You may visualize that little devil sitting on one shoulder telling you to flee the meditation and tempting you with your “to do list” or the “more fun activities” lists, and the “you aren't good” enough mindset trickery. Don't fall for this! Just have FAITH and KEEP SHOWING UP! Faith, faith, faith and a heavy dose of practice and all is coming in time.

I hope these help! DO YOU HAVE MORE CONCERNS NOT ADDRESSED HERE? Reach out with your meditation challenges and I am happy to help you reframe these or find solutions for greater success! Yours, ∞Nadine