

# Guidelines for Your Meditation Journal

At this point in the course this is an ideal time to go deeper into your own practice of meditation. You will need to establish a daily practice of meditation over the next eight weeks and keep a journal of your experience.

Each practice must be for **ten minutes** so you will need to time your practice. Using the insight timer app on your phone can be a good option as you can choose the sound of the finishing bell. If you want to extend the length of the practice, please do so if it is realistic.

A morning practice can be ideal as its effects can then be experienced during the day, although you may wish to choose another regular time instead. Whatever you decide upon, establishing a regular time will always be most helpful as eventually the body/mind starts to automatically get ready for the practice.

If you ever feel that you do not have the time for meditation, then it's the sign that you really need to practice! The practice may have surprising beneficial effects in this regard, changing your perception of time!

To create your journal please use the handout which will be emailed to you, where you must give your dates of practice. Type up your experience of practicing on a daily or weekly basis, and it might be best to make some quick handwritten notes each day and then summarise your observations weekly. Your journal will need to be given in at the very end as evidence.

## **Please note:**

You may like to stretch out a little before sitting for meditation. Also, you might like to:

- Notice if there is any element of expectation or if you can release the need for any particular outcome.
- See if you can allow your mind to naturally 'unwind', losing its momentum, and meantime be willing to be aware of thoughts passing without the need to engage with them.
- Observe if when you get 'carried away' you are able to return to your focus, simply being glad you have noticed this?
- See if there is anything learnt concerning the nature of your mind?

## **Meditation Practice:**

### **Week One**

Focus upon the sensations experienced within the body, perhaps noticing we only perceive the body as a cloud of sensations, and that a lack of a distinctive boundary with the space around the body may be experienced.

### **Week Two**

Gently focus upon the breath without the need for anything more complicated.

### **Week Three**

Be aware of sounds without the need to label them, seeing if you can focus upon the silence from which sounds arise and into which they are released.

### **Week Four**

Focus upon your field of awareness, and notice any thoughts or emotions passing through, welcoming them, and then releasing them.

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## **Week Five**

Mentally practice the mantra 'Om', or perhaps if you prefer verbally and then mentally. If you prefer another simple bija mantra such as 'shreem' which has a nurturing energy, then that is perfectly acceptable, however you must stay with the same mantra in one session.

## **Week Six**

Focus on the Ajna Chakra, the point between your eyebrows, using a very gentle form of Shambavi Mudra, and if it feels appropriate, when ready, you can allow your focus to gently move backwards into the mind space of the forehead, the space of Chida Akasha.

## **Week Seven**

With eyes open focus upon the space between objects and when ready, closing eyes, focus upon the spaciousness inside between any phenomena such as sensations, thoughts, emotions etc. passing through.

## **Week Eight**

Closing eyes and settle inwardly using a gentle relaxing breath, then imagine you are trying to mentally pronounce the letter 'K' which without an accompanying vowel cannot be easily be pronounced, leaving you with a feeling of stillness & potentiality. Stay with the sense of stillness & potentiality.