

## THAT'S MEDITATION TOO

Meditation is a whole world of activity more than just the popular concept of it as something like resting in peace: R.I.P. LOL

Meditation is not just some magic-cushion that we are always trying to get to so that we can sit on it. Meditation is also about what comes up in the moment for each of us that we could face head-on rather than ignoring as is our habit. And ignorance (and ignoring) is what is habitual, what we have been doing all our life or lives. Some awareness or vigilance may be required on our part not to fall back into avoiding the obvious. That awareness is a form of meditation.

We can be vigilant and take note when we turn away, when the moment passes from normal to what we might call "boring," when we are suddenly antsy and we reach for whatever passes for entertainment in our Self. The point when the moment turns to boredom is a very clear sign that we have reached an impasse or a moment of decision or change. That kind of awareness is also meditation.

If we habitually turn away from the present moment (and its appearance) into entertainment or suddenly feel overwhelmed and have to go lie down (or whatever), that also is a time to be vigilant and learn. That vigilance is meditation.

My point is that the actual process of meditation is not just Tranquility Meditation (Shamata). Tranquility Meditation is, historically, just the basis for meditation. We have to be able to focus with some degree of concentration and also be relaxed enough in the process, but that is just the ground, the wrapper.

True meditation is what happens on top of that ground, on top of that stable basis of tranquility. And that can be active as all hell. Every time we turn away from the

moment, we could instead turn toward it and look directly at it. Every time we find ourselves saying “No,” we could instead say “Yes,” In other words, we don’t have to always take “No” for an answer. That too is meditation.

You see, it’s all meditation, all of the time, and not just some idyllic R.I.P. (“Rest in Peace”) moment where we think we should be and that we like to call meditation, such as sitting on the cushion. Meditation is, as the Tibetan word (GOM) for meditation translates to, becoming familiar with our mind. That is active and not passive. Where we live is here and now, and not just sitting in a nice corner somewhere on a cushion for a short time. At best, our time on the cushion is just a reminder.

Sure, Tranquility Meditation is peaceful enough, but for me that and a ticket will get you a ride on the bus, as they say. In the 24 hours of each day, the amount of time I spend just sitting on the cushion is dwarfed by the rest of the day, what is called post-Meditation. Yes, I sit on the cushion in front of my little shrine twice a day, but that’s just a touchstone, a reminder. The rest of the time, which is most of the time, I am actively becoming familiar with my mind, moment by moment, out in the thick of things, in the jungle of time. LOL. That, my friends, is or can be meditation.

Of course, we are looking for a peaceful time and life, but that can’t just be more pie-in-the-sky as the old saying goes. We can’t just kick the can down the road. As I used to mantra to myself, “For our dreams must be made to matter”; we have to make our dreams real and that is not done just virtually, but actually. Doing an internal “March for Peace” is not wrong, but it’s a bit quaint, IMO. Telling yourself how you want things to be is not the same as seizing the day and actually transforming your situation into what you want or what the situation actually demands.

In the same time that we can dream, we can do. That's what the remedial dharma practices (what are called the "purification practices") are all about, clearing the way for actual meditation. And meditation is an all-day thing.

And, if we are looking for some way to help, try helping yourself by facing the music of each day as it is doled-out or arises. I say to myself: "It is permitted," so that's what I have to do because that's what I HAVE to do. LOL.

Yes, my time sitting on the cushion in front of my shrine I do, without fail each day. Yet, at best it is like touching home base for a moment; and then I go on with my day, which is not so neatly arranged as the offering bowls on my shrine. LOL.

And it is in the sometimes-chaos of each day that my main opportunities for Meditation take place. If meditation, as the Tibetans define it, is "becoming familiar" with our mind, then the jungle of each day is where I meditate most. And for me, it's not just the odd good deed, kind thought, or compassionate act that counts, although they help. It is my becoming familiar in the moment with whatever arises to stare me down and my look right back and directly at it that is important.

In other words, for me, the process of meditation is like the word that sometimes appears in my word-processor instead of "meditation," which is "Mediation."

Mediation is much of what meditation is about for me each day, making friends and becoming familiar with my mind in all of its phases: quiet, fierce, raging, peaceful, chaotic, and on and on. The many moods of Michael have to be mediated and become familiar. All of that is meditation if approached as such. IMO.

Yes, order me up a cave and some solitude, but I doubt that I would be any different because "I" would still be

there. I try my best to walk point and not be turned away by what I find difficult. That, IMO, is all meditation.

Lest we get carried away with these thoughts, keep in mind that we actually have to thoroughly learn Tranquility Meditation (Shamata) before we can have any confidence that we can build upon that the more advanced forms of meditation (as described above).

For those of you who would like to have access to other free books, articles, and videos on these topics, here are the links:

[http://traffic.libsyn.com/spiritgrooves/Links\\_to\\_Michael\\_Erlewine-V2.pdf](http://traffic.libsyn.com/spiritgrooves/Links_to_Michael_Erlewine-V2.pdf)

“As Bodhicitta is so precious,  
May those without it now create it,  
May those who have it not destroy it,  
And may it ever grow and flourish.”