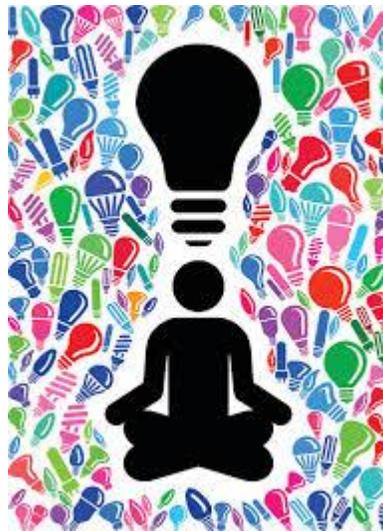


**CREATIVE MEDITATIONS**  
**By John Moeller**

**A meditation experiment culminating in several creative meditation techniques**



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## **PREFACE**

I have written this small book in order to share my experience of working with various meditation techniques. Many of these I have created and others I gathered from various traditions. In doing this I hope that it might inspire you to do something similar, or even just to try some of the techniques that I will be sharing, to see if they are beneficial to you.

## CHAPTER 1 GETTING STARTED

Back in 2013, when I was living in Albuquerque, NM, I decided to do an experiment. Each month I would try a new religion. I would do whatever practices that the particular religion did and attend their meetings. Since there were a number of Buddhist sanghas in town, I decided to start with Buddhism. I began to attend a sangha that I liked, and I started a daily practice of meditation. When the month was over, I found that I was very happy with this discipline. So I decided to end my experiment there and just continue in my new practice. Although I never actually became a Buddhist, I found the teachings were thought provoking, and Buddhists were very accepting of me. Even though I have other beliefs, I've always felt that I was accepted just as much as a fellow Buddhist was. Overall the main thing that I liked about Buddhism was the meditation. Even before I attended Buddhist meetings, I did meditate off and on and realized that it was a very effective practice. I decided to make it a daily practice and it has remained that way to this day.

As I attended various sanghas and read some books by Buddhist, Hindu, and other spiritual authors, I realized there are several ways to meditate. So I began experimenting with various techniques. From the knowledge I attained, I already had a handful of techniques to practice. I wanted to expand upon this. So I did a Google search and I discovered an excellent website called LiveAndDare.com which is authored by Giovanni Dienstmann.

<https://liveanddare.com/types-of-meditation/>

One page of his site is entitled, "Types of Meditation: An Overview of 23 Meditation Techniques." On this page there were techniques from various religions: Buddhism, Hinduism, Taoism, Christianity, and Sufism. Here is a quote from that web page:

"There are literally hundreds—if not thousands—of types of meditation, so here I will explore only the most popular ones. The purpose of this article is to help you experiment with different meditation techniques, and find the ones that work best for you... You need to experiment with many, and find the one that works best for your unique needs and personality."

- Giovanni Dienstmann

This is exactly how I felt about meditation, so it really resonated with me. I selected a number of techniques from this page to try out. I also added some Buddhist techniques, some from other traditions, and some of my own ideas. Some of these ideas were influenced by books I read as well as teachers that I learned from locally. Some ideas actually came to me as I meditated. So initially I started out with about 30 techniques to work with. My goal was to find a hand full of techniques that worked well for me personally that I could practice regularly. I have found that the enjoyment of this exercise though has actually caused me to change my goal for this experiment as well, much like my experiment with different religions. I spend more time now experimenting with new techniques than I do practicing my favorite ones. I really don't mind because I love experimenting with the new techniques. I love seeing the effect they have on me and I feel I benefit from constantly trying new techniques.

## CHAPTER 2

### SOME THOUGHTS ON MEDITATION

Before I delve into my experiment with meditation I would like to offer some of my thoughts on the subject.

#### **1. Meditation helps to reveal your true nature.**

...or in Buddhist lingo, your Buddha nature. Kindness, love, peace, and well being can come forth as we still our minds. With clutter gone our true nature can be realized. The following quotes are from the Hindu monk, Om Swami, a bestselling author of more than fifteen books on meditation, wellness, and spirituality.

*“Meditation is about discovering your natural state of peace and bliss.”*  
-Om Swami (A Million Thoughts)

*“A mind that has gone empty fills with love naturally.”*  
-Om Swami (A Million Thoughts)

#### **2. Meditation should for the most part be an enjoyable experience.**

That does not mean we won't have a difficult time getting there, but, with practice, the more proficient we become at meditation the more pleasurable it becomes.

*“Practice should be enjoyable and pleasant. It should be full of joy.”*  
-Thich Nhat Hahn (You Are Here)

#### **3. It is helpful if meditation is interesting.**

Thich Nhat Han, a renowned Zen Buddhist monk from Viet Nam, has said that he once struggled as a young monk staying alert during meditation. Then he realized the secret to combating this drowsiness was to make the meditation more interesting. Ajahn Brahm, who is the abbot at a Theravadan Buddhist monastery in Perth, Australia, also spoke of the importance of making meditation interesting. He spoke about trying to do usual techniques with a slight change in the way it's done to make it more interesting. Sometimes we need to be creative in doing this. Later in this booklet, as I present some techniques, you will see plenty examples of this.

#### **4. Meditation can lead to spiritual insights.**

I mentioned that many of the meditation techniques that I created came to me as I was meditating. This is one example of insights that might occur during meditation. In the Hindu scripture, the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna mentions that a heart that has found quietness allows wisdom to come forth.

*“In this quietness falls down the burden of all her sorrows, for when the heart has found quietness, wisdom has also found peace.”* -Krishna (Bhagavad Gita 2:65)

## **5. There is no such thing as a bad meditation.**

Even during a difficult meditation, where our mind frequently wanders, every time we bring the mind back to the object of our meditation, we are training our minds. The object of meditation might be the breath, the body, a mantra or various other things that one might use as the main focus of meditation. This training of the mind can be compared to exercising the body. When we exercise the body we might, at times, have a difficult work out. We might not feel like working out, but because we make the effort to show up at the gym to exercise, the result will be stronger muscles over time. In the same way when we meditate we are exercising the mind and over time the mind “muscle” becomes stronger and healthier.

## **6. Meditation rewires our minds.**

*“When neuroscientists tested expert meditators, they discovered something surprising: The effect of Buddhist meditation isn’t just momentary; it can alter deep-seated traits in our brain patterns and character.” -From lionsroar.com*

The link below is an article by neuroscientists Daniel Goleman and Richard Davidson which gives an introduction to the research they have done, as well as the book they have written concerning this research. This book is entitled “Altered Traits: Science Reveals How Meditation Changes Your Mind, Brain, and Body.”

[https://www.lionsroar.com/how-meditation-changes-your-brain-and-your-life/?fbclid=IwAR0WXvqN6E65k5CPNLvnP41xB5f\\_29XogqqoI5VJsfwzJmH5Fft5T4BTSLQ](https://www.lionsroar.com/how-meditation-changes-your-brain-and-your-life/?fbclid=IwAR0WXvqN6E65k5CPNLvnP41xB5f_29XogqqoI5VJsfwzJmH5Fft5T4BTSLQ)

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **SOME BASICS**

Before we get into my experiment with meditation and the top 21 techniques, I would like to give some basics of meditation. If you are a new meditator it might be a good idea to start here, before getting into the techniques that will be presented in chapter 5. Once you get the hang of it, then move on to the rest of the book.

The goal of meditation is to quiet the mind, reduce stress, gain insight and ultimately to attain enlightenment. Most meditation techniques have a few things in common. Most techniques have an anchor. An anchor is a point of focus. One of the most common anchors for many meditators is the breath. When you use the breath as an anchor you observe the breath without controlling it in any way. This focus helps to keep the mind quiet. If the mind gets lost in thought or begins to wander you simply bring your attention back to the breath. It is important not to get upset or impatient when the mind wanders. The idea is to be gentle with the mind. It's common, especially for beginners, for the mind to wander several times during the meditation session. Every time you let go of the thoughts and come back to the anchor you are training the mind.

Another common anchor for many meditators is a word or a phrase called a mantra. Most people are familiar with the mantra, "Om." The word "Om" is repeated silently or out loud and you focus on the word as it is repeated. It is the same as focusing on the breath. Whenever the mind wanders you bring your attention back to the mantra. There are probably thousands of mantras that can be used. You could even use a mantra with a meaning such as the word "calm" or "kindness."

The body is another common anchor. You focus on the body, and on bodily sensations.

Another anchor commonly used is the mind itself. You simply observe the mind. If the mind is busy with thoughts you just watch the thoughts but don't get caught up in them. If the mind is quiet then you observe the silence. If the mind is peaceful, or if it is agitated, you observe that as well.

Another anchor may be just whatever comes to your awareness during your session. So as you meditate you might notice thoughts, sensations, emotions, or even qualities such as peace or stress. The anchor may change throughout the session. This is perfectly ok. Whatever comes to your awareness in the moment is the anchor and that may change throughout the session.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **THE EXPERIMENT**

#### **How I Evaluate Techniques**

Now that you have an understanding of some basics of meditation, I will continue to explain my experiment. As I was saying earlier, my experiment was to try many different types of meditation, not just traditional techniques, but also techniques that I created myself. Before I could start the experiment I needed a way to evaluate the techniques that I would try. So I came up with a way to rate each session whenever I would try a technique. I would do a 20 minute meditation with each technique and rate them from 1 to 10; 10 being the best. I was guided by the following chart.

10 = Excellent  
9  
8 = Very Good  
7  
6 = Good  
5  
4 = OK  
3  
2 = So-So  
1  
0 = No Way!

Each meditation had to achieve a certain score or be eliminated. I was lenient at first, but each time I would make the criteria more difficult. At the seventh try and there after they had to have an average score of at least 7, which according to my chart, is between “good” and “very good.”

I enjoy listening to videos by Ajahn Brahm, and one day I was surprised to learn that he evaluates his meditations as well. When he comes to the end of a meditation session he uses what he calls a “peace-o-meter.” He actually rates the peace that he feels from his meditation and gives it a score from 1 to 10; 10 being the most peaceful. Then he evaluates what was effective in his meditation so that he can learn from the session.

#### **Meditations Still Standing**

So now (2021), after doing this for around 7 or 8 years, I have evaluated more than 300 techniques. There are only 21 that have not been eliminated, even after trying them at least 10 times. This is not to say that these techniques will be just as effective for everyone else who

tries them. The only way to know if they work for you is to try them out for yourself. The following are the techniques with a brief explanation. I encourage you to try and see if any of these are a good fit for you. I would also love to hear from you as to what your experience was like.

The rest of this booklet describes the meditations that have not been eliminated by the process that I described in the last section. To date I have done these meditations 10 to 20 times each, sitting for 20 minutes each session. They continue to average a 7 or above in my system of evaluation. So, for me, these techniques are the cream of the crop, especially considering the fact that I eliminated about 300 techniques that didn't make the cut.

Whenever I sit for 20 minutes the first (approximately) 3 minutes is a warm up. So before I actually start the technique I just settle in by focusing on my breath, body or mind. Once I feel settled I begin the technique.

## CHAPTER 5

### THE TOP 21 MEDITATION TECHNIQUES

Unless otherwise noted the majority of these meditations are my own creation.

#### The Power of Words

The following techniques demonstrate how powerful words can be to bring us to a deeper state of consciousness.

#### **Positive Feedback**

This technique and the next one (Sacred Adjectives) have been the most effective ones for me personally. After the three minute warm up you should begin to settle into your meditation. If you notice peace, stillness or any pleasant sensation, say to yourself, “good!” or, “excellent,” or any positive word of encouragement. Continue to do this all throughout your time meditating. I’ve found that it helps to not use the same feedback word all the time. Try to mix it up a bit with words such as good, very good, excellent, yes, nice, etc.

I have found that the effect it has on me is that it will cause me to experience more peace, more pleasant sensations, more quietness of mind, and a deeper meditation. It’s as if my subconscious mind takes encouragement from this positive feedback.

#### **Sacred Adjectives**

I have found this to be a very powerful meditation. Be sure to begin with a few minutes of warm up as I described in the intro to this section. As you settle into your meditation, you should begin to feel calmer, quieter and more peaceful. At this point, begin this technique by using adjectives that describe your experience in a positive way. Below is a list of adjectives that you might want to try. You can even try them if you don’t necessarily feel that way, just to see what effect it has on you. I believe that all these qualities describe what is already there within us. However, we are normally distracted from the truth of who we really are. This technique helps to bring us back to realizing our true nature.

Quiet	Still	Calm
Relaxed	Peaceful	Pure
Gentle	Tender	Precious
Holy	Sacred	Loving
Kind	Powerful	Beautiful
Healing	Happy	Joyful
Blissful	Miraculous	Perfect

### **Sacred Adjectives for the Body**

This technique is the same as the “Sacred Adjectives” method shown above except the adjectives are to be used to describe the body. I like to use the phrase “The body is a very \_\_\_\_\_ place.” You can use this phrase and fill in the blank with various adjectives.

### **Sacred Adjectives for the Mind**

This technique is the same as the “Sacred Adjectives” method except the adjectives are to be used to describe the mind. I like to use the phrase “The mind is a very \_\_\_\_\_ place.” You can use this phrase and fill in the blank with various adjectives.

### **Sacred Adjectives for This Moment**

This technique is the same as the “Sacred Adjectives” method except the adjectives are to be used to describe this moment.

### **Preciousness**

This technique will help you see all things in your awareness as being very precious. Use the word “precious” to describe your experience as you meditate. Practice seeing everything that you notice as being very precious; things such as your body, the breath, the mind, the moment, your heart, sensations, emotions, and even your awareness itself. In fact everything that you notice during your session can be seen as being very precious.

### **Breath in Wholesome Qualities**

Imagine you are breathing in wholesome qualities such as love, peace, kindness, etc. Imagine they are going to every part of your body, even every cell of the body. Here is a list of wholesome qualities that you might want to try.

Love	Peace
Kindness	Compassion
Quietness	Stillness
Calm	Pureness
Holiness (or sacredness)	Beauty (inner beauty)
Healing	Happiness
Joy	Bliss
Power (transforming power)	Miracles

## Practice

Whenever we meditate, we are doing a practice, a practice with great benefits. This technique emphasizes the fact that we are practicing. There is no good or bad in practice. We are simply practicing to become more aware and to reap the benefits of mindfulness. When we practice anything we become better at it. In this technique we fill in the blank of the short phrase “Practice \_\_\_\_\_.” An example would be “practice peace,” or “practice love.” When we practice either of these qualities, we are sensing what it feels like to have peace within, or feel love within. Below are numerous examples of words which you can use to fill in the blank. You don’t have to use them all but pick a few that resonate with you or come up with some words of your own.

Observing	Awareness	Enjoying
Breathing	Silence	Stillness
Peace	Happiness	Joy
Bliss	Feeling good	Smiling
Compassion	Love	Kindness

## Feeling Good!

The following techniques are about finding pleasant feelings or sensations that are present within you. You will probably notice that some of the “Feeling Good” meditations are very similar. I admit they are, but I find that the choice of words that you use to help you focus on the pleasant feelings can make a big difference in your meditation experience. So that one phrase such as “Follow your bliss” might have a different effect than focusing on the phrase “Feelings of bliss” even though the idea is almost the same.

### **Mindfulness of Any Peace That Arises**

Be mindful whenever you feel even the slightest peace while you are meditating. Let that be the focus of your meditation. Be focused on the peace you feel as you would your breath in a breathing meditation. Stay with that peace. Follow it. What does it feel like? Be curious.

### **The Body Filled With Bliss**

This technique is from a Hindu scripture called “Vijnanabhairava Tantra.” In this text one is instructed to feel or imagine that the body is filled with bliss. You may not feel any bliss or any pleasant sensation at first, but start by using your imagination. Little by little it should feel more real. At least that has been my experience. If the word “bliss” seems too difficult for you to

imagine, then start by just picturing that your body feels “good.” You can then gradually work up to “bliss.”

### **Feelings of Bliss**

Be mindful of any blissful feeling you may have whether it be in the body or the mind or a general overall feeling. If you do not feel any bliss then try to imagine what bliss feels like. The imagination is often a good starting point. The more you are able to relax, the more readily blissful feelings should arise.

### **Follow Your Bliss**

I borrowed this phrase from the famous author, Joseph Campbell. Campbell uses this phrase to encourage us to make decisions in our lives that we are truly passionate about rather than keeping in line with the status quo. However my usage of it is a bit different from Campbell’s. It is in the context of meditation. So with this technique you seek to find and follow your inner bliss in the moment. This normally starts with quieting your mind. Therefore it is important to do the warm up for about three minutes so you can begin to feel calmer and quieter. Once you feel even the slightest sense of bliss focus on it and follow it.

### **Explore Good Feelings that are Present**

Be mindful of any good feelings or sensations that you notice, even if it’s very slight. Just be with the feelings that are present, rather than trying to manufacture them.

### **Body Work**

The next two techniques work with the body.

#### **Pressure Points**

Imagine that you are physically applying pressure with your fingers to various points of your body as you meditate. Think of how a massage therapist might do this. Picture this gentle pressure releasing tension in your body. You can even imagine that you are sending positive energy into your body from that point. Allow this soothing pressure to relax, quiet, and calm you. If your mind begins to drift in thought, bring it back to the pressure points.

#### **Spirit Hand**

This one requires some imagination. Imagine that an invisible hand or hands are entering into your body and sending your body spiritual energy. You can imagine this as your hand or God’s hand, depending on your beliefs. Experiment with this by imagining this spirit hand being in the center of your body, or your heart, head, spine or anywhere else in your body.

## **High Energy**

The following techniques are quite different from most traditional meditation techniques in that they are stimulating rather than calming.

These are good meditations especially during times when you are sleepy. Om Swami says that the key to success with meditation is to know when to exert and when to relax. These techniques are excellent for exerting when you are feeling drowsy and need to get your blood going.

It's interesting what I find with all three of these exerting meditations. About half way through the session, I often feel a deep sense of calm even while I am excited.

## **Infusion**

Imagine that you are infusing positive spiritual energy into your body. You might start from the bottom of your belly and imagine the energy moving up your body, all the way to your head.

I find it helpful to use my hands to help me focus. I start by having my hands open, palms up, level with my belly button. Then I move my hands up just in front of the body all the way to the head. Do this as if you are moving the energy with your hands. You can do this several times, as needed to help you focus.

## **Excitement**

Just feel excited! Feel the sensation of excitement. Don't think about anything specifically that makes you excited, unless it's excitement about this moment, or excitement about "the way things are" (to use a Buddhist expression), or to be excited about life. Let the feeling of excitement be the focus of your meditation.

## **Rejoicing**

In this meditation you will simply be rejoicing. Just feel the sensation of rejoicing. I recommend that you even raise your arms high above your head, off and on, throughout your meditation to express rejoicing. Let rejoicing be the focus of your meditation.

## **Other Techniques**

### **Stuff Happens**

In this meditation the focus is on the fact that things are happening and that we are just watching them happen. It can make a big difference to think "breathing is happening" rather than thinking "I am breathing." In this example we are focusing more on the breathing taking

place rather than "I am the one breathing." Below is a list of things to observe that are happening. With these words you can simply fill in the blank for the phrase "\_\_\_\_\_ is/are happening." Of course please use your own words as well if you like. You can use anything that comes into your awareness. So if you become aware that you are feeling positive qualities such as kindness, you can say "kindness is happening." I first heard of the technique, "breathing is happening" during a guided meditation by my teacher (Aruna Dhammadhira) at the Buddhist sangha that I attend. I expanded this concept a bit to include other things in one's awareness that are also happening.

Breathing	Sitting	Sensations
Thoughts	Quietness	Calm
Peace	Sounds	Emotions

### **Harmony of Mind**

This meditation is a reflection on a verse from the Hindu scripture, the Bhagavad Gita. In verse 17:16 of the translation by Juan Mascaro it says,

*"Quietness of mind, silence, self-harmony, loving-kindness, and a pure heart. This is the harmony of the mind."*

So in this meditation you should first memorize the verse. Once you have the words mastered simply repeat the words and allow them to sink in. You can also notice how it feels in your body to hear them.

### **Metta**

Metta is a Pali (ancient language at the time of the Buddha) word which means positive energy and kindness toward others. This is a very popular meditation that is from the Buddhist tradition. I have expanded upon it in a few small ways and I have also simplified it in other ways.

Begin by taking a moment to wish yourself well. Then wish others well. You might say "May she be happy," or "May he be healthy." You can also imagine that you are sending them positive spiritual energy. You can even imagine that you are placing your hand on someone's shoulder and sending transforming energy into their body. You can even include Christian-like prayer for someone if you are so inclined. Do this for whoever you care about, family, friends, sangha members, etc. You might want to even try to send metta to people you might not care for so much, a difficult person. This is a good way to practice being compassion toward all people.

## **SUMMARY**

My purpose in sharing this with you is to give you some ideas about trying your own meditation creations, or trying out some of the ones that I shared. To really give them a try, I suggest that you sit with any of these meditations for a good 20 minutes. It has been my experience that the more different types of techniques that you try the more your own creativity will begin to kick in.

I feel this booklet is a work in progress. So if you notice any errors in spelling or grammar, please let me know. Also if you feel anything in this booklet needs more explanation or if the explanation I have given is unclear please let me know. Any other suggestions would be helpful as well. I would love to hear your feedback whether it be positive or even some constructive criticism. Finally, if anyone has a good suggestion for a title I'd love to hear it. The current title is the best I could do for now.

May your meditations be sublime and bring insight and peace to your life.

*John Moeller*  
*Colorado Springs, CO*  
*2021*