

# The **Joy** of stillness... and practicing meditation/prayer for stress-relief

**“May we allow ourselves stillness  
so, we can open our minds to ourselves,  
and spaciousness so we can allow a moment of rest  
when all thoughts fly above us like kites in a strong  
wind.”**

*“I will not die an unlived life”* by Dawna Markova



For many, one of our greatest fears is silence. We avoid it by having the radio or TV playing in the background all day. Then when we leave our office or home, the radio is on in the car, or our Spotify playing ... just something that creates distraction.

Avoiding silence can be avoiding ourselves. Not always, but often. Are we comfortable with what will arise if we are silent? Silence stills our minds, and it allows us to question ourselves and to think more deeply about the relationships with those around us.

*“Silence provides a pathway towards mindfulness, and when embraced, allows us to internally evolve — a deepened, meaningful state of existence.”* Aletheia Luna

Silence provides us with the space for feedback from ourselves... about our ‘true’ selves; our insecurities, our faults and our problems. And often we want to escape or do anything but allow those issues to arise. We don’t want to open ourselves to our secret yearnings or to the questions about how we’re living.

When we sit in silence, we face ourselves in a mirror. We learn to be comfortable with just ‘being’ and not totally filling our lives with mindless activities and chatter that create a veil between our outer world and the inner world of who we truly are. Experiencing our life from the inside means taking time each day to simply be alone and quiet in the presence of our soul. We are often not used to doing this for ourselves and don’t even understand how to create ‘space’ for ourselves and silence.

I encourage you today, to start making time daily for just sitting silently. You will become more present in your life and less absent to your authentic being if you practice being silent. This doesn't mean reading a book or watching television but being open to yourself instead... alone without distraction. This will become a precious part of your day when you find yourself opening to the beauty of who you are like a flower in the sun, even if it's just 5 minutes to begin with.

I have been practising silence regularly and I can vouch that it is reviving, in a way that's so precious! I feel calmer, more in touch with my inner wisdom, increasingly connected to my dreams, and greater centredness in my life in general.

Silence is a great balm for your soul... for she can arise and speak! How fabulous! I'd love to hear about your journey into silence!



We all suffer from stress at times, right? People often ask me how I deal with stress and when I mention meditation, they ask me how I do it and what type of meditation I do and for how long etc? So, in this article I'm going to give you a simple method for meditation to encourage you to begin or deepen your meditation practise.

We can all feel on edge or frustrated and stressed at times and need ways of calming down and feeling more relaxed. Meditation is an ancient mind-body practise that has been used for thousands of years, that promotes relaxation and well-being. Originally it was meant to help deepen understanding of the sacred or mystical forces of life. This is still a pertinent reason to meditate today. But more than ever it is used for stress-reduction, relaxation and also to connect with our Higher Power or just to feel more connected to ourselves.

Research shows that meditating has stress-relieving psychological and physical health benefits that include reduced blood pressure, anxiety, insomnia and depression. You may think that learning to meditate effectively is too complicated or too time consuming, but you really only need a few minutes in your day to practise these simple exercises and feel refreshed. Anyone can practise meditation as it's simple, inexpensive and doesn't require any special equipment.

Meditation can help us calm our minds, giving us a new perspective on a challenging situation. It can increase our self-awareness and reduce negative emotions.

## **Meditation has been cited to help people with:**

- Asthma
- Cancer
- Depression
- Heart disease
- High blood pressure
- Pain
- Sleep problems

(Meditation isn't a replacement for traditional or alternative medical treatment. But it may be a useful addition to what you already have in place.)

## **Simple breath meditation**

### **Find a quiet place to sit**

You can lay down to meditate but if you're feeling tired you should probably sit up! I find that sitting with back supported suits me best so I can relax. A comfy lounge chair is fine. (You need to find a place where you won't be disturbed by animals, other people or technology as well.)

### **Start to notice your breathing**

Breathe deeply in and out through your nose and really concentrate on your diaphragm rising and falling. Notice your breath and enjoy your breath rising and falling.

### **Concentrate on something**

You can light a candle and concentrate on the flame or close your eyes and just notice your breath. Or you can repeat a word or mantra. The idea is to calm your mind from the almost ceaseless chatter that goes on many waking moments and give yourself a break from thinking about stressful situations, problems or even tonight's dinner.

Your mind will probably wander during meditation. It takes time and discipline to not start thinking about dinner or what your friend said last night etc. This is normal and to be expected—even for those who have been practising meditation for a long time. When this happens, just notice your thoughts and let them drift across your mind like clouds across the sky. Don't resist them, just accept them and then bring your focus back to what you were concentrating on when you started your meditation, whether it was a candle, your breathing or a feeling etc.

When you start meditation, begin with just 5-minute blocks of time and work up to longer periods. When I first started, I struggled to still my mind for even short

periods of time. What I found helpful was to do 5 minutes and increase over time. This helped me feel I was achieving my goal and to not get really discouraged with my practise.

### **Engage in prayer**

Praying is a type of meditation practised all over the world in many different religious and non-religious contexts. Adapt the prayer to meet your needs, personal beliefs and meditative goals. You can pray aloud, silently, write down your prayer or repeat a mantra or word that is related to your beliefs and desires. For example, you could repeat the mantra “I am” (in-breath) “peaceful” (out-breath). Always make your mantras in the now and positive, not “I don’t want to be sick” or “I’m becoming wealthy”. Instead “I am well now” and “I am abundant” or something like “I am connected to a loving power/God and all is well.”

### **Know that there is no “right way” to meditate so just enjoy it!**

There are many forms of meditation. Choose what suits you. Do some research or join a local group that can give you support and new options for practising meditation/relaxation/prayer. Don't worry about doing it right, just relax into it and learn along the way.

Gardening is a form of meditation, so is art practise, walking or Tai Chi. One major facet of meditation is purely relaxing the mind, which in turn relaxes the body. We all need a break from having a busy, tense mind, so give meditation a try today! You’ll feel so much better for it!

I hope you enjoyed this article about stillness and meditation. If you’re interested in learning more about me, please read below 😊

## **Ways to work with me:**

- **Soul Portraits** are spiritual intuitive paintings, to bring forth a profound message for your soul; a heart opening, an aligning with the greater purpose of your life. If you’re in need of inspiration and Soul recognition today, read these exciting success stories [here](#).
- **Vibrant life-affirming original artworks** to inspire your world and brighten your day. Click [here](#)
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"I first met Alli over five years ago when we began our journey of training in art therapy together. Since that time, I have admired her incredible journey through art, and I am amazed at the talent and intuition that she has shown in developing her art and her art-inspired offerings. I am the proud owner of many of her beautiful artwork prints and I purchase her cards regularly to use for both clients and for friends and family.

Seeing her artwork in real life is the only way to feel the joy of how beautiful Alli's work really is! I highly recommend her artworks in all forms."

Mel, Albury NSW AUSTRALIA

### **More about me here:**

[www.diilhami-art.com](http://www.diilhami-art.com)

[www.instagram.com/Diilhami](https://www.instagram.com/Diilhami)

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[www.etsy.com/au/shop/Diilhami](https://www.etsy.com/au/shop/Diilhami)

*Alli xxx*

Sources: [wikihow.com](http://wikihow.com) and [mayoclinic.org](http://mayoclinic.org)