

PRACTICE IS "PRACTICE"

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By Michael Erlewine (Michael@Erlewine.net)

Meditation requires practice and practice is kind of boring or can be whether it is practicing scales and fingering on a guitar or practicing meditation. Our practice is not the result or fruition of meditation practice but only the means of forming a habit that can bring us toward that fruition, call it realization, awareness, or whatever.

The practice of meditation is like any other form of practice, preliminary by design. It is practice and not the real thing. That is why we call it meditation 'practice' as in "I am now going to do my practice." That says it all.

Meditation is about learning to use the mind. It differs from other forms of mental pursuit in that instead of focusing the mind on external thoughts and matters like philosophy, science, psychology, or what-have-you, meditation focuses the mind inward on itself. The mind looks at the mind. That is the difference.

Using the mind to look at itself is not new to many Asian countries, but it is (for the most part) new to the U.S. and western countries. What do we mean when we say to use the mind to look at itself? Since most Americans don't know how to do this, how is this to be understood? We might better just say that we need to get to know the mind, to look at it.

If you want to see how difficult this is just try and look at who is reading this sentence? Go ahead and look. At least try it. What do you find? You should find that it is very difficult to "look" at the looker, so to speak. It is a little like those little dog magnets some of us had as kids. If you try and put two of the same polarity ends of the magnets together they just won't go. They go anywhere else but there. This is a little like trying to 'look at the looker', using the mind to see itself.

What we call meditation might better be called what those of us who meditate call it already, which is 'practice' because that is what we are doing -- practicing or forming a habit. And it takes time. I wish someone had explained to me early on that my daily meditation was just practice and not to expect anything from it, at least not that day or anytime soon. And back then I was even calling it 'practice', but never had the awareness to realize what the word meant. Now that is funny!

Meditation is all about becoming more aware but it does not just happen overnight. Sitting meditation practice gradually gives us the habit of allowing the mind to rest on whatever object we have chosen -- the breath, a pebble, and so on. Skill in meditating arises. It is like using your computer mouse to place the cursor anywhere on the screen and then taking your hand away from the mouse.

The cursor will just stay there as long as you don't want to move it. Meditation is like this. Meditation practice in time will let you to focus your mind on whatever object you wish and allow it to rest there. You can't forcibly rest the mind, but you can learn to let the mind rest naturally. At this point in meditation, your practice is deeply relaxing. Until then it is practice.

For those who are interested in this topic, please check out this free booklet "Training the Mind" here:

<http://astrologysoftware.com/books/index.asp?orig>

