

A person is shown from behind, sitting in a meditative lotus position on a wooden mat. They are positioned in front of a large, perfectly circular opening in a wall. Through this opening, a vast landscape of mountain ranges is visible under a soft, golden sky, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The scene is reflected in a pool of water in the foreground, creating a symmetrical effect. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

SAYADAW U JOTIKA

**MEDITATION FOR
BEGINNERS**

Dhamma Talk

Meditation for beginners

Sayadaw U Jotika
Transcribed by Viet Hung
with support of Sonix.ai tool

Words from the transcriber

This dhamma talk from Sayadaw U Jotika is another time-less teachings from Sayadaw. Those simple teachings hold true over the time and serve as the core for any meditators, not just for the beginners as in the title. I got this dhamma talk from the Internet and it has no title. It was a talk Sayadaw U Jotika taught to a group of meditators during a retreat in Melbourne, on 09/03/1997. Though the title of the talk is “Meditation for beginners”, the more I listen and read it, the more I meditate, the more I deeply realize the fact that, this is the critical teachings for even the most hard core meditators. I often call it “back to the basics”. And one more important thing is that the talk is very inspiring for whoever want to change your life for the better. I transcribed it here and will continue translating it into Vietnamese. Certainly, there may be in-corrections here and there, during the transcribe. But overall, the key points should be correctly written down. You can also refer to the original talk below. Enjoy the listening or reading.

Việt Hùng

Recorded Audio

Recorded audio can be found here: [https://
viethungnguyen.com/2020/09/21/dhamma-talk-
meditation-for-beginners/](https://viethungnguyen.com/2020/09/21/dhamma-talk-meditation-for-beginners/)

V. 01.00

Meditation for beginners

I'm glad to see all of you. Some of you are new comers. I remember most of your faces. But I see some very young people here today. Are you here for the first time?

[conversations back and forth between Sayadaw and meditators]

I want to know if is there anybody here who has never meditated before, who is a real beginner? Oh, I see quite a few here today. Well, I want to tell you that once I was a beginner, that's where we begin.

It was a long time ago when I was about 16. Long time ago. About thirty four years ago. So, I've come a long way, thirty four years is quite a long time. So, I want to welcome especially to those who are real beginners and also like to come here. Very glad to see you. Welcome, everybody.

So since there are a few people here who are really a beginner, today, I would like to talk about meditation

from the very beginning. Actually, I want to have a kind of series of talks so that I can add more details, more ideas and keep it going. Maybe when I have time, I want to make a plan for that, because whenever you want to study something, you need a kind of plan, to have a plan to do that.

Meditation is a very deep and meaningful practice. It is a discipline. So I've got a few notes here. Because it's very easy for me to forget, not because I have a bad memory. I used to have a very good memory, even now I don't think I have a bad memory, but my habit is that I don't carry things in my mind. Most of the time, I keep my mind quite empty. Just being aware, not getting anything, very light.

To begin from the beginning, when I started meditating, I did not do that because I wanted to become enlightened. I was quite young. That time, I was 16. I was just interested in many things, especially about my... how do develop my intelligence? That was my main interest, actually.

I want to learn quite a lot and I know that there are, those days, also there were many people who were very, very intelligent. So I wanted to become a very learned and intelligent person who knows quite a lot, almost everything.

So, I read a lot of books. And I read in many books

that if you can keep your mind calm and peaceful and relax, which means if you don't waste your energy worrying and doing unnecessary things, then you can use all your energy and devote to really find out about the world, about nature, about life, about mind, about the meaning of life. And also about deep wisdom, vague idea, had only a vague idea about some deep wisdom, I didn't know what it means, actually.

So I love that idea. Yes, we need to conserve our energy, mental energy and physical energy too. If we waste our energy then, we don't have enough energy to really do something very important.

And I read a lot of books about inventor scientists and I found out that they devote all the energy to doing what they like to do. They did not waste the time and energy. For example, Sir Isaac Newton, he didn't go to parties mostly. And when he could not refuse, he will just go and spend a few minutes and go. He cannot waste the time. And he doesn't want to get distracted. So, I like these scientists very much. They found out very deep and meaningful things about nature.

And also, I read a lot of books about people who are very spiritually developed, and I knew quite a few too. My first meditation teacher was a musician and also a musical instrument maker. I talked about him quite a few times. I really love him very much. He was... I don't know whether he's still alive or not. We don't

have any contact anymore. He was a very special person and he was an expert in classical music. I learned music from him. I went to his house, to his shop also, many, many times. And I watched him making musical instruments and I watched him playing musical instruments. So beautiful and so much ease, so much professional. It's really amazing to see somebody doing something almost perfect. I would say almost perfect.

And I asked him to make a violin for me. I love violin very much. So, I watched him making the violin from the beginning to the end. Just watching him making a violin was a big lesson for me. It's not just a trivial thing, if you see a master working. When you see that, it is an art.

So you might have heard about Zen masters talking about doing everything perfect. Even archery, monk shooting arrows is something contradictory sometimes, but they made it into an art.

So I watched my teacher making a violin. He had a big stump. I can't remember exactly the quality of the wood. But he had a big stump and he looked at the stump. And then he cut the stump into big pieces. And he washed the grains very carefully and cut off pieces, cutting off those things that are not useful. And then he cut this one piece into two and put the two together like this. So that the grain identical matches just like a

mirror image. So my violin looked very beautiful. Because brown grain looks like a butterfly. And he got into very beautiful shape and polish it very carefully.

And I watched him making every piece of wood with real love and care. It was really beautiful to watch somebody doing something, really knowing what he is doing, really knowing how to make it perfect and doing it with wholeheartedness, mind and body doing it. Not just making a good machine. He was all...

All the work was done by hand. He didn't have the machine in Burma in those days to make musical instruments. So he was doing it very, very carefully. The body piece and the neck singable peck. And also in the end, he polished. Put polish on the violin and then pull the strings on it, and then tune the strings and played it so beautiful sounds.

So, he gave me that violin and gave me very simple exercise to play. Just a few notes, four or five minutes to play again and again in different variations. So, I learned violin from him and he told me to play this few simple notes again and again. The next day I go back, I went back and he said, "OK, you play that melody again".

I played it again. He said that, "Well, listen, listen very carefully. I play". And he took the violin and play those beautiful of four notes only, beautiful notes on a

violin. It sounds very different. The way I played it and the way he played it sound very different. It's the only four notes and he was playing on this violin slowly. It was a very slow movement. No hurry. The way he touched the strings with the bow very gently. Violin is a very delicate instrument. If you press it, you get a different sound. If you touch it lightly, it's a different sound. If you tail the bow, you get in a different sound. If you draw it quickly, you get a different tone. If you draw it slowly. You get another tone. The same note can be very different. So again and again, I went to him. He asked me to play the same four notes again and again, and again and again, for many, many days.

And I was very impatient. I want to play those bigger pieces, very beautiful pieces. But every time he played those four notes again, I understood that I need to practice it more. I can't go on because I haven't learned to play these four notes well. First, I went to him to learn music, actually, I didn't know that he was a meditator. I only knew him as a musical instrument maker and musician.

And so after a few months, we got to know each other very well. And then I went to his house in the evening about two or three times a week. And then we played music for a few minutes. And he would teach me some new things, how to make new sounds.

One day he said, let's meditate. Just that. He didn't ask me whether I would like to meditate or not. He just said, let's meditate.

I was very surprised. I didn't know that he was a meditator. I didn't expect that. But we became such good friends and he was such a gentle and loving and kind person. And he lived like he knows what he's doing. He never talk about other people. He never talk about making money or becoming famous or getting better or anything like that. He just did everything with much ease, without worrying about anything. Very calm and peaceful and relaxed person.

So I love him very much and respect him very much too. So, when he asked me, when he told me let's meditate, I said yes. I cannot say no. He asked me in such a gentle way that you cannot say no. If he asked me, go meditate, then I'll think about it. I might change my mind and say, oh, I don't have time, I must go back.

He asked me very gently. So you see, gentleness has a lot of power. If you see something wholeheartedly, with real kindness, real compassion and gently, it is a lot of power and somebody who hear that will not think of saying no. So I hope you understand this idea. Gentleness has power, so I meditated with him.

He gave me a very simple instruction. Sit. Breath

deeply. Keep your mind near the nostril. Feel the air coming in and going out. Feel the air. He didn't say anything, just feel it. So, this idea, feel, this word feel is very important in meditation. Don't think about it. Feel it, as the air comes in. It touches near the nostril and you feel it cool. And when it goes out, it's warmer. Find out the place where you feel this coolness and warmth and also gently, lightly touching, softly touching. Breathing in, breathing out. Where do you feel that? Warm air going out, cool air coming in. Which area, which place you feel it? Keep your mind there.

And so, we sat and meditated. At first, he told me to breathe a little bit harder than normal. Because he said normally we are so busy doing so many things throughout the day. We are very agitated. And also we have the habit of thinking, thinking, thinking all the time, whether it's important or not. Just thoughts coming in, one thought after another. We are not making it. But it's coming all the time. So just to, um, keep the mind on the nostril. More easily, he said breathe deeply.

But he explained to me that when you become a good meditator, you don't need to do it anymore. But for a few days, whenever you meditate, breathe deeply. It helps you to keep your mind there. So this is quite true. It's natural. When you breathe very gently, it's difficult for you to feel it. Because to feel is the most

important thing.

So he said breath deeply, like this. Then it's easier to keep the mind. The mind wouldn't run away. You cannot run away, because that sensation, the feeling is so obvious, so distinct. So I did that. He was sitting near me. So this is a very important thing. Again, you know, he didn't ask me go and meditate. So I think about it very deeply again and again. The way he related people and the way he talked to people is very meaningful. He didn't say things lightly. Whenever he said something, (though) he talked very little, but whenever he says something, every word counts. Even his manner. His tone of voice is very important. Because he was a real artist. And he was a real meditator. He knew what he was doing. He knew what he was saying.

So nothing comes out of him, um, un-mindfully, absent mindedly. Just very mindful. So what he said was, let's meditate, not go and meditate. That is very important. To meditate together with your teacher is very important. It is not enough just to take the instruction, go and meditate. It feels very different. When you are meditating with your teacher, it feels very different. So if you are fortunate to have a teacher like that, meditate with him. So we sat together. He was on my right side. I was sitting like this, and meditate very deeply.

After about 10 minutes, I felt very hot. As breathing deeply makes you very hot and the weather was also hot. After 10 minutes, he said, now let go and just breathe normally, naturally.

So I let go of deep breathing and then back to normal breathing. Because I've been breathing for about ten minutes so hard, my body was saturated with oxygen. So, my body didn't need to breathe much. So I breath very gently. But my mind was very calm and still. And then he said, go through the whole body and see all the sensations in the body, from the head to toes.

He gave me a very brief instruction again. So I did that studying for my forehead, going down slowly and slowly and slowly. And from the back also, slowly and slowly down. And then my arms, going down slowly down to the fingertips, another arm, another shoulder. Going down slowly through the fingertips and then one leg and then other leg slowly. I didn't know what the name of the method was in those days.

I didn't ask even. He didn't tell me. He talked very less, very little, only when necessary. So I did what he told me to do. And later, every time I went to his home to learn music, we played music together. I learned music from him. And then after that he said, let's meditate. He didn't ask me whether I'm making any progress or not, just ask me, let's meditate. So I sat with him again and meditate, the same thing. Nothing

new. The instruction was very, very simple. Just like those four musical notes, along these four musical notes, play that in different variations. After a few weeks, I learned it very well. It came out very beautiful and then he'll give me something more and something more. I practiced it again and again.

So as I learn music better, I learn meditation also better, slowly and slowly. After a few weeks, one day, after sitting, and reading, doing meditation for about ten minutes and then going through the whole body sweeping from head to fingertips down to the toes for about another 10 or 15 minutes, I felt very calm and peaceful, very light in my body and mind. The whole body was very light and peaceful. And I understood one thing in that moment. And that moment is a very crucial moment in my life.

I felt so peaceful, something I've never experienced before. And I understood that all those years I lived, I was never really happy and peaceful, because I had some kind of a reference now from that point, from the peacefulness of meditation. I look at it, the way I live my life, and found that that was a crazy way of living. No deep inside. This is not an enlightenment and [not being able to hear the words].

I'm not going to live like that anymore. I must change the way I live. I was doing too many things in those days. Actually, my father was also a workaholic. And I

was not a workaholic, but actually a bookaholic, reading too much. I want to read the whole library. Even once, I thought of going to live in a foreign country in England or in New York or Washington, going live near a big library and go and read the whole library. So there's so much a craving for knowledge, too much craving for knowledge, even though I read quite a lot. That's my biggest, biggest desire or craving.

But anyway, I found out that to be happy and peaceful, I don't need to know everything in the world. And everything, if you know everything, even that will not make you really happy, not (even) wise even. You will have a lot of knowledge. But that doesn't mean that you are wise.

So I meditated regularly. At first, only once a day. And three times a week, I meditated with my teacher. And four times a week, I meditated at home, in my place, in my room, on my bed. And nobody knew that. My family didn't know that I was meditating because my family, my parents, they were not Buddhist. So I didn't want them to know that I was meditating. But they might not understand me. And I did not consider myself as a Buddhist even. I did not consider meditation as a Buddhist practice. I did not have any labels. And that was very good. That was a kind of freedom. No labels.

I was just doing something that I feel is good to do. I enjoy doing that. It was just very nice to meditate. So, before I go to sleep, I sit and meditate. So, the posture he taught me was sitting like this, very simple. In Asia, most people sit like this on the floor and he told me to put my arms like this, let my fingers free. He said, don't let your finger press anywhere, just let your fingers free. So this was the first posture he taught me. He said, if you want to, you can keep your hands like this too. The hands like this too. But if you can't, do like this, let your finger free. And later, I found out the importance of that.

If you let your fingers free, your arms become very relaxed. And let the eyes pills, but don't shut it completely. So if you look at the Buddha image meditating, you'll find that the eye is slightly opened. And that is not something that the image maker made it accidentally. It is described in the meditation books that once a meditator becomes really relaxed, calm and peaceful, the eyes open a little bit. And that is the sign of peacefulness and relaxation and ease. So, it is very important to be at ease, when you meditate. If you don't know how to do that, meditation can become very stressful, very painful sometimes. That's why some people run away. They can't sit. They don't want to sit. It's painful.

But I learned this from a teacher who was a really good meditator. So I got very good instructions. Very

simple, actually, but very important, very good instructions. So sitting like this, with the back straight, but not tensed, straight, but at ease as much as possible. Very relaxed and keep the head straight only, not like this. Very gently and at ease. You can feel it. You do a little bit, make your head bended a little bit, or go up a little bit and find a position which is the most pleasant. You feel very at ease, very peaceful, very relaxed. Sitting like this.

He said, don't press your arms, just let your hands stay rest on your knees. Don't push. So that is also another thing important. And some people, when they concentrate, they do like this, the eyebrows come together closer. How do they call that in English? Frowning. Yes, frowning. So they try very hard. They try very hard to meditate, so they frown. That becomes very painful. It can give you eye aching. It can make your eyes aged. So he said, don't frown. Leave your forehead very relaxed and smooth even when you don't see the, the lines coming here. Sometimes you still feel some tension there, so just feel the tension and let it go. Never use any tension.

And also he said don't make your eyes shut too tightly. Sometimes people meditate, they keep the eyes like this. Too much pressure. Just let go of your eyes. Put the eyes lid, open slowly, slightly, like this. And some people, once they meditate, they keep their lips tightly shut. He said, don't do that. Just let them touch very

gently, just barely touching. Because he said if you let it open when you breathe, the air will come out of your mouth, come in from your mouth, and sometimes, it will make you dry throat.

So just keep your mouth shut. But let your lips just barely touched each other. Make, leave it very, very soft. And don't let your lips touch each other. Lose your jaw. And also lose your tongue, drop your tongue. And also shoulders. Mostly when we sit and meditate, unconsciously, we are raising our shoulder a bit, not letting it go down. So one person, he made a joke. He said, I sit and meditate. And my teacher told me to relax, but my shoulders are near my ears. Only holding tight, we are always holding something, controlling something, using too much energy to do something.

So, we don't want to waste our energy by keeping the body tight. So we want to relax our body and use all our energy just to meditate. So if you see a very good player of golf playing, you find that even though he hit the ball very hard, the rest of his body is very relaxed. That's the way to play. So the same idea applies. We sit and meditate. Meditation is what you do with your mind, not with your body. So, the best thing is to let your body relax as much as possible.

Go back again and again and check. So even though we relax our shoulders, after a few minutes, it'll

become tensity. Whenever we put too much energy into do something, it'll become tense. So he taught me to keep my body straight and relaxed. And also breathing. Also he said, breath naturally. When you breath naturally, you breathe in and then you breathe out and you stop for a second, you don't breath in immediately. If you breath in immediately, after a while, you become tired. It becomes stressful. So he said, look at the baby sleeping and see how the baby breathes. Breath in, breath out. Rest and breath in, breath out, rest for one second, about one second, I'm not exactly sure. Maybe one and a half seconds, like that, he said, look at the baby's face when the baby's asleep and try to keep your face like that, very soft and gentle.

So only in the beginning you breathe deeply. After a while, you breathe naturally with ease, going through the whole body. You see whatever you can feel. Be aware of any kind of sensations. So in some cases, I feel, I felt very hot. In some places, I felt tightness. But as much as possible, I tried to keep the whole body very relaxed.

After doing that for a few months, I learned to see everything relaxed. And it was really wonderful. I really enjoyed that. So I want to repeat this again. I did not meditate to become enlightened. I did not begin to meditate, to become enlightened. I did not do that as a religious practice. Because at that time, I was

not religious. I was a very rebellious person. I read many philosophies and many religions and found them contradicting each other. So I thought I wouldn't accept anything. So I did not follow any religious group. I was, never was a religious group. But I meditated. Because I like it. I enjoy it. It makes me very calm and peaceful. So my first motivation was that: it's very enjoyable. Meditation is very enjoyable. So more and more, I enjoy that. And later I meditate twice a day, once in the morning and once in the evening. And at that time I was in university, studying engineering. So I had my own room, very simple. Whenever I have a few minutes, I meditate. Later, I meditate three times a day. Once in the morning, once in about noon, and then once in the evening. Only a few minutes, 15 minutes, 20 minutes. That's the maximum. My maximum was about 20 minutes. And then slowly and slowly it so happened that when I was attending classes, sometimes in between, there was no class for one hour, I don't know what to do. Don't want to go back. I didn't want to go back to my room. It'll take too much time to go and come back. It would waste about 20 minutes or half an hour. So I didn't go back to my room.

I just went and find a quiet place somewhere. In our university, there was a department, called automobile department, not many students there, very quiet. So, I usually went to that place and sat on a cement bench, so to speak. I sat there, just relax and meditate. It was

so nice and then went back to classes.

So, because I enjoy doing that, it came to me naturally. Whenever I have five or 10 minutes, I just want to go back to that state, so relaxing, so peaceful. And even in those days, I had a lot of problems in my life, many, many problems, some financial, some relationship problems. My father was in a very bad relationship with my mother. They don't talk. They didn't talk. Many other problems, too. But no matter what happened, I always go back to meditation. And that helped me see things more clearly.

So I made a few mistakes, but I did not really make very serious mistakes. At first, I thought, this is the only thing that I get from meditation, becoming relaxed and peaceful. And becoming more clear about what's happening in my life and what to do, that meditation, calmness and peacefulness give me some clarity.

But after five or six years, just doing it regularly for 20 minutes, two or three times a day, after five or six years, I noticed that the way I look at the world is changing. My values are changing. Actually, my voice has changed. I didn't notice that. It changed so slowly, so regularly, gradually that at first I did not notice that. But then when, after a while, my friends, they did not change. They were just doing the same thing that they used to do. And I noticed that I cannot do some

of the things that they are doing. I did not enjoy those things anymore, like getting drunk. I cannot enjoy that anymore. I used to get drunk. But later, I didn't want it anymore. I don't want to drink anymore. And I did not want to go to noisy, crowded, crowded places, dusty places anymore. I could not read some of the books anymore. They seem so foolish, meaningless. I don't want to waste time reading junk books. I cannot read newspapers anymore. So gradually things changed.

My mind was becoming more and more going towards spirituality, calmness, peacefulness, deep and meaningful way of life, understanding things very deeply. And then once, when I was very unhappy, I went to a place where I played tennis, tennis court, and there were benches near the tennis court, but nobody was there in the evening. Everybody left. So I went and sat on a bench, looking deep into my mind and my heart to see. I was very unhappy and I was just trying to feel that, unhappy, trying to meditate and relax again. But unhappiness won't go away. It is still there. I was watching that unhappiness and after a few minutes, suddenly I saw that.

Why was I unhappy? You know, I read about these ideas many times in the book, but those were just ideas, just words and ideas, just like a philosophy. But in that moment, I was just looking deep into my heart, into my mind and really feeling it. And I noticed that I was very unhappy because I was afraid that I would

not get what I want. I was afraid that my life will not be a success. I was afraid that, when I was young, I was very ambitious, but I was afraid that I will not get that chance to become somebody that I wanted to become. But there was no opportunity.

But I look deeply into that again and again and found that it doesn't matter. I don't need those things to be really happy. Even though, if I do those things, I'm not really sure that I will really be happy and satisfied. So slowly my mind shift to another mode of seeing life. Do what you can now, do your best now and let whatever happens later. Let it be. Do your best now. That was a very simple insight.

Actually, there's not much you can talk about. But to understand it without thinking has a great impact in your life. And that changed my life again. So my thinking changed. I will do whatever is possible now. I will not worry about the result anymore. Because that's the best I can do. Even though if I sit and worry too much that thing will happen, nothing will really help me.

So just meditating for a few minutes a day, two or three times a day. Slowly and slowly change my way of looking at the whole world, the whole of history, the whole civilization, history of religion, even.

And when I read both history and religion, I can see

the tip of it. And when I read the teachings of the Buddha later, every sentence becomes very, very meaningful. It has layers and layers of meaning, not just words. Just like, for example, everybody knows about this sutta which is: don't associate with fools, not to associate with fools. [Pali words]. Maybe you've heard of it. Yes. So that became very deep and meaningful to me. I was thinking, what does this mean? [Pali words] What does it mean by "fools"?

The translation is very simple, straightforward, not to associate with fools. But what does it mean by a fool? Slowly, slowly I begin to understand: to do something unskillful is foolish. To harm yourself and to harm others is foolish. If you drink, then you're harming yourself. That's very foolish. Not only that, you become a burden to the society, to your family, and also to harm another. It's foolish.

Then slowly, I think about it. Why are people foolish? Why are we foolish? And slowly it appears again. Because we are un-mindful. That's very obvious, isn't it?

Because we are un-mindful, we are foolish. So once we become more mindful, we become less and less foolish. And not only that, once we become too greedy, we become foolish again. Because when the greed is so strong that we lose our own mindfulness, we lose our center, we lose equanimity, we lose clarity. Then,

whoever is greedy is foolish because he will be, he will do something very foolish. And also, whenever you get very angry, you become foolish again. Because you lose your clarity. You lose your balance. You don't know what is right or what is wrong. You just want to go ahead and strike or hit, do something terrible. So I looked very deeply and thought. Yes, when you're angry, you're foolish. So anger makes you foolish, very simple and obvious. Greed, anger and un-mindfulness. And not only that, pride and envy, jealousy. Looking slowly and slowly, understanding very deeply those things make people foolish.

So, Buddha said not to associate with fools, but what to do when I myself is a fool? I can't say "I'm a fool, but I'm not going to associate with the fool". That will be a big joke. So I thought again, well, not to associate with fool has many layers of meaning. It's very important not to associate with somebody who's doing foolish things because he will encourage you or even force you to do those foolish things. And if you are not wise enough to get away, you will think that's a good idea. And you do it. And most younger people do that. But if deep inside you, you are not mindful, you're greedy, you know, you get angry, you lose control, you are conceited, proud, envious, jealous, then you do foolish things. So it is more important not to associate with those things that makes you foolish.

So slowly and slowly, these things become very deep

and meaningful. So whenever I get very greedy, I just take time and relax, look deep into my mind. Ah, I have greed. So just to see greed as something objective gives you freedom. So whenever I get upset, actually I had a very short temper. I get angry very easily. So I get very angry, I look at my anger. This is anger. I've done so many things because I got angry. Said so many things wrong. Hurt so many people. Because I got angry, I couldn't control myself. Gradually, just being mindful and peaceful and relaxed brings these clarity. Slowly and slowly, I see things happening in my body, in my in my life.

And later, I decided to meditate more, and went to a meditation center, a monastery, actually, and took robe and became a monk. That happened later. So it is very important, if you really want to learn something, it is very important to practice it every day. But unless you love doing it, you'll find excuses. But if you really love doing it, you will never find an excuse. Oh, because I'm too tired now, because I'm too busy now, I can't meditate. Maybe tomorrow. You will not see that. No matter how tired I got, I meditate before I go to sleep. Because if I don't meditate, I can't sleep. My mind keeps thinking, thinking, thinking. Actually I waste more time. Just lying in the bed and can't fall asleep.

So, I find out it is more efficient to meditate. You spent 20 minutes or half an hour and you don't waste the time. And actually if you meditate and make your

mind calm and peaceful and go to sleep, you sleep very well, very soundly. And when you wake up in the morning, you feel very refreshed. So I told myself when I wake up in the morning, the first thing I will do is to meditate. So that, I can keep my mood. I can create this peaceful mood early in the morning and try to carry this mood throughout the day, try to keep calm and peaceful.

So, these are very important things. If you want to be a good meditator and if you really want to make it best out of your life, meditate regularly, learn more about meditation. It's very simple, actually. So, here are a few things that I wrote. The practice of an art requires discipline. So, like playing a violin is an art. It is a discipline. And also mindfulness, meditation is an art. So the practice of an art requires discipline. Newcomers and really beginners, remember this and think about it very deeply.

Anything I do only if I'm in the mood, maybe a nice or a music hobby, I shall never become a master of art. So if you really want to do it well, you need a long term program. Although I'm a beginner today, after a the few years I'd become an expert, master. But the problem is not only that of discipline in the practice of the particular art. They're practicing every day a certain amount of hours, but it is not of discipline in one's whole life. So we cannot keep meditation separately from the way we live. This is not possible.

I've expressed this idea before a few times. But I want to repeat this again and again.

Our life is a whole. So this idea of compartmentalization I read about this word, very difficult to pronounce, is very deep and meaningful. We cannot separate meditation from our daily life. If you really want to meditate, then you have to check the way you live your life. What am I doing during the day? If you are doing anything that will disturb your meditation, stop it. So try to arrange your daily life so that it will support your meditation. Even the way you eat, the food you eat is very important. Even if you drink too much coffee, you cannot meditate. It agitates your mind and body. So try to think about it. Without such discipline, however, life becomes shattered, chaotic and lack in concentration. So without discipline we will not have concentration. That concentration is a necessary condition for the mastery of an art. And it is hardly necessary to prove. Anyone who ever tried to learn an art knows this. So like what I told you a few minutes ago, playing violin. I played it every day, many times a day. Sometimes, even before I go to sleep, I went to sleep, I kept my violin near me, near my bed. And in the morning I woke up and just pick up the violin and play the violin. Cause I love it so much. I wanted to do that.

So that's the way you become an expert. Anyone whoever try to learn an art knows this. Yet, even more

than self-discipline, concentration is rare in our culture. We are trying to do too many things at the same time, reading and eating at the same time. That's what I did when I was young. My mother will complain again and again. Stop reading, put that book away, eat. Because I did not want to waste time, so I put everything in one bowl mix and put the spoon there. I'm reading and putting food in my mouth. I did not know what I was eating. So, my mother got very upset. Because she had one idea, which is a beautiful idea. She said, eat your meal respectfully.

That was a very profound advice. Eat your food, eat your meal respectfully. And this is what the Buddha also taught in Pali [Pali]: Train yourself to eat the meal respectfully. In Pali, [Pali] means respectfully.

So mindfully and respectfully. This is a very profound idea. So, since you are a beginner and you want to meditate your whole life, keep this idea in your mind. Very deeply. Do everything respectfully, lovingly. Don't do it because you have to do it. Don't meditate because you have to meditate. You meditate because you love to meditate. Because you enjoy to meditate also. Yes, it's very enjoyable, not a torture really. I believe it is not a torture. So not to do too many things at the same time.

So you have to discipline yourself so that you don't read too much. You don't watch television too much.

You don't travel too much unnecessarily. Even not talking too much. Not eating too much. Very important.

If you simplify your life, that will support your meditation. So do live a voluntarily simple life. Voluntary simplicity is very important. Even today, somebody told me that when she meditates for a while, for a long time, she became more and more simple. And people think she was stupid. Because you don't have to do too many things anymore. You don't want to watch television too much. You don't want to know even all the news. So one person in America told me that when you meditate, you become simple, but you don't become a simpleton. A simpleton means a stupid person. To be simple and to become a simpleton is not the same.

This lack of concentration is clearly shown in our difficulty in being alone with ourselves. Yes, it has become more and more difficult to be alone, quietly sitting, doing nothing. It's very difficult. You become very agitated and anxious. Sometimes we feel guilty. I'm doing nothing. I should be doing something. So one person and they used to say that, don't sit there, do something. But now they say, don't just do something, sit there.

Yes, we are doing too much. To sit still without talking, smoking, reading, drinking is impossible for

most people. Some people can do that, but most people cannot. Another fact is patience. Again, anyone whoever tried to master an art knows that patience is necessary. If you want to achieve anything, be patient. Don't expect too much, too quickly. It takes some time to learn to meditate, to become really peaceful, to become really clear. It takes time.

It took me at first for a few weeks even to experience a couple of minutes of peacefulness and clarity, just a couple of minutes. But that was really great, something I've never experienced before. The mind can become so peaceful and clear, like a diamond, so clear. If one is after quick results, one never learns an art. So don't go after quick results. Tell yourself it will take time. Anything you learn, anything worth doing takes time. Nothing comes cheap.

Yet, for modern men, patience is as difficult to practice as discipline and concentration. If one wants to become a master at any art, one's whole life must be devoted to it. Very important, or at least related to it. So understand that your meditation practice is related to your whole life. After awhile, only in the beginning you sit in a place like this, a special place, in meditation hall and in regular time. It's very important to sit regularly, regular time, in a kind of formal posture sitting like this. But after a while, learn to meditate in any situation, learn to meditate with your eyes open. So that you can just sit in your bus, keep

your eyes open and meditate. Nobody will know that.

So my second teacher told me, meditate everywhere, but don't let anybody know. Very interesting ideas. Meditate everywhere, anywhere, but don't let anybody know. Nobody will know that you're meditating. But they will know that you feel very, you seem very relaxed, peaceful, detached also, sometimes.

So develop meditation so that your whole life becomes meditation. Even talking can become meditation. Actually I practiced to do that. Because I talk so much, spent so many hours talking. And even in the meditation instruction (in Pali), [talinkg in Pali], while talking, do it in mindfulness and clear comprehension. And whenever you do something with mindfulness and clear comprehension, that is meditation. So, Buddha even mentioned that while talking, do that. So, talking meditation. Ever heard of talking meditation? We had the idea that when you meditate, you sit, close your eyes, don't move anymore, don't think, don't talk. That is important too. Actually, that is also important. It doesn't mean that sitting still and not thinking anything, concentrating on one thing is meditation only. This is only meditation.

No, this is also meditation and that is also meditation. So eating meditation, walking meditation. And after a while you can even do reading meditation. One can do that, while reading. He tried his mind, very mindful,

calmed and concentrated. He is trying to watch his mind, also. How his mind is reacting to the ideas from the book? Whether he like it or not, whether he's judging or not. So, whatever we do, if we do it mindfully, we get more out of it. We really learn quite a lot from whatever we do. So, that makes your mind, your life very meaningful and efficient, very meaningful and very efficient. You get a lot of joy doing that. So doing anything half heartedly is such a waste of your energy.

So, once a person becomes an instrument in the practice of the art and must be kept fit. So, your body and your mind, this is the instrument, you must keep it fit. When I play violin, my teacher told me that play a violin so that after a while your violin becomes a part of your body. Really? Because at first I had to hold my violin like this with my chin and hold it like this and play. So difficult. After a while it was so easy, I can play anyway I like. Sometimes I even play with my violin on my shoulder. You can do that. Because it became part of my body. I was not thinking of where to put my fingers. I was not thinking of how to draw my pull. It happened so naturally.

So just to realize that. As you practice your meditation with real wholeheartedly, after a while it becomes your nature. Meditation becomes your nature. Habit is second nature. Everybody heard about that. So if you are really serious about making your life work, if

you're really serious about making your life meaningful and really enjoy your life, this is also important to enjoy your life. So I talk about it last Sunday, I think. The French words I read in a book, a phrase "joie de vivre", joy of living. When you become really mindful and peaceful, then you really enjoy your life. Life becomes really joyful.

Otherwise, life is something we put up with. Life is something that happens to us. So practice regularly and make everything you do part of your practice. Very important, this is. According to this specific function it has to fulfill. So place. First of all, as a beginner, find a place which is very peaceful and clean and simple, like a room like this. It is very clean, very simple and peaceful now, very quiet too. And a group like this is also very important. You get the support from the group and you have a teacher. Regularly, you hear the instructions and you can ask questions. But after a while, meditate alone also, at home. If you have a separate room at home for meditation, very, very good. I know some people even here in Melbourne, who have a small room at home, he actually built that room, extended his house, put a new room just for meditation. It's a very good idea. If you can afford it, it's very good. But if you cannot afford a separate room, find a corner in your house for meditation and meditate regularly in that place. So when you, whenever you go and sit there, your mind becomes ready to meditate and let go of everything else. To

learn to let go is also very important. Next week, I will talk about it more deeply in depth.

Because I have so many things to say that I don't have enough time. I want to give as much information, as much advice as possible. So give me a few more minutes to finish.

So after awhile, meditate anywhere, in a park, anywhere. And later, in a bus, in a car, in a train and in a plane also, if you travel by plane, sometimes.

And posture... First, you sit like this, very relaxed, very dignified posture, actually. But after a while, any posture.

And time... Very important to have a regular schedule. So make a timetable and just sit regularly, whether it's going well or not. Doesn't matter. Just sit regularly. Get it a habit. My teacher once told me. I went to him and complained out: "meditation sometimes it is good and sometimes it is not good". And he said you eat two times a day, every day. And do you feel, do you really enjoy your meal every time you eat? And I said no. Sometimes I eat because I have to eat, it's time to eat. Sometimes I really enjoy the food. Sometimes I just stuff things in(to) my mouth. Be quick, be over with it. And he said, "the same thing". But if you don't meditate regularly, you'll never find a good meditation, experience. Very

important advice.

So if you really want to develop your meditation, practice, meditate regularly, regular time. And meditation method for beginners, especially, the simpler the better. That's the shortest advice. Just breathe in and out. Keep your mind there. And also for a beginner, like I said, if you breathe regularly, it's hard for you to keep your mind there. So, breath a bit deeply. Easier. And after doing that, go through the whole body. Because, as you keep your mind moving over your whole body, it's like you give something to your mind to do. In the beginning, it's something you do. But in the end, meditation is not something you do anymore. Meditation becomes being, not doing.

So, in the beginning, meditation is something you do. In the end, meditation is not something you do. Meditation is what happens naturally. It's a being.

So for method then the advice is: the simpler the better. You don't have to think about anything. You didn't decide anything.

And attitude, that is also very important. Don't expect anything to happen. Don't try to make anything happen. Which means don't try to make your mind become peaceful. Don't do that. Just try to be with breathing and sensations. And when thought comes, just watch your thought very gently. Don't resist it,

don't push it away. Let it come and let it go away. Don't get upset. So, real good experience happens when you don't expect anything. And when the first time when something happens and you feel very happy about it, the next time you try to make it, it will not happen. It becomes harder if you make it.

And another advice is you need a long term program. So, I have many more things to say. But I'm very sorry. I don't have enough time today. Because I want to give you some time to meditate, to really meditate. Next time we meet again, I'll have many things to talk about.

So I want you to come again and again because it is a learning process. One hour is not enough to teach you meditation. Although I can teach you some simple instruction, you need to know something more to meditate.

So, now we will meditate. I'll guide you in the beginning. The first part will just breathe in and out for a few minutes and then we'll go to the whole body, part by part, slowly and slowly, the whole body. And the next (round) time will do the bigger part, not detail. And then the last time, the third time, the whole body at once. So it has three stages.

Sit anyway you like. Just make yourself comfortable. But it's better to keep your back straight. It's easier to

breathe.

If you sit on a chair, if you can, don't lean on the back. Because if you lean on the back, it pushes pressure on your buttock. And after a while, it becomes very painful.

So, keep your hands anyway you like. The only thing is to keep it very relaxed and natural. Don't hold any position. So, you can put your hands on your knees, or you can just keep your hands in your lap. Just leave it there, very gently.

Now, let's breathe in and out mindfully for a few minutes.

Breathe in mindfully, breathe out mindfully, feeling the air, coming in and going out.

Coming in cool. Going out warm.

The mind wandering, thinking.

Just watch the thought. Let (it) go.

Now, pay attention to any sensation. In your forehead. Or on your forehead.

Any kind of sensation. Tightness or tension?

Feel it first, and then slowly let (it) go.

If you're frowning, you can feel it tight there.

Now, your eyes. Just relax your eye lids.

Let go of any control.

Slowly move down to your lips.

Keep it very soft and gentle.

Now your jaw muscles.

Drop your jaw. Feel it becoming more relaxed and peaceful.

Relax your tongue.

Throat. Relax. See if you can feel any tightness there.

On the whole face, relax. Very soft.

Feel the whole face.

Soft and relax. It feels very good to relax.

Now, move your attention to your neck and neck muscle.

Find a suitable position, so that you feel more at ease.

And the face, the throat and the neck, (we can) relax.

You feel very much at ease in your head.

Relax your neck muscle.

If you can keep your face relaxed, it is very easy for you to keep your whole body relaxed.

Now, shoulders. Relax.

Drop your shoulders.

Now, go down your right arm, slowly.

Slowly feel(ing) all the sensations.

And letting go.

To the tips of your fingers.

Slowly. Gently.

Now, your right arm. (It's) Relaxed.

You can see that it feels very different.

It becomes warmer.

It feels different from your left arm. And now do the same thing to your left arm.

Go down your left arm slowly.

Feel all the sensations, movement, tightness, warmth.

Feel your hands becoming warmer. Warm and soft.

If you can keep your face, your shoulders, and your arms... relaxed, you feel very much relaxed.

Feel the relaxation. Thoughts come (into) and go (out of) our mind.

Now, your chest. Pay attention to your chest. Breath in, breath out.

Movement.

Slowly go down, to your tummy.

Your tummy becomes very soft.

Feel the [can't recognize the word]...

Breath in. Breath out.

Now, go down your back.

On your shoulder, slowly and slowly go down.

To your buttock.

Feel anything there. The movement? Hot? Pleasure?
Tightness? And in the end, let go and relax.

Now, go down, slowly.

The right leg, knees, calf, foot

Now, left leg.

Slowly, go deep into the muscles. Feel everything
there.

The knees. Any kinda sensation in your knees?

Maybe tight?

Slowly go down to the calf. And then the foot.

One round finished. Now, the second round.

Go quickly.

The whole face. Pay attention to the whole face, as a
whole. Relax.

Feel any sensation there. Your eye lids may be moving.

And at the cheek, tongue, lips, throat, neck.

Right shoulders, right arm. Let go.

Left shoulders, left arm, chest.

Tummy.

Back. Buttock.

Feel the sensation.

Maybe hot. Maybe pressured. Maybe tingling.

[Can't recognize the word] Vibration.

Right leg.

Feel the whole leg.

Left leg.

Now, feel the whole body as a whole.

In some places, you can feel more sensations.

Face. Shoulders. Arms. Legs. The whole body.

Very peaceful. Very relaxed.

Sometimes, you can feel your mind also. Very peaceful, sometimes.

Feel the peace in this new mind. Even for a few seconds.

Especially face and arms, keep them very gentle.

If your mind gets distracted, go over the whole body again, slowly.

Ting... ting... ting...

I hope you enjoy it.

If you practice regularly, after awhile, it becomes very easy. In a few minutes, your body and mind become very calm and peaceful. And then slowly and slowly become more and more alert. And you can feel very subtle sensations in your body, rising, moving, vibrating.

So I would like you to ask questions. About this meditation. Any questions?

At first tried to pay attention to that being. Because

the important point of meditation is to be aware of whatever is happening at that moment.

So first of all, the attention to the being and see the nature of being. How is it? Is it big or small? Sharp or dull?