

A dirt road winds through a vast, golden field under a bright blue sky with large, fluffy white clouds. The road leads the eye from the bottom center towards the horizon. The overall mood is peaceful and expansive.

MEDITATION WITH VISUALIZATION

Sayadaw U Jotika

Dhamma Talk

Meditation with visualization

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

Words from the transcriber

This dhamma talk was taught by Sayadaw U Jotika on 20-03-1997. In this talk, Sayadaw taught a technique called “psychologically distance yourself”. While it is not a meditation technique, it’s a very useful one to prepare your mind and body right before meditating. And due to that well preparation, your meditation session would be come more of a great one. As always, Sayadaw’s teaching is very simple, easy to understand, yet has many deep meanings that all Vipassana meditators would appreciate and want to learn, I believe. May all the peace be with you!

Việt Hùng

Recorded Audio

Recorded audio can be found here: [https://
viethungnguyen.com/2024/05/10/dhamma-talk-
meditation-with-visualization/](https://viethungnguyen.com/2024/05/10/dhamma-talk-meditation-with-visualization/)

V. 01.00

Meditation with visualization

Welcoming beginners and newcomers. Because it is another day for beginners. Those who come here regularly, get a more complete picture, more ideas about how to meditate, what meditation is. So, I'm glad to see some of you coming regularly. [can't get the words right] because you come regularly. But anyway, those who have come for the first time today, welcome.

Today, I want to talk about a very simple idea, but very important. In fact, simple things are very important in our life. For example, what's the most important food that we eat? Yeah, the most important food that is the most simple for Asians is rice. Just boiled rice in water, just boiled rice. Very simple, but very important. So, that's the way it is. Simple things are the most important in our life. First we get what is important. First, get the bread and then think about butter. But before you have bread, don't think about butter. You can't just eat, fill your stomach with butter. But even though you don't have butter, you can just eat bread. I eat just bread with nothing. Just bread,

just bread. It's good to eat healthy. So, it is meditation also. Simple meditation is very, very important. Complexity. So, I'd like to talk about things that I did when I was a beginner, just to share my knowledge with beginners here, especially those who are younger. How old are you, Damon? 21, quite young. I started meditating when I was about 16. How long have you been meditating? Off and on. How long? 2 or 3 years. You began when you were about 18. You do know some things about me. Just last week I talked about some of my experiences. So, today I would like to tell you some things about my story.

So, when I was a beginner meditating and at that time I was not 16 anymore, I was about 19. I've been meditating for about two years, doing just very simple technique, sitting very relaxed, breathing in very deeply, breathing out very deeply, even keeping my mind as much as possible on the breath, coming into my nostril and going out. And then after a while, when the mind becomes a little bit calm, I went to the whole body, trying to get in touch with the sensations in my body, from my head to my toes to my fingertips, inch by inch, slowly and slowly, going through the whole body over and over again. After a while I can get inside my body. I can feel my heart, my stomach, the diaphragm, even sometimes the bladder also. When it's full, it's very painful. Feel the pressure, the tension so full and tight. Anything that I can feel, any kind of sensation, try to get in touch with my body.

So, actually, the basic meditation is to be in touch with your body and mind. That's what it is. Most of the time we are not in touch with our body and mind. We are out somewhere. Some people say spaced out. We are mostly spaced out, thinking, thinking, thinking, thinking about something. Some people get so lost in thought. When I told them to pay more attention, when I told them, advised them to pay more attention to their body, they say, I can't feel my body. Really, I'm just imagining they really can't feel the body. So, meditation is to become in touch with your body and mind, with sensations, with thoughts, with feelings, emotions, all that. So, one day I'll talk about emotion only just about emotion. Very, very important to understand our emotion. We are carried away. We are drawn by our emotions. So, how many different kinds of emotions can you think of? I've got a list now. I'm trying to write down and I haven't completed my list. When I completed it, I'll talk about it, trying to find suitable words for different emotions. But anyway... So, I was meditating, regularly every day, sometimes at home, sometimes with my teacher in his home. Sometimes, I'll just walk up a hill, where I was born, in the city I was born, there's a hill in front of the city in the eastern part of the city, not far away. From my home, it's just about 20 minutes walk. I can go to the hill and climb a very gentle slope. In those days, there were not many cars, not many houses. Houses were built very far away. Big compounds, big trees, not

very crowded in those days.

So, I used to... About twice a week, I used to go up the hill and go to my favorite place, my special place there. And I talk about it once before, and I'll go and sit there. And from that place I can see the river in the west part of the city. The city where I was born, situated on the mount of the Salween River. It's on the mount, so I can even see the part of the sea from that hill. I look to the west and I can see the sea. And there's a very big island also. It's about seven miles long, an island, big island. So, the scenery was very, is very beautiful, still is. I went there a few years ago. So, I find a nice place to sit. And then I look across the valley. And the valley is the city. And beyond the city is the river, and beyond the river on the other side is a big island, and beyond the island is a sea. So, the scenery is very, very beautiful, very peaceful. And most of the time when I went there, there was nobody there. Very quiet. Once in a while somebody will come for a walk. So, a simple life, a very simple city in those days. So, I went to that place and sat, and meditate. Sometimes, not really meditating, just looking at the scenery, the sun going down and down and down. It's really mesmerizing. I look at the cloud, the cloud changing, the sun, bit by bit going down. You can really see when it touched the water, the sea. You can see it's going down, very fast. So, once I checked the time, how long it takes for the sun to totally disappear. It takes about two minutes from the time that the sun

touched the sea until it disappears. Totally, it takes two minutes. You can see it going down and down. So, I watch it very closely. It's moving down and down and down and down. You really get absorbed in it. So, actually that is also a kind of meditation to get absorbed in something. It's a kind of meditation. So, I just sat there and watched the scenery. And after a while, the mind became to be calm, peaceful. I can feel the wind, the cool breeze. I can hear the birds coming home, sometimes. Nearby there is a pagoda. So, if you have been near pagoda, you know there are many bells on the pagoda. When the wind blows, the bell rings, very beautiful, like the sound, but smaller bell. It tinkles. The wind blows and you can hear different tones of the bell. It's very soothing, very peaceful. So, the mind became very soothing and very peaceful and calm. And because I was so high up on the hill, it's quite big hill, I feel like I'm detached from that noisy city down there. That my city is far away. It has got nothing to do with me anymore. I became a psychologically detached from the city. So, I just sat there. After a while I will close my eyes and then meditate. Sometimes just about half an hour, sometimes about an hour. It depends on the day, the weather. Sometimes on the full moon night, I spend until midnight on the hill with the moon so bright and big. Sometimes the sky very clear, quiet and cool up there. And I can see the city down there. I thought all those people down there, they have so much to worry. Why are they worrying so much? Anxiety, worry,

sadness, anger, frustration. Why is happiness? Are they really happy? I was just sitting there and thinking. So, about twice a week I do that. So, like you here, you come here, some of you come here once a week, some twice, some three times a week.

And I talk about this with my teacher. And I told him that it is so nice to go up the hill and sit there every day, but I can't go there every day. I have no time. Because I was working and also studying. No time to go there every day. I would like to go there. At home, sometimes noisy. People are around, they're talking. So, if I wait until everybody goes to sleep, I have to wait until about midnight. So anyway, I have a room for myself. It's quiet enough. So, when I talk about this with my teacher, my teacher said, when you cannot go up the hill, then you can use a technique to distance yourself psychologically. So, that's the idea, he said. Psychologically distancing and not exactly the exact phrase. You can go away psychologically, he said. So, he said, when you are meditating at home, sit down and just imagine in your mind, going down the stairs to the street and then going toward the mountain, toward the hill. And between our house and the mountain and the hills, there's a big field, very big field. So, I had to go across the field to the hills. So, he said, imagine yourself taking each step, going, going, going, and then cross the field and then climb the hill. Go to your favorite place in your imagination. Take your time. Feel everything around, see the trees, feel

the air, hear the birds. And then, when you get there, sit down and meditate. So, he taught me this idea.

So, at first I thought, well, it won't really work. It won't be the same. And yes, it won't be the same. It's quite different. But, when I do it with real interest, I find out that as I imagine myself going up the hill, I feel myself distancing from the city. You get the feeling of it, psychologically, you are going away from the city. And when I got to my place and sat down there, I felt more peaceful. Then later, my teacher told me more ideas. He said, you don't have to go to the real place that you went. You can even prepare your mind, imagine a better place. So, this way of imagining yourself going away, in itself, is not meditation. So, I want to make this point very clear, in itself, it is not meditation. But it is a very good preparation for meditation. Even before you meditate, if you imagine of going away, the mind becomes calmer and calmer. You feel detached from your worries and cares. So, my teacher gave me a short instruction. But I have the habit of making things more, more detailed, more interesting. So, he gave me a very clear and short instruction. He said imagine yourself going away from the city, crossing a field and the road, going through the field. It is straight, not a big road. Not a busy road. I mean, not any cars going there so that you don't have to be disturbed. You won't be disturbed. No cars going there. It's not a road for a car. It's only a very narrow road. So, imagine yourself going through the

field on that road. And then you come to a small hill and you climb the small hill slowly. There are trees there, and as you go across the field, you see many kind of vegetations, wildflowers, many kind of smell, maybe some crops growing there, any kind of crop. And then as you climb the hill, you get higher and higher. And if you look back, you can see the city far away, but you don't hear the noise. You are quite far away from the city. And then the road on the hill goes round and round. It's a winding road. So, sometimes you see the city, sometimes you don't. And then you come to a stream. There's a small spring where the water gushing out from the rocks. So, you can see the water coming out, wash your hands and wash your face. So, he said, everything has symbolic meaning. And this is very important. Everything has symbolic meaning. Everything around here also has symbolic meaning. So, everything in this world has a hidden meaning.

So, wash yourself. And the water is pure, cool and clear. You can take a drink if you want, if you are thirsty. And then cross the little stream and go. And he said, as you go, you will find a tunnel through the hill. And the tunnel also is a straight tunnel. It's very clean, very neat inside. And from this end of the tunnel you can see another end of the tunnel. You can see the light on the other end of the tunnel and you can see some trees, landscape also. And you go through the tunnel. And when you get to another side of the hill,

you are totally away from the city. The only thing that is connecting you and the city is the tunnel. And then you go there and find a nice place, maybe a small hall like this, but with glass walls, double glass walls and the roof also transparent. Maybe plastic, maybe glass, but very simple. And you open the door, go inside. There might be some other people sitting there meditating. Your friends, maybe your teacher. Take your seat. Sit down. And inside that hall, it is perfectly quiet. So, he gave me a very simple instruction like that. And he said, do that again and again. As you get used to doing it, after a few days when you do that, as soon as you get into that hall, your mind become totally calm already.

So, I did that as much as possible I mean. Sometimes, I did it very slowly, getting all the details, seeing, feeling, hearing, all the details. And the more I do it slowly, the better result I get. If I do it in a hurry, this being in a hurry makes the mind agitated. So, if you want to get good results from meditation, don't be in a hurry. Sometimes, the preparation takes about ten minutes. It's not wasted. Because after that you sit and meditate, you have prepared your mind so well that you are really ready to meditate. Otherwise, although your body is there sitting and meditating, you are trying to meditate, your mind is not ready. So, have you noticed that? Your body is ready to meditate, I mean, you are sitting there, cross-legged like this, but your mind is not ready. So, it is very important to get

your mind ready to meditate. Very important to prepare for everything. So, preparation is very, very important. If you do something without preparing, you won't get the result. Just like going and sitting for an exam, if you haven't studied and prepare for that, you won't be able to answer the questions. So, whatever you do, prepare yourself psychologically. This is very important.

Right, right. First, we learn to meditate while we are in a place like this. A very special place and in a special posture. And try to learn, to do that very well. After a while, we learn to be mindful wherever we are. We can tune into that state, wherever we are. It takes some time to do that, so be very, very patient. For me now, it's very simple. If I want to meditate, I just sit and suddenly I can switch to another state. So, in a way, I am living in two different worlds. Another world where I live, there is no money, no comparison, no job, no competition, no worries, no cares. And you are not a man or a woman. You are neither young nor old. All that disappears. All that concepts disappears. So, it's a matter of practicing and getting used to doing it. Tremendous freedom there. So, first you learn to do that in a special place very well. Then after a while, you can tune into that any time you like. Even when you are driving a car, you can just tune into meditative mode. But on the road it's very important to be alert. Otherwise, you get into an accident. So very important to be alert. Right? Yes. You can use that to

keep alert.

Music. Right here. I mean, when you're listening to the radio.

Very difficult because you get involved. Only when you become a very good meditator, then you can do that. And when you become completely mindful, you don't hear music anymore. You only hear sound. But after you get used to meditating, you can adjust your mind, like you adjust frequencies. You can adjust your mind to different frequencies. You enjoy something or you don't enjoy something. You can do that. And sometimes, even though you enjoy something, you are not attached to that. And that's the kind of freedom: Enjoying without being attached to it, without being greedy. Like, say looking at a beautiful sunset. I do that quite often. I enjoy that very much, but I am not attached to that.

So, today also, I would like you to try the technique and some other teachers in Burma also did that. One teacher before he gave a dharma talk... He passed away a few years ago. So, before he gave a dhamma talk, he won't just sit down and start giving a dhamma talk. First, he explained the scenery. He will say, well, once the Buddha was living there and he will explain the city, the population, even how much population there was and where this monastery, the Buddha stayed, was situated. How far away? So he explained

the situation, the scenery very well. And then where the Buddha was and what time it was. Sometimes it was full moon night and he will explain the whole thing. It was full moon night, and the Buddha was there, and about 400 or 500 monks around. And then somebody came and he will explain the whole scenery. Because he said, when you are in the right mood, then you understand the right thing. When you are not in the right mood, even though you hear the right thing, you don't understand it. So, our mood is very important. When we are in a calm and peaceful and receptive mood, then we understand very deeply. We can go beyond words, beyond concepts. So, to prepare our mood is very, very important. So, very skillful teachers in Burma prepare the mood of their students, the listeners. So, you yourself can do that for yourself. Prepare your mood first. When your mood is ready, then it is very simple, natural.

So, now we will try to do that. And I do that quite often, almost every day. Before I meditate, I will just sit and imagine myself going away. Even in my room here, I'll imagine myself going to Dandenong. It's very peaceful, but I made the distance very small. Not an hour to go there. In one minute, I'll be near Dandenong and climbing the mountain in my imagination. I went there once and walk there very early in the morning. I arrived there before 7:00, quite dark, not sunrise yet. And I walked there very early in the morning and heard the birds. It was very cool,

even cold for me, very quiet and cold there. I can hear the wind going through the trees. And I stayed there for a while. I came back at about 10:30 here. So, even here I imagined myself going to Dandenong to meditate. When my mind feels like I was there, then the mind becomes very calm and peaceful.

So, now we will prepare our mood and try to understand this and do it again and again. It needs a few times to get used to doing it. And when you do that, do it with deep interest. Feel the air, feel yourself walking and listen to the sound also. And sometimes in the forest you can get the forest smell, the green smell. Even try to smell that also. Maybe sometimes you get a smoke, smell of smoke sometimes. And after you get to a place like that... So, my teacher said, everything that you go through the way has symbolic meaning. So, you go through a field, a very open space, and there is a road going through the space. The field is a narrow road, very quiet, straight. So, he even said that it must be straight. You get a different feeling when the road is straight. Because it's in the field, you go straight. And then when you climb the hill, then the road goes winding, winding. Then you get higher and higher and higher, and then you come to a place where there is water crashing out and you can wash yourself. And he said, that is also symbolic meaning. You wash yourself, you clean yourself, symbolically cleaning your body and mind, and then go through a tunnel in your imagination. And this tunnel also, he said

symbolically, it's like dying, dying to another world which is a better world. You can look through the tunnel. It's another world on the other side of the tunnel. Go through the tunnel on that side. There's no money anymore. No job, no position, no worries, no cares, no responsibility. You are neither young nor old. And man or woman doesn't matter. White or brown doesn't matter. All that concepts are gone. You are just there to meditate, to become calm and peaceful and free. So, all these things have symbolic significance and it affects your mind. Because it is symbolic, we should not think that it is meaningless. Because everything we imagine has tremendous power.

So, I think I've got something here. We become what we contemplate. So, when we contemplate, when we think about something very deeply, we become that. So, one teacher said he was very interested in reflecting on the qualities of the Buddha. And he spent all the time, almost all the time, meditating on the qualities of the Buddha. After a few years, he took a few years to do that. After a few years, he became very, very calm and peaceful. His mind becomes very pure, just like the purity of the Buddha. Almost, not really actually, but become very calm and peaceful and pure. So, we become what we contemplate. If you think about something that makes you angry, you become angry. So, angry thoughts makes you angry. If you think about somebody you hate, you feel hatred. You become that actually. If you think about

somebody loving, you feel love. Somebody, somebody, lovely or lovely, love. I don't know the exact word. Somebody you love, your teacher, somebody peaceful, compassionate. So, whatever you think, very deeply, you develop that quality.

So, talking to you right now, another image came into my mind. Images are very, very important. I have read a story by Nathaniel Hawthorne when I was very young, and the story is called the Stone Face. And in that village there is a stone mountain. But in the evening, the sunset reflects an image, shades and light, makes the mountain look like a face of an old man. Very old, wise man. And the villagers, they liked that very much. And they say someday a wise man will come who looks like that stone face. So, there was a man in that village, in the evening, he will just sit there and look at the stone face, becoming more and more like human face, very calm and very dignified. So, he was also thinking of waiting for this old man to come. So, as he grows older and older, one day he was just sitting there and looking at the stone face, very calm and peaceful and wise. Many villagers around suddenly saw that he looks like the stone face.

So, this is a symbolic story, which means that when you contemplate on somebody's calm and peaceful, free, dignified, long enough, you develop those qualities. So, whatever we keep in our mind, long enough, we become that. And try to understand this

very deeply. I did that since I was very young. Since I was young, I have in my imagination a quiet place, a simple hut, and I was living there, living a very simple life, reading deep and meaningful books, meditating. And that's what I'm doing now in Burma, a very simple and quiet place, and reading deep and meaningful books and meditating most of the time. So, what you think very deeply, that's what you become. This is very important. Our thoughts define our universe. Our thoughts define our universe.

Most of us have too many thoughts, too many conflicting thoughts. So, in most cases, they just cause a lot of confusion. But if we can, screen some of our thoughts and let only wholesome and good thoughts come into our mind. If we can keep our mind on that sort of thoughts, we will become that kind of person. The mind has tremendous power, but most of us are not training our mind, training ourselves systematically. So, our energy is dissipated. It is chaos in our mind most of the time. Thinking too many things. Seeing too many things. Hearing too many things. So, if you really want to develop your highest qualities, spiritual qualities, you need some sort of screening process. Without doing that, you cannot develop those things. Because a lot of things coming into your head, they just cancel out.

So, I think I have another piece of paper here. I try to write my sentence, but I'm not sure if I got it right.

You have one and only central need in your life. What would that be? You have a very strong yearning for something, very strong yearning in your life. What could that be? Generally, be happy, yes. But what will make you happy? That's a good question. If you answer a question and then ask another question slowly and slowly, you will get deeper and deeper. What do you think will make you happy? This one is what will make you peaceful? How will you become peaceful?

Meditation. Mm.hmm.

Right? Right. So, ask more and more questions. You'll get closer and closer. It's very important. So, you have one and only central yearning in your life, very deep yearning. All of us have this yearning. Sometimes, we don't really know what it is. I want something, I want something, looking for something. And that is to become the best that you can. Very simple, to become the best human being that you can, to realize the best of your potentials. That is what we want, really, very deeply.

[Skip a short conversation between Sayadaw and someone in the hall]

That's okay. Actually, Buddha taught to meditate in all four postures: standing, walking, sitting, lying down. And I'll give you more information in brief. Buddha

even mentioned meditating in the toilet. Really... So, no matter where you are, if you are mindful, you are meditating. So, adapt yourself to your condition, to your situation. Adaptability is very important.

So, let's try that now and see how it affects you. It's up to you. You can now sit very relaxed in meditation posture and let your eyes become closed down. But don't try to keep it tightly shut. Just let it close. You look at the Buddha image. Anybody meditating and becoming very quiet and peaceful and relaxed, the eye close down naturally, but it stays a little bit open. This is natural. So, psychologically distancing now, we will try to do that. Try if you can do that. Especially younger people are more interested and they can do it more. They can imagine more.

So, now close your eyes and imagine yourself going away from the city.

Slowly and slowly walking away.

Taking easy steps. Not in a hurry.

Slowly and slowly going away. Now, you have come near the field, open space. There's a road going through the field. Take that road. Slowly walk across that field.

Feel yourself going away from the noisy city. All your

worries, all your cares, job.

As you cross the field, see if you can imagine, feeling the breeze, the cool breeze. Maybe there are birds also. Imagine yourself hearing the birds. The more you can feel it, the more effective it becomes.

Now, you are getting closer to the hill.

You have left the city far behind. Closer to the hill. And go up the hill slowly.

Winding path. Go up the hill.

There are trees there, rocks there. Going up higher and higher.

Very soon you will come to the waterhole, the spring. The water coming out from the crack stone. Very clear, pure water.

You can wash your hands and face.

You can take a drink once you're thirsty. Cool yourself.

In this little stream there, you cross the stream.

It's becoming more and more quiet.

Very soon you will come to the tunnel.

Now, you are at the opening of the tunnel. Look through the tunnel to the other side, you can see the light on the other side. You can even see the trees.

Now, slowly go into the tunnel. This is a very important symbolic meaning. It's like a new rebirth. Going through the tunnel. It's dim in the tunnel. Cold and very quiet.

Slowly getting to the other side of the tunnel. Now... Now you're on the other side of the tunnel. And that is a totally new world. Everything you've left behind, all the worries, all the anxieties, all the job, all the relationships.

Slowly walk on the winding road. Very quiet and peaceful day.

Going higher up now.

You've come to the meditation hall with glass walls. Very simple hall.

Now, you've come to the door of the meditation hall. Sliding door. Gently push open the door. Imagine yourself touching the door. Pushing it. Going in. And close the door gently. Inside, it is perfectly quiet. Very cool. Very peaceful. There are your friends there.

Take your posture. Very, very relaxed. Now, you are really ready to meditate. You have left everything behind. Now, you are ready to meditate.

Breathe in deeply. Breathe out deeply. Pay attention to the air coming into your nostrils. It's a bit cool. Going out, warm, touching gently. Breathe in, breathe out without effort. Every time you breathe in and then breathe out, you become more relaxed and peaceful.

Thoughts will come. Let them come and let them go. Don't take them seriously, but just notice... "Thinking". And then come back to breathing.

Keep your face very relaxed, your forehead relaxed. Eyes, relaxed. Cheek and jaw, very soft and relaxed. The lips and tongue, let go and relax.

Feel any kind of sensation... In your face, warm and soft, the lips touching each other, vibrating.

Relax your shoulders. Just drop them.

Slowly relax your right arm. Go down your right arm. Slowly feel all the sensations. It might be hot, warm, cold, movement.

Slowly down to your fingertips. Relax your fingers. It is very important to relax your fingers.

Right shoulder now, right arm, right hand. Slowly feel the sensations and just let go and relax.

Breathe in, Breathe out. Peaceful and relaxed.

Pay attention to your chest. Do you feel tightness there? Feel it and let go.

Slowly go down, to your diaphragm, if you know where it is.

Or your tummy. Relax your tummy. Any kind of sensation there, tightness, pain, movement, warm, cold,... Feel the sensations.

Relax your back.

And then slowly down your right leg.

Feel the tightness. Any kind of pain, any kind of sensation.

When you finish your right leg, now to your left leg. If you can, go deep into your muscles.

Try to see and feel the whole body relaxed, as much as possible.

Breathing... in... out...

Thoughts will come. Let them come, let them go. It's okay. Just take notice... "Thinking".

Go through the whole body. Keep your mind occupied.

Relax your face ... shoulders... arms... chest... tummy... the back... legs.

Keep your fingers relaxed and eyes relaxed. Those are the two most important parts to be relaxed.

Right now, nothing is important. Just to be in touch with your body and mind. That's the most important thing now. Thoughts come and go. They just come and go, arising and passing away.

Sensations, all over the body. They're just sensations. Natural phenomenon. Arising and passing away.

Just watching without getting involved. Just watching without reacting. Breathe in and out. Pay attention to your breath.

If your mind wanders away, gently notice that and bring it back. Very gently, without getting upset.

Now, for a few minutes, we will think of loving kindness.

All of us are here to meditate. We have the same values. We feel close to each other. We are here to support each other.

Just by being here, we are supporting each other. How nice to be on the same path, to be doing the same thing.

In your own way and in your own words, just think of some kind thoughts to yourself, for yourself and for others.

Like wanting to be happy, peaceful, loving, lovable.

In your own way, in your own words, think of those kind thoughts for everybody. Do it your own way.

If you have no fear of anything, if you are not afraid of anybody or any situation, if you are loving and compassionate, if you are a peaceful person, how would you relate to others?

Imagine yourself a person who is fearless, not afraid of anybody, not afraid of any situation, imagine yourself a very loving person, a very compassionate person, a peaceful person, a person whose heart is free. Just imagine that... If you are that sort of person, how would you relate to others?

When we are peaceful, then we become loving.

Still to become a really loving person, first, we must become a peaceful person.

When we feel okay about ourself, then we feel okay about others. When we can really love ourselves just as the way we are now, then we can be loving towards others, just as the way they are, no condition.

Deep inside, we have very beautiful spiritual qualities.

Deep inside, all of us are beautiful and loving and also lovable.

We might have done something wrong.

Others might have done something wrong.

Never mind. Forgive yourself. Forgive everybody. There is no other way. No other way is better than that. To be forgiving and to be loving is the best we can do for each other.

So, here we are together. We appreciate each other. We support each other. Everybody is okay.

Most of us are carrying so much guilt and sadness, so much anger. Just let go of all that. It doesn't pay to carry anger and frustration and guilt.

Please understand we become what we contemplate.

So, contemplate yourself as a peaceful, mindful, loving, forgiving, understanding person.

You are a loving, understanding, forgiving, peaceful and a mindful person.

The more you keep that in your mind, the more you become that.

So, be mindful and become more peaceful, more loving, more forgiving, more understanding, more accepting.

Imagine yourself stretching your arms wide open in this gesture of opening yourself and accepting.

We are so scared of being hurt and we've been hurt also so many times. That we closed our heart. We won't let anybody touch us. That makes us feel very lonely. It's okay to be hurt. Forgive. Open.

If you feel any emotion, thinking, these thoughts, be mindful of that thought, that emotion.

Very cheerful bell ringing. This little bell is so cheerful.

Now, I would like you to ask any questions that you have. After eating... It is not a good idea means you should meditate. Is that what you mean? I mean, it's not the best time...

[Skip a few sentences here]

So, I would like to explain a little bit more. Formal meditation and informal meditation, two types of meditation. So, when we come here and sit and meditate, this is formal meditation in a special place, in a special posture. And we have a special object of meditation, like breathing and sensation in the body. So, this is formal, very formal. And for the rest of the time, we should pay attention to whatever is happening, and that is informal meditation. So, if you put the two together, time for meditation is from the time you wake up in the morning and go to sleep in the night. Full time meditation actually. Let me give you some detail from the Teaching of the Buddha, straight from the text. So, Buddha said, gate *ṭhite nisinne sampajānakārī hoti*. Gate means walking, *ṭhite* means while standing, *nisinne* means while sitting, be mindful, pay attention. And *sutte* means lying down, sleeping. And *jāgarite* means waking up still lying down, the position is still lying down, but your mind is awake. At that moment also, that time also. So, lying down before you go to sleep, be mindful and pay attention to your body.

[Skip a few sentences here]

Yes, let me give you more idea. You'll be even more surprised. Let me give you more ideas. So, you see, walking, standing, sitting, lying down before you go to sleep and waking up but still lying down position, you meditate. As soon as you wake up in the morning, you know that awake. Because before you awake you don't know anything. You are not in touch with your body. You are not touch with your surrounding. So, as soon as you wake up, you know you are in touch with your body. You feel cold or you feel stiff, or you hear some sound, or you might be thinking about something, so immediately become aware of that. So, just knowing what is happening that is meditation. And asite means eating, eating meditation and pīte means drinking, drinking juice, drinking coffee. So, eating bread, eating fruits, any other thing and drinking juice, drinking coffee, drinking water. So, whenever you are drinking, if you pay attention, reaching for the food, putting your mouth, you know the taste. You know the smell. You chew it, swallow it. That's meditation. So, you have a lot of time to meditate. Who tells you that you don't have time? You have a lot of time to meditate, see. So, while you are walking on the street, yes, the roads here are pretty big, wide, nice to walk. You can do that.

[Skip a few sentences here]

Yes, sometimes it's very good. Sometimes, there are a lot of cars and people. But never mind. You have your own way to go, to walk. So, wherever you go, whatever you do, if you pay attention, that's meditation. You are not lost in thought. You are not thinking about the past. You are not thinking about the future. You are right here and now. So, to be here and now, to be in touch with your body and mind? Yes.

How can you slow your pulse rate and, slow your heartbeat down and blood pressure through meditation. Particularly when you're not formally doing it. I mean, does that does that work when you say...

It works indirectly. So, in meditation practice, especially in vipassana mindfulness practice, we don't try to get anything. All we try to do is to be in touch with what is. So, this idea is very, very basic and simple and very important. So, let me ask you what makes your blood pressure goes up and what makes your pulse goes up? It's your emotion. Whenever you get excited, anxiety, worry or even when you get happy, your blood pressure goes up. So, it's your emotion. Whenever you get in touch with the present moment, whatever is happening right now, you don't get emotional. You become calm and peaceful. And so indirectly, that calm and peace brings your blood pressure pulse down. It works indirectly and it has

many other therapeutic effect too. People can even cure cancer. And even in Burma, some people do actually, not all, I mean. Some people do cure cancer. One person I know. She had cancer in her throat, very difficult to operate. So, the doctor said 50/50 chance. If we operate, you might survive. We don't know exactly. So, this person went away to the meditation center and meditated. She said, "I'll just try meditating". She even said, "I come here to die, but I want to die meditating". And she didn't die. That the tumor disappeared without operating.

How long was she meditating for?

I don't know exactly, but she's been meditating since then, until now. Because she got so happy meditating. Now she worked for the meditation center and she stayed in the meditation center and meditating all the time, helping other meditators. Some people cured cancer even from meditation. So, this mind, which becomes very calm and peaceful, has tremendous power. Many people have cured many kinds of diseases, not just one. But the important point is that we don't try to do that. That is important point.

[Skip a few sentences here]

For the beginners, if the person can sit, it's good to sit in a very relaxed posture. If a person cannot sit like this straight, this person can sit in a chair, comfortable

chair. And first, concentrate on breathing, to calm down as much as possible. You don't get 100% quiet mind, but relatively it becomes calm and quiet. After that, relax the whole body. This relaxation response has a tremendous therapeutic effect. Even here in Melbourne, they have many organizations and centers where they teach meditation for people who are sick, terminally ill. One person I have read about, Alfred gave me the pamphlets. It's Gawler Foundation. Yes, they teach meditation there to cure cancer. So, there are many meditation groups here, even in Melbourne teaching that. And in America also there are many groups there. And some of the teachers are my friends and some of them are my students. And many other groups there. I've read a few books written by those teachers. One book is called "Full Catastrophe Living". It's a very wonderful book. If you can find a copy, please read it. Very deep and meaningful. Very useful book. I like it very much, I recommend it. It's good for health also, and it is also good for developing higher insights because in that book this person emphasizes anattā very deeply. Because we take everything as our self, our body, even our sickness. This is my body and this sickness is mine. Even my body is sick. But when we can see that as just a natural phenomenon, we can become detached. And this detachment, it has a kind of peacefulness, unconcerned. That is very important. Because this concern and worry just make the problem worse. It doesn't help. So, when a person becomes less

concerned and less worry and just concentrate the mental energy to help the body, the body can heal very quickly. The body has healing power. It has inner healing power. In many ways, we are disrupting or interrupting the natural process, because of thinking, negative thinking. So, if we can just stop thinking and meditate and become calm and quiet, and if we can just get ourselves out of the way, things will take care of itself. So, just get out of the way. Get yourself out of the way. So, in this book, Full Catastrophe Living, the title sounds very terrible, frightening, but the subtitle is "Using the Wisdom of Your Body and Mind to... To what? I don't know exactly. To overcome pain, illness and stress. I don't know exactly the word I forgot. But generally, this is what it means: Using the wisdom of your body and mind.

And another book I have read written by another American specialist. The author's name is Paul Pearsall. And the title of the book is "Super Immunity". You can develop super immunity by meditating. Not just normal immunity, super immunity meditating. So, this person works in a big hospital in Los Angeles, and he has a meditation program structured very well. And in the hospital they have in-house television, and the patient can switch on the program and stay in the bed watching the television program where the teacher is giving instruction. And most of the time the teacher himself is meditating. The patients can see the teacher, they're meditating, saying

nothing, give very simple instruction and advise the patient to meditate. And the patient, they're lying in the bed, meditating and the teacher on the television screen meditating. And they also have cassette tapes. And this person found out that those patients who meditate got better, faster with less medicine, complain less, many, many benefits due to it. So, skillfully, if you know how to use meditation, it can help your life in many different ways. It can help you become healthier, happier, sleep better, eat better even, and relationships also. Even in your relationship, in your work... I know many musicians who are meditators and know many painters who are meditators. They meditate and then they play music, they meditate and they paint. I know many doctors who are meditators. They said when they meditate and become very calm and peaceful, intuitively they understand the patient. They can give proper treatment. Even the way they talk and relate with the patient has the healing power, therapeutic effect. They can really understand the patient. And the patient feels that this doctor really knows me. This is very important. These days, people are becoming so impersonal that the doctor is not looking at the patient anymore. The doctor is looking at the disease only. So, the patient feels that no, he doesn't know me.

So, this meditative mind has healing power. And in some cases, I know... I know some meditation teachers and most of my teachers are wise and old

monks. I brought one book here. That teacher passed away when he was 104 years old. And he has a picture when he was 100 years old. And he wrote a book named “”. And many other teachers too. My preceptor pass away when he was 90. So, these teachers, their mind is so calm and peaceful, and they have so much love and compassion that it radiates. You can feel it when you go near him. And many people said that the moment they came into the monastery, they feel calm and peaceful. Many people with mental problems, a lot of anxiety, many kinds of neurosis, they told me that as soon as they come near the teacher, all the symptoms disappears. They feel very secure and peaceful. They feel accepted just the way they are. Many people told me. My teacher, one of my teachers, he didn't speak English, not a word. He couldn't speak English. Many people came to him. So, I asked them, why did you come here? You don't understand what my teacher's talks. And I was the one who translated for them mostly.

Sometimes, people come and say, “I want to go and see the teacher”. I told them that the teacher is very old and he's quite busy during the day. Now, he's resting. So please wait for a while. Give him a rest. He needs a rest. He has so many people coming to see him. Sometimes, he's very tired. A human being gets tired, no matter how good a meditator he is. The body needs a rest. But sometimes people say that, “I have to go. But I just want to be near the teacher for a while,

for a few minutes. I won't say anything. I won't ask any question. I just want to be near the teacher". So at last I couldn't refuse. I couldn't say anything anymore. So, I went and asked my teacher. Some people came here and they just want to be near you. They won't ask you any question. You don't have to say anything. And so, being such a loving and compassionate teacher, he said, let them come. Even when he was really sick, sometimes he let people come. Even my teacher got sick sometimes. Even Buddha got sick sometimes. So, people came and sat near my teacher. He never sleeps in the bed. He never slept in the bed. He sits in the chair and sleeps in the chair all his life, no bed. So, he was there, sitting in his chair, meditating, very calm and very peaceful and very relaxed too. You can see his fingers, as if he's got no muscles, always very relaxed. Even his tone of voice, never heard any tension in his sound, in his voice. Never saw him become tense or anxious. Never saw him angry. So, people came near him and just sat there. After ten minutes, he said, "Thank you very much". They pay respect and they left. I asked them, why? Why did you come and do that? I was just very curious. They said just being near him has a tremendous healing power. They feel much better. So, this is really true. When you go near a very peaceful and loving person, you feel very secure. And that security, that love and peace heals your sickness. So, just by being a loving and peaceful person, you are doing quite a lot for people. If you cannot do anything

else, just try to be a loving and peaceful person. You don't even have to say any word. You don't have to pay anything, get anything. Just by being a peaceful and loving person. So, if you can use meditation skillfully, it can affect your life in many, many ways. It helps in your studies too, if you know how to use it. You are still studying. I did that before when I was in university studying engineering. Before I study a difficult theory or anything difficult, I meditate for a few minutes, five minutes, ten minutes and then I study and in between my studies also, I take a break, meditate, and then study.