



A Guide to Business Meditation

By

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Self-Worth and Meditation

The practice of meditation is an effective tool in elevating self-worth. It slows down your thinking so you can catch the negative language, images, and emotions that are at the root of self-worth problems. Meditation is brain training, and offers a way out of the never-ending chatter that erodes your confidence and motivation. In business, it is hugely effective and delivers benefits that go well beyond our initial desires of money and advancement.

For me, meditation is a boat that floats on the surface of my busy life. Instead of splashing in the chaotic waters of other people's drama, I see clearly what I wish to accomplish and, most days, am able to navigate the rapids with ease. However, that's not how my practice started.

Yoga Poses and Mystic Chanting

My biggest obstacles to meditation were embarrassment and contempt. First, my mind slammed shut at the thought of meditating in yoga pants while holding a wooden Buddha. I'm not a Buddhist nor do I have any desire to be. I suffered from low self-worth and I felt the practice could help. Second, I believed the business world would not embrace meditation as something desirable. I feared you finding out and laughing at me (which is another self-worth issue). No one ever talked about it let alone make an attempt to educate the business community.

Finally, the road to a calm mind seemed to exclude advancement and success. Recently, I posted a short audio program on a popular meditation-sharing app. Many hardcore meditators reacted negatively to my statements of wealth and business success. However, a few latched onto it quickly. There is a small but growing group of people wanting to know how to build a calm, successful life while having financial security and a thriving career.

A Simple Guide to Business Meditation

This guide is a meditation primer based on my experience. I've tried on a lot of robes and sandals over the years and have assembled this outline so you can discover what works for you. In the end, the goal is to slow down your thinking so you can identify the negative thoughts that affect self-worth and stand in the way of your goals.

Self-worth is not always evenly distributed in your psyche – you may have high self-worth as it relates to raising kids while issues of money and career may be difficult and challenging. Each person is different and only you know what areas you'll want to elevate. Meditation gives you a tool to catch your thinking before you sabotage an opportunity. For me, I've done more damage to my career by reacting, instead of responding.

Getting Going

You don't have to consume any religious or spiritual philosophy. This guide is strictly practical, and intended to be an exercise in training your mind to slow down so you can improve your life. If you want to learn more regarding spiritual practices, fantastic but it is not necessary to receiving the benefits of mediation.

When I started meditating, I was able to get a few days in, maybe even a week, and then I'd fall off the practice. At one point, I amassed a couple weeks of consistent meditation, with each session lasting upward of twenty minutes. However, I could never keep it up. Fixing my resolve, I'd go to a retreat and commit to improving my practice. I'm good at the forty-yard dash, but I could never run the marathon.

I knew the development of a consistent meditation practice was important. Every book I read about self-improvement and the attainment of happiness suggested meditation. I wanted to slow down my thinking and train my thoughts. I considered it a high priority but had little success. It was really frustrating and it fed my limited self-worth language.

"I can't meditate" is the repeated mantra of lower self-worth and suggests that I am broken and flawed. When I did meditate, I received the benefits and physically felt better. Yet, every time I got momentum I'd stop.

"Why do I quit?" I'd ask myself. Why do I avoid meditating when it pays such high dividends? The rationalization, the resistance, and the justification seemed to be in every cell of my body, telling me, "You can let meditation slide – you don't need it." I lacked the muscle to keep going.

Then one day, it hit me. I decided to meditate on my own terms. Instead of following 3,000 year old, highly prescriptive practices, I decided to float down my own river into uncharted waters. I'd make meditation work under my conditions. Like riding a bicycle for the first time, I needed to get up on two wheels first. Once I was rolling, I'd look to others for fine-tuning.

It worked and I'm sharing my primer with you. The following is the guide I wrote for myself and appears in my book *The Bug in Our Brain*. I hope it helps you find peace in a busy life.

The Act of Meditating

There are numerous forms of meditation, each with their own particular stated benefits and purposes. I've outlined the basics for the purposes of a starter. You'll need to take the action and deepen your practice by means that align with your beliefs, customs, and intentions.

My experience with meditation started with a weekly group that met on Thursday mornings. Each week, a volunteer would lead the session. This gave the leader a chance to learn a practice and teach the practice to the group. From this foundation, I learned how to meditate and bring the practice into my life. More importantly, I took the best of the practices and assembled them into something that worked for me.

This primer demystifies meditation and removes the cultural and religious overtones that tend to keep people away from the practice.

1. **Showing Up**—The number one requirement of meditation is making the attempt to meditate. Showing up is the first rule of meditation. Making a commitment to meditate every day is critical; even if it's to do one minute in the morning, we must do one minute every day. Remember, routine and repetition are your friends. Your brain's Routine Engine will come to expect the peace of meditation every day. Once the subconscious mind is addicted to its daily break, you'll parlay the winnings into all areas of your life. Showing up is the most important part of meditation.
2. **Location**—Find a safe, quiet spot indoors where you will not be interrupted. For me, it is my office at home. I started in the bathroom, on the closed toilet seat. Yes, I know, not very elegant but it served the purpose and got me uninterrupted time to start the practice. I know many people who use the driver's seat of their car. It's quiet, safe and protected. A safe, quiet space is critical.

Regarding meditating outdoors, I do not suggest starting the practice outside. You want the emotional security of a safe environment. Sitting quietly, with your eyes closed in an outdoor setting, does not bring about the desired effect of safety. Also, insects tend to interrupt the flow. Start indoors, and after you have a solid discipline, you can venture into the great outdoors.

3. **Groups** - Meditating in a group can be amazing. I started my practice in a group setting with like-minded individuals all trying to find a little peace in their lives. A good friend of mine started his practice at the University of California, Irvine extension course on mindfulness. A group setting was a key part of the course and helped launch him into meditation.
4. **Readings**—Before I meditate, I read my Success Statement. My Success Statement is a short statement of my goals—financial, spiritual, physical, mental, and personal including relationships. Occasionally, I switch up the readings with affirmations with an understanding of what I am doing. I impress into my subconscious mind my desires. The impression period is usually ninety days; however, I've found it takes less time when you've cleared your mind of broken thinking. Pick readings that matter to you. There are a number of them in my book, "The Bug in Our Brain". Start with The Gift section for ninety days. Once you have acquired the discipline, you can branch to others.

5. **Music**—My preference is to meditate without music. A friend of mine mentioned that our brain gets addicted to the music and requires it to get into a meditative state. That made sense to me. My goal is to identify negative thinking anywhere, under any circumstances, and music seems to be more of a distraction than help. However, I know many meditators who like and leverage music with great benefit. Find what works for you. There's no right or wrong here, just try and see where it takes you.
6. **Guided**—I will, from time to time, follow a guided meditation in an effort to discover a block, but once discovered, I typically go back to silent meditation with a timer. Done well, guided meditations are amazing and open doors that may appear to be shut. I've used guided meditations to help me understand my purpose and to clear my foggy vision. There are many paths to the mountaintop; find what works for you.
7. **Time and Duration**—I meditate once a day for twenty minutes. Most meditation practices suggest a twenty-minute session upon awakening. I've adopted this practice, and it seems to be a perfect mix for me. I get up at 5:00 a.m. every day, go to the bathroom, do what I need to do, and head to my office. There, I do my readings and meditate. Once complete, about thirty minutes, I'm good to go and ready for the world.
8. **Breathing**—Most practices teach some form of breathing technique whereby you focus on the breath moving in and out of your body. Witnessing your breath, moving in and out, has the effect of clearing your thoughts and moving you into the present moment. This simple technique is the foundation of my meditation practice and brings me back to the present whenever I mentally wander off.

Imagine your mind is a puppy. Your goal is to train the puppy to stay. You move the puppy in front of you, release it, and wait. As expected, the puppy wanders off for no apparent reason; curiosity gets the best of her. You move the puppy back and do it again. With each return, the puppy slowly learns that it must stay in front of you. Hopefully, you do this with love and kindness. Your mind works the same way. Simply return to the breath and the present moment. You'll train your mind to stay and not become a victim of random thinking.

9. **Posture**—I learned to meditate sitting on the edge of a chair or stool. I roll my hips forward to straighten my spine and lay my hands palms down on my knees. Palms up or palms down, whatever feels natural to you. There are other meditation practices that encourage lying down or sitting comfortably in a chair. I don't have an opinion on any of those—just that you're consistent with the meditation practice. For me, a straight-back posture helps me maintain my focus on the breath. Again, find what works for you.

10. **Clothing**—I meditate in my daily clothes; however, I loosen my belt and unbutton my pants to free my waist. Loosening my pants helps my breathing by freeing my stomach to move in and out with my breath; it's also comfortable.
11. **Apps**—I highly recommend using a mobile phone app. I use *Insight Timer* for the Android and iPhone. It offers useful tools for both guided and timed meditations, as well as useful features for connecting with other meditators. If you're interested, you can find my guided meditation and reading of *The Gift*. It's free with the app.
12. **Coming Out**—Once my meditation has concluded, I slowly open my eyes and stretch my body by standing up and raising my arms over my head. I bring myself to the current moment and say a set of affirmations that have become my daily practice.

I hope these suggestions help your meditation practice. Once you develop the routine, you'll surely branch out and find more techniques that help you improve your practice. I have, and I know you will too.

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All the best.

About the Author

Robert Christiansen is the author of *The Bug in Our Brain*, the first personal development book uniquely focused on the core driver of success – self-worth. Robert is a successful cloud computing executive and entrepreneur, public speaker, and coach. His coaching company, Motive For Life, is dedicated to changing the world through the elevation of personal worthiness. Learn more at www.MotiveForLife.com



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