Awareness and Release

Simple and Easy techniques

Kaushik Chokshi
beyond-karma.com
Twenty simple and easy awareness and release techniques that you can incorporate easily into daily living.

Kaushik Chokshi

Welcome!

You can navigate using the Content banner at the left, available on every page.

This ebook should print fine in color, grayscale, or black&white.

Please visit www.beyond-karma.com for free articles and more ebooks.

Kaushik Chokshi

Peace
Forget about gurus and religions and satsangs. Forget about temples and churches and mosques. You don’t need teachers or guides, and you don’t need psychologists and therapists, and you don’t need self-improvement guides and you most certainly don’t need a “life coach.” There is no “I’ll be happy when”. You’re already here. Forget striving. Forget enlightenment; you’re already enlightened.

This is do-it-yourself awakening. This is not knowledge or beliefs or mumbo-jumbo. There are no recipes or steps or mantras.

Your best teacher is your own innate intelligence. Not your intellect. Not thoughts. But your Awareness, which is the seat of intelligence and the joy of being. This is your direct, personal experience. Now.

We chase happiness but what we really want is the natural ease of being. We want the complete comfort of flow, where there is no division between life and living, and no division between being and action. Clearly, when we are at ease, everything else follows. No matter what age or culture or gender you are, this is something you can easily accept. You want to be joyful.

All you need is attention on Awareness. Awareness is simply witnessing and watching effortlessly.

Release techniques help us release the pain of past, which will inevitably come up as we become more aware.
Find out who you are without the noise of thought.

These are straight-forward, practical techniques. All techniques lead to Awareness Now.

The shortcut:

Observe in the present moment. Observe as a watcher without analyzing or judging. Observe emotion as sensations in the body. Observe thought, as a witness. Observe perception. Observe beliefs, concepts, images, and memory. Observe with Awareness, with direct perception, not thought. Be aware of Awareness. When you are comfortable in stillness, observe the moment-to-moment angst of lurching, of ‘becoming.’ And observe who it is who’s doing the observing. Observe the observer, the doer, the watcher, the witness, the sense of I AM.

Start with the techniques that are the easiest. You will notice the techniques are about Awareness, Releasing or Inquiry. Releasing and Awareness work in an alternating, interdependent way. Awareness increases presence, and Releasing keeps the ego in check and helps cleanse pain. Both will bring about a sense of peace. Play around. Don’t take any one technique too seriously. This is a toolbox.
In the instant before you began to read this, there was Awareness. As soon as you started to read, Awareness was seemingly obscured by thought. But it is not obscured; it never is, for you could not read this without Awareness. Attention can be on Awareness, or it can be on objects in Awareness, in any case there is always Awareness.

I refer to Awareness Now also as True Meditation or formless meditation.

True meditation is not a practice. It is being. It is being—just being. It is being without the movement of becoming. It is Awareness. Just stop and look, just be, without the effort of thinking and without the effort of becoming—this is true meditation. It doesn’t happen when we sit and “meditate.” It is a natural and easy state of being.

True meditation is natural being. The power is in its simplicity. We are so habituated to doing something, becoming something, lurching for the next moment, that in the beginning True meditation will have to settle, just like shaking up a mixture of sand and water settles.

We use attention in one of two ways. We either shine it directly on objects in consciousness. Or, we shine it through the mind, where the shine is filtered, interpreted, labeled, divided reconstructed, and delayed. In Awareness Now, we shine attention directly on objects.
Our attention is usually fixed in objects in consciousness. It is fixed in thought and thought-stories, the voice in the head, emotions, desires, fear, conditioning, perceptions, memories, imagination, past, future, grasping, and becoming. We are in True Meditation when attention is not fixed. Attention is just on Awareness, when we just are. Then the objects in awareness are left to their natural rise and fall. There is no effort to manipulate, start or stop these objects in Awareness. There is no grasping, no becoming. There is utter acceptance--no movement to be different or better, no movement to have this or that, no leaning towards the next moment, and no running away from the Now.

It is just natural, effortless awareness; the kind of awareness that a cat has watching a mouse hole. There is curiosity, but not an interfering sort of curiosity.

True meditation is what we are when we give up all practices and rest in choiceless, unbidden Awareness. True meditation has no method. It is not about going anywhere, doing something for a while, or sitting in special postures with special goals. It is just the awaring presence. It happens right here, right now. There is no effort. In fact, anything you “do” will get you out of the natural state. If you expect a shift of some sort of meditative experience, it will take you out of effortless meditation.
Try this:

Just be. Notice. Notice thoughts come and go. Notice perceptions come and go. Notice breath and body sensations come and go. Notice Awareness. There is no effort, no doing, no lurching. Just be. Notice that everything we know arises in Awareness. Awareness is the space and silence in which thought and every other object arises. Fall backwards into Awareness. Release into Awareness. There is no effort to this. Just be. Be patient. Awareness will expand on its own.

Try this:

Whatever other technique you use, you will become aware at some point that there is something which is aware of the technique. If you observe thought for example, you will with practice become aware that there is something that is observing thought. Join the looker. Look at the internal sense of looking.

Or, try this:

Take some time to relax completely. Use the progressive relaxation technique or just breathe out and relax. Look at something in the room. Focus on it. Awareness is looking. Become aware of Awareness. Shut your eyes and remain aware of Awareness. Relax. Let go. Relax and let go even more. Let go as deeply as you can. If thoughts arise be aware of them, let them come and go. Simply observe, without participating or attaching meaning. There is nothing else to do. Shift attention to Awareness that is witnessing the thoughts. There is distance between you and thoughts.
Or, try this:

Be utterly present. Be present with the things that are already present. Your body, your breath, the tingling inside your hands, the sense of sound, the sense of sight when you simply experience and not divide or label, a plant, a flower, the sky...these are utterly present. This is a relaxation into presence, not a trying or a grabbing or a becoming of presence. There is no difference between what is and what you want it to be. There is no time-delay between perceiving and sensing. There is no lurching forward to the next moment. Just Stillness.

Awareness does not need the seer or the seen; it is just pure seeing.

This is Awareness watching Awareness.

If you don’t get this, don’t worry. Start with Observing Thought.
An emotion is an energized thought, and it always starts as sensations in the body.

This is a beautiful technique that’s as effective as it is simple. That’s because it’s very natural. We knew it as children but have forgotten how to use it.

It works right away with emotions, but once you have some practice with it, you can use it just as well for thoughts and beliefs, and for releasing emotional baggage around desires.

It helps to understand the structure of emotions. If we were fully functioning organisms, a feeling would simply be a transient message about something going on right now, and we would feel it as a quick ripple. That’s a feeling. An emotion, however, is a pattern, and it is remembered and it accumulates energy, leaving a deeper groove each time it is experienced, and it may or may not be about something happening right now. Emotions can come up as a response to circumstances, but more often, they come up as a response to thoughts. An emotion is an energized thought, and it always starts as sensations in the body. This is obvious with strong emotions like anger or anxiety. Anger starts off with muscular contraction, an increase in adrenaline, temperature, heartbeat and blood pressure, and a hotness in the face. Anxiety may start as sensations in the belly. Even the smallest of emotions starts as a sensation, though we may not be sensitive to the sensations. The sensations start up, and they trigger an associated thought-story. With negative emotions, the associated thought-story is usually in voice of the inner critic. The thoughts and sensations then get into a feedback loop, energizing each other, and the emotion gathers up a storm.
You will notice that with negative emotions, the first thing we do is contract. We mentally resist and physically contract our bodies, in anticipation how bad it’s going to feel.

You may also notice the paradox of negative emotions. Emotions promise to hold off the very thing they give us. Fear says I am trying to keep you safe. Anxiety says I am trying to give you the security you need. Anger says you are not liking what is happening. Hurt says you will feel bad if you don’t pay attention to me.

In Asia, they use this clever trick to catch monkeys. There is a circular shackle or a hole through which the monkey puts her hand to grab a banana on the other side. The hole is just big enough to let in an open hand, but not big enough to let out a fisted hand. The monkey cannot get her hand out if she holds on to the banana. This is exactly what we do with emotions. We grasp them. All we have to do is open our hands to release.

Here’s a quick experiment to show how this technique works. Make a fist and squeeze it hard as if you’re holding on to something, and keep squeezing. What does that feel like—a little uncomfortable? Perhaps it feels a little strange, but if you keep squeezing the strangeness goes away. It’s still uncomfortable but secure and automatic. Emotions in the same way are uncomfortable and automatic. And releasing emotions is as easy as opening your hand.
The technique is adapted from the Sedona method’s basic technique. It is a series of questions, which we answer very quickly. The questions in themselves are not important nor are the answers. The questions help us stop, look, and be aware of what’s going on, and they help us re-learn what we have always known: that it is easy and instant to release any emotion. Ask and answer these questions quickly. No matter what the answer is, move on to the next question. Soon they will become non-verbal. With practice the questions disappear and releasing becomes automatic.

When you experience an emotion, big or small:
- Can I make a lot of space for this emotion?
- Am I able to let it go?
- Let it go

What are you feeling right now? You don’t have to label it, and it doesn’t have to be a big emotion.

Can you allow the emotion? See if you can allow the emotion without resistance. Make a lot of space for the emotion in the body. Don’t contract. Don’t resist. Welcome the emotion, allow it, and love it. Then, make even more space for it. Allow it to expand right out of your body. If you don’t think you can welcome the emotion, it’s perfectly fine. Move on quickly no matter what happens.

Are you able to let the emotion go? You don’t have to let it go, the question is: are you able to? It’s okay if the answer is no. Just continue.
Let it go now. It helps to sigh, or exhale long and easy while letting go. It’s perfectly okay if you don’t think you’re actually letting go or you don’t understand what it means to let go. It works anyway.

Instead of questions, you can make them into statements, something similar to:

- I am making space for this emotion.
- I can let this emotion go.
- I am letting it go now.

With practice the technique becomes non-verbal and natural and technique-less. You will notice a sensation in the body, make space for it by not contracting, and release it.

The mind will immediately question whether this will work. “It’s too simple.” “If I knew how to let go of emotions, I would have done it already.” “How can this work?” “What is the mechanism?” “I can’t use this until I understand more.”

The answer is just to try it a few times. If you feel you are not able to let go of the emotion, don’t worry about it. Try it anyway. Keep trying. My experience first was with the Sedona method of releasing. I tried it with anxiety, several times a day for about two or three weeks. I didn’t think it was really working, and one day I realized I had not felt anxiety for several days. I have never felt anxiety again. With practice the technique became instant and non-verbal.
The Sedona method is similar. I highly recommend the book, or you can simply visit their website. There is an audio segment that explains the technique and it is free.

Why does this work? Well, first, it is very natural. Second, we are bringing emotions back to their true function of feeling-message by interrupting the association with thought-stories. Also, we naturally develop equanimity with this method. After all, what we are experiencing is just a body sensation. And finally, we are breaking the false identification with the whole pattern of body sensation and thought-story.
This is not a technique, but an intention. Decide not to create beliefs, concepts, ideas, and goals, particularly around awakening. Decide not to bring any more pain into your life. You may not be able to help the desires and conditioning and beliefs you already have, but you can decide to bring no more pain by simply intending to rely on direct and personal experience only.

It helps to get comfortable with emptiness. Get comfortable with not understanding, not knowing, not conceptualizing, not rationalizing and not creating new beliefs. Loosen the investment in existing beliefs.

This can be a difficult intention because the mind will fight it. It may feel little uncomfortable to rely only direct experience, because what do we really know from direct experience? If you go into it, there isn’t much we can be sure of. There is Awareness, and all experience is in the Now. That’s about it.

Become comfortable with not believing.

If it is difficult to rely on direct experience, try this. Don’t take any thought or belief or desire seriously. You can’t know whether it’s true or not. Is it true? How can you be sure? Have fun with it. Don’t let the mind settle on any particular assumption or desire or belief. Question the most basic assumptions. What is the nature of time? What is self? Who are you at your essence? What is it that you are fond of saying to everyone else about yourself? What do you consider yourself to be? Be completely open. Perhaps you can’t give up the belief or desire, but you can see that there is a possibility that it may not be true. The important thing is never to settle on an idea. This is a fun practice. If you can do this, you will feel lighter and relieved. There is nothing to defend. There is nothing to take seriously.
Sometimes we find it hard to rest in Awareness Now, or release, or to observe thought or meditate. Here is technique that is easy and effortless. When the mind is resistant, you can simply decide to be momentarily aware—just for a second or two. Then you are free to slip into auto-pilot mode. Whatever you are doing, driving, working, talking, listening, thinking, longing, wondering, or daydreaming about how grand life will be when you are finally enlightened—whatever it is, just use your inner stop to stop and look and momentarily slip into a witness mode, and watch yourself, just for a second or two. Watch thought. Watch the inner body for sensations or emotions. It’s a quick wake up. And then allow yourself to go about whatever it is you were doing.

As you do this, you will do it more and more frequently and it will become easier to be a witness to what’s going on inside you.
How do I quiet thoughts?

Can you simply end, right here and right now, your fascination with thoughts? Can you stop believing them? Whether the thought is good, bad, spiritual, evil, of him, of her, of me—can you simply end the fascination? Can you see thoughts are not yours? Thoughts arise out of conditioning and memory; literally out of the stale past. You do not choose your thoughts. So how can they be yours?

How do I end the fascination?

If there were a 12-step plan, that would simply be another thought. If we can’t end the fascination or belief in thought, Observing Thought is a good technique to take the wind out of its sails. Allow thoughts to come, and go. Do we control our thoughts? For the most part, we do not decide what the next thought is. Can we just say to thoughts: yes, come in and play. And leave when you want to.

Observing thought is moving attention from the content of thought to Awareness. Then, it can be seen that thought is just one of many objects that pop up in Awareness, and that there is no perceptual difference between a thought and seeing a coffee table. Your attention can either be inside of the thought or it can be outside of thought. When it is inside, you are participating in the thought-story, when it is outside you are observing thought without interpreting or reacting or participating in it. When it is outside of the thought, it is in awareness.
Right now you are embroiled in thinkingness. This is blocking awareness. Awareness is simplicity. Thought is complexity that arises within awareness. Thought is heavy. Thought cannot see Awareness; Thought can only see narrow content. Awareness can see the entire structure of thought.

For now, set aside the need to understand.

Witness thought. This is a soft, intention-less observing; this is not the effort of concentration or analysis. Do not analyze the content. Do not judge. Do not interfere. Do not block any thought or emotion. Simply observe. Watch. Witness.

When thoughts arise, allow them to. When they subside, allow them to. They’ll come and go. In the beginning it may be hard to keep out of the river of thought. You’ll get involved. Without blocking the thought, without changing it, try to step out of it and watch it.

Watch without judging or analyzing or labeling or interpreting. If you feel good, that’s good. If you feel bad, that’s good. Don’t reject negativity. Just observe it. Only thought can judge. Awareness does not judge. So when thoughts are judged as good, bad, negative, irritating or whatever, it is one thought judging another. Don’t judge. Don’t judge yourself on how well you are observing. That too is just another thought.
You might want to notice the voice of thought. Thought is in words and has a voice. Does this voice sound like you? What gender is it? What is the tone of the voice? Is it adversarial? Isn’t it interesting that the voice of thought is often critical and adversarial? Go into it. Who is the adversarial voice talking to? If the voice were a real person talking to you, would you listen to that person? Watch the voice when ‘negative’ emotions are strong. The voice then is angry or critical or challenging or down-trodden. Who is the voice talking to? How many of you are there? Does it feel that the voice is trying very hard to convince? Isn’t this strange? The voice inside of us tries to convince ‘someone’ to feel fear, anger, hurt, or whatever it is. The ‘someone’ clearly isn’t easily playing, otherwise why would the voice try so hard and persist? Who are you? The voice? Or the someone it is trying to convince? Observe the entire conversation, this apparent dichotomy between mind and someone else. Is this someone just awareness? Or is it another thought?

The first thing you may notice is that observing hard! You will be shocked at the torrential momentum of your thoughts. The noise is incessant and compulsive. It is completely natural to fall right into the river of thinking from the beginning. But remember, trying to observe is the same as observing. Come back to observing whenever you remember to. Come back with a smile. Here you need to be very gentle with yourself. It is perfectly okay to find observing a difficult thing to do in the beginning. There is nothing wrong with you. Keep coming back to observing, with gentleness and a smile.
The second thing you notice is that with continued attempts at observing, it gets easier. Don’t get frustrated. Decide to enjoy the process. Decide to see humor in the monkininess of the mind. With a smile, bring attention back to observing whenever you remember. The mind has always been thus.

Observe thought and experience its structure. Find that it flows in a single stream. Thought does not have volume, it has speed and disjointedness, and it has the uncanny ability to gobble up all your attention. Thoughts come one after another, in rapidity, one melting into another, but thoughts are not simultaneous. Observe that as you observe, thoughts began to become distinct, with some space. Observe that there is a transition, from being immersed in thought to observing the thought, and from observing to being immersed. You can observe when observing, and you can observe the two transitions, but you cannot observe in the immersed state. When immersed in thought, you are swept away, and therefore not watching. When you become conscious of being immersed you transition out. It feels like a release, a falling, a relaxation.

As you continue to watch, you will find that the momentum of thought diminishes. As thoughts diminish, you will find gaps between thoughts. This is Stillness. Allow the gaps. Don’t force them; don’t wish for them. You may be tempted to clutch at the gaps, or to cling to them. Don’t. This will not work. The gaps are the Stillness, the Silence. You don’t arrive at the gaps, the gaps are just being right here, right now. It is not doing, simply being here and now.
You’ll soon realize that these gaps—this space—is the constant background Stillness in which thoughts arise. Thoughts come and go. The Stillness is constant.

As gaps expand, and stillness abides, you will notice that you are present.

If you’re having trouble observing thought there is a nice trick you can use temporarily. It’s called echo-talk, and it is exactly what you think it means. It works well with obsessive, recurring thought-stories. When you become aware that you have had a thought, repeat it. Repeat it in an impersonal, slow voice. See what happens.

Are you not able to observe thought? Is it hard? Do you not understand what watching thought means? Can you see that these too are just thoughts? Trying to observe is observing. Keep at it.
Abide in the principle that you don’t mind what happens. The next time something happens—you don’t get what you want or you get what you don’t want or someone has wronged you—you will remember this principle and guess what? You will very much mind that it happened. You may mind even more, because now you’re aware of minding. But something will happen again, and perhaps then you will mind a little less, and again something will happen and you will mind even less, and so on progressively, until you realize, in your awareness that minding really doesn’t help the tiniest bit. It only serves to attract more minding. So don’t mind what happens. It’s as easy as that. Decide not to mind. Decide to accept everything just the way it is. Don’t worry if you can’t seem to, because once you decide, the process will start, and progressively, you will accept more and more easily.

There is a lot said in spiritual circles about Acceptance, Gratitude, Forgiveness, Love and Surrender. Accept what is without wanting to change it, be grateful for what we already have, desire what we already have. Ask for forgiveness; and forgive with the knowledge that there no one who needs to be forgiven. Give out love without expectation....and these will lead to Surrender. Certainly, these principles are necessary, for at some point the ego must surrender.

But often it is not clear what this really means. If someone is beating me over the head, do I accept that? With expanding Awareness, there is an expanding understanding of what these principles really mean. They become natural. Precepts and commandments don’t need to be learned; they are Awareness.

Life works much better if we don’t resist what already is.

Remember that not getting what you want is sometimes a wonderful stroke of luck. –Dalai Lama

Kaushik Chokshi
beyond-karma.com
Why do we find it so hard to accept? It’s probably because with acceptance, we feel we are locking in whatever it is that we don’t like. Then, acceptance is more like stoic tolerance or resignation. That isn’t it of course. Acceptance is simply the absence of unnecessary resistance. The resistance deepens the ‘negativity’ of the situation. It becomes feeling bad about feeling bad. There is no need to add a second layer to feeling bad.

Nobody can teach us how to flow without resistance. It is something we realize ourselves. If we force acceptance, that’s not acceptance, that’s suppression. It can’t be forced. With intention and Awareness, acceptance seems to develop on its own. We can help it along if we intend Acceptance.

The Release techniques help with acceptance. When you resist what already is, go into it. Why are you resisting? What emotions are coming up? Anger, longing, fear, the need for change? If an emotion comes up, that’s great. Allow it, welcome it, give it a lot of space, and then release it. What are the aspects around not accepting? Is it from wanting power, or fear of being powerless? Can you release the want and fear?

“Don’t mind what happens.”
When you feel agitated, or when thoughts are compulsive, bring attention to the body and breath. When it is difficult to remain in Awareness Now, put attention in the body. Giving attention to the body and breath is being present, because the body is always present.

Scan your entire body. Is there tension? You may be holding tension in the face or shoulders. Are your hands balled into fists? Are you shaking your foot?

When you are in a conversation, listen with your entire body. Be alert and aware of your body. Hear others voices coming from deep inside of you. You don’t have to analyze what is said, you are simply keeping some attention in the body, listening with the body. See that there is no time delay between hearing and perception of someone’s voice from inside of you. Really, there is no time delay between any sensing and perception. Time only manifests when you think about it. Hear without thinking.

Bring awareness to one of our hands. Hold attention there. Soon, you may feel a tingling in the hand. You feel a certain aliveness. See if you can expand that feeling. Can you spread that feeling to the fingers and arms and beyond?

Hatha Yoga and Vipassana meditation are excellent for becoming more aware of the body.
Vipassana meditation is essentially developing sensitivity in the body.

Notice that we locate awareness in the mind or in the head. The brain and eyes and ears and nose and taste are located in the head, so awareness is “imprinted” in the head. Experiment with moving awareness around. Move awareness to the area around the heart. In olden times, it was believed that the heart is where awareness came from. This is not the same as becoming aware of the physical heart. This is being aware from the heart. For us, awareness is in the mind, around the physical brain. When awareness is in the heart, there is some distance to thought. We become aware of the structure and nature of thoughts, rather be immersed in the content. Allow awareness to flow through the entire body. When you are with someone, interact with awareness through the body. Experiment with how your feelings for the person change or intensify as you move awareness through the body. Listen with your entire body. Send out compassion and love through your body to the other person. Experiment and see how your interaction changes. See that you always have access to the joy of being when you keep awareness in the body.
Here's the short version: Sit comfortably. Do nothing. Be aware of thoughts. Yes, you will get swept away in thoughts. When you realize this, gently bring your attention back to awareness, with a smile. Allow thoughts to come and to go.

That's all.

Here is the longer version:

Meditation is good practice with a lot of immediate and practical benefits. It can also become an obstacle.

True meditation is not a practice. It is Awareness. Just stop and look, just be, without the effort of thinking and without the effort of becoming—that is true meditation. True meditation is what we are when we give up all practices and rest in choiceless, unbidden Awareness. True meditation has no method. It is not about going anywhere, doing something for a while, or sitting in special postures with special goals. It is just the awaring presence. It happens right here, right now. It is the recognition that it is impossible not to be right here, right now. It is the recognition that there is no meditator. Just be. Be Awareness.

The practice of meditation starts firmly in the dualistic monkey-mind. The practice of meditation is useful because it has many physiological benefits and it leads to True meditation.

All the techniques suggested in this book can be done while sitting down in meditation, or simply while you go about your life. In the beginning especially, it can be useful to sit and practice these techniques without distraction.

Here’s the short version: Sit comfortably. Do nothing. Be aware of thoughts. Yes, you will get swept away in thoughts. When you realize this, gently bring your attention back to awareness, with a smile. Allow thoughts to come and to go.

That’s all.

Here is the longer version:

Meditation is good practice with a lot of immediate and practical benefits. It can also become an obstacle.
Meditation is your true nature now. You call it meditation, because there are other thoughts distracting you. When these thoughts are dispelled, you remain alone, i.e., in the state of meditation free from thoughts, and that is your real nature which you are now attempting to gain by keeping away other thoughts. Such keeping away of other thoughts is now called meditation. When the practice becomes firm, the real nature shows itself as the true meditation.

-Ramana Maharshi

Our attention is usually fixed on objects in consciousness. It is fixed on thought and thought-stories, the voice in the head, emotions, desires, fear, conditioning, perceptions, memories, imagination, past, future, grasping, and becoming. We are in meditation when attention is not fixed, when attention is just on Awareness, when we just are. Then the objects in awareness, like thoughts and perceptions, are left to their natural rise and fall. There is no effort to manipulate, start or stop these objects in Awareness. There is no grasping, no becoming, no movement to be different or better, no movement to have this or that, no leaning towards the next moment, and no running away from the Now. Attention is on Awareness, not on the objects which appear in Awareness.

You will find that some of these sit-down meditation techniques can take some practice to develop. If you’re interested in practicing meditation, I suggest some sort of progressive schedule. Start with sitting quietly for five minutes. When you are comfortable, try it for ten. And so on. You may find this is not as easy as it sounds.

Sitting down is suggested because you are at rest but you will not fall asleep as you might when you’re prone. Sitting in your favorite chair is fine. If you want to sit on the floor, that’s fine too, just keep your pelvis higher than your knees, and this will keep your back straight. I don’t meditate often, but when I do, I am able to lie down to meditate without falling asleep.
If you can do Awareness Now right away, you are meditating. If not, you can progress towards it by sitting longer and longer each day, and progressing through techniques you find easy and comfortable.

For example, start with counting. Count your in and out breaths forwards to 11 (or 17 or 21 or whatever you want), and then count backwards. Repeat. This can develop some concentration, and you can get used to sitting.

When you’re comfortable with this, count just the out-breaths.

When you’re comfortable with counting, go with Anapana. This is keeping attention on the breath. Don’t count, just rest all attention on feeling the air move in and out of your nostrils.

When you’re comfortable with Anapana, go with Vipassana. This is scanning the body for sensations.

Then try being present or observing thought.

Then try Awareness Now. Some call this formless meditation, or being aware of Awareness. What you want is to be in Awareness, where you are just noticing as a witness. Watch thoughts come. Watch them go. Watch the transitions. If you get swept away in thought, that’s fine. Bring attention back with a smile when you can.

All you are doing is watching awareness without attending to anything in particular. You may become aware of breath. That’s fine. Watch body sensations. Watch thoughts. Be aware of awareness itself. There is no effort. There is no technique.
Notice there is no doing. When a sound comes, you hear it and sense it at the same time, without deciding to. When a thought comes, you become aware of it and think it at the same time, without deciding to.

When Awareness feels relaxed and natural, look at who is doing the watching. Do this in a relaxed, delicate manner. If you can’t find the ‘who’, don’t worry. Just rest in Awareness.

Obstacles can come up. In sit-down meditation, you may experience these obstacles sometimes in an intense and furious manner.

You may feel a driving need to run away. You want to stop meditating and go do something. This is the resistance of the mind. Recognize the monkiness of the mind, smile at it, and stay with it.

You may feel emotions come up. Anger, fear, pain and other emotions can come up; this is good; this is the mind cleansing itself. Don’t judge them to be pleasant or unpleasant. Use the Release technique in meditation to deal with them.

When the monkiness of the mind settles, you will notice that the mind is in a constant state of wanting to be in the next moment. This is grasping, “becoming”, or “shoulding.” It is always grasping for something other than presence, and this gap between what is and what the mind wants it to be is the violent conflict that we come to know as struggle. Noticing this in meditation diminishes it.
This is a quick energizing meditation. It can be done at anytime.

We don’t have to know the colors or positions of chakra, or even what chakras are, for this to work. Become aware of your spine from the very bottom to the crown of the head. Imagine a bright, energizing light is going off at the bottom of the spine. Imagine that the spine is lighting up with this white bright light progressively, as it extends up the spine. This white light starts at the bottom and begins to extend, and gets brighter and brighter as it quickly moves up your spine, and through the head to the crown. Now imagine that light is so bright, it’s lighting up the whole body. Now it’s even brighter, seeping through the body and then lighting up the whole world!

Try it!
This is it. There is no more. If you can be present, it’s the whole ball game. The immediacy of life in the present precedes the mind and all concepts.

It’s hard for the mind to understand what being present is because the mind is never present. Yet, we do have moments of presence, when we are awed by beauty or those times when we are in flow.

You will find being present is ordinary. Don’t expect the extra-ordinary; that will take your right out of presence.

Try it. It is not an effortful presence. The ego is capable of creating a mental space of presence, and you can tell because ego-presence feels effortful, artificial and dull. We are already always present, so it’s little misleading to say “be present.” What we mean by that is really to be Awareness, absent of the constant lurch for the next moment, the grasping, or the becoming.

The body is always present, so we can always bring attention deeply into the body or breath to be present.

Do the following to be present:

Sit down, shut your eyes, and watch your breath. Become aware of breath going in, and going out. Breathe freely, there is no need to control or change the flow. Become aware of the sensation of air passing through your nose and nostrils. Pay attention to the lungs filling up and emptying. Pay attention to the belly expanding and relaxing. If attention is distracted by thought, gently bring it back with a smile.
Notice that there is no time between perception and hearing.

Expand your attention to the sound of breathing. Don’t label or analyze, simply listen to the undulating sound of breath. Notice that there is no time between perception and hearing. Time only happens when there is thinking about hearing. Hear without thinking. Is there any effort required to hear? Pay attention to the way the sound is heard. As you notice the sound, pay attention, just to hear the sound, without decision or interpretation or judgment. Hearing just happens. There is no thought required. Meet the perception half-way. Is there any time delay between the sound and the hearing? The hearing of sound is thought-less, time-less. Relax, and be the awareness that hears the sound, without thought.

Expand your attention further to any sound that comes into perception. Don’t label or measure or judge. Just pay attention to the sound. Notice the sounds pop up in Awareness, inside of you. There is no space or time between awareness and the occurrence of the sound.

If thoughts rise, let them and shift attention back to the sounds.

Now feel your weight. Feel your skin touching your clothes. Feel your skin touching air. Don’t label or figure out what it is touching, just simply feel the perception of touch. Go inside the body to feel it. Put attention inside your hands and soon you will feel a tingling, an aliveness. Notice there is no time between feeling the sensation and being aware of the sensation. Just to feel, is there any time required between the sensation and the feeling of it? There is no decision, no effort, no thinking; it just happens. Time only happens when you interpret the sensation with thought.

Kaushik Chokshi
beyond-karma.com
Move attention to taste. Do you taste anything? Is there a taste? Don’t figure out what it is. Just be aware of it.

Move attention to smell. Is there any smell? Don’t label it or figure out what it is, just abide in the perception of it.

Open your eyes. Look around the room. Don’t label anything. Simply take in the seeing. Take in colors without labeling them. Take in the background, the ceiling, floor, the walls, the sky, clouds, anything without labeling. Feel the colors rather than seeing them. Notice there is no time delay between seeing and awaring. Perception takes no time. It is right here, right now. Don’t label anything, see it for the first time. Trace the contours and edges very slowly with your eyes. This is just Awareness. Everything you see is Awareness seeing in Awareness. The entire visual field and beyond is in Awareness. All these objects are simply perception in Awareness.

Move deeply into the Now.

When you are deeply in the Now, look at the grasping and running-away feeling in the mind, with Awareness.
Sit in a comfortable position.

Close your eyes. Be aware of breath. What does it feel like to breathe? Feel the air moving in and out of your body, starting with the tip of the nostrils. Feel the cool of the air coming in, and the warmth of air going out. What does the movement of air feel like? Now notice the sensation in the upper nose. And then down into to body. Feel the upper lungs, the middle lungs, and then deep in lower rungs. Feel the diaphragm expanding and contracting. Now, come back to the nostrils and stay with this. Don’t control the breath. Let it happen. The force of life breathes. You don’t breathe, you simply witness. You witness the feel of air moving through nostrils, and stay with that. No effort is required. When your attention wanders, gently, with a smile, bring it back to the breath and nostrils. Be gentle with yourself. It is very common that attention will wander right away and frequently. Concentration will develop.

You can do this at anytime. If you’re feeling agitated, or it’s hard to be aware or observe thought, quickly bring attention to nostrils and feel the air move in and out. Or bring attention to the breath.
When you’re agitated, here’s a good technique to calm the mind. Take five (or one or ten or three) deep breaths, with attention on the breathing. Fill up your lungs slowly either through nose or mouth or both, with the diaphragm and chest expanding. Then release the air, slower than you breathed in. Repeat.

There are Yoga Pranayama asanas you can do as well. Stand up comfortably, do the breathing and move your arms up and down with the in and out breaths. While breathing out, you can constrict the throat a little and make a HA sound. It sounds like Darth Vader breathing out.
intro
Awareness Now
Release
Direct Experience
Inner Stop
Observe thought
Don't mind what happens
Inner Body
Meditate
Chakra
Presence
Anapana
Vipassana
Breathe
Release meditation
Relax
Release Aspects
Inquire
Sense of I AM
Metta
Zap
close

Hold awareness without reacting to sensations. Sensations will rise and fall. They may feel good or bad. Let them come and go; don’t expect or anticipate or avert.

Take a few attentive breaths or do Anapana first.

Scan your body from top to bottom. Try not to hold an image of the body. As you advance, the scanning may follow rivers of aliveness rather than parts of the body. You want to become sensitive to the subtle sensations. Start with the sensation of aliveness you feel in the cells. Many people will feel this in one of their hands right away. Attend to this feeling.

Start at the crown of the head. Attend to a small area. Observe. Do you feel anything on the surface? You may not and that’s okay. Stay on each part for two or three seconds. Now move attention to the face, then the sides of face, then the back of head and so on. The order doesn’t matter. In this way scan the entire surface of the body. As the technique develops, you can start scanning the inside of the body. You can start with staying on an area for two or three seconds, but as sensitivity develops, you can scan the entire body very quickly.

Hold awareness without reacting to sensations. Sensations will rise and fall. They may feel good or bad. Let them come and go; don’t expect or anticipate or avert.

This is a meditation but you can also do this at any time of the day. No matter what you’re doing, you can bring your attention to the aliveness in the body. When you are listening to someone, listen to the voice or sound with your entire body.
Shut your eyes. Relax. Use any technique to relax, such as presence or progressive relaxation. Let go of mind-stuff. Let go of any feeling of having to do something. You are just here and now, with nothing to do and nothing to change. Let go of all beliefs and desires. Ignore your body. If thoughts arise, let them, watch them come and go. Continue to let go. Surrender completely. Release everything. Accept. Surrender. See how deep you can go with this. Let go until there is just awareness of Awareness. Let go even more.
Tense up a set of muscles for two or three seconds, and then release them into a deep relaxation.

You can use this any time. This is particularly good at night if you’re having trouble falling asleep. Once you practice it, you will find you can use it any time to simply relax and release. When you remember to aware, or to observe, or be present, you may want to precede that with this technique first.

Start with your facial muscles. Tense up the muscles in the face for a two seconds. The completely relax them. Breathe out as you relax them. Do it again if you wish. Then move to another set of muscles. Tense up the neck, and release completely while breathing out. Continue with shoulders, chest, arms, fingers, torso, thighs, calves. Flex and unflex your wrists and feet, and then relax. Curl and uncurl your toes and fingers. Move deliberately, slowly and with awareness. Repeat if you wish.

Tensing the muscles first will bring attention to them. And then when you relax them, they will relax more deeply than before you tensed them. It also allows blood to move.
It is necessary to own up to and release all aspects of ourselves, particularly the ones we don’t like. To realize the Truth of who we are we must face up to who we have become. If not, this will be an obstacle. The ego will hijack the traits in us that we resist to make Awakening into a process to solve specific problems or achieve specific desires. A direct way of releasing is to make a list of everything that we want to change about ourselves. This includes cherished intentions, goals, desires and beliefs. What we want and what we don’t want. Then, accept and acknowledge these items. Own what you have become, without judgment. Use the release technique, or Sedona method, or EFT to release emotions about the aspects.

Ask yourself from where this intention arises. Is it from seeking power, or from the feeling of powerlessness. Then release the need for power, or the fear of feeling powerless.

If you have depression, anxiety, low-energy, or apathy, or something similar to that, it may be that you have turned anger inside towards yourself. Make a list. Ask yourself what it is that you’re not getting, or what is it that you don’t want. What are you angry about? You may not be able to identify what it is that you want or don’t want, or what it is that you want to change. That’s fine. Don’t worry about it. As you practice Release, these will surface.

If you are able to identify the items, list them. Own up to them. Accept them. Release the emotions around them.
For example:

- I completely and fully accept that:
- I want to lose weight? (approval or power)
- I have depression (control or power)
- I want to be fit (approval or power)
- I want to be more energetic (control or power)
- I need more income (security or power)
- I have to write (security or power)
- I need a job (security of power)
- I want to quit smoking (control, security, approval)
- I want to quit drinking (control, security, approval)
- I want to start doing yoga (control or power)
- I want to meditate (fear of separation, fear of powerlessness)
- I want to be happier (fear of separation)
- I want to be more effective (approval, control)
- I want to more social (approval)
- I want to be more popular (fear of separation)
As you do this you may be able to identify finer and finer aspects. What we’re doing here is simple. Without analyzing, we are bringing up aspects of ourselves in our Awareness. This is sometimes enough to release them. If not, stay with and you will be able to release. As emotions come up that are associated with these aspects, give them a great deal of space. It may be the longing for power or the fear of powerlessness; it may be the desire for approval, control, security, or a feeling of completeness; and it may be anger or hurt or anxiety that comes up. It may even be the opposites of any of these. Welcome the emotion. Make space for it. Ask yourself if you can release it. And then let it go.
Meditation is not a means to an end; there is no end, no arrival; it is a movement in time and out of time. Every system, method, binds thought to time, but choiceless awareness of every thought and feeling, understanding of their motives, their mechanism, allowing them to blossom, is the beginning of meditation.

When thought and feeling flourish and die, meditation is the movement beyond time. In this movement there is ecstasy; in complete emptiness there is love, and with love there is destruction and creation.

- Krishnamurti

When you can rest effortless in Awareness Now, you may want to inquire into some of our most basic aspects. These may be assumptions or a belief or a feeling. This is not a reasoning or thinking exercise. It is simply holding up a basic assumption in Awareness, examining it keenly with Awareness, not with thought, but with feeling-realization.

First, simply rest in Awareness Now. Then hold up an assumption or fact for consideration. Don’t look at it intellectually; look it directly without thinking about it. Don’t expect anything to happen. A truth may crystallize or it may not.

Some aspects that you can try this with:

Grasping: wanting something different from what’s present right now. Watch this constant movement of the mind to run to the next moment which it hopes to be different. See if you can relax deeper into Awareness. What does grasping feel like? Watch it. Can you release it and relax?

Aversion: Any resistance that shows up as fear, anger, boredom, or similar. Watch it in Awareness to see what it feels like, where it comes from. Simply put Awareness on it.

Restlessness: jumpiness, the energy of wanting to run away from the present moment. Watch this energy with humor and without judgment.

Sloth and torpor: Apathy, detachment, depression: simply hold up the feeling in Awareness and watch.

Doubt: the mind’s rebellion. Watch it in Awareness and smile.
Shoulding: the energy of “I should be doing something”, other than abiding in present moment Awareness. Watch the shoulding in Awareness and try to relax into a place of where all shoulding is absent. Can you feel the constant tension of shoulding? Sometimes it is subtle. Noticing this can bring us deeply in the present. Can you release it?

Becoming: See that we are in constant state of becoming, not being. We are not relaxed naturally in our being. The mind is in constant movement, in a determined effort to constantly lean forward into the future. Even when the mind is quiet, there is sense of moving to the next moment. “If I meditate, I will be enlightened.” Can you see how this is a flight into an imaginary future? Can you see that this is perpetual becoming? This process is happening right now in you. Can you feel the constant tension of becoming? Can you release it?

Now: Go deeply into the only moment in time we can experience. Is the Now a moment? Or is it the timeless eternity? Go very deeply in Awareness with the knowledge that there is nothing else except the Now. Go into peacefully, in the absence of becoming or shoulding.

Time: outside of memory and conditioning of the past, and imagination of the future, is there time? What does the sense of the passage of time feel like? Can you capture the beginning and end of this moment?

External reality: is there such a thing? What if everything we consider external arose internally in Awareness? Would reality still be consistent?

I Am: If you can find the sense of I AM, stay with it. This is a powerful meditation.
In this spiritual hierarchy, from the grossest to the subtlest, you are the subtlest. How can this be realized? The very base is that you don’t know you are, and suddenly the feeling of ‘I amness’ appears. The moment it appears you see space, mental space; that subtle sky-like space, stabilize there. You are that. When you are able to stabilize in that space, you are space only. When this space-like identity ‘I am’ disappears, the space will also disappear, there is no space. When that space-like ‘I am’ goes into oblivion, that is the eternal state, ‘nirguna’, no form, no beingness.

Nisgardatta, Ramana Maharishi, and many Advaita and Nondual teachings suggest that we focus on the sense of I AM.

In pursuing the sense of I AM, we are chasing what Nisgardatta calls “from the grossest to the subtlest” sense of I AM, until we fall behind the identification. At times it is the observer, the thing that is experiencing. It may be a solid sense of I AM, or it may float around. It may at first be the conviction I AM, and then it may be that which is able to experience the conviction. It may be the body. It may be Awareness. You may not be able to find the sense of I AM at all.

The nice thing about this practice is its simplicity. Once the practice is going, it excludes all mind-stuff by its very nature. When thoughts arise, simply ask to whom these thoughts arise?

If the sense of I AM is elusive, don’t worry about it. Teasing out the sense of I AM may be difficult. It is for me. When I abide in the sense of IAM, I fall naturally into what I feel as being aware of Awareness. Attention is on attention itself. If this is the case, just rest attention on Awareness. Or try one of the other techniques.

Ramana Maharishi suggested delving into the inquiry: Who am I? Possibly because of the problem of translation from Tamil to English, many think of this as an inquiring question. It isn’t. It is resting attention on the sense of I AM.
Actually, what did happen there? This message 'I am' was no message. Dealing with this aspect, I cannot talk much because there is no scope to put it in words.

This I Am has dawned on you and you stand apart from it as a witness with no participation in any of its activities whatsoever.

The ‘I am’ is your greatest foe and greatest friend, foe when binding to the illusion as body, friend when taking out of the illusion as body.

-Nisgardatta

We’ve all asked ourselves, who am I, why am I me, why do I exist, how do exist, why do I have consciousness? Of course, most of us come up with thinking answers such as belief in God and afterlife and the purpose of life. If you want to get to the truth, ask the question who am I. This is not a philosophical inquiry. It is simply abiding in the sense of you. Ask the question, but don’t answer it verbally. Simply abide in the feeling of I AM. For any thought or emotion or sensation—any mindstuff—you can simply ask: To whom does this thought occur? To me. What am I? Don’t answer verbally. Don’t answer with ideas or thoughts or beliefs. Abide in the sense of I AM’ness or awareness.

Why does this make us present? There is no doubt that I am consciousness. You may have convinced yourself of many things: you may believe in God, in religion, in Science, in afterlife, in reincarnation, heaven, hell, good , evil...but the sense of I AM is a reflection in the mind of Awareness, and it’s something we can know without the least bit of doubt. This is the original thought; all thoughts are built on the foundational thought of I AM.

Ask yourself: How do I feel? Try to watch what happens. You will bring up an image of yourself. You will try to see what you feel. The feeling and the image will modify each other. Can you see this? Now ask the question again, and this time, do this in a relaxed Awareness. You are not trying to figure it out. Be non-verbal about it. Can you see what is happening? Can you see that emotions and the self-image modify and affect each other? Where is the ‘I’ in all of this?
To see this, you can even control your emotions, and you will see that it affects the image of self. Droop your shoulders, tilt your head down, feel sad. Now ask how do I feel? Do you see the mechanism at work? Now lift your shoulders, open your eyes wide, look up, feel happy. Light up you chakras. Ask how do I feel? Does a different self-image come up?

We can think of this inquiry as a natural progression. Attention first is on external objects, then on internal objects such as thoughts and emotions. These are the perceived. Then attention turns to the perceiver. This is the sense of I AM. When attention lights up attention, this is self-inquiry.
Send out loving-kindness. Send out compassion. Send out gratitude. Feel compassion and gratitude and loving-kindness and friendliness. Feel that you are truthful, positive, and compassionate in thought, words, and action. Send out this feeling to your loved ones, and ones who have wronged you, and ones you have wronged. Send it to anyone.

End you your meditation with this metta meditation.

At any time in the day allow the feeling of metta—of compassion, love, kindness, friendliness, honesty—to rise. Allow the feeling to rise and send it out—mentally zap another person with it and see what happens. Zap your waitress, the attendant at the store, the grocery cashier, loved ones—do it quietly without expectation, and see what happens.
I hope you enjoyed reading this as much as I enjoyed writing it.

The key techniques are:

- Awareness Now or Being Present or Observe Thought, and
- Release

That’s all you need.

Please visit [www.beyond-karma.com](http://www.beyond-karma.com) for free articles and more ebooks.