



EXPLORING MEDITATION

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Creation

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Introduction

This book has been written as an accompaniment for those who attend my Exploring Meditation classes. It does not include everything we cover during the meetings but offers you some theory and a number of exercises for “everyday meditation”.

This workbook is purely an introduction and a stepping stone to enable true meditation – TRUE meditation allows the mind to empty and complete silence reign. Not surprisingly, meditation takes years of practice to develop.

There are many forms of meditation, some of which are deeply spiritual. I hope that you use this workbook as a step towards a deep and meaningful meditation practice.

Within this guide we will be exploring :

- Guided meditation. Sometimes called visualization, you are taken on a journey to form mental images of places or situations.
- Focusing your attention – this uses breathing, candles or a mantra to prevent distracting thoughts
 - Postural methods – using poses and mudra’s (hand positions)
- Chakra’s – energy centres of the body, associated with sound, colour, mental, physical and emotional issues.
- Mindfulness – or having an increased awareness of the present moment - this may include silence, exercise, walking or the flow of your breath. Mindfulness enables you to observe your thoughts and emotions without being attached to them

In appendix II I have offered a selection of different forms of meditation. The Exploring Meditation Group covers a selection on “non-religious” approaches, whilst my Healing Meditation Group explores “spiritual” formats.

Enjoy!

What is Meditation?

Meditation has been used in the East for thousands of years where it forms a central part of spiritual practice and discipline. Recently, the Western world has recognised the important or meditation, although many choose not to use for spiritual practice but to achieve “silence between thoughts” allowing you to soothe the “monkey mind” that clutters our attention with thoughts and worries. This workbook offers non religious meditation techniques to help you to achieve “silence between thoughts”.

Through out this booklet I offer various visualisations, breathing and postural practices to enable you to quieten the mind. It is a good idea to practice meditation in some form on a daily basis because it encourages the mind to “quieten and eventually relax”. I feel it is important to emphasise that meditation can be done anywhere – and I will help you develop awareness so you can enter this “silent space” even when washing the dishes or walking the dog!. There is no instant “fix” with meditation and each experience will be different – after all we feel many things throughout one day! In addition, we form habits which take time to change so do not be hard on yourselves – just remember to live in “the moment”.

I am always being asked the following - Does meditation have to be spiritually based? Fundamentally, the answer to this is No. Meditation can be used purely to allow yourself head – space by achieving inner peace and calm and subsequently personal empowerment which is deeply powerful and often life changing. Because of the powerful impact meditation can have, it often connects with a spiritual experience. This can lead to an “inner knowing” and develops intuition, which in turn introduces a spiritual aspect and so an adventure!. I am a Reiki Master/Teacher and practice spiritual meditation myself. For whatever reason you choose to meditate what is important is making a habit of regular meditation practice to develop personally and/or spiritually. Remember:

Meditation is a personal journey
There are many forms and techniques
It is not competitive but does require practice
It does not have to be spiritual or religion based

When Should You Meditate?

There is no set time, but if you are doing it ensure you cannot be interrupted. It is best to make it a regular part of your schedule. Create a space and just do it! Start with just 10 minutes a day and ultimately progress to 20 minutes twice a day – it makes all the difference!

Benefits of Meditation

Teaches us to gradually distract our thoughts so we can experience a sense of inner peace and relaxation.

**Enables our mind to feel lucid and spacious
We feel refreshed.**

Meditation enables the incessant flow of distracting thoughts to be calmed through concentrating on the breath. When the turbulence of distracting thoughts subsides and our mind becomes still, a deep happiness and contentment naturally arises from within. This feeling of contentment and well-being helps us to cope with the busy-ness and difficulties of daily life. So much of the stress and tension we normally experience comes from our mind, and many of the problems we experience, including ill health, are caused or aggravated by this stress. Just by practicing a breathing meditation for ten - fifteen minutes each day, you are able to reduce this stress. It is possible to experience a calm, spacious feeling in the mind, and many of your usual problems will fall away. Difficult situations will become easier to deal with, you become naturally warm and well disposed towards other people, and I have found relationships with others gradually improve.

There have been over 1000 research studies since 1997 which attest to meditation and it's wide range of measurable improvements in human functioning. Dr Herbert Benson MD, a Professor of Medicine and the founding president of the Mind Body Institute, who has co-authored more than 170 scientific publications and seven books reports that "meditation induces a host of biochemical and physical changes in the body collectively referred to as the 'relaxation response'. The relaxation response includes changes in metabolism, heart rate, respiration, blood pressure and brain chemistry". (Science,1997)

Physically it has been shown to support the immune system, support reduction of addictions, reduce the need for orthodox prescriptive medicine, balance the heart and circulatory system

- ✓ Reduce the use of prescriptive drugs
- ✓ Reduce chronic pain and muscle tension
- ✓ Reduce emotional anxiety and the respiratory rate
 - ✓ Decrease elevated blood pressure
 - ✓ Reduce cholesterol
 - ✓ Reduce cortisol and stress levels
 - ✓ Reduce substance abuse
 - ✓ Increase concentration and
- ✓ Increase longevity and quality of life.

It also helps us to rise above all the conflicting emotions, hopes, desires, anxieties and fears that shape and sometimes distort our thinking. Through regular practice we learn how to enter a still space in the mind in which we call appreciate that all these feelings are transient and ultimately unimportant in the scheme of things. From this perspective we discover what really matters. By listening to silence we are able to bring clarity of mind, cope more effectively with stress and become more tolerant and loving.

References:

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Castillo-Richmond A, Schneider RH, Alexander CN, Cook R, Myers H, Nidich S, Haney C, Rainforth M, Salerno J. Effects of stress reduction on carotid atherosclerosis in hypertensive African Americans. *Stroke*. 2000 Mar;31(3):568-73

Herron RE, Hillis SL, The Impact of the transcendental meditation programme on government payments to physicians in Quebec, an update. *Am J Health Promot*. 2000 May-Jun;14(5):284-91

THINGS TO REMEMBER:

**Meditation is non competitive – it is a journey of self discovery but to enable
It to happen regular practice is necessary!**

Once learnt meditation is a tool which can be used anywhere

**It's perfectly normal for thoughts to bubble up whilst meditating. You don't need to do
"anything" – just guide your attention back to your breath when you realise the mind has
wandered off.**

"Mindfulness"

– getting to know the here and now.

The aim is to become absorbed by what you are doing. It's concentrating on the "here and now", becoming aware of how the here and now is affecting you. Practising "mindfulness" can be doing anything at all including posture work, sitting, breathing, exercise, walking, even doing the washing up or watching a butterfly in the garden. It does not mean "analysing" the sensation or focus but being aware of it. i.e

during walking meditation you become aware of each step you take and the soles of your feet on the ground.

Practices:

Postures:

There are various postures that can be used in meditation, lying down, sitting, kneeling and in the lotus position.

Lying down: Lie on your back on the floor. You may need a cushion under your head or knees if you suffer with a bad back. Arms and hands on the floor but palms should be facing upwards. This is an excellent position to begin meditation with although there is a high chance you will fall asleep!

Sitting:

Chair needs to be firm and upright. Sit down, feet on the floor, ideally shoes should be off. Your whole body should be comfortable, poised but relaxed, hands resting on your knees or in your lap. Your spine should be erect, with your chest open and heart lifting upwards. Your neck should be relaxed and your chin slightly tucked in. defocus your eyes

Alternatively you can buy a meditation stool or block or zafu and sit on this with your legs crossed on in one of the poses below. However many people find this uncomfortable at first and some develop cramp.



Yoga has two very important meditative postures - Padmasana (Lotus Pose) and Siddhasana (Adepts Pose). These postures are great tools for effective meditation. They help in calming the nervous system as well as help in attaining physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual stability.

Padmasana (Lotus Pose):

In the seated position, first carefully place the right foot onto the left thigh. Then take hold of the left foot and place it onto the right thigh. Keep the body erect with both knees touching the floor. The hands are to be placed either with hands or wrists resting on the knees, or the hands placed between the heels, the right hand resting in the left hand.



Swastikasana (Ankle lock Pose):

The word 'Swastika' means prosperous in Sanskrit, and is said to bring prosperity,

success, and good health to the practitioner. Stretch the legs in front of you. Bend the right leg at the knee, and place the right heel against the groin of the left thigh so that the sole will be lying in close contact with the thigh. Now bend the left leg and place it against the right groin. Insert the toes of the left foot between the right calf and thigh muscles. Now both feet can be seen to lie between the calves and thigh muscles. The hands are placed in Padmasana.



Sukhasana (Easy pose):

Simply crossing the legs and keeping the head and trunk erect. The hands are placed as in Padmasana.



Vajrasana:

Sit upon the heels, keep the trunk, neck and head straight. Keep the knees together with the palms of the hands resting upon the knees, or with the right hand resting in the left hand upon the lap.



The 10 Step Protocol

1. **Get Settled** - in your posture
2. **Breathe Deeply** – 5 deep, audible breaths breathing in deeply and exhaling completely or using the “breath exercises”
3. **Check In** – Settle into your body. Observe your posture, acknowledge your senses: notice anything you can smell, hear, taste and sensations of hot or cold.
4. **Scan your Body** – Slowly turn your mind inwards. Scan your body from head to toe, observe any tension or discomfort. Don't change what you find, just acknowledge it. Scan again, but this time take note of which parts of the body feel relaxed. (take about 20 seconds for each scan). Turn your awareness to your thought. Notice any thoughts arising without attempting to alter them. Gently note your mood, just become aware, don't judge yourself.
5. **“Contemplation”** Consider “why” you are meditating today – take a moment to consider the wider effects of being mindful today. How will it better your life? Allow yourself to step back from life, slow yourself down.
6. **Observe your breath** – do not change it, just observe it rising and falling, focus on the quality of the breath.
7. **Grounding**
8. **“Meditation”** using a led visualisation. Or watching something i.e. in mindful mode or whatever.
9. **“Being”** – allowing your mind to be free
10. **Preparing to finish**

Breath Work:

Many of the ancient schools knew the importance of breath. We are once again being given this ancient knowledge in order that we might use it to raise our vibrations using a very simple technique. You can meditate using your breath, this is a very mindful form of meditation and an excellent technique which is manageable on a daily basis. I offer a few meditation exercises below:

Pre-meditation:

At first, your mind may be very busy, you may even feel as if the “breathwork” is making your mind busier; but in reality you are just becoming more aware of how busy your mind actually is. Try not to follow the different thoughts as they arise, just acknowledge that thought and let it go..... remain focused on the sensation of the breath. If your mind wanders and starts to follow any thoughts that arise, just return to the breath once more, repeating this as often as necessary until the mind settles on the breath.

Pre-meditation or simple breathing technique:

It is important to spend time preparing yourself for meditation. I encourage all my students to spend 5-10 minutes doing the following exercise before the Earth breath and using a visualisation or meditation.

Close your eyes and take a few deep breaths, drawing the breath deep down into your chest, feeling your rib cage and chest expand. Hold the breath for the count of 2 and then let it go slowly, starting from your chest, through your rib cage and down into your abdomen. Repeat three times.

Now I would like you to allow your breath to return to normal – just become aware of your breath, listening to it your quietly, aware of the inhalation and exhalation through the nostrils. Do not force the breath, just sit with your eyes partially closed and turn your attention to your breath. Breathe naturally, through the nostrils, without attempting to control your breath, try to become aware of the sensation of the breath as it enters and leaves the nostrils. This sensation is our object of meditation. We should try to concentrate on it to the exclusion of everything else. Sitting quietly, take your awareness into your body. Become aware of your breath, do not interfere with it or control it. Let your mind settle into the swell of the breath, like a small boat at anchor, gently rising and falling with the sea.

Additional Breathing Exercises and Techniques:

You may use these simple practices lying down, walking, standing, or sitting – try to do one of them for 10 –20 minutes per day.

Counting the Breath: Begin silently counting the breaths: 1 as out inhale, 2 as you exhale, 3 on the next inhalation and so on up to 10. Then start again. Continue until the timer has sounded. (you need a little clock or some kind of time for this)

Earth Breath: Magnetises and grounding. You can use this to prepare yourself before meditation. The Earth’s magnetism gives strength and you can do this with your feet on the ground or lying on the couch if you are able to use visualisation. Breathe in and out through your nose, letting go with each exhalation. Imagine drawing the Earth’s magnetism through the soles of your feet and palms of your hands. Take the breath up the spine

and as you exhale imagine the light travelling down the spine, letting go of any tension and sleepiness.

Water Breath: Releases feelings, letting go.

Breathe in through the nose and out through the mouth. Imagine a waterfall washing over you and the water flowing through you – with each exhalation it flows through you

Fire Breath: Energising and lifts us out of depression

This is the light breath and it can energize and lift us out of depression. Breathe in through the mouth and out through the nose. Visualise the solar plexus as a furnace that you stoke as you breathe in. As you breathe out imagine radiating light out through the heart centre, shoulder blades, crown and base centres and sides of the body.

Air Breath: For clearing out the cobwebs from the mind.

Breathe in and out through the mouth. Imagine your thoughts as a pile of leaves forming a point up at the “third eye”. Breathe in and focus on the third eye. As you breathe out imagine it as a wind that scatters over a huge expanse

Meditation Gaze

Whilst many people choose to meditate with their eyes closed, it is possible with your eyes open – the Brahma Kumari's actually suggest you maintain a gaze inward towards your third eye.

Alternative forms are lowering your eyes, - you do not need to close them but do not focus on anything. Another form is the yogic practice of Trataka

Trataka -

Trataka means steady gazing. It is a very simple and beautiful Meditation Technique.

Method:

In this a regular candle is used, however any other object of choice can be used (e.g. a flower – see visualisation 4). The candle is set up at an arm's distance, level with eyes, and steady gazing is first done with the eyes open. After some time, the eyes are closed, and the after image of the flame is 'gazed at' with eyes closed at the eye brow centre. Try not to move through out the practice. Relax your breath , let it lengthen, deepen.

This open gazing of the flame and then with the eyes closed is alternated a couple of times before concluding the practice.

If using a candle for Trataka, the gaze should be fixed at the wick tip and not on the flame.

Benefits:

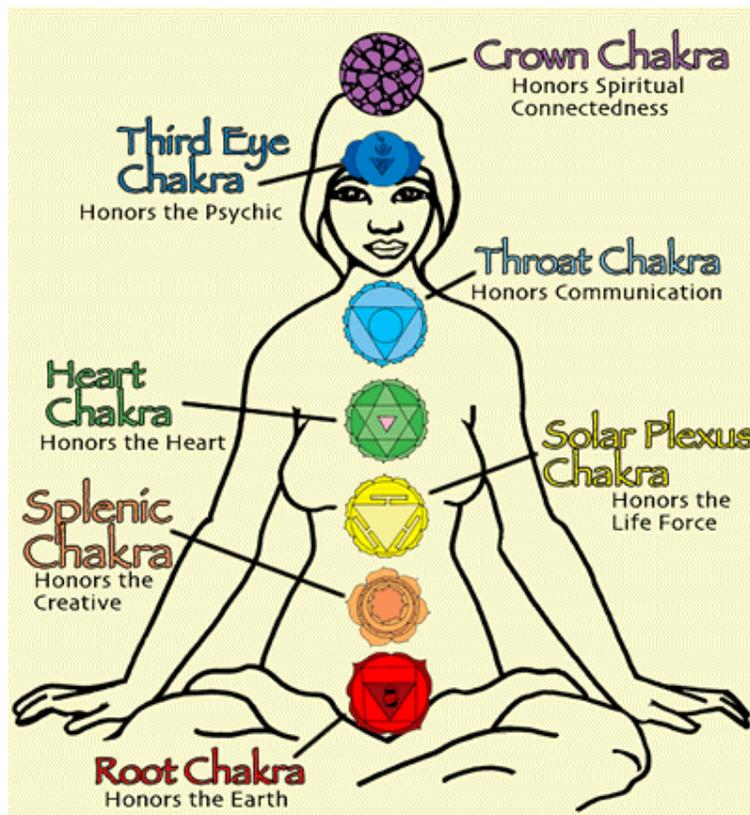
- * This form of practice is believed to help improve the optic function, both external and internal, such as poor eyesight and visualization abilities.
- * It helps develop concentration and mental resolve.
- * Develops the ability to maintain focus amongst the noise and distractions of daily life.
- * Supports the development of Intuition.

Chakra's

The Chakra system is vital in all sorts of yogic exercises, including meditation. The Five Tibetan exercises (link later) are based on the core energy of the seven chakras.

The term "Chakra" comes from the Sanskrit word *chakram*, which means "wheel". They are called this because they appear as whirling disks of light which are the primary energetic centres. They are located along the spinal pathway and are connected by three major energetic pathways which run from the base of the spine to the top of the head, conveying energy from one chakra to another. The sites of the seven main charkas correspond to the sites of the main glands forming the endocrine system, which produces hormones in the body and react to stress, both internally and externally. Chakra's mediate all energy within, coming into and going out of the body. They play a major part in the distribution of energy for the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual aspects of our being.

I would recommend that once you have established your breathing technique and feel comfortable meditating you actively work with the Chakra's. I would also recommend you increase your knowledge of chakras by reading on the subject. Caroline Myss has written an excellent book called "Anatomy of Spirit" which explains energy anatomy at a much deeper level. Below is an illustration of the chakras and their associated colours.



Chakras are also associated with sound, organs, mental, physical and emotional issues. I offer a table below explaining them a little more.

Chakra / Colour	Organ	Mental and Emotional Issues	Physical Dysfunction
Crown (7th) (top of head) Violet Sound: SILENCE	Upper brain, right eye and pineal gland, skin, skeletal and muscular	Ability to trust life. Spirituality and devotion. Values, ethics and courage Humanitarianism, selflessness. Ability to see the bigger picture, faith and inspiration	Energetic disorders, mystical depression, chronic exhaustion that is not linked to a physical disorder. Photo-sensitivity, extreme sensitivity to auditory and environmental factors
Third Eye (6th) (between and just above eyes, ie. centre of forehead) Indigo Sound: Aum	Lower brain, left eye, nose, spine, ears, pituitary gland	Self-evaluation, clairvoyance, truth, intellectual abilities, feelings of adequacy, openness to new ideas, ability to learn from experience, emotional intelligence	Brain tumour/stroke, neurological disturbances, blindness/deafness. Spinal difficulties, learning disabilities, seizures
Throat (5th) Blue Sound: HAM	Throat, thyroid, trachea, mouth, neck vertebrae, oesophagus, parathyroid and hypothalamus	Self expression, communication, creativity, sense of responsibility, addiction, judgment and criticism, capacity to make decisions	Throat, mouth and gum difficulties, swollen glands, thyroid irregularities, scoliosis, joint problems
Heart (4th) Green/pink Sound: YAM	Heart, lungs, circulation, thymus gland, shoulders and arms, ribs, breast, diaphragm	Centre of the emotions, love and hatred, grief and anger, self-centredness, loneliness and commitment, forgiveness and compassion, hope and trust. development and compassion	Congestive heart illness including heart attacks, lung diseases and disorders, asthma/allergy, upper back and shoulder issues
Solar Plexus (3rd) Yellow Sound: RAM	Abdomen, upper intestines, stomach, liver, gall-bladder, kidney, pancreas, adrenal, spleen, middle spine, solar plexus	Trust, fear and intimidation, self esteem and self-confidence, self-respect, care for oneself, personal honour, sensitivity to criticism	Arthritis, gastric and duodenal ulcers, colon/intestinal problems, diabetes, pancreatitis, indigestion, eating disorders, hepatitis, adrenal dysfunction
Sacral (2nd) Orange Sound: VAM	Reproductive organs, large intestine, lower vertebrae, appendix, bladder, hip area	Blame and guilt, money and sex, power and control, creativity, ethics and honour in	Chronic lower back pain, sciatica, gynae issues, pelvic illness, sexual potency, urinary problems
Root (1st) Red Sound: LAM	Physical body support, base of spine, legs and bones, feet, rectum, immune system	Will to live, physical family and group safety and security, feeling "at home", social and familial law and order, survival	Chronic and acute lower back issues, depressions, varicose veins, rectal cancer and bowel issues, depression, immune related illness

References:

Reiki 1 Handbook - Justine Evans
 Reiki by Tanmaya Honervogt - Gaia Books 1998
 Anatomy of The Spirit - Caroline Myss, Bantam Books 1997

Mudras

Mudras are an ancient system of precise gestures that are often used in meditation and yoga. They are believed to develop energy circuits within the body to be used in healing and promoting higher states of consciousness. It is believed there are 24 basic mudra's and are intended to link the individual pranic force with the Universal force. The Sanskrit word for Mudra means "seal". In yoga these hand positions "seal" the energy flow in the body.

It is believed there is a chakra in the centre of the palm that emits an electro-magnetic ray. The hand is like a miniature universe representing the complete system. In both Buddhist and Yogic systems the right hand represents the SUN and the left the MOON. The Sun represents intelligences and the moon meditation.

The Five Elements

In both hands the fingers represent the five elements:

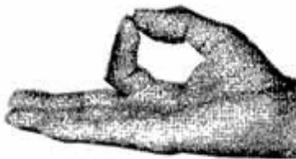
THUMB:	Sun
INDEX FINGER	Air or wind
MIDDLE FINGER	Sky or space
RING FINGER	Earth
LITTLE FINGER	Water

Mudras are believed to help control the 5 elements in our bodies as they create energy waves which help to balance the 5 elements and some consider are able to cure disease whether they are physical, mental or spiritual. During my research it would seem that there is conflicting evidence as to how long and often you should hold a mudra for but like all meditation I believe practice is elemental and so hold the mudra for as long as it feels comfortable.

Anjali Mudra

Press both palms firmly together

Neutralises the positive (male) and positive (female) side of the body. By connecting we bring both hemispheres of our brains into balance. You will see that this is the same as the prayer position.



Gyan Mudra

Place the tip of the thumb on the tip of the index finger while the other fingers remain relaxed and extended. Do this with both hands and place them on the thigh in a relaxed position. When the fingers point upwards it is called a Chin Mudra and when they are pointed downwards it is called Jnana Mudra.

Most used in meditation and during chanting Om and the Gayantri Mantra. It is considered effective in cases of mental ailment, imparts happiness, the intellect develops, memory is sharpened.



Apaan Mudra

Bring the tips of the middle and ring finger to the tip of the thumb,
To cleanse the body and remove constipation and skin disorders



Prana Mudra

Join tips of ring and little finger to the tip of the thumb.
Prana Mudra activates the root chakra and increases vitality. Also used to route awareness and energy throughout the body, it is also called the energy mudra. .



Prithvi Mudra

Join the tip of the ring finger to the tip of the thumb.
Makes body sturdy. One experiences happiness – considered to help remove all kinds of physical and mental weaknesses, maintains energy, freshness and happiness, removes limited thinking and vibrates stamina, vitamin and mineral disorders, anaemia, anorexia, IBS, personality disorders, lack of love or being underweight.



Ling Mudra

Place both palms together and clasp the fingers. One thumb remains upright and encircled by the thumb and index finger of the other hand. Keep both hands in front of the chest .



Varun Mudra

Joining the tip of the small finger to the tip of the thumb whilst keeping the other fingers straight and touching each other.

Effective in treating disorders connected with water, considered to help purify the blood.



Lotus Mudra

Lotus Mudra belongs to the heart chakra and is the symbol of purity. It is believed that Lotus Mudra is synonymous to opening towards the Sun, the divine principle. Moreover this mudra is practised when you feel drained, misunderstood, or lonely.

Lotus Mudra is practised by placing both hands in front of the chest so that only the edges of the hands and pads of one's fingers touch each other. This forms the bud of the lotus flower. Open the hands, but maintain the contact between the tips of the little fingers and the outer edges of the thumbs. The next step follows of spreading the other fingers open as wide as possible. After four deep breaths, one may close both hands back into a bud, place the fingernails of the fingers of both hands on top of each other; now join the backs of the fingers, the backs of the hands, and let the hands hang down relaxed for a while. In the same way, bring hands back into the bud and the open flower. This process can be followed repeated a number of times.

References:

<http://www.healthandyoga.com/html/news/mantra.html>

<http://www.mumuyoga.com>

The Healing Power of Mudras – Rejendar Menen

Visualisations

All forms of mindfulness, visualisations and meditations should be entered into once you have spent some time on posture and breathwork. As you develop you can also add mudra's and mantras. I have offered a few examples here but we use many different formats within the group – especially mindful silent walks during the summer months.

1. Progressive relaxation: Helps quieten the mind.

Close your eyes and take a few deep breaths, drawing the breath deep down into your chest, feeling your rib cage and chest expand. Hold the breath for the count of 2 and then let it go slowly, starting from your chest, through your rib cage and down into your abdomen. Repeat three times.

Now I would like you to allow your breath to return to normal – just become aware of your breath, listening to it your quietly, aware of the inhalation and exhalation through the nostrils. Do not force the breath, just sit with your eyes partially closed and turn your attention to your breath. Breathe naturally, through the nostrils, without attempting to control your breath, try to become aware of the sensation of the breath as it enters and leaves the nostrils. This sensation is our object of meditation. We should try to concentrate on it to the exclusion of everything else. Sitting quietly, take your awareness into your body. Become aware of your breath, do not interfere with it or control it. Let your mind settle into the swell of the breath, like a small boat at anchor, gently rising and falling with the sea.

It is time to go on a journey. I would like you to visualise yourself beside a peaceful calm lake, beside the side of a mountain. Find somewhere to sit, perhaps on the grass or a rock close by. Above you the sky is blue and you can feel the warmth of the autumn sun on your back. It is so relaxing here, you feel mesmerised by the calmness of the water, the soft lull of the lake moves in a gentle rhythm from the mountain breeze, reflecting the sky and clouds like a mirror. The sun casts shadows of the tall conifers onto the lake. Just stay here a while, watching the reflections in the lake. Enjoy the serenity and natural life.

A beautiful white bird lands beside you. You watch it as it finds its way down to water side to have a drink. It seems totally unaware of your existence, it is free from all life's challenges. Once it has waded in the water and enjoyed a drink it takes off, flying over the lake. You watch it shadow reflect in the water. After the bird has passed you notice how the lake does not hold onto the image of the bird, but only reflects the clouds and sky just as clearly as before. It mirrors only what is "present" - at this moment, it does not hold onto past actions.

We will stay here for a while now, just watching the lake, allowing thoughts to pass by, neither concentrating on them, nor thinking about them, just acknowledging them – allowing them to pass like the clouds.Your mind remains clear – just like the calm lake. **Remain focused on the sensation of the breath...and the stillness of the lake. Breathe into this present moment, viewing anything that arises as a detached witness,**

It is time to leave now. Slowly, allow your mind to leave the lake and slowly become aware of the music gently playing in the background, here in this room. When you are ready I would like you to start to become aware of your physical body. Become aware of any sensations that you can feel within your body - become conscious of your mood. Acknowledge how you are feeling right now.

Very gently take a deep breath into your lungs. Feel your chest rising and then sigh out the breath as you re-connect back into yourself. Picture the room outside your closed eyelids, keep breathing

in deeply and our completely. Wriggle your fingers and toes, stretch your arms in front of you and really bring yourself back. When you are ready allow your eyes to open and come back into the here and now.

2. Passive Visualisation: Uses the imagination as a key for unlocking the unconscious

At The Harbour Meditation

Make yourself comfortable in your chair. Get yourself into a good position for meditating: so your back is nice and straight, feet spread out flat on the floor and your hands resting gently in your lap or on your legs. Close your eyes and allow yourself to go inwards. Sit up so that your chest is open and feel your heart is lifting upwards. Softly let your body begin to ease and let go.

Close your eyes and take a few deep breaths, drawing the breath deep down into your chest, feeling your rib cage and chest expand. Hold the breath for the count of 3 and then let it go slowly, starting from your chest, through your rib cage and down into your abdomen. In essence we are breathing in deeply and exhaling completely. We shall repeat three times. By the way, this is supposed to be a natural movement!

To help us release residual tension and let go we will visualise a wave of calm and relaxation washing over us using the Water Breath:

Breathe in through the nose and out through the mouth. Just spend some time focusing on this breath. As you inhale imagine water filling your body, rising from your feet and as you exhale the water gushes out of the crown and falls from you like a great waterfall – cleansing and releasing tension and negativity. We shall repeat this breath at least 5 times.

When you are ready I would like your breath to return to normal - become aware of it as a point of focus but do not attempt to change it.

I would like you to imagine that you are standing looking out on a picturesque little harbour. The sun is bright in the sky. It is shining down on you and you can feel it warm against your skin. The small harbour has little boats tied up out across the water. They bob up and down on their moorings, nodding and waving to you. As you look out over the water, the sun twinkles on the smallest little waves that lap the sides of the boats. The wooden decking that is on the harbour edge is bleached and salty in the sun. The boats are all different shapes and sizes and colours - and have their poetic names painted on their sides. The ropes and sails of the boats brush against their masts and make a continuous tinkling sound as the light breeze makes them nod back and forth.

You feel so still and serene as though you do not have a care in the world.

Look out across this peaceful scene and take in the sights and sounds. You may wish to wander along the harbour edge, or find yourself a bench to sit down and really absorb this special place. We will stay here for a while – in silence other than the natural sounds, which you may notice around you.

It is time now to leave the harbour. Stand up and take a last look around. Remember the boats, with their bright colours and tinkling ropes. Look up at the sky and absorb a last piece of sunshine. Feel the sun drenched decking under your feet before you

go.

Then very gently take a deep breath into your lungs. Feel your chest rising and sigh out the breath as you re-connect back into yourself – letting the harbour go. Become aware once more of your feet on the floor beneath you. Breathe in and out of your nose. Imagine drawing the Earth's magnetism up through the soles of your feet as you inhale. Take the energy up your spine and return it to the Earth down the spine and through your arms and legs on the exhalation. I shall repeat this two more times to help ground you. Now picture the room outside your closed eyelids, keep breathing in to fill up your lungs and feel yourself back in the room. Wriggle your fingers and toes, stretch your arms in front of you and really bring yourself back. When you are ready allow your eyes to just fall open and come back into the room.

3. Path Working Meditations: Similar to passive visualisation it uses the imagination as a key for unlocking the unconscious and receiving insights through symbolic images and experiences

Evening Walk

It is a clear, frosty, moonlit night and you are walking through a wood. You see the tall trees stretching far above your headyou hear the wind in the branches.

As you walk deeper into the woods you come to a clearing where there is a huge tree – It feels as if you are in the centre of the wood:

The roots of this magical tree, reach down to the centre of the earth and the branches reach up to heaven. It is the tree of life.

The tree has a light of its own. You reach out and touch the tree. You become one with it. Imagine developing roots from the soles of your feet. They reach down to the earth. You feel grounded and strong. As you become one with the tree, allow your consciousness to travel up the trunk and the branches which reach the sky.

From here you can see all around you, the wood, beyond the country and further across the world and up into space. As you look out observe the surroundings, breathe, listen, maybe there is a message for you.

What is your message? It may come in the form of a sound, object, feeling, emotion, thought pattern, just go with it. Do not force it, if nothing comes do not worry, just return to your breath or continue your walk in the woods until you see something that you feel you can relate to.

When you are ready, allow yourself to return to the base of the tree, imagine your “roots” returning to the soles of your feet and gradually withdraw from the tree. It is time to leave this place now, start to walk away from the centre of the woods, with each step becoming more aware of the earth beneath you. You feel vibrant and alive. Breathe deeply and exhale completely, become aware of the music playing in the background and being here in this room. Wriggle your fingers and toes and open your eyes when you are ready.

4. Active Meditation - "focusing on a flower". Focusing on the image then recreating it in your inner vision.

As you're sitting here, just allow yourself to relax. Close your eyes. Take a deep breath and exhale completely. Hold the inhalation for the count of 3... and let go. Allow yourself to breath normally and naturally through the nose. Spend some time becoming aware of your breath, do not force it, just listen to it or become aware of how the air draws in and out of your nostrils. Just sit here, quietly, allowing your mind to calm down.....acknowledging any thoughts that may rise but allowing them to blow away like the breath. When you are ready we are going to visit a garden.

I would like you to imagine that you're standing in a garden.... and looking around you notice the garden has many beautiful trees and flowers.... The garden may be one you know or somewhere you suddenly find yourself in. Do not dwell on it, but become aware that you feel comfortable and safe here. As you look closer, you notice that there are steps leading down to a small area where there is a rather comfortable looking seat. Just stop for a moment and take a deep breath... as you do you feels an overwhelming sense of relaxation and peace.

In a moment we will walk down the steps and with each and every step you go deeper and deeper into relaxation.

So let's begin...stepping onto the first step now. As your foot touches down...you feel yourself becoming calmer.

Down onto the second step ...you feel comfortable and at peace.... knowing that this is your time to relax

As you step down onto the third step.... You feel free from all concerns

As your foot reaches for the fourth step...you feel your chest rise and release any residual tension. Total calmness drifts through your entire body.

You walk to the bench and sit down. As you sit you notice the scent of the flowers close by. You pick one. Now open your eyes and take a close look at it. Notice its natural beauty.....its colour.....petals..... Stem.....leaves.....is it thorny or smooth?Its scent..... How is each petal formed.how does it make you feel?.....are there any similarities to it and your life?

Just allow yourself to be totally transfixed with the flower. When you wish close your eyes once more and be aware as to whether you can see the flower as clearly in your mind's eye.....just stay here for a while now., in your minds eye or physically looking at your flower.

It is time to leave this tranquil place now.....imagine putting your flower down and getting up from the bench. You walk along the path and out of the garden.....back into the here and now. Slowly become aware of the outside noises and your body. Become aware of your breath once more.....Wriggle your fingers and toes and open your eyes when you are ready.

5. Chakra Meditation:

Pre-meditation exercise: Breathe in to the count of 4 and hold this breath for 4 counts then exhale slowly. Repeat – allowing your mind to calm.

Sitting quietly, take your awareness into your body. Let your breathing resume its own rhythm, without interfering with or controlling it. Let your mind settle into the swell of the breath, like a small boat at anchor, gently rising and falling with the sea. As best you can, relax each muscle as you bring awareness to it

As you relax into the rhythm of your breath, envision yourself in your own special sanctuary. It may be a garden, a waterfall or a meadow. This is the place in your mind's eye where you feel safe, secure and at peace. As you sit or lie here I would like you to become aware of your body. Tighten your toes and relax them, then your hands and release them. Squeeze your shoulders up towards your ears and release them. Just allow that tension to go.....release.....you are safe and relaxed. With each exhalation allow any remaining tension to be released. Just let it go.

As you inhale again, I would like you to hold the breath for the count of four. As you hold it imagine a golden white light penetrating the top of your head. This radiant light travels all over your body – to every organ, to the tips of your fingers and toes. As you exhale slowly imagine the light pushing any pain or discomfort or residual tension out through your mouth - see it as grey mist.

As you spend time sitting in your sanctuary feel the golden light once more enter your body and merge with the natural energies of your physical body.

Starting at the base of your spine, now imagine the golden light coming up from the earth. It travels up through the soles of your feet and up to legs, blending with the red energy of the root chakra to bring vitality to your body. The red stimulates your circulation and removes any blockages from your blood. It passes through the adrenal glands, dissipating any worry and you begin to feel relaxed - any fatigue that you have been feeling has gone. Breathe in to the count of 4 and hold this breath for 4 counts then exhale slowly returning the light to the Earth. Repeat

On the inhalation the golden energy from the Earth travels up through your soles of the feet once more, up through your legs and base chakra to the sacral centre. Feel the golden light blend with orange as it travels up your body, The light surrounds you kidneys, gall bladder and spleen, re-balancing and stimulating. Your courage is strengthened and inhibitions dissolved. Once more, breathe this visualisation in to the count of four and release. Repeat once more.

On the inhalation the golden energy from the Earth travels up through your soles of the feet once more, up through your legs and base chakra, through the sacral centre and into the solar plexus , where it turns to a beautiful yellow light. Allow the bright golden, yellow light to permeate your liver, colon and intestines.. Feel the calmness and purification it brings. Once more breathe this visualisation in, holding each breath for the count of four before releasing slowly. Repeat

Now the cosmic energy moves into your heart chakra, you feel optimism as the golden light turns to green. It opens your sense of peace and love. If you have blood pressure or heart problems the green ray of light brings healing. Emotional problems are neutralized and you feel safe and comfortable. Breathe this visualisation in - holding each breath for the count of four before releasing slowly. Repeat.

On the inhalation the golden energy from the Earth travels up through your soles of the feet once more, up through your legs, your base chakra where it turns red, sacral centre turning to orange yellow at the solar plexus, green at the heart and now blue as it reaches your throat. As it reaches .

Become aware of how easily you can communicate and be yourself. Your creative abilities are unlocked - breathe this blue light into your throat area, hold you inhalation for the count of 4 before releasing slowly, allowing the blue light to permeate the whole throat area.

Allow this blue energy to rise higher, towards your third eye in the centre of your forehead. Here it becomes a beautiful indigo light which purifies your vision and disperses any fears. Once more breathe this beautiful indigo light into your third eye, hold the inhalation for the count of 4 before releasing it slowly. Allow the indigo colour to permeate around your forehead. As you exhale allow the indigo to travel down to the throat area as it turns blue, as it reaches the heart as it turns green, as it reaches the solar plexus it turns yellow, orange as it reaches the sacral centre and red at the root. As you exhale the light returns to golden white, travels down through your legs and feet and returns once more to the Earth.

It is time to stop counting your breath. Allow your breath to adjust, do not try to manipulate it in any way, just allow it to be at ease. As you inhale this final time imagine the golden energy from the Earth travelling up through your soles of the feet once more, up through your legs and base chakra, through the sacral centre solar plexus, heart, throat and third eye, and eventually reaching the top of your head. Here a violet flame emerges and mingles with the golden white light to treat any nervous conditions.

When you are ready I would like you to let the violet light fade now, and allow the golden light to travel down from the top of your head, down through the third eye, the throat, the heart, the solar plexus, the sacral centre, root chakra. Imagine it travelling down through your legs and feet and returning to the Earth once more. Now imagine disconnecting from this light, feeling strong and grounded. I would like you to leave your personal sanctuary and allow yourself to be transported back to the room – to the here and now. As you sit here, in quiet contemplation, I would like you to smile inwardly to yourself and watch what happens. Become aware of how you feel. When you are ready wriggle your fingers and toes and rock your hips gently from side to side, open your eyes and slowly become accustomed to the room once more.

6. Mindful Meditation

Here are some simple mindful exercises for you:

Breathing:

Pre meditation or the elemental breathing exercises as on pages 10-11

Exercise:

Pre meditation exercises as we do in class or the Tibetan 5 exercises (see page 28), or become mindful during your own chosen exercise – swimming, running etc

Walking:

Go outside or to a park and walk silently. Become totally engrossed with each foot step – becoming aware of the soles of your feet touching the ground.

Sound:

Listen to bird-song, Tibetan bells, wind chimes or some soothing music. Allow yourself to become immersed in it. Alternatively use a mantra, repeating a mantra or chanting the chakra sounds (Lam, Vam, Ram, Yam, Ham, Om)

Posture:

Become absorbed into the way you are sitting/standing/posture. Include a mudra - become mindful as to how it feels, its meaning.

Mantras

Mantra Meditation is an easy form of meditation and can be practiced by anyone at anytime and under any conditions.

A Mantra is a grouping of sound vibrations, which have an effect on the mental and psychic consciousness. Although traditionally given by a Guru, the practitioner may choose his own mantra. An important criterion for mantra selection is that it must appeal to the mind fully when spoken verbally. Mantra chanting creates powerful vibrations, which are said to be directed to the right "*chakras*" to attract divine forces. This process is said to mysteriously heal the spiritual, physical & psychological body. It is important that when the mantra is chanted, the words and their rhythm must be enjoyed and one must surrender oneself to this experience.

Mantras do not have to have any specific meaning. Their power lies not in the meaning of the word but through the vibratory effects of the sound that they produce when spoken verbally or mentally. However a mantra can be a positive affirmation which you understand and repeat to yourself – such as "I am loved" or "All is well"

The most common way of practicing Mantra Meditation is performed by repeating a mantra in sync with the rotation of a mala but you can do it without the use of a mala. A mala is a rosary of 108 beads where each bead is turned after the mental or audible recitation of the mantra and is effective because it provides an anchor to bring the mind back as it experiences wavering thoughts and this is one of the most recommended forms of meditation for the beginner.

Transcendental Meditation (TM) introduced by Maharshi Mahesh Yogi is also a form of Mantra Meditation where the participants are provided with their own personal Mantra.

For the purpose of this booklet I have offered a few suggestions for mantra work – see mindful exercises (page 25) and Appendix 1 – none of these include complex Tibetan or Buddhist mantras although we do use these within the Healing Meditation group. I would recommend that you cut or type the mantra's out and keep them as cards. Shuffle the cards and without looking choose a card. Practice with this card regularly, starting with just a few minutes daily and increasing to a maximum of 20 minutes twice per day. Some disciplines recommend that you repeat a mantra for forty days.

Within both my meditation groups we work with mantras regularly.

Aids to Support Meditation

Aids that you can help to make your meditation easier including creating the right atmosphere to encourage calm, focused attention and a time and place for your practice. As we have already established breathwork and posture is also important!

In addition you could consider any of these:

Group work: joining a group is ideal because it encourages you to work with others and commit to regular meditation.

Room: If you are privileged enough you could have a “special” room at home to meditate in – no telephones, computers etc. It should be a time when you will not be interrupted. You can add soft lighting, candles, comfortable seat etc to support your practice. Shoes should not be brought into the room.

Specialised seating arrangements: The use of specialised meditation seats such as Zafu’s, meditation stools, cushions, yoga mats, a special chair – if you are sitting in a chair please ensure your feet can be placed on the floor.

Timer: You may find it easier if you use a timer

Postures including mudra’s

Sacred smells: Incense has been valued for thousands of years for religious and spiritual ritual – cleansing and bringing about altered states of consciousness. You could also burn aromatherapy oils or apply them to your skin, via massage or on acupressure points or chakras (providing they are blended). I have found these to be an excellent aid. Frankincense, petuli, jasmine and sandalwood are the best known for meditation.

Sounds: Vibration through personal sound – Aums. The use of Tibetan singing bowls, wind chimes, natural sound and bird song, meditation Tibetan cymbals, soft music, meditation audio CD’s or classical music especially Mozart, raises the mind to a more spiritual level. You could also use prayer beads if you’re repeating a mantra or chant or practicing Transcendental meditation.

Subconscious: I mean this by using CD’s which work by by-passing the conscious level of the mind which acts as a barrier to deeper mental levels. One of these is an American programme called The Silva Method which helps you to reach the Alpha state. There are others that are programmed with instructions which are too quiet for the conscious mind to hear but which are received and acted upon by the subconscious.

Energy Essences: By this I mean flower and energy remedies which you take internally – look for Spagyric, Australian Bush, Bach etc which operate on a subtle level increasing spiritual awareness

Journal Writing: please do keep a journal of each meditation experience – you will see how you are progressing!

Pre meditation exercises:

To encourage energy levels and to work “mindfully” I recommend some pre-meditation exercises – which we as a group do at the beginning of practice. These are done sitting in a chair and do not require specialised clothing. For those of you who are interested I would also suggest you look at the “Tibetan 5” – an alternative exercise programme.

The Tibetan 5

As explained already the Tibetan 5 exercises are connected with the Chakras. We do not practice these within the meditation group as they are not suitable for all the group members – however here are some links for you to explore them yourself. There are a number of variations available –

http://www.mkprojects.com/pf_TibetanRites.htm

<http://www.lifeevents.org/5-tibetans-energy-rejuvenation-exercises.htm>

Recommended Reading List:

All can be purchased from Cygnus-books.co.uk, amazon etc

Meditation For Beginners - Jack Kornfield

Insight, or vipassana meditation is the time-honoured skill of calming the emotions and clearing the mind for higher understanding. Created especially for beginners, renowned teacher Jack Kornfield offers a straightforward method for bringing meditation into your life. Using the six guided meditations on the included CD, you will discover how easy it is to use your breath, physical sensations - and even difficult emotions - to create tranquillity and loving kindness in your everyday life.

In Light of Meditation - Mike George

Meditation is more an experience than something that you do, more a process than an achievement, more an inner journey than a destination. *In the Light of Meditation* offers an introduction to the art and practice of meditation known as Raja Yoga practiced by the Brahma Kumaris. A series of ten practical lessons cover some deep ground, including rediscovering the true identity; exploring the different levels of consciousness; understanding the natural laws that govern the universe; a spiritual understanding of how the dance of life on earth has evolved; and how to support meditation with the right lifestyle. The book is accompanied by a CD of guided meditations

Start Now - Rudolph Steiner

Rudolf Steiner's vast contribution to human knowledge was based on his ability to conduct 'spiritual research': the investigation, through clairvoyance, of the metaphysical dimensions of existence. The source of everything he did and taught was meditation. Drawing on many Western traditions, Rosicrucian, alchemical, esoteric Christian, Masonic, philosophical and Theosophical, Steiner developed a system of meditation designed to enable the user to follow the path of knowing to its greatest heights. Structured in chapters that lead the reader from basic instructions and practices to more advanced work with verses, meditations and visualizations, it is an indispensable text for all those interested in the deeper levels of meditation.

The Art of Meditation - Matthieu Ricard

The Art of Meditation Matthieu sets out to talk you through the theory, spirituality and practical aspects of meditation. *The Art of Meditation* demonstrates that by practising it on a daily basis you can change your understanding of yourself and the world around you. He illustrates each stage of his teaching with examples, meditations and sources of inspiration, leading you deeper into your own practice. Through his experience as a monk, his close reading of sacred texts and his deep knowledge of the Buddhist masters, Matthieu Ricard shows the significant benefits that meditation can bring to each of us.

The Mindful Manifesto - Dr Jonty Heaversedge & Ed Halliwell

The Mindful Manifesto, is the first book to integrate the latest scientific and medical research on mindfulness with meditation's historical context. For thousands of years Eastern traditions have taught meditation to help people lead healthier, happier lives. Now, scientific research is confirming that mindfulness can help us all improve our mental and physical well-being.

Healing Mantras - Thomas Ashley-Farrand

Mantras are simple chants or short phrases packed with energy and intention. Thomas Ashley-Farrand has practiced mantra based spiritual practices since 1973 and offers an illuminating book explaining why and how mantras work.

The Healing Power of Mudras - Rajendar Menen

"Mudras" are "yoga of the hands" which have been recognised for centuries as a simple yet effective healing tool. This book examines Mudras and teaches practice methods.

Appendix 1 - Mantra Words

I AM LOVE	HEALTH	LAM
I AM HAPPY	PEACE	VAM
I AM HEALTHY	CLARITY	RAM
I AM GRATEFUL	GRATITUDE	YAM
I AM PEACE	LOVE	HAM
I AM GENEROUS	TRANQUIL	AUM
I AM COMPASSIONATE	SILENCE	PROSPER
MAY I BE FILLED WITH LOVING KINDNESS	BALANCE	
MAY I BE WELL	NURTURE	
I RELEASE ANGER	TRANSFORMATION	
ALL IS WELL	FORGIVE	

Appendix II Meditation Practices

Exploring Meditation Practice Methods (non -religious based)

Mindfulness Including walking	Breath work	Mudra's	Mantras	Silence
Active visualisation	Passive visualisation	Path working	Mandalas	Visual meditation
Chakras	Symbols and Sound	Music	Contemplation	Flame/Flowers

Healing Meditation Practice Methods

Reiki	Mindfulness	Tibetan, Krisna, Buddhist Mantras	Mudra's	Mandala's
Third Eye Opening	Aura	Chakra's	Angelic	Crystals
Symbols	Conscious Awareness, connecting with Higher Self	Reiki Global Peace	Energy Cleansing	Silence, Sound,

There are many forms of meditation - including

Various forms of Buddhist meditation

Vedic

Tibetan

Transcendental Meditation

Zen

Brahma Kumaris

Burmese

Hindu

Krishna

Yoga Nidra

WHERE TO GO FROM HERE:

Meditation groups: 24 Munster Road, Teddington Middlesex TW11.

See www.justineevans.co.uk for details or www.creationfertility.com or sign up for my FREE newsletter which will include dates at www.creationfertility.com or contact@justineevans.co.uk.

Healing Meditation: Alternate Tuesdays 7.30 p.m. – 9 p.m. Spiritual practice. Aimed for those who have some knowledge or experience of meditation and who wish to practice within a spiritual format. Meditations include practices such as Global Peace, Mudra's, Mantra's, Raja Yoga, Prayer Beads, Mandala's, Mindfulness, Silence, Walking, Crystals. Each class includes: Thought for The Day, Observing the Breath, Guided Meditation, Silence or Mantra Chant, Reiki Healing, Herbal Tea, Reflection

Exploring Meditation – meets alternate Tuesday evenings 7.30-9p.m. Non-religious based meditation. These classes introduce you to various meditation practices to help obtain “silence between thoughts” – these include mindfulness, visual, auditory, postural, walking, sound, vibration and silence. Each class includes: **Simple Theory**, Observing the Breath, a guided Visualisation Meditation and concludes with a period of reflection, herbal tea, questions and answers. Suitable for everyone.

About Justine Evans

Justine Evans, BSc. Nut. Med is a Naturopathic Nutritional Therapist and Natural Health Practitioner who specialises in fertility and family health. She is also a Reiki Master/Teacher and meditation teacher, qualified to teach adults. Justine has been a student of meditation for many years and passionately believes meditation is essential to maintain good health.

Justine's approach to health is truly "holistic", blending her modalities to offer a unique approach to health. Justine practices from two clinics, offers individual consultations and 1-2-1 meditation sessions, allergy and food sensitivity screening, nutritional workshops and meditation classes.

Her meditation classes are currently held on a Tuesday evening at 24 Munster Road, Teddington

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