



Essential Elements of Meditation Practice

In this series, we will explore three essential elements in meditation practice: cultivating a compassionate motivation, letting go of expectations, and sharing the positive results of our practice with others. These qualities help ensure that our meditation practice will have the greatest possible impact on our own lives and our ability to help others.

Below you will find more information on these topics, as well as suggested readings from Mingyur Rinpoche's books and simple instructions for daily meditation practice. Links to related teachings and downloadable guided meditations can be found at <https://learning.tergar.org>.

January 12, January 19, January 26, 2021 ~ Forming a Compassionate Motivation

Though we tend to focus on the things we say and do, it is our underlying motivation that often dictates whether our actions bring about positive or negative results. If we take the time to cultivate the wish that all beings find true happiness, and let this intention guide our actions, then even seemingly insignificant endeavors can have powerful effects. This is especially true in meditation practice. When imbued with a compassionate motivation, something as simple as paying attention to the breath can become deeply transformative. **Reading:** *Joy of Living*, pp. 189-192

February 9, February 16, February 23, 2021 ~ Letting Go of Expectations

Once we have formed the intention to help all beings find true and lasting happiness, we are ready to begin the main practice of our meditation session. One of the key points in meditation is to drop any expectations concerning what should or should not happen when we meditate. Experience is always changing by its very nature, so there is no need to pin our hopes on a particular experience. The intention to be aware and present is the important thing. Beyond that, we can simply do our best and not be too concerned about what happens in our meditation session. **Reading:** *Joy of Living*, pp. 129-132 and 136

March 9, March 16, March 23, 2021 ~ Sharing the Results of Practice with All Beings

At the end of any spiritual practice, we can expand its benefits by dedicating any positive outcomes to the happiness of all beings. This strengthens our connection to others, reminding us that they share our basic hopes and expectations. It also nurtures the impulse to share our good fortune rather than holding onto it for ourselves alone.



Reading: *Joy of Living*, pp. 198-200 (beginning on the last paragraph)

~ Daily Meditation Practices ~

Sitting meditation practice¹

- At the beginning of your meditation session, *reflect on your motivation*:
 - Recognize that all beings want to be happy and free from suffering, just as you do.
 - Think to yourself, "I am going to meditate now to discover my true nature and help all other beings do the same. May we all experience lasting peace and happiness."
- With this motivation, let go and *rest in open awareness* for a minute or two:
 - Relax your mind and remain present, without trying to focus on anything in particular or control your mind, yet not lost in thoughts either.
- As you rest in awareness, *bring your attention to the sensations in your body*:
 - You do not need to concentrate or focus intensely, simply be aware of these feelings as they come and go.
 - When you notice an expectation that you should be experiencing something other than what is happening in the present moment, simply take note of this attitude and recognize that this reaction is just a passing experience.
- For the last few minutes, let go and *rest again in open awareness*.
- To conclude, *reconnect with your open-hearted motivation*, thinking to yourself, "Whatever good has come from this practice I freely share with all beings. May this bring them great peace, happiness, and freedom from suffering!"

Meditation in action

- When you wake up, and throughout the day, form the intention to bring peace and happiness into the world.
- Remind yourself of this intention as often as you can:
 - Pick specific moments to remind yourself, such as during breaks, at meal times, or when you get up to do something.
 - Place reminders, such as sticky notes or stickers, around your home and office in places where you will see them frequently.
- When you remember this intention, think to yourself, "May what I am about to do bring peace and happiness into the world. May it help all beings to discover their true nature and be free of suffering."

¹ If you are new to meditation, we recommend that you start by meditating twenty minutes each day, either in one session or two ten minute sessions.



- Reaffirm this intention throughout the day.

~ Teachings, Guided Meditations, and Other Resources ~

Online Readings

- [Loving-kindness and Compassion](#) by Mingyur Rinpoche

Online Videos

- [Transforming Anger into Loving-kindness](#) by Mingyur Rinpoche
- [What is Meditation?](#) by Mingyur Rinpoche

Online Audio Teachings

- [Transforming Anger into Loving-kindness](#) by Mingyur Rinpoche
- [Expectations and Reality](#) by Cortland Dahl
- [Bodhicitta: The Vastness Of The Heart](#) by Myoshin Kelley