

"If you are depressed you are living in the past. If you are anxious you are living in the future. If you are at peace you are living in the present. " - Lao Tzu

June 14, 2017 | 701 upvotes | by [marcustomp](#)

[removed]

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Comments

Jekyllisgone • points • 14 June, 2017 01:30 PM **[recovered]**

"If you're depressed and anxious, you're living like me." - Me

lets_move_to_voat • points • 14 June, 2017 02:40 PM **[recovered]**

Ah yes, the famous beta philosopher, Me Irl

chewingofthecud • 25 points • 14 June, 2017 01:37 PM

Two points:

This is not a Lao Tzu quote that I recognize.

Low time preference (preferring future to present satisfaction) is what builds civilization. High time preference (the reverse) is the mark of the child, the progressive, and the dog.

BareFistEmpiricist • 11 points • 14 June, 2017 03:21 PM*

Distinction: Living in the present VS living for the present.

To elaborate, there is a difference between denying instant gratification in view of long term objectives and being cognitively encumbered by anxiety or depression.

Baltais • 17 points • 14 June, 2017 12:03 PM

Don't just use meditation, be mindful throughout a day! At first i used just 15min meditation before sleep, now i practice mindfulness every single moment (when i remember to do so), and i see a big difference and faster progress.

youkickmyd0g • 0 points • 14 June, 2017 03:58 PM

I started reading a book recommended on TRP 'The Flinch'... the flinch is not remembering. The flinch is what makes you hesitate to do what you know you're to do. Throws a little excuse in, etc. I should pick that back up. I was self taught as a kid, never let that bitch Flinch have anything on me. Went to Uni in my 20s and became beta as fuck. Untraining it now... getting back to roots and possibly surpassing my 17 year old self now in my early 30's. I need to finish that book... but if you're looking for one, I recommend it... if nothing else the first section that I sampled gave a memorable account of the bitchifier the Flinch.

kalmuah • 4 points • 14 June, 2017 03:16 PM

Namaste from India, nice post sir. I would like to correct a statement and add a few of mine, piggybacking your post. Correction :

The kind of meditation I'm about to describe is called: Mindful Meditation or Vipassanā in Buddhism

Vipassana yoga is not by Buddhism, its brought by Hinduism later it was spreaded to all Dharmic religions.

Piggybacking this post I would like to add, for beginners Vipassana shouldn't be the first yoga to start with, just like in gym we don't start with heavy weights the very first day. First condition your mind like your body, then practice detachment, after a few months you wouldn't even have to practice Vipassana, it would come to you naturally. To condition your mind :

1. Practice Sirshasana or headstand for 2-min initially, moving to 5-min and slowly to 10 min, daily.
2. Followed by Pranayam or breathing exercise for 5 mins or at max 7 mins not more than that, daily.

Once you feel comfortable doing both this exercise, it's time to practice detachment.

Detachment doesn't mean you have to be monk and go to jungle to be secluded from the outside environment. No, what you have to do is say *NO* to your temptations. For ex: if you're a beginner gym goer, you eat healthy but one day you feel like eating that cheese pizza with extra bacon which you know is unhealthy, have the capacity to say NO. My guruji used to say, our mind is like a monkey (always jumping here and there looking out for something thats tempting) and if controlled it's as powerful as a drunken elephant. When you'll be successfully able to this, you'll see when you're meditating, useless thoughts wont appear anymore. Here's a quote from Bhagwat Gita to end this :

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(Karmanye Vadhikaraste, Ma phalesu kada chana, Ma Karma Phala Hetur Bhurmatey Sangostva Akarmani)

Which roughly translates to : *You have the right to perform your actions, but you are not entitled to the fruits of the actions. Do not let the fruit be the purpose of your actions, and therefore you won't be attached to not doing your duty.*

Baltais • 1 point • 15 June, 2017 07:51 AM

What's the benefit for practicing headstand and pranayama before trying Vipassana ? Can you please explain a bit more on this ?

kalmuah • 2 points • 15 June, 2017 09:14 PM

both have different purpose: 1. Headstand or Sirshana : When you are doing headstand you are forcing huge amount of enriched oxygenated blood to go upstream towards your brain, which when done repeatedly, makes nerves more strong, helps in rejuvenating your brain. 2. Pranayama : It literally means Pran(life force)+ayam(to control). Controlling your breathing is the first step towards making your mind come in control. I cannot explain you in two simple lines its a huge subject. I would suggest you to google about it, you can read tones of articles.

Why I am suggesting both of this exercises before Vipassana is because Vipassana is a very advanced yogic technique. It deals with self realisation and understanding oneself. Just like you cannot see your reflection properly in a pond if there are ripples in there, same is in the case of your mind. You cannot find yourself if you're already disturbed. Every thought of that hot girl you met today, that missed trade opportunity you should've bet, that call to the closest friend, is going to create ripples in your mind. So its difficult to sit there and meditate silently with all this thoughts jumping around. Just like in Muay Thai you condition your bone, your skin, before the main training you do that with your mind too. I hope I have been able to explain it to you properly.

Baltais • 1 point • 16 June, 2017 07:30 AM

Thanks for the answer! I myself am practicing yoga with some pranayama exercises in the morning for some time now, and doing meditation and living mindfully. Is it important which pranayama exercises to use in this case? I usually do breath of fire, for 1-2mins x3 times.

kalmuah • 1 point • 16 June, 2017 08:58 PM

Pranayam is about comfortability. There are total 8 types of it. I cannot give you the exact english terms for those 8 since I am not familiar with how west interpreted those yoga names(for the first

time i am hearing breath of fire, later on searching i realised its kapalvati). Kapalbhathi should not be done if someone have heart or lungs problem. Similarly each and every other pranayams should be taken with proper precaution otherwise it will create adverse effects.Its good if you can practice all 8, but if you dont have time do the 3 basic ones, Kapalbhathi, Anulom Bilom and Bhramri. (sorry i dont know there english names) and the repetitions and sets that you're doing is enough.

jorgander • 2 points • 14 June, 2017 03:05 PM

Meditation doesn't do much for me, but kudos to those who have gotten it to work for them. Some nitpicks about your diction:

Mindfulness is the ability to know what is happening in your head in any given moment without being carried away by it.

This is not simply mindfulness, but *self* mindfulness, or more generally *self awareness*.

This gives you the ability to respond wisely to any event.

Probably you mean to say it gives you the *opportunity* to respond wisely. Simply mastering your fear doesn't mean you automatically acquire wisdom. We all know people that are fearless, but also dumb. Lack of fear does not equal lack of stupidity.

SILENTSAM69 • 2 points • 14 June, 2017 01:13 PM

I use to listen to Allan Watts videos on YouTube. There is some good advice to be found in Taoism.

vertilius • points • 14 June, 2017 01:09 PM **[recovered]**

I read part of a human mind/ego advice book and I think my biggest problem is balancing being a responsible human whilst caring about as little as possible. If you just purely live in the present and do too good a job you won't even pay your bills on time because the future is stressing you out and you shouldn't be thinking about it. I know I'm probably over-extrapolating.

youkickmyd0g • 2 points • 14 June, 2017 04:03 PM

My answer to this has been habit, perhaps a little ritual now that I have a ton of good habits. Each day should be 5% better than the day before, meaning you execute everything you practiced the day before 5% better so have a little variety. Law of exponential growth applies. J Peterson covered this literally years after I'd been working on it, but he goes on to say that "at least at the end of your life you're not wretched" as opposed to people who just let themselves rot and get bitter. As soon as you let go of the routine everything else starts slipping too, you know?

AHotBustyAngel • 1 point • 14 June, 2017 03:38 PM

I would add that 15 minutes a day is obviously a nice goal to shoot for, but if you've never tried meditation of any kind, it might just piss you off. When I started meditating three months ago I could hardly sit still and find any sort of "quietness" in my mind for even a couple of minutes, but I kept at it. Now I can easily meditate and really get into the zone for 10-15 minutes and am working toward 20 minute sessions.

If you find meditation difficult don't hold yourself to a standard you can't reach. If you can only stand it for a few minutes but you gave those few minutes your best, call it a day and try again tomorrow.

To quote a line from Bojack Horseman, "Every day it gets a little easier. But you have to do it every day. That's the hard part. But it does get easier."

jefeperro • 1 point • 14 June, 2017 03:51 PM

I need some wabi sabi in my life

youkickmyd0g • 1 point • 14 June, 2017 04:09 PM

I pretty often experience life 'turning on' when I meditate 'Anytime'. It's really weird, but I only say that because I've spent long periods of my life relatively totally asleep. Totally asleep, I feel like I came alive for the first time as an adult just a couple years ago, such as in a body that's been dormant. I remember times when I was younger where it was this 'me' but was hiding in a shell most of the time. Now that I can analyze behavior better, I see that most people in my life were 'abusive' and I lost my discernment. Meditate or die.

drunknihilist • 1 point • 14 June, 2017 04:15 PM

Soooo I have a couple questions about this. First, regarding "If your are depressed, you're living in the past" - but don't we learn from the past? Isn't that what experience is about? It sounds like I should just be forgetting anything that has happened in the past, but I can't imagine that that's really a good idea? Same goes for the second part, "If you are anxious, you're living in the future" - well, yes we're all brought up to think about our future, what's important to us and how to achieve that - and being anxious about things that might hinder us from developing the way we feel is right for us, seems like a natural thing?

I've heard and read about meditation several times, but it's always been a "your inner voice is wrong, don't listen to it" kind of thing, and I'm just wondering why that would be a valid statement? What's so wrong about it, if it's a naturally occuring thing that happens to everyone, that (probably) separates us from other animals that don't have the same capability?

I understand that it makes many things 'easier' as it's a way to be less emotionally or logically invested in things that you may or may not be able to change, but isn't that kind of the same as just stopping to care about things, but instead just accepting the way things are and thus, changing yourself to accept your environment instead of trying to change your environment, which we humans are pretty damn good at (for better or worse, depending on the human)?

TheSecondLesson • points • 14 June, 2017 11:43 AM **[recovered]**

I'm sure these methods are great. From personal experience, I would recommend anyone who is really serious about meditation to check out Transcendental Meditation. There have been over 300 studies done by over 200 independent universities about its benefits. Very powerful shit. It can help you with almost any ailment you have, from insomnia to asthma to even crazy shit like ulcerative colitis. It's backed by very powerful people, some of the top celebrities in the world practice TM. They brought it to a prison once and got all the prisoners doing it, and violence went WAY down. Bottom line, there was just too much proof for me to give it a go. I've tried it, and this stuff really does work.

vorverk • 13 points • 14 June, 2017 12:39 PM

Everytime you hear someone talking about quantum phisycs or string theory in the same lecture as consciousness, just run away.

[deleted] • 1 point • 14 June, 2017 03:12 PM

Hey, everything is quantum when you get down to it!

saijanai • 1 point • 15 June, 2017 07:34 AM*

Everytime you hear someone talking about quantum phisycs or string theory in the same lecture as consciousness, just run away.

Look up John's record publishing Quantum Field theory and other physics articles.

His essay—*Is Consciousness the Unified Field?* (pdf)—was widely read in the theoretical physics community when he first published it, I have heard, though of course, few, if any, actually accepted his arguments.

jimmyhandle • 1 point • 14 June, 2017 01:31 PM

Great post, OP. thanks for sharing.

loofy_goofy • -4 points • 14 June, 2017 01:50 PM

'The mind is just a tool for you to use and the voice inside it it's not you. You are the one that is aware of it, the one that can hear it.'

The voice is you and the one that is aware of it is you. Both of them are you. Your stomach pain and your blood pressure is You too. You = Your body.

Meditation is good since it may reduce amygdala size and help with anxiety and depression. There are many other ways like using meds, or balance diet or reduce stress or getting out pathological relationships (no amount of meditation will save your ass from let's say BPD girl)

The depression might be qualified as living in the past since it may be guilt burdened however you can have depression about future like 'my life would be shitty and painful from now on'. Anxiety is definitely not 'living in the future'. Are you living in the future when you have panic attack in public?

I also have doubts that this is the Lao Tzu quote, sounds more like Alan Watts and he was wrong unfortunately.

Meditation is so much overrated in all 'self-improvement' communities. It's nice tool and nice way to spend time once you accustomed, but nothing more. Meditation won't bail you out of everyday problem.

There is nothing magical or superb in meditation. I actually prefer massage chair as a tool for daily relaxation. They expensive as fuck, but worth your money.

"Stay scientific, Morty"

InstigatingDrunk • 2 points • 14 June, 2017 03:24 PM

Most retarded thing I've read today. Now I have to do 15 minutes of meditation to cleanse myself

[deleted] • 1 point • 14 June, 2017 03:08 PM

staying scientific: it literally changes the physiology of your brain.

No, it won't fix your life problems but will help you deal with them by changing how you relate to your problems.

It's like, you can't keep a hoe from cheating on you but you can change how you'll deal with her cheating (not giving a fuck).

loofy_goofy • 1 point • 14 June, 2017 03:51 PM

If you won't give a fuck when your girl is cheating on you then maybe you don't need this girl at first place.

It is changing the physiology of your brain. Here is a list of things that will change physiology of your brain:

1. drugs
2. booze

3. sport activities
4. pills (SSRI)

Changing brain physiology is not a big deal.

timdo190 • 1 point • 14 June, 2017 03:13 PM

Meditation will make it so there are no everyday day problems you need to be bailed out from

loofy_goofy • 1 point • 14 June, 2017 03:49 PM

Meditation will pay your bills? Pay your taxes? Fix your relationships? Get you a raise in your job?

The whole experience is just a big joke. You sit in trance. Ok. It calms your emotions a little bit. Yes.

[deleted] • 2 points • 14 June, 2017 04:08 PM

Comments like these are why there needs to be a vetting process on who can and can't post in TRP.

timdo190 • 1 point • 14 June, 2017 04:42 PM*

Is oxygen necessary to continue living? (This is an equally stoopid question like the ones you asked) What is meditation besides being conscious of your breathing and all the thoughts and feelings that come from being conscious of doing that? Meditation makes solving all the problems you mentioned and formulating a plan much easier. When you're meditating and you become overwhelmed and aware of the seemingly insurmountable problems in front of you, taking a deep breath and flooding your brain with oxygen from your lungs into your bloodstream creates very subtle and beneficial changes. Doing this multiple times during meditation is like a feedback system where each time you take a deep breath you take yourself down a new path and see/think of new ways/approaches to solving the problems you mentioned that you didn't think of before you took a deep breath prior until you're thoroughly satisfied. Feeling and being aware of your emotions trough meditation and then taking a deep breath is like eating tons of protein and food to recover after a physical workout. If you're simply in a trance in meditation that means two things: 1) you're practically brain dead or 2) you have seriously repressed your emotions and natural thought processes probably because it's required to do so to make money in this country and socioeconomic system which deprives you of any semblance of spirituality

hepheuua • -1 points • 14 June, 2017 03:18 PM

By the time your brain has received and transduced your sensory input, converting it in to an 'experience', the moment has already passed. There's no such thing as the 'present', there's only the past.

[deleted] • 1 point • 14 June, 2017 04:05 PM

Our brains are not dual pentium 1.6ghz processors from 2006...

hepheuua • 1 point • 14 June, 2017 04:20 PM

Ever had someone say something to you, and you respond with "What?" and then immediately answer the question you were asked? That's because of the auditory 'latency' between you receiving a signal, and your brain actually processing it. The fastest neural impulses travel at around 100 metres per second, and that includes those associated with sensory processing. Everything you experience is on a delay. Your brain may be faster than a pentium from 2006, but it's still got to process the inputs.