

## How Free Do You Want To Be? ~Monte U.

Matt Talbot Retreat March 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>, 2025

### Let Go & Let God

As children bring their broken toys,  
with tears for us to mend.  
I brought my broken dreams to God,  
because He is my friend.  
But then, instead of leaving Him  
in peace to work alone.  
I hung around and tried to help,  
with ways that were my own.  
At last, I snatched them back again  
and cried, "How can you be so slow?"  
"My child," He said, "What could I do?  
You never did let go."

### Quotes:

***"The unexamined life is not worth living"*** ~Socrates.

***"Everything that irritates us about others can lead us to an understanding of ourselves"*** ~Carl Jung.

***"Be silent and listen: have you recognized your madness, and do you admit it? Have you noticed that all your foundations are completely mired in madness? Do you not want to recognize your madness and welcome it in a friendly manner? You wanted to accept everything. So accept madness, too. Let the light of your madness shine, and it will suddenly dawn on you. Madness is not to be despised or feared, but instead, you should give it life. Be glad you can recognize it, for you will thus avoid becoming its victim."*** ~Carl Jung

***"Knowing your own darkness is the best method for dealing with the darkneses of other people. One does not become enlightened by imagining figures of light but by making the darkness conscious. The most terrifying thing is to accept oneself completely. Your visions will become clear only when you can look into your own heart. Who looks outside, dreams; who looks inside, awakes."***

~Carl Jung~

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### Why Meditate?

Imagine the running man, forever chasing what he wants and running from what he doesn't want. He dies exhausted and unfulfilled. Meditation is an opportunity to step off the treadmill, relax, and reassess your priorities.

My friend Barbara B. says, "When you first start meditating, it's like being locked in the closet with the boogieman."

Thoughts racing, emotions raging, I think I'd be happier if I just stayed busy! Meditation is not for the timid. It takes courage to face yourself and your situation.

- Some of you just got back on the treadmill.
- If you are still interested, breathe.
- Pick a time when you will not be disturbed.
- Early morning is good for most.
- Ten minutes is good; twenty is better.

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- Relax your body. If you are unsure whether you are relaxed or tense, tense up and let it go.
  - Relax your mind. Try to watch your thoughts like clouds in the sky. Pesky thoughts can be written down and saved for later.
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- If it helps, use a mantra like Be Here Now, or I am love, loving, loved, and lovable. Try to make friends with your mind.
  - Relax your heart, and make friends with whatever emotions come up to be met. Get help if you need it.
  - Now you are at peace with your life, and we're just getting started.
  - Now, we can use this relaxed state to regroup and reprioritize, allowing us to relax and reconnect with our Source. Am I being of maximum usefulness to Source and my fellows? Am I following my heart? Am I open to deeper and richer experiences and understandings?
- We can do energy work in this space, Metta, or Chakras.

- One popular meditation is on Death.

What if I knew I was going to die 3 months from now or three years from now? What would my priorities be, and how would I live my life?

- The sky is the limit here.
- Let your life be your meditation.

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### "BUT I HATE MEDITATION!"

In meditation, your only 'job' is to be curious about what arises.

Don't try to get rid of any aspect of your experience.

Your crazy thoughts – just watch them.

Uncomfortable feelings – just breathe with them.

Cry with them. Laugh with them.

The part of you that hates meditation – be interested in it, too!

The child in you who can't sit still.

Who wants to be somewhere else?

Who feels ashamed or guilty for thinking 'unspiritual' thoughts or experiencing 'negative' feelings and impulses?

Who feels the burning desire to run away and do something else?

Welcome him with open arms.

Breathe him into love, and breathe love into him.

In meditation, even the unwanted is wanted; even your resistance is sacred!

~ Jeff Foster

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### True Meditation

True meditation has no direction or goal. It is pure, wordless surrender, pure silent prayer. All methods aiming at achieving a certain state of mind are limited, impermanent, and conditioned. Fascination with states leads only to bondage and dependency. True meditation is abidance as primordial awareness.

True meditation appears in consciousness spontaneously when awareness is not being manipulated or controlled. When you first start meditating, you notice that your attention is often held captive by a focus on some object, such as thoughts, bodily sensations, emotions, memories, or sounds. This is because the mind is conditioned to focus and contract upon objects. Then, the mind compulsively interprets and tries to control what it is aware of (the object) in a mechanical and distorted way. It begins to draw conclusions and make assumptions according to past conditioning.

All objects—thoughts, feelings, emotions, memories, and so on—are allowed to function naturally in true meditation. This means that no effort should be made to focus on, manipulate, control, or suppress any object of awareness. In true meditation, the emphasis is on being aware, not of objects, but of resting as primordial awareness itself. Primordial awareness is the source in which all objects arise and subside.

As you gently relax into awareness and listening, the mind's compulsive contraction around objects will fade. The silence of being will come more clearly into consciousness as a welcome to rest and abide. An attitude of open receptivity, free of any goal or anticipation, will facilitate the presence of silence and stillness to be revealed as your natural condition.

As you rest into stillness more profoundly, awareness becomes free of the mind's compulsive control, contractions, and identifications. Awareness naturally returns to its non-state of absolute unmanifest potential, the silent abyss beyond all knowing.

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### SOME COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT MEDITATION

**Q.** It seems that the central instruction in True Meditation is simply to abide by silent, still awareness. However, I often find that I am caught in my mind. Is it okay to use a more directed meditation, such as following my breath, so that I have something to focus on that will help me avoid getting lost in my mind?

**A.** It is perfectly okay to use a more directed technique, such as following your breath or using a simple mantra or centering prayer, if you find that it helps you avoid getting lost in thought. However, always strive for less and less technique. Make time during each meditation period to simply rest in silence, still awareness. True Meditation is progressively letting go of the meditator without getting lost in thought.

**Q.** What should I do if an old, painful memory arises during meditation?

**A.** Simply allow it to arise without resisting it or indulging in analysis, judgment, or denial.

**Q.** When I meditate, I sometimes experience intense fear. Sometimes, it overwhelms me, and I don't know what to do.

**A.** When experiencing fear in meditation, it is useful to anchor your attention in something very grounding, such as your breath or even the bottoms of your feet. However, don't fight against the fear, as this will only intensify it. Imagine that you are the Buddha under the Bodhi tree or Christ in

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the desert, remaining perfectly still and unmoved by the body-mind's nightmare. It may feel very real, but it is really nothing more than a convincing illusion.

**Q.** What should I do when I get an insight or sudden understanding of a situation during meditation?

**A.** Simply receive what is given with gratitude, without holding onto anything. Trust that it will still be there when you need it.

**Q.** I find that my mind is spontaneously forming images, almost like a waking dream. Some of them I like, while others are just random and annoying. What should I do?

**A.** Focus attention on your breathing down in your belly. This will help you not get lost in the mind's images. Hold the simple intention to rest in the imageless, silent source prior to all images, thoughts, and ideas. 🙏 Adyashanti

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### The history behind reading The Lord's Prayer at 12 Step meetings

It is mentioned in Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers that the prayer was used from the very beginning of the Fellowship, at least as early as 1938 and 1939. In those days, there was no AA literature, so the early groups relied heavily on existing prayers, the Bible, and Oxford Group literature for inspiration and guidance. Bill W. commented several times in his correspondence about the early use of the Lord's Prayer. He wrote a letter to a member in 1959 in which he stated: "This practice probably came from the Oxford Groups, who were influential in the early days of A.A. You have probably noted in A.A. Comes of Age what the connection of these people with A.A. was.

I believe that saying the Lord's Prayer was a custom of theirs following the close of each meeting. Therefore, it quite easily got shifted into a general custom among us." Bill also wrote the following in a 1955 letter: "Of course, there are always those who seem to be offended by the introduction of any prayer whatever into an ordinary A.A. gathering. Also, it is sometimes complained that the Lord's Prayer is a Christian document. Nevertheless, this Prayer is of such widespread use and recognition that the argument of its Christian origin seems somewhat far-fetched. It is also true that most AAs believe in some kind of god and that communication and strength are obtainable through his grace.

Since this is the general consensus, it seems only right that at least the Serenity Prayer and the Lord's Prayer be used in connection with our meetings. It does not seem necessary to defer to the feelings of our agnostic and atheist newcomers to the extent of completely hiding 'our light under a bushel.' However, around here, the leader of the meeting usually asks those to join him in the Lord's Prayer who feel that they would care to do so.

The worst that happens to the objectors is that they have to listen to it. This is undoubtedly a salutary exercise of intolerance at their current stage of progress. As Bill's 1955 letter indicates, recitation of the Lord's Prayer at meetings has clearly been controversial in some circles almost since the beginning.

The GSO has responded to letters on this issue since the 1940s and 1950s. It is continually addressed in articles in Box 459 and the AA Grapevine and has often been asked about at the General Service Conference.

For example, at the 1962 Conference, in one of the Ask-It Basket questions, this subject was broached: "Question: What is the procedure for dealing with individuals who refuse to stand during

