Overview
Who ‘invented’ meditation?

Core State of Meditation
At ease - Mindful, Awake, Observant - Compassionate, Caring - Connected

Frequently Asked Questions
When, how long - Health benefits - Psychological risks

Gateways into Meditation

Practices
Just being - Compassionate witness and loving presence - Know thyself, reflection, planning - Self-healing - Spiritual anatomy - Expansion of consciousness - Devotion - Seed thoughts, contemplation, enquiry - Energy work, metaphysics, journeying - Service, healing, prayer, forgiveness - Nature, the seasons

Managing Challenges
Practical strategies - Discernment

Teach and Lead
Preparation - Empathic resonance - Tone of voice

Checklists
Daily practice - Revision

Spiritual Companions Trust
Mission Statement
We believe that humanity is an evolutionary species with the potential to develop a global culture of love, wisdom and care for all.
And that spiritual health is the crucial fuel and inspiration for people to achieve their best and serve the whole community of life.
Our goal is that spirituality and spiritual health become as accepted, necessary and valued a part of everyday culture as diet, exercise and the arts.
We achieve this through providing world-class educational resources and programmes through an approach that is holistic, practical and person-centred.

spiritualcompanions.org

William Bloom is a UK educator and author in the field of spirituality and health. He has been researching and teaching meditation for over forty years. His background includes a two-year retreat. His many books include The Endorphin Effect and The Power of Modern Spirituality.
‘William Bloom has an encyclopaedic knowledge of meditation.’ The Independent williambloom.com
Liberation

Meditation is natural. How else could it have arisen in so many different cultures, geographies and times?
To be at ease.
To be watchful, observant and enquiring.
To be caring and compassionate.
To feel connected to the wonder and energy of life.
These are natural.

This handbook is the result of decades of exploring, practising and teaching meditation. There are many different meditation practices and traditions from all across the world. But at their core is a universal state.
So it is appropriate for meditation to be liberated from any association with just one particular tradition.

Albert Einstein is reputed to have said, ‘If you can’t explain it simply, you don’t understand it well enough.’ I have tried to take that approach in clarifying that there is a core and universal state to meditation — that there are many gateways into that core state; and that there are diverse meditation practices. But this simple model needs to be balanced with a recognition of prior experience and instinctive human skills is deeply encouraging for people developing their meditation practice. It is an educational error to learn the core skills of meditation — being at ease, observant, compassionate and connected — as if they are completely new practices.

This handbook takes a learner-centred approach to spirituality, which has been developed by the Spiritual Companions Trust, a UK educational charity. Our first enquiry is always: What works best for you? This approach is also incorporated in our Diploma in Practical Spirituality and Wellness, the first vocational qualification in this field to be on the Ofqual Register. The essence of our method can also be found in our companion publication Your Spiritual Health Programme. Members of the public looking for trained teachers who use our approach will find them via the Spiritual Companions Trust.

William Bloom
Glastonbury, Somerset
2019

Contents

Overview 3
Core State 7
Frequently Asked Questions 14
Gateways 17
Practices 25
Managing Challenges 31
Teach and Lead 36
Checklists 39

CHECKLISTS

Your Daily Practice

Where
When
Gateway
Posture
How long
Practice

Gateways

- Altered states of consciousness
- Aroma
- Arts, crafts
- Attitude
- Being, formless
- Body awareness
- Breath
- Catharsis
- Ceremony, ritual
- Clearing your desk
- Guided journeys
- Healing
- Imagery
- Making love
- Mantra, Prayer
- Movement, Yoga, Tai Chi
- Nature
- Relaxation exercises
- Sacred space
- Sound, Music
- Switch off TV
- Touch

Core State

- At ease
- Alert, mindful
- Compassionate
- Connected

Practices

- Just being
- Compassionate witness
- Loving presence
- Reflection, planning
- Self-healing
- Spiritual anatomy
- Expansion of consciousness
- Devotion, Prayer
- Seed thoughts,
- contemplative enquiry
- Energy work, metaphysics
- Healing
- Forgiveness, Tonglen
- Nature, seasons

Further Reading

Alice Bailey, Letters on Occult Meditation. (Metaphysics.)
William Bloom, Psychic Protection and Feeling Safe. (Boundaries.)
Ann Weiser Cornell, The Power of Focusing. (Body awareness, inner dialogue.)
Deb Dana, Polyvagal Theory in Therapy. (Physiology, trauma, therapy.)
Miguel Farías & Catherine Wikholm, The Buddha Pill. (Risks.)
Jon Kabat-Zinn, Full Catastrophe Living. (Mindfulness, mental health.)
Overview

Meditation is a natural human behaviour. It was not invented by one particular tradition. All across the world, in all cultures, women and men have followed their instinct to be still and calm. This is a crucial starting point for how we learn and teach meditation. We are not teaching a special ability. We are supporting the development of an innate behaviour.

Historically meditation schools were geographically and culturally isolated. The different traditions did not talk to each other or share their practices. Today we can explore all the diverse approaches and recognise their universal principles. At the same time we can dismantle some of the out-of-date cultural clothing and recognise that:

- Meditation is a natural human behaviour.
- It does not belong to any particular tradition.
- It is accessible to everyone.
- There are many different strategies/gateways used to enter into meditation.
- There is a universal core state of meditation.
- There are many different practices we can use once we are in the core state of meditation.

Many Gateways ➔ Universal Core State ➔ Many Practices
SO WHO INVENTED MEDITATION?

It is normal for people to seek quiet time and to enjoy the ambience of being emotionally and mentally still. So over thousands of years of human history who knows how many people have ‘invented’ meditation?

Here are three short anecdotes about ordinary people that illustrate how meditation could have been invented.

The Householder
A woman lives in a village in a house full of children and relatives. One day she feels an instinct to get away from the noise and activity. She walks until she finds a quiet spot under a tree by a stream.

She closes her eyes. She feels the tree against her back and the soft grass and earth beneath her. The breeze touches her cheeks. The sound of the stream is soothing. After a few minutes she feels some anxiety and accompanying thoughts about her family and neighbours. She feels an impatient urge to get up and go home. But there is an equal instinct to stay sitting quietly.

She sighs, notices tension in her chest and begins to breathe more softly.

She stays sitting quietly, just patiently waiting, letting her body and feelings become easier. This feels good.

She returns the next day. And the next day. And the next.

In the silence, her mind and her feelings are calm. Her psyche is able to contemplate, enquire and explore.

She is meditating.

No teacher. Just an instinct.

Do you relate to this story?  □ Yes  □ No
Meditation Masterclass
Handbook for Teachers and Practitioners
Essential knowledge and skills

Overview
Who ‘invented’ meditation?

Core State of Meditation
At ease - Mindful, Awake, Observant - Compassionate, Caring - Connected

Frequently Asked Questions
When, how long - Health benefits - Psychological risks

Gateways into Meditation

Practices
Just being - Compassionate witness and loving presence - Know thyself, reflection, planning - Self-healing - Spiritual anatomy - Expansion of consciousness - Devotion - Seed thoughts, contemplation, enquiry - Energy work, metaphysics, journeying - Service, healing, prayer, forgiveness - Nature, the seasons

Managing Challenges
Practical strategies - Discernment

Teach and Lead
Preparation - Empathic resonance - Tone of voice

Checklists
Daily practice - Revision

Spiritual Companions Trust
Mission Statement
We believe that humanity is an evolutionary species with the potential to develop a global culture of love, wisdom and care for all.
And that spiritual health is the crucial fuel and inspiration for people to achieve their best and serve the whole community of life.
Our goal is that spirituality and spiritual health become as accepted, necessary and valued a part of everyday culture as diet, exercise and the arts.
We achieve this through providing world-class educational resources and programmes through an approach that is holistic, practical and person-centred.

spiritualcompanions.org

William Bloom is a UK educator and author in the field of spirituality and health. He has been researching and teaching meditation for over forty years. His background includes a two-year retreat. His many books include The Endorphin Effect and The Power of Modern Spirituality.

‘William Bloom has an encyclopaedic knowledge of meditation.’ The Independent

williambloom.com