

Meditation script April 2016

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[Note from Emily: This is the script used to record our meditation held in New York on April 25, 2016, with Andrea, Jim, Maria, Kate, Sky, and me. It was written and read by me, and recorded and engineered by Andrea at Andrea and Jim's studio. Thank you, Andrea and Jim; and thank you, Kate, for putting us together; Sky for being there; and Maria, my mentor, for helping me edit this guided meditation. I borrowed from many meditations to write this one, with special thanks to George Lewis in Sarasota, Florida. George's longer meditation script was the basis for this New York version, and he graciously gave permission to use it.

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Our focus is to improve our conscious contact with our higher power, or God as we understand Him ... or your own our inner voice, your higher consciousness, your best self—whatever you're comfortable with.

To begin, we'll get into a spiritual focus with the Saint Francis Prayer, and I'll guide us into a meditative state. Then we'll sit for 15 minutes of silent meditation, and I'll bring us back from the meditation. The whole session lasts about 30 minutes.

To get started, let's pray the beautiful Saint Francis Prayer.

Please join me, if you like:

Lord, make me a channel of thy peace—that where there is hatred,
I may bring love—

That where there is wrong, I may bring the spirit of forgiveness—

That where there is discord, I may bring harmony—

That where there is error, I may bring truth—

That where there is doubt, I may bring faith—

That where there is despair, I may bring hope—

That where there are shadows, I may bring light—

That where there is sadness, I may bring joy.

Lord, grant that I may seek rather to comfort than to be comforted—
To understand, than to be understood—
To love, than to be loved.
For it is by self-forgetting that one finds.
It is by forgiving that one is forgiven.
It is by dying that one awakens to Eternal Life. *Amen.*

As we start to focus, close your eyes, get comfortable, and retain the feeling brought by our prayer. Bring it with you into meditation, as you begin listening for your higher power's wisdom.

Take a few deep, yawning breaths and bring your attention to your body. Begin softening and loosening your muscles, as you start to let the day go. It's okay to sit or lie in any position to get comfortable during your meditation.

Simply include any sounds you hear, such as hallway noise, birds singing, or rain falling, into your meditation.

A helpful meditation tool is to "follow your breath." And because you are seeking conscious contact with your higher power, you may want to think "God" or "love" on each in-breath, and again on each out-breath. This will help create a flow of your higher power's love and positive energies. Whatever words you choose to breathe with, stretching the words for the full length of your breath can make this practice even more effective.

Another focusing tool is to place your attention on a spot directly behind your belly button. As you do, notice that your thinking slows immediately.

No matter what method of focus you use, the struggle between focusing and allowing your brain to think random thoughts is important. The

practice of simply stopping, and looking deeply, is a way to enlightenment, a process of discovery. The answer is already there.

All you need to do is stop everything and see the true nature of what is in front of you. It may be a cloud, a pebble, or a human being. It may be our own bodies, or our feelings and emotions. Every time we truly stop and look deeply, the result is a better understanding of what is there, inside us and around us.

Be gentle with yourself in this peaceful moment. Everything that happens in meditation is perfect and spiritually usable. All we need is willingness, and the door will open. We show our willingness simply by the practice of meditating. If a question or puzzling thought arises, do not worry. Over time, confusion will dissipate.

Know that you're safe here right now—free to release your grip on repetitive thoughts. You cannot solve your problems in this moment, so why not let it all go, just for now?

Allow your body to sink deeper into your chair as we move down to a tranquil and peaceful place. With eyes closed, look directly at the backs of your eyelids. Images may come. If they do, simply let them drift by, remaining the observer, and letting go. At this point, you are seeing with your spiritual eyes.

Be gentle with yourself. It's not necessary to see anything. The most significant factor to meditation is surrender. You will begin to experience the healing power of stillness.

Allow your feelings, and not your brain, to communicate the peaceful tranquility of your meditation space. During this time, you are completely available to your higher power. The deeper we go, the more relaxed you will become.

Bring your attention to your scalp. Let the furrows in your brows go. Let the energy holding them stream down your face. Permit the tenseness in the muscles around your eyes to soften, as you begin to move deeper and deeper.

Now let any tension in your jaw, mouth, tongue, and throat go.

Slip down deeper and deeper. Focus on loosening up your neck—especially the area around the base of your skull. Let this harmful energy go. Let it stream down away from your body.

As you sink deeper, allow feelings of protection to surround you.

Continue moving, deeper now, while focusing on your breathing. Inhaling, your body fills. Exhaling, your body lets go. With each in-breath, receiving life ... with each out-breath, letting resistance go. Breathing in, mercy. Breathing out, resistance. Breathing in, patience. Breathing out, tension. Breathing in, lightness. Breathing out, the shadows.

Breathing in faith. Breathing out, fear. Breathing in, healing. Breathing out, and letting go.... Focusing on your breathing, “let me be a channel of thy peace.”

Bring your awareness to your neck and shoulders, letting go of tension there. Release the tightness held in your shoulders, arms, elbows, wrists, and fingers. Let tension go; let it disappear into the air.

Allow your body rhythms to slow. Healing breath.

Bring your awareness to your chest and your heart. Looking deeply within, let any anxiety held in your chest and back flow down your body. Let it go. Feel yourself relaxing and surrendering to your higher power.

Bring your awareness to your belly, rising and falling with each breath. Begin to soften your belly. Release the holding, and let in the healing breath. Your breath comforts your body, releasing its grip on pain, on fear and resistance. Let yourself feel the feelings, but release your hold on them. Soften the belly. Breathe in, safety. Breathe out, fear. Breathing in comfort. Breathing out, and letting go....

Be gentle with yourself as you continue to focus on your breathing. Let any tension in your waist and spine move down your legs and away from your body. Let go ... relax. Move deeper and deeper.

Bring your awareness to the joints in your hips, knees and ankles. Release any pain or anxiety they are holding; let negative energy run right out of the ends of your toes. Tension no longer feels welcome. You are safe in true serenity and deep tranquility. No tension, no negativity, no fear. Only feelings of safety, kindness, and love remain.

We'll relax here in the calm and pleasant stillness for about fifteen minutes. You'll hear a little bell like this [gong] about every five minutes. After the silent meditation, I will come as gently back into your consciousness, as I am able. For now, let go and float gently.

Allow yourself to connect with your truest inner world, to know the presence of your higher power.

[Allow 15 minutes of quiet]

It has been peaceful here. This tranquil time has allowed your higher power, or deepest consciousness, to come and work with you. There's been a quiet communication. You may not feel it right away, but some part of your being has absorbed it.

We are now going to move back up to a place of higher consciousness and awareness. Once we have returned, be sure to retain your peaceful state of serenity.

Feeling refreshed ... gently, slowly, moving upward. Feel the positive energy breathing through your body. This energy comes from your connection with your higher power, and with your true self. It straightens our backs, opens our hearts, softens our bellies. A straight back will lead to dignity and courage. An open heart will nurture acceptance. A soft belly reminds us to be gentle with ourselves.

Looking forward to being back, fully aware in the present moment, we continue moving upward. Feeling calm ... feeling serene and happy. Bring your focus back into the room. Arriving here, pause for a moment.... Be aware of the calming, positive energy you have invited into your being.

Thank you for praying and meditating with us.

[We hope you enjoy it. Feel free to share this meditation or use it in your groups. It's our pleasure to offer the experience.]