

## Make Your Meditations Come Alive

Brother Satyananda

SRF/YSS Convocation 2018

(DISCLAIMER: These notes are our best attempt to capture the essence of what was said at this class. There is always a degree of human error involved when taking notes and we have transcribed them to the best of our ability.)

Brother began the session with a meditation.

He then asked, “What did we just experience? At first we were relaxed until we experience stillness in the body. Did you notice how the mind becomes still? “

Master said that when the mind becomes still, you are in the kingdom of the Infinite. Would you like to quietly enter the sanctuary of inner stillness and enjoy the stillness of body, heart, and mind.

This is really an experiential workshop that I call, “Relaxing Into God”. We will experience how to begin ending with our journey into the kingdom of the Infinite. The gurus teach ways to explore or metaphysical relaxation, and there are three secrets to be revealed.

First:

- Tense the whole body
- Relax
- Inhale slowly
- Exhale slowly
- Relax and feel

Daya Ma often held discussions about the organization. She was working to involve the younger monastics in the discussions. I noticed some patterns between the discussions and the decision made there was often a short meditation.

On one occasion, I watch Ma during a time when she had a very difficult decision to make. She looked old and quite weary. I could tell that she was tired. I thought, “Why does she have to bear this weight and burden in this stage of her life?”

Then she said, “Well dears, let’s just meditate a little.”

I kept my eyes open, watching her. I'm glad that I did. She took a deep breath and exhaled. It was a sigh. Then she was perfectly still. Then, after about three minutes, I saw a gentle smile, and then a laugh. She opened her eyes, and she looked radiant and was young again.

I wasn't sorry for her anymore. I was sorry for myself. I thought, "I must learn to do that too."

She could experience conscious relaxation with a single breath, and stillness in about two to three minutes. It was perfect, a relaxation into joy in the middle of a business meeting.

We can train ourselves to calm the inner storm and enter into the land of stillness. I am training myself to make a quick transition from restlessness to peace. Lessons 70-72 in the SRF Lessons provide relaxation techniques specific to meditation. I call it "the silence of stillness". A song is really a sutra. Becoming still is really a science, and knowing is the fruit of the silence applied consciously and with intention.

Brother led the group through another meditation with these instructions:

1. Keep your mind on your body
2. Feel yourself experiencing it
3. Feel the mind relaxing emotionally
4. Feel yourself transcending body and mind
5. Feel yourself reaching the soul level

We need to create an environment of stillness by which we perform pranayama. With the last breath, we remain relaxed and motionless. At first, we feel the relaxation. Then a new sensation comes—the relaxation of stillness.

Master said that by complete relaxation, man can with the arrow of his consciousness draw the life force throughout the physical body. It happens naturally, and it feels really good. It feels like a burden being lifted, like Daya Ma's exhaling sigh. Spirit is that vast stillness that is behind all created things. With stillness, the energy and consciousness are withdrawing from the muscles and nerves into the spine. This has a tremendous effect the mind. When still, the mind automatically relaxes and begins to disengage from the body in complete stillness and silence.

Here are three secrets:

1. When the body is tense and restless, the mind will be filled with restless thoughts.
2. If the body is still, you can control your mind. The energization exercises help us to take the body into stillness.
3. Metaphysical relaxation is full absorption of the divine mind and your true identity in spirit.

Brother then led another meditation.

See how effective this is? You just silenced your mind on command.

Science is sequential. First the body, then the mind. Those who can quiet their thoughts on command at once will find the whole system relaxes into stillness. Quiet the body and you'll find the mind is quiet. The techniques are then fully enabled to do their work. As we perform the techniques, our stillness deepens. Our attachment to the body relaxes. We start to know ourselves not as the body, but as the Immortal Soul, going from the restless ego-bound to the body to the Immortal Soul in cosmic spirit.

Stillness produces wonderful sensations. Enjoyment is integral to the process. If we can relax into stillness from the very beginning, we will find that in perfect stillness of body and mind, the yogi experiences the soul. The devotee who experiences unity with everything has experienced God.

A Zen master was reprimanding his students telling them to let the mind relax. He told them to let the mind relax when you drink tea. The next morning, the students saw the same master drinking tea and reading the newspaper.

Three Tibetan nuns were watching colorful flags waving in the breeze. One said, "Look how many flags are moving." Another wise nun said, "The flags are not moving. The wind is not moving. Your mind is moving." In stillness, all maya melts away.

Phase 2 of my project is called, "Hurry up and relax".

Master relays this story in "The Autobiography of a Yogi".

"The mosquitoes one evening were especially virulent. But Master failed to issue his usual instructions. I listened nervously to the anticipatory hum of the insects. Getting into bed, I threw a propitiatory prayer in their general direction. A half hour later, I coughed pretentiously to attract my guru's attention. I thought I would go mad with the bites and especially the singing drone as the mosquitoes celebrated bloodthirsty rites.

No responsive stir from Master; I approached him cautiously. He was not breathing. This was my first observation of him in the yogic trance; it filled me with fright.

'His heart must have failed!' I placed a mirror under his nose; no breath-vapor appeared. To make doubly certain, for minutes I closed his mouth and nostrils with my fingers. His body was cold and motionless. In a daze, I turned toward the door to summon help.

'So! A budding experimentalist! My poor nose!' Master's voice was shaking with laughter. 'Why don't you go to bed? Is the whole world going to change for you? Change yourself: be rid of the mosquito consciousness.'

Meekly I returned to my bed. Not one insect ventured near. I realized that my guru had previously agreed to the curtains only to please me; he had no fear of mosquitoes. His yogic power was such that he either could will them not to bite, or could escape to an inner invulnerability”

Here are three steps to achieve stillness:

1. Relax the body into stillness. Enjoy it.
2. Enjoy the stillness of the mind.
3. Enjoy the stillness of the body and mind.

The results have been transformative. Every single time, no matter how I feel in meditation, I can still have that freedom and stillness. When I do it this way, the body and mind become still.

Master said to practice faithfully what has been taught to you about muscular relaxation and the path of realization will open up before you. As enjoyment increases, it prepares the way for joyous communion with joy. The experience of enjoyment during stillness is the beginning of God’s bliss. If we are consciously enjoying stillness, we are entering into the joy of Spirit. The conscious enjoyment of spirit expands into bliss.

Master said to sit quietly and meditate on the joy of silence. Nothing can give you that deep joy like silence. This would be easy except for the ego. The ego and body have a long friendship. We are strongly attached to our body-bound restlessness. Even though a habit is quite strong, we can overcome it. But distracting worldly thoughts find their way in.

It’s like we’re under a waterfall of worldly thoughts. We’re on the hill enjoying the restless thoughts below. You must vaporize them with your will power. Allow one restless thought and you find that whole horde of invaders is coming up the hill.

Sometimes, restless worldly thoughts come disguised as an important responsibility. You are meditating, and then you think about your daughter who is in her first year of college. You become distracted, restless. Soon, you realize the deception. The eyes have come down, and the body is tense. When this happens, go back into relaxation. Lift the gaze and feel the body. Relax and follow the sequence. Even in the stillness, there is temptation.

The third secret to deeper meditation is training ourselves to enjoy the stillness over the restless thoughts and body. All we have to do is assertively train ourselves. You are the one who can make this choice. Choosing stillness over restlessness is your 25%. We can gain the spiritual high ground and you can gain your spiritual advantage there.

Daya Ma performed a spiritual refresher in the middle of a business meeting. We have to find ways for dealing with stress. Stress is one of the most consistent torments in life. I think about a day in my life. I begin with meditation, and often engage in daily traveling. As I engage in worldly activities the pressures do build. I experience stress, but I don’t have to live with it.

What are the sources of stress. There are many: sustained physical attention, moodiness, a feeling of being overwhelmed....These can easily escalate into serious anxieties. When I start to feel impatient, I know I am tense. It can be between or during daily conversations in daily life. We can integrate it into our daily lives.

How do we get rid of stress? Exercise.

Brother led the group through a relaxation exercise.

1. Tense the body gently. Now remain still.
2. Like Daya Ma, let out a sigh. (4,000 devotees then sighed.)
3. Feel the peace of the morning meditation as it begins to flow back in, and you can feel it there with no stress. It feels very, very good.

What do you do with your cell phone or computer when they are acting out. You reboot. The system then takes out the trash, and you're good to go. This is my sixty second spiritual reboot. If the body is relaxed, I cannot be in anger. I cannot be in fear. These are primal, toxic emotions with which stillness cannot co-exist. All we have to do is feel the peace. We can't be angry and relaxed at the same time. If you choose relaxation of body, heart, and mind, it will heal you. I've tested it, and it works.

So the secrets are that by conscious will, relax the body into stillness. Total relaxation brings the body and mind into stillness, and this is the beginning of God's ecstatic bliss. We are training ourselves to choose the refined stillness over the habit of restlessness. Once they are in your control, how do you feel?

We'll end with a story and a quote. On one occasion, I asked Sailsuta Mata, who was at Mother Center about her favorite recollections of Master. She often came out into our kitchen. She was always so friendly.

She answered, "As a matter of fact, I do. On a number of occasions, I saw Master come out of these doors after a long day of counseling. He would walk the grounds. He always went to this little gardenia. He would twist off a gardenia blossom and take a deep breath of it. He would then walk down the long drive in front of Mother Center. Every now and then he would stop, sniff and smell the gardenia blossom, smile, and then keep walking."

Master told us, "Even as the touch of sandalwood makes the hand scented, let the mind be scented wherever you go. You will live in ecstasy. You will be in constant peace with the joy of your soul."

---