



tuesdays with Lori

musings on life, loss and everything in-between

THE PRACTICE OF PRACTICE

*Join us the first Tuesday of every month.
Next session Tuesday, March 7 at 4:00 PM EST*

COMPLIMENTARY

A 30-minute neuroscience-based mindfulness meditation class designed to help steady your nervous system.

Learn about mindfulness and meditation, no experience necessary.

It used to be when I taught meditation, I taught the way I'd been taught: sit in stillness for twenty minutes every day.

I teach differently now. Too many people have sheepishly told me they manage to sit for five or six minutes and that's all they can tolerate. I feel the same way about walking on a treadmill. Five minutes and my mind hijacks my

legs insisting this road to nowhere is intolerable. *Just get off*, my mind insists. Then my mind out and out lies to me: *You'll get a bit of exercise later*.

I don't always let my mind convince my legs, but too often, I admit, I do. For me, the hardest part of the treadmill workout is persuading myself to get on the damn thing. However, if I manage to stick with it, the next time it's a little easier to stay the course.

These practices are just that – practice. The first time you run up the stairs, it may be hard to catch your breath. Do you say – well, that's that, it didn't work. Nope. You know you need to stick with it. Keep trying and your endurance will improve. With mindfulness practices, things also improve over time. The more times I get myself to sit, the easier it gets.

Unfortunately, the resistance to sit down and practice remains strong. Ten years into my mindfulness meditation practice, I still have the same experience every single time I sit. As soon as I sit down to find stillness, the first thoughts to alight in my brain are pesky, negative, critical thoughts. Sort of a worry/criticism combo. I often hear the loopy tape of conversations that never have and never will occur. When he said that, if I would have said this, then he would have said that and then I would totally have had the opportunity to say this most brilliant and poignant comment that would finally and totally prove to him why he is so wrong. All I can do is notice the resistance arise, then sit with it as best I can.

I have never followed a routine that was consistent in time or place. I often sit in the morning, but frequently find myself squeezing in twenty minutes of stillness where I can find it. There are a couple of location options for me in my house. I like to sit cross-legged with my back supported on a sofa. There are two rooms in my house with sofas and I just choose whichever room is farthest from the household action. My favorite place to meditate is outside, but this is also the most challenging location since the sounds are uncontrollable – traffic, lawnmowers, noisy birds. There's also the possibility of an insect disturbing me. For me, the distractions of sitting outside are worth it because there is nothing more divine than deeply experiencing the warmth or coolness of a gentle breeze on my skin.

Perfection is the enemy of progress. If you can get on the treadmill for ten minutes a day,

do that. The message is the same in the practice of meditation. There is no goal here, no right way to do it, no prizes, no winner. Sit in stillness as best you can and possibilities appear. What is possible is far from perfect and what is perfect is far from possible.

Do try this at home.

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It's somehow vastly more aggravating to wait two minutes for the microwave than two hours for the oven—or ten seconds for a slow-loading web page versus three days to receive the same information by mail.

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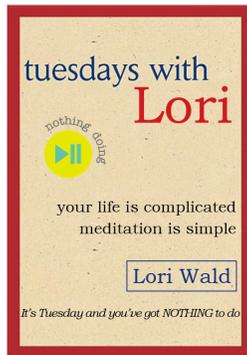
-- Oliver Burkeman

from his book *Four Thousand Weeks: Time Management for Mortals*, a book I highly recommend.

Decide how long you want to sit for. Do not set a timer. In the same way you intuitively know one minute before your alarm clock goes off, you'll know when your meditation session is over.



A mindfulness meditation practice helps clarify intentions. Check this out for guided audio meditations ranging between 5 and 20 minutes. Personal coaching is also available.



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If any of this resonated with you, let me know. I would love to hear your reactions, dissonances and questions.

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