

# Meditation Essentials - 1

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BILLABONG RETREAT

# Workshop 1: What is Meditation?

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- ❖ Path of self-transformation
- ❖ Requires the progression through 3 stages:
  - ❖ Stilling the mind
  - ❖ Self inquiry
  - ❖ Self Transformation

# History of Meditation

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- ❖ **1500 BC** – Meditation is described in the Vedas (Hindu scriptures).
- ❖ Between **400 BC – 200 AD** Patanjali wrote the yoga sutras – describes the internal workings of the mind & the **8 limbs of yoga.**
- ❖ **600 – 400 BC** Buddhism developed – Siddhartha Gautama was the first Buddha
  - ❖ Taught the Eightfold path: Right view, right resolve, right speech, right conduct, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right Samadhi.
  - ❖ Around this time meditation was being practiced in much of the Eastern world.
- ❖ **1800's** Western academics & philosophers began studying the Vedas, French philosopher, Voltaire described the Vedas as, “The most precious gift for which the West had ever been indebted to the East.
- ❖ **1960's**– Transcendental Meditation became very popular, hatha yoga and ashtanga yoga also introduced to the west

# 8 limbs of Yoga

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1. Yamas: Ahimsa, Satya, Asteya, Brachmacharya, Aparigraha
2. Niyamas: Saucha, Santosha, Tapas, Svadhyaya, Ishvara Pranidhana
3. Asana: Postures
4. Pranayama: Breath control
5. **Pratyahara: Withdrawal of the senses**
6. **Dharana: Connection with an object**
7. **Dhyana: Sustained concentration**
8. Samadhi: Enlightenment

# Types of Meditation

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- ❖ Moving meditations: Asana, tai chi, walking
- ❖ Mantra – Transcendental Meditation, Vedic Meditation
- ❖ Mindfulness – Present moment awareness, meditation in everyday life, being the observer
- ❖ Breath focused
- ❖ Visualization
- ❖ Counting
- ❖ Meditating on a deity
- ❖ Candle Gazing
- ❖ Yantra
- ❖ Silent sit

# Stage 1: Stilling the Mind

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- ❖ Pratyahara: Withdrawal of the senses
- ❖ Dharana: Connection with a object
- ❖ Dhyana: Sustained concentration

# Lets Practice!

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❖ Mantra

❖ Yantra

❖ Walking

❖ Guided

# Meditation Essentials - 1

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WORKSHOP 2

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# Recap – Workshop 1

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## ❖ What is Meditation?

❖ Ultimately it is a process of self-transformation, the process requires the practitioner to progress through 3 stages:

- ❖ Stage 1: Stilling the mind
- ❖ Stage 2: Self Inquiry
- ❖ Stage 3: Self transformation

## ❖ Stage 1: Stilling the mind

- ❖ Pratyahara: Withdrawal of the senses
- ❖ Dharana: Connection with an object (depending on what technique you are using this change: mantra, breath, counting, mindfulness).
- ❖ Dhayana: Sustained concentration

# Workshop 2: Exploring the Inner-world

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- ❖ During meditation distractions enter the consciousness in the form of thoughts, emotions & physical distractions.
- ❖ These distractions driven by the subconscious mind.
- ❖ Our subconscious mind is developed through our unique experiences of the world (cultural conditioning).
- ❖ These experiences shape perception of world and cause us to think, react and behave in ways in which perhaps are not ideal.
- ❖ Yogic philosophy describes these motivational forces as the Kleshas (things that cloud our perception):
  - ❖ Ignorance, incorrect knowledge, inability to see things as they are / AVIDYA
  - ❖ Ego, I am ness, prevents you from connecting from the true self / ASMITA
  - ❖ Desire, attachment, addicted to things of pleasure / RAGA
  - ❖ Aversion / DVESHA
  - ❖ Fear / ABHINIVESHA

# Workshop 2: Developing a Personal Practice

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- ❖ Frequency? Amount of time? Time of Day? Place? Technique? Group classes? Teacher?
- ❖ Stage 1: Stilling the mind:
  - ❖ Pratyahara – Withdrawal of senses
  - ❖ Dharana – connection with an object
  - ❖ Dhyana – sustained concentration
- ❖ Stage 2: Self Inquiry - Reflect on distractions (The Kleshas): Keep a meditation journal, review monthly.
- ❖ Stage 3: Self Transformation - Act on things that continually present themselves

# Lets Practice –

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## ❖ *Reflect upon distractions that presented:*

- ❖ Ignorance / incorrect knowledge / not seeing things as they truly are / AVIDYA
- ❖ Ego / I am ness / beliefs about yourself / ASMITA
- ❖ Desire / attachment / RAGA
- ❖ Aversion / avoidance of discomfort / DVESHA
- ❖ Fear of death / AMHINIVESHA

## ❖ Practices:

- ❖ Nadi Shodana – Mala beads - Sit