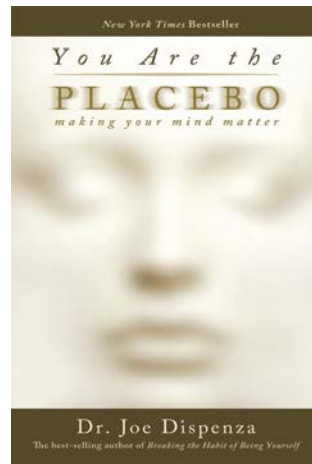
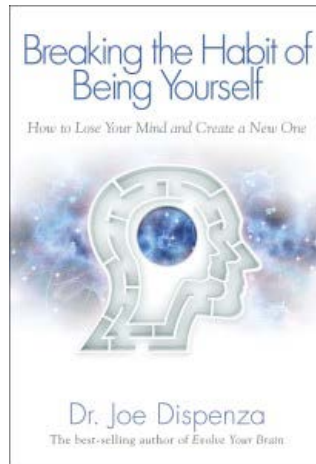


The Meditative Process Review



Overview: Meditation Inductions

An induction technique I use in the beginning of my meditations may at first seem contradictory, for I'll have you'll focus your attention on your body and environment. These are two of the Big Three that I explain in the book *Breaking the Habit of Being Yourself* that you have to overcome - but in this case, you're in control of your thoughts about them.

Why is it desirable to focus on the body? Remember, the body and the subconscious mind are merged. So when we become acutely aware of the body and sensations related to it, we enter the subconscious mind. Induction is a tool that can be used to get into that operating system.

The cerebellum plays a role in proprioception (awareness of how our bodies are positioned in space). So in the induction portion of the meditation, as you rest your awareness on different parts of your body in space and the space around your body in space, you're using your cerebellum to perform this function. And since the cerebellum is the seat of the subconscious mind, as you place your consciousness on where your body is oriented in space, you access your subconscious mind and bypass your thinking brain.

Induction shuts down the analytical mind by forcing you into a sensing/feeling mode. Feelings are the language of the body, which in turn is the subconscious mind, so induction allows you to use the body's natural language to interpret and change the language of the operating system. In other words, if you're sensing or putting your awareness on different aspects of your body, you would be thinking less, shifting your analytical thoughts from past to future less, and broadening your focus more to encompass a very different scope - not narrowly obsessive, but rather, creative and open - and you would move from Beta to Alpha brain waves.

All of this happens as you move from that narrow-minded range of attention to an expanded focus on the body and the space around it. Buddhists refer to this as an open focus - occurring when brain waves naturally become orderly and synchronized. Open focus produces a new, powerfully coherent signal that allows parts

of the brain that were not communicating with other parts to now do so. That enables you to produce an extremely coherent brain wave signal.

We can measure these differences in how you are thinking - we can view your thought patterns on an EEG to see how you've moved from Beta-to Alpha-wave activity. I'm not interested in just getting you into an Alpha state of any kind, though; you want to be in a highly coherent, organized Alpha. That's why you will concentrate first on your body and its orientation in space, then move from those individual parts to the volume or perimeter of space surrounding the body, and eventually focus your observation on the entire room. If you can sense that density of space, if you can notice it and pay attention to it, you will naturally move from a state of thinking to feeling. When that happens, it's impossible to maintain the high-Beta state that characterizes the emergency mode of survival and an over focused condition.

Preparing Your Environment

Location, location, location. You have learned that overcoming your environment is a critical step in breaking the habit of being yourself. Finding the right environment in which to meditate, one with a minimum of distractions, will really give you a leg up on defeating the first of the Big Three (we'll cover the other two, the body and time, in a moment). Pick a comfortable place where you can be alone and not be seduced by the addiction of the external world. Make it secluded, private, and easily accessible.

Go to this place every day, and make it your special location. You will form a strong connection with this setting. It will represent where you frequent to tame the distracted ego, overcome the old self, create a new self, and forge a new destiny. In time you will truly look forward to being there.

Preparing Your Body

Position, position, position. I sit up very straight. My back is totally vertical, my neck is erect, my arms and legs are resting poised and still, and my body is relaxed. What about using a recliner? Just as with sitting in bed, many people fall asleep in recliners. Sitting upright in a regular chair, limbs uncrossed, is best. If you prefer to sit on the ground and cross your legs "Indian-style," that's fine, too.

Preventing bodily distractions. In effect, you want to "put the body away" so that you can focus without needing to pay it any attention. For example, use the restroom. Dress in loose clothes, remove your watch, drink a little water, and have more within reach. Take care of any hunger pangs before you begin.

Head nodding vs. nodding off. Since we're talking about the body, let me address an issue that may come up in your own meditation practice. Although you are sitting upright, you may find your head nodding as though you are about to fall asleep. This is a good sign: you are moving into the Alpha and Theta brain-wave states. Your body is used to lying down when your brain waves slow down. When you suddenly "nod" like this, your body wants to doze off. With continued practice, you'll become accustomed to your brain slowing down while you sit upright. The head nodding will eventually stop, and your body won't tend to fall asleep.

Making Time to Meditate

When to meditate. As you know, daily changes in brain chemistry result in easier access to the subconscious mind just after you wake up in the morning and before you go to bed at night. These are the best times to

meditate because you can more readily slip into the Alpha or Theta states. I prefer to meditate around the same time every morning. If you are really enthusiastic and would like to meditate at both these times of day, go for it. However, I suggest that folks just starting out do so once daily.

How long to meditate. Take a few minutes before each day's meditation session to review any writing you have done in connection with what you would like to create. As I said in *Breaking the Habit of Being Yourself*, think of these notes as your road map to the journey you are about to take. Every session will start with 10 to 20 minutes for induction. Your daily meditation (including induction) will generally take 40 to 50 minutes. If you need to finish by a certain time, set a timer to go off ten minutes before you must end your session. That will give you a "heads-up" to complete the session, rather than having to stop abruptly without bringing what you were doing to a close. And set aside enough time to meditate so that the clock doesn't become a concern. After all, if you are meditating and find yourself thinking about your watch, you haven't overcome time. Essentially, you may have to wake up earlier or go to bed later in order to carve out a slot in your day.

Preparing Your State of Mind

Mastering the ego. To be honest, I do have those days where I battle my ego tooth and nail, since it wants to be in control. Some mornings as I begin the process, my analytical mind starts thinking about flights to catch, meetings with staff, injured patients, reports and articles I need to write, my kids and their complexities, phone calls I have to make, and random thoughts from nowhere that pop into my head. I'm obsessing about everything predictable in my external life. Typically, my mind, like most people's, is either anticipating the future or remembering the past. When that occurs, I have to settle down and realize that those are all known associations that have nothing to do with creating something new in the present moment. If this happens to you, it is your job to go beyond the tedium of normal thinking and enter into the creative moment.

Mastering the body. If your body bucks like an unbridled stallion because it wants to be the mind (to get up and do something, think about someplace it has to go in the future, or remember a past emotional experience with some person in your life) you must settle it down into the present moment and relax it. Every time you do, you are reconditioning your body to a new mind, and in time, it will acquiesce. It was conditioned by an unconscious mind, and it has to be retrained by you - so love it, work with it, and be kind to it. It will ultimately surrender to you as its master. Remember to be determined, persistent, excited, joyful, flexible, and inspired. When you do so, you are reaching for the hand of the divine.

Now let's begin. . . .

For book companion meditation instructions, please refer to
Chapters 9-13 in *Breaking the Habit of Being Yourself* - or- Chapter 12 in *You Are the Placebo*.



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