

# Meditation for Relaxation, Focus and Inspiration:

## Meditation Strategies for the Early Care Professional

Laura Dawn Bridges, M.S.

### What is Meditation (and what is it NOT)?

- It is NOT an eastern religion. Most major religions practice it in some form or another. It can be used to deepen whatever beliefs, religion or spiritual path you follow. It can also be practiced *without* a religious context.
- It is NOT a path that will make you spacey or become flakey. It enhances concentration and focus.
- Meditation is NOT something alien from outside your self. Meditation is your own life energy. When you sit for meditation, your meditation energy will heal and balance your system.
- A practice of relaxed alertness.
- A state of consciousness much like sleep states
- All of us have experienced “meditative” states when we have been completely one-pointed and in the flow of our game. Musicians, athletes and artists often go into a meditative state when they are in the flow of their art or their game.



### Beneficial Outcomes for Meditators

1. **Mental:** Clarity, focus, concentration for learning, efficiency and effectiveness at work and in life.
2. **Emotional/Psychological:** Reduced stress, improved relationships. The people around you are positively influenced by your centeredness – especially children.
3. **Physical/physiological:** builds the immune response, lowers blood pressure, steadies the heart rate  
**Spiritual:** Deepens our sense of purpose in life, our connectedness with others and with the Divine (Source, God, the Universe).

### Meditators may have a variety of experiences when sitting for meditation:

- \*Calm, centeredness, relaxed states
- \*Memories, fantasies, mental chatter, images, feelings
- \*Movement of energy in the body or body movement such as swaying
- \*“Ah-Ha’s” and insights into what is going on in their life or how to handle a challenge or solve a puzzle
- \*Ecstatic or euphoric states

### How Do I Set Up a Daily Meditation Practice? 5 Steps to Daily Meditation

1. **Right Space:** Clean, uncluttered, focused
2. **Right Time:** Early morning, Lunch time get-away or before bed
3. **Right Preparation:** Mental attitude, comfortable clothes, pillows, yoga
4. **Right Point of Focus:** audio, visual, breath, mental, affirmations
5. **Right Closure:** Breath, yoga, move slow, mental awareness, journaling

### Meditation with Children

- 95% movement and preparation (yoga, music, dim the lights). Gradually slow the movement down to sitting or lying down.
- 5% Sitting Meditation (1 min per age of child) or lying down with eyes closed.
- Use guided meditation such as “Let’s go to the top of your mountain.” Or “Let’s go into your secret garden”.
- Ask the *child* “What did your heart tell you?” and “What does your Inner Self say?”
- After meditation, invite the children to draw, paint or act out what showed up in their meditation.



## Bridges Transformation Network

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### Ten Guiding Points about Meditation

1. The more you meditate, the more steady your mind will become. No need to force your mind to be still.
2. Allow the mind to melt into the meditation experience in its own time. It doesn't work to get in conflict with the mind. Use your point of focus. If your mind wanders (and it will), gently, lovingly bring it back to your point of focus.
3. Label your thoughts: "*That's a memory*", "*That's a fantasy*". Avoid judging your thoughts and feelings.
4. Watch your thoughts and feelings go by like clouds in the sky, without putting attachment or personal meanings to them.
5. Find the quiet beneath the mental chatter or memories that come up.
6. When you meditate daily, you body and mind will get into the daily habit. It gets easier over time.
7. Meditate with other meditators on a regular basis so that you stay inspired about your journey with meditation.
8. Journal about what you're experiencing so that you can capture the subtle benefits that are happening for you.
9. As you meditate more and more, you'll find that when you are caring for children, you are more in tune with them. They sense your calm and will enjoy your attentiveness and you will see fewer behavioral problems, especially if you show them how to meditate.
10. Meditation will lower your stress. When you are less stressed, the children, families and co-workers around you will feel less stressed. Everyone benefits when one person meditates.



*"Whatever happens in meditation IS meditation."*



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Dyer, Wayne. [Inspiration: Your Ultimate Calling](#). 2006.

Gilbert, Elizabeth. [Eat Pray, Love](#). 2007.

Keating, Thomas. [Open Mind, Open Heart: The Contemplative Dimension of the Gospel](#). 1986.

Lazerus, Judith. [Stress Relief and Relaxation Techniques](#). 2000.

Siegel, Dan. [Mindsight. The New Science of Personal Transformation](#). 2010.

Tolle, Eckhart. [A New Earth: Awakening to Your Life's Purpose](#). 2005

### DVDs & CDs:

**Relaxation and Breathing for Meditation.** Rodney Yee. 2003

**The Secret.** Rhonda Byrne. 2006

**Meditation Instructions.** Gurumayi Chidvilasananda. (guided meditation). 2000.



### Online Resources

[www.learningmeditation.com](http://www.learningmeditation.com)

[www.chopra.com](http://www.chopra.com)

[www.wilddivine.com](http://www.wilddivine.com)

[www.meditationwithchildren.org](http://www.meditationwithchildren.org)

[www.benefitsofmeditation.org](http://www.benefitsofmeditation.org)

[www.heartmath.com](http://www.heartmath.com)

[www.mindsightinstitute.com](http://www.mindsightinstitute.com)

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