**MOTIVATIONS FOR MEDITATION**

The intention with this document is to investigate what motivates me to want to practice meditation; secondarily, what can I do to develop and sustain a daily meditation routine, and finally, how I can integrate the mindfulness gained from formal meditation practice into a beneficial lifestyle.

***Why do I practice meditation? What benefits come from this practice?***

I practice meditation for several reasons. When I consider what my moods and actions were like in the early 1980’s compared to today, it is clear to me that I am a much calmer and less impulsive person. I realized early on that the commitment to meditate daily and go on retreats periodically improved my self-discipline; I went to grad school full time while working 40 hours a week, which was extraordinary compared to my lax routines previously. I am less selfish, more patient and tolerant of others than I was before I meditated. I know from my research that regular meditation practice changes the structure and functionality of the brain in ways that are measurably beneficial.

***Ways I can commit to and realize the benefits from formally practicing meditation daily:***

Over the course of my meditation career, I have varied in my approach to establishing and maintaining a regular, daily meditation practice. From 1982, when I went to my first retreat, until I went to my first 3 month retreat in 1990, my sitting practice was intermittent, but I managed to go to several weeklong retreats during that interval. I would sit when it was easiest to find the justification to meditate. Sometimes upon awakening, sometimes when I returned from work, and sometimes just before bedtime. It was usually 45 minutes per sitting, because that was recommended by the meditation teachers on retreat. When I met my wife I had been meditating for several years, so it was understood that I have a strong commitment to regular meditation practice. After returning from the 3 month retreat, I understood the value of ongoing, daily meditation practice. In this regard, I helped organize the Orlando Insight Meditation Group so I can sit with other folks. This creates an “accountability partnership” with others who are similarly inclined. My wife and I made a big move in 2000, buying the property where we live now because of a freestanding building in the back yard, which was converted into the cottage where OIMG meets today. A few years ago, I found the “Insight Timer” app; that helped me increase my consistency with sitting as I didn’t want to “lose” a day on the app. I now sit primarily early in the morning; I am a “morning person”, and my bladder wakes me early. I just decided to make that into a habit and it has become more and more routine for me to sit at that time.

***Ways I can integrate the benefits from formal meditation practice into daily life routines:***

From early on in my meditation career, I have found ways to integrate the benefits that come from formal sitting practice to daily life routines. I would drive mindfully wherever I went, as often as it occurred to do so (For many years I didn’t turn on the radio in the car); I would meditate at traffic lights—did the light turn green on the inbreath or outbreath (I would do the same thing with the stoplights on the car immediately in front of me as well). I would practice noticing when my eye blinks occurred with mindfulness. I set an hourly beep on my watch to remind me to be present, at least for that moment. When there were slack times at the office, I would meditate, even if for only a few minutes before my next meeting. At home, I would meditate during television shows, monitoring how I was processing what I was immediately experiencing. I would walk mindfully while mowing the lawn. There are as many ways to “wake up” to the present moment—the key element in this is to remember the benefits from this “grounding” and realize the opportunity as it presents itself.

I hope these comments and suggestions have been helpful. I wish you well. Peter