

Inspiration Meditation & Personal Wellbeing

A Practical Guide to Balanced Living

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INTRODUCTION

Ever since I can remember, I have sought the freedom, openness and clarity that is available to us all. As a young child, I somehow had the knack of seeing into or directly knowing the core of people, situations and events. With this inner knowing, I understood, or at least believed that I did, what keeps things as they are and what allows them to change as they can. I also often delighted in finding the possible in what was thought impossible. Of course, many others delight in this too.

I very much wanted to find ways to contribute to people's lives, to experiment with the unknown, to seek freedom from limitations, to find cures for the incurable, to solve the unsolvable and, most importantly, to find enduring fulfilment.

My life became an exciting adventure that led me to know clearly that our real aliveness, fulfilment, health, completion and deep satisfaction as human beings comes primarily from within. These qualities arise from an all-embracing awareness – the Infinite – which is simultaneously the expanded consciousness or awareness that encompasses everything and what nourishes the very roots of our day-to-day lives.

From an early age, I also intuitively understood that much of what we are taught about life by our elders and peers is unnecessarily limited. Yes, we certainly need to take notice of what we are taught, but to fulfil the spiritual, cognitive, emotional, physical and worldly potential we all actually have, we need to test all such teachings and find out for ourselves if they are true.

The result of these adventures is that I feel certain we are beings who in the most open reaches of our understanding encompass all that is. We have profound capacities that enable us to take on the challenges of our day-to-day lives and discover the excitement, wonder, balance, joy, fulfilment and fundamental aliveness available to us all.

Many people perceive things similarly. They see through the distractions that somewhat obscure important realities. And in writing this book I am not presuming to offer anything better than you or they already know. In many parts of Asia, indeed, all over the

world, there are numerous ancient traditions that imbue people exposed from birth to spiritually-based practices and understanding of all the dimensions of life and how they can be integrated with everyday living.

At the same time, with my background as a psychotherapist well versed in many Western human growth and development traditions, combined with my training as a meditation master, my perspectives on some areas may be different enough to be of some value. In particular, I have offered ways of integrating various dimensions of everyday living with Life, so that we can benefit from the freedom, meaning and purpose Life offers us all.

THREE PRIMARY THEMES

Inspiration, meditation and personal wellbeing, the three main themes in this book, provide a framework for presenting some of my discoveries. Whatever your background and hopes, my overall wish is that you will be inspired to use what you find here to go deeply into yourself and soar to the heights of your full potential.

My experience is that inspiration is present in everything: general inspiration that can guide and fulfil our lives, and specific inspirations related to particular events and issues.

Also, there are many practical ways of cultivating a full experience of personal wellbeing, and a collection of them is offered here for you to test and hopefully to benefit from.

In addition, a group of meditations is presented that can make their own special contributions. These can stand alone, or, like the wellbeing practices, they can be combined with everything else. In fact, when the practices in all three areas are combined, they produce a dynamic blend that I hope will reveal the wonders of your life to you and be of practical benefit.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Several principles guided the evolution of the practices presented, as well as my choice of what to include.

First, to be effective in life, because our hopes, needs and problems arise in the midst of everyday life, our responses also need to be down-to-earth and everyday. Second, a range of approaches is needed. No single practice deals with all aspects of living. Many different forces act on and in us, and potentially we need to respond to and deal with each of these if we are to realise our worldly aspirations and to find deep fulfilment. Third, simplicity

is fundamental. No matter how complex people, situations or events may seem, we can always find simple recurring themes or patterns that can help us to understand and change things.

Finally, no book can contain all that could be of value to us in life. Nevertheless, I hope that you will discover at least some measure of assistance in what I have written.

HOW TO READ THE BOOK

To get the most out of this book, I encourage you to take your time in order to learn what it offers. The exercises, meditations, principles and guidelines included are designed to help you embed what you are reading into your everyday life in ways that best suit you. You could also read according to what attracts your attention most strongly. All the chapters stand alone enough for you to do this; and where you need more information, there are references to other relevant chapters. The frequent headings and subheadings, and the index, will also help you to find information easily.

Finally, I make repeated references to using a logbook at the end of the various exercises and meditations. Accordingly, I suggest you get a logbook or electronic organiser, or use the Notes pages at the end of this book. Keeping brief records will help you to fix the material in your memory (called ‘anchoring’ it), to understand it, and, when you review your records from time to time, to discover how much you have learnt. You are the only person who needs to see this logbook, so you can record whatever occurs to you in whatever way you want. Also, to make the process as easy as possible, keep your notes brief. Brevity is all you will need.

THE CONTENT

Divided into five sections, the content is presented in an ordered sequence in which earlier subjects contribute to the later ones.

Section 1 is about both inspiration and Life itself (called the ‘Infinite’ in the book). This section includes whatever it is that underlies, interpenetrates and enlivens all that exists, the nature of inspiration, why people are prompted to meditate, and the influence of events and everyday practices on personal wellbeing.

Section 2 contains ways to manage day-to-day activities. Each one helps to open and balance us enough for the Infinite to be experienced and known directly. These practices also contribute directly to the management of life’s practical and spiritual challenges. This section includes material on goals, priorities, starting to meditate,

grounding, centring, pure awareness, nutrition, rest and exercise.

Section 3 considers how to harness life energy actively during our everyday activities in a manner that makes us increasingly open to our deepest sense of self. It includes practices and information on feelings and emotions, daily cycles, resolving and releasing conflicts, and making effective decisions.

Section 4 introduces six sets of primary meditations, each capable of contributing profoundly to the awakening of consciousness and the establishment of fundamental (spiritual) fulfilment. They include breathing meditations, inner smile and body clenching, opening the heart, mantra meditation, awakening meditations, and ways to integrate meditation into daily life.

Section 5 deals with the common challenges involved in starting new endeavours and applying ourselves regularly so we achieve what is important to us. The last chapter includes guidelines for identifying good teachers, masters and mentors.

WE ARE ALREADY AT THE END

The practices in this book are effective because the union of spiritual and everyday fulfilment is already hardwired into all of us. It already exists deep inside us. We don't need to re-engineer ourselves to have it. Having said this, many of us do need to develop receptivity and openness if we are to experience or know directly the Ultimate Nature of the Infinite. 'Closer ... than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet'¹, it is there for all of us and blocked only by habits of living, all of which we can change.

TEST FOR YOURSELF

All of what you will find here has been tried, tested and refined by many people in their own lives. Even so, as you explore the practices presented in the chapters that follow, I urge you to test everything for yourself. Part of living our lives responsibly involves testing everything and adapting any suggestions from others so that they fit the specifics of our own lives.

RECORDINGS OF THE MEDITATIONS

I developed several of the meditations included in this book. Recorded versions are available in CD or electronic (MP3) formats that are easily obtained from The Awakening Network Inc. You will find contact details at the end of the book.

Ken Mellor (Victoria, Australia 2011)