



How To Clear Your Mind In 60 Seconds

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Practical Wellbeing

For Karen

The Legal Stuff

This is like the safety briefing that you get on a flight. It's not the most interesting stuff in the world, but it needs to be there just in case.

Disclaimer

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Acknowledgements

The process I am describing is a combination of Buddhist meditation and mindfulness practices and a technique borrowed from Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT).

Many books have been written about the value of mindfulness from both secular and spiritual perspectives. One of the best introductions to mindfulness practice in my opinion is Jon Kabatt-Zinn's book: [Wherever you go there you are](#). It is simple, practical and very well written.

The process for disconnecting from negative thoughts that you find is described by Russ Davis MD in his [The Happiness Trap](#) which is an excellent layman's description of ACT.

As far as I know the combination of these two techniques into this process is my own creation.

Cover stopwatch image courtesy of [o5com](#).

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Introduction

Thank you for downloading this e-book. I hope you find it helpful for living with a busy mind and that you find new ways to use these techniques in ways that will benefit you.

So what's wrong with a busy mind?

If you can read and understand this sentence you are the lucky owner of a conscious mind.

Most minds are often very busy full of thoughts, ideas, memories, images, sound, snatches of conversation all rattling through awareness at high speed.

All the activity of the mind happens so fast that we are barely aware of it. This rush of thoughts and ideas have been with us a long time, we are used to it, this is just the way things are.

All this mental activity wouldn't be so bad except:

1. Our thoughts lead to our moods

What you are thinking strongly influences how you are feeling, which in turn influences what we do, how we do it and what we think of next.

Try this little experiment.

Make a mental list of all your perceived defects, all the things that you think is wrong with you.

Run through the list in your mind without saying anything out loud.

How do you feel now?

If that was a long and critical list you are probably not feeling too good at this moment.

Thinking those thoughts led to those feelings.

Of course, I deliberately asked you to think a lot of negative thoughts, one after another.

Under normal circumstances those thoughts will only rise up to the surface of thinking from time to time. Even so, thinking each thought triggers its own little pulse of stress and anxiety.

2. We believe our thoughts

We can be very sceptical about what other people tell us. We weigh up what they say against our experience and ideas, then we decide whether what they are saying is worth taking seriously.

This is good as no one likes being deceived.

However, we have a tendency to swallow everything our mind tells us hook, line and sinker, whether it is useful, truthful, harmful or ridiculous.

Go back to your list of your personal deficiencies.

Are they all true?

Are you really so bad?

If some of those judgements seem believable, ask yourself: “How do I know this is true?” or “Who is telling me it is true, and why do I believe them?”

Do they still seem so believable?

Still not convinced?

Imagine that a good friend of yours, some one you like and respect, confesses to you, in all sincerity, that they have the same list of 'defects' as you. Would you believe them when they told you each defect?

Wouldn't you think: “Just a minute, that's not right, you're not that bad!”

You would probably be much more sceptical of a friend's list of self-criticisms than you would be if you were thinking them yourself.

If we were this sceptical of our own thoughts we would probably be more realistic about ourselves, much happier and much less stressed.

3. Our thoughts are just below the surface

This racing chatter of mental stuff is often below our awareness. We focus on the task at hand and don't notice most of the thoughts running through our mind. It's like having the TV on in the background, it's a barely audible murmur on the fringes of your awareness.

Even though these thoughts are just below the surface they still exert a very powerful influence. They may pull us down into unhelpful moods, self-criticism or self-sabotage, while we barely notice what is going on.

4. We have had a lot of practice thinking this way.

These thought patterns, phrases, images and so forth are out of our awareness because we have practiced this way of thinking since we were children. The better you get at some skill the more automatic and streamlined it becomes.

If you are a good driver then you probably give no thought to driving down a busy road while having a conversation at the same time. Your driving skills are so well-integrated that you can put yourself on driving auto-pilot while you talk with your friend, listen to the radio or plan what you are going to have for dinner. It's easy as all your driving skills are now operating at an unconscious level.

But, do you remember when you were learning to drive?

Back then, you had to think of everything. How to use the pedals, how to steer and brake, how to manoeuvre in traffic, all the skills of driving that fully occupied your attention and left you no mental capacity for anything else. With a lot of practice all this hard work slipped down below consciousness so that driving is now almost effortless.

You've been a thinker for a lot longer than you have been a driver, so it should be no surprise that most of what you are thinking happens automatically.

What can I do about all these bad thoughts?

This book is all about one technique that can help you identify and disconnect from the flow of unhelpful thoughts that roll through your mind on a daily basis.

The process is:

- **Simple:** It only takes a few minutes to learn.
- **Quick:** It takes 60 seconds to apply (when you've had some practice it can be even quicker than that).
- **Portable:** You carry this around in your head wherever you go. You don't need any special equipment and no batteries are required.
- **Invisible:** This all goes on in the privacy of your own mind. You don't need to adopt any strange postures, go through any obscure rituals or say anything out loud. No one will know you are doing this except you.

Note: In this book I often refer to the unhelpful thoughts that cause us distress as “bad thoughts”. These thoughts are not bad in the moral sense of the word, they are not wicked or evil, they are just thoughts. However, the way that we relate to these thoughts causes us stress and distress, they are thoughts with unhelpful effects.

Is this technique a miracle cure?

Will one application of this simple process clear my mind of all negativity forever, so that I never need to have another troublesome thought in my head?

No, it won't ... sorry!

If you use this once and expect miraculous results then you will probably be disappointed.

This process works well to interrupt your unhelpful thought patterns but you need to do it on a regular basis like eating and brushing your teeth.

If you want something that you can use every day to make your life easier, keep reading.

Still here?

Great! Let's get started.

Meeting The Monkey Mind

The first part of this process is designed to give you a direct experience of what is going on in our mind during our waking hours. We are often so busy thinking that we don't notice just how busy the mind is.

Most people don't sit or stand still very often. In this exercise you are going to experience sitting still for just 60 seconds to observe the activity of the mind¹.

1. Put a watch down in front of you
2. Sit still and quiet for 60 seconds – don't speak, don't move (remember to breathe) just pay attention to the mind's activity, whatever thoughts, ideas, sounds, images, memories and fantasies come and go in awareness.
3. Don't do anything with all this mental activity, just be aware of the constant flow.
4. At the end of 60 seconds you can move again.

You have just observed the ceaseless flow of stuff through our consciousness. Our mind jumps from one thing to another, ever restless and eager to get to the next thought. This mental state is well known to meditators as “monkey mind”.

¹ Those of you with an existing meditation practice will find this all very familiar.

Mindfulness

Taking time to observe the activity of the mind is sometimes called mindfulness. It is attending to our experience without judging or acting out what we find.

To get the best results from this kind of process you need to suspend two of the things we tend to do with our mental activity: judging it or acting on it.

Don't judge your thoughts

Imagine that you are a wild life cameraman making a documentary of a day in the life of a watering hole on the African savannah. If that was so, you would set up your camera at dawn and wait patiently for something to happen.

Animals would come and go, you would notice and film them doing whatever they wanted to do. Your job would be as an unobtrusive observer capturing each moment as it unfolds.

If you wanted to get a good record of what was going on you would not try to interfere with the animals. You wouldn't try to arrange them to make a better photographic composition – elephants on the right, hyenas on the left. Nor would you try to have them act out your fantasies of how wild animals 'should' act.

It's like this with our thoughts. When we give them a few moments to present themselves we need just to observe them as a good naturalist would watch all the animals they were looking at. In this way, you would acknowledge the reality of the situation and not try to interfere or have it turn out in the way that you wanted.

When we sit still and watch the actions of our minds we may begin to notice that it's not all sweetness and light. Some of our thoughts are not cute and cuddly. We might have moments of anger or ill-will, thoughts of revenge or attack, resentment and judgement. For the purposes of this exercise we give up any ideas of how we want to be and pay attention to how we actually are.

Sometimes it's not a pretty sight.

It might be tempting to come down on ourselves for thinking this way by having these kinds of thoughts:

- “What do you think you are thinking about?”
- “You can't think that!”
- “Don't think those bad thoughts they might come true!”

This is the judging mind at work. It thinks about thinking and passes judgement on what we are thinking - “That's a bad thought, you shouldn't think that way”, or less common “That's a good thought, well done!”

Most of us have a very judging mind. It takes us away from our experience and gets caught up in thinking about our experience instead of being present to the experience.

For the purposes of mindfulness it is wise just to put aside the judging mind for a little while and let whatever thoughts come to mind be there. If judging thoughts arise, let them be there as well, just notice, don't get caught up in what they are thinking about.

Don't act on your thoughts

The second piece of advice is don't act on the thoughts, don't do anything with them just notice that they are present in your experience.

You may find all sorts of thoughts arise into consciousness when they are given a bit of space. These thoughts may be quite powerful or appealing.

“I could kill her after what she did to me!”

“I've got to get my own back on that two-timing snake!”

Left to their own devices our minds can come up with all sorts of ideas that if acted upon would give us (and others) a lot of trouble. If you want a life that is free from prison or other unfortunate consequences it's better not to act on these thoughts.

Remember that the purpose of the mindfulness section of this process is to be aware of what is going on in our minds, without judging it, pushing it away or acting it out in unhelpful ways.

We are aiming to be present in our experience without fighting with it. Just having this attitude of non judgemental attention to what is going inside us can make huge differences in our experience.

For the purposes of the “60 seconds process” we are using mindfulness to give a snapshot into our experience so that we can identify thoughts we want to disconnect from.

Disconnecting From Thoughts

“for there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so.”

- William Shakespeare

We live in a world of thoughts. We spend most of our waking hours thinking about things. We plan, we discuss, we worry, we imagine, we talk to ourselves. We ride our train of thought through the day without giving the fact that we are on a train of thought much attention.

Our train of thought takes us from one moment to the next. Unlike real trains we don't know the destination of our thinking. We can get on a train of thought in one place with a view to going somewhere and find ourselves miles away somewhere else in just a few moments.

Each thought can throw a switch on the track to divert the train in any number of directions. One thought leads to the next, and to the next and the next. Our monkey-mind is driving the train.

In moments we have travelled a long way. Sometimes we like where we are going, the view from the window is pleasing, light and sunny, at other times we can find ourselves travelling into dark, hostile and frightening territory.

If we don't like where our thinking is taking us we can try several methods to get ourselves out of our unpleasant journey.

Suppress our thoughts

Perhaps we can hide our thoughts from view. With a bit of willpower we might be able to push them down below the surface so we don't have to think them or feel their results.

Like an ostrich we stick our heads in the sand and hope those troublesome thoughts will go away.

We tell ourselves not to think those thoughts, or perhaps we can distract ourselves: watch TV, eat some junk food, read a magazine or turn on some music to keep those thoughts out our minds.

But this is hard work, keeping “bad thoughts” out of our mind takes a lot of effort. We have to stand guard on our awareness, making sure that none of these bad thoughts can get in and that takes effort and energy.

We may also need to use a lot of distractions that are expensive in time, money and consequences.

If you need to eat a tub of ice cream to keep your mind away from unpleasant thoughts then that is going to take money from your pocket and add inches to your waistline.

All this avoidance and suppression can take it out of you.

Think more positively

Perhaps we can keep those bad thoughts away by overwhelming them with good ones. If we can just come up with enough positive thinking we can drown out the negativity with sweetness and light.

There is a self-help industry telling us that we need to think positively to get on in life. If we just keep an unfailing

positive attitude by using affirmations enough, being grateful enough or cheerful enough we can overcome our “negative programming” and get to the promised land of total happiness.

Just affirm enough, be grateful enough and you can neutralise those thoughts.

There's a lot to be said for a positive upbeat attitude but this idea, taken to extremes, does have some drawbacks.

- If you take the “good thoughts are good, bad thoughts are bad” idea to its logical conclusion then you can become afraid of your thoughts. If you think that a bad thought will bring bad things into your life then your “bad thoughts” will scare you. Being scared of your own mind is not helpful.
- Sometimes life sucks! Some life events can be very unpleasant: a miscarriage, serious illness, the death of a loved spouse or child are not happy events. If you wanted to focus on the positive in such experiences you would need to spend a lot of mental energy searching for a small silver lining in a very large black cloud. (Not only that, your efforts to be relentlessly positive might not be appreciated by other people in that predicament who just want you to acknowledge the awfulness of the situation).

Once again this approach is hard work, the more disagreeable the thought the more effort you need to go to “cover it up” with positives.

Argue with your bad thoughts

If you can't hide from your thoughts or sweeten them you could always try arguing with them.

When an unhelpful thought arises you could pick a fight with yourself.

“That's a really stupid thing to think”

“Don't think that it's wrong”

“I am a good person, don't think that way”

Perhaps you come up with counter arguments to your “bad” thought.

“He's a bully! ... No he isn't, he didn't mean to yell at me, he was just stressed”

“I'm crap! ... No you're not, you're just tired, you are a wonderful human being”

This approach rarely stops at one sentence, it expands into long running arguments about what is really happening and what it means. You can end up in a long, bloody, inner battle.

This approach results in internal conflict, stress and unresolved thoughts. In the absence of a definitive victory for either side, trenches are dug, positions are fortified and shots are exchanged in a very long war of attrition.

Acknowledge the bad thought and let it go

The fourth approach is perhaps the least obvious and most radical.

The previous approaches to managing an unhelpful train of thought were to stay on the mental train, hiding from, sweetening or arguing with our thoughts. In this approach we recognise that we are on a train of thought and that

we can step off that train at any time. We don't need to go where it is going.

We acknowledge the reality of the situation and what we are thinking and we step outside the thinking process that propels the train forward.

This is a three-step process:

1. We notice that we are having a particular thought
2. We accept the thought as a thought without judgement
3. Rather than suppressing, distracting, positive replacements or arguing, we acknowledge its presence and let it go.

This approach has many benefits.

- **It acknowledges reality.** There is no attempt to change what is going on to something more agreeable to us. It helps us to face our experience without distortion or manipulation. If we are grounded in reality we are much more likely to make wise decisions.
- **It uses awareness rather than effort.** Because we are not seeking to change anything we do not need to work so hard to create “counter measures” to our thinking. The effort required is to be present to our experience whatever it is.
- **We are not struggling with ourselves.** Accepting our experience as it is without judgement means that we

do not need to fight with ourselves over whether our thoughts are the right thing to think or not.

Sounds great, but how do you do this?

So, how do you actually acknowledge disagreeable thoughts and let them go.

In fact there are lots of ways of letting go of troublesome thoughts.

In many mindfulness practices you “just” bring your attention back to the thought in question again, and again, treating it with non judgemental awareness until it softens and loses its power.

That can be a very big “just”. This approach may take time, effort and willingness to be present with unpleasant experiences for a lot of time.

There is another way, a two step process that is simple and effective in helping us step back from a bad thought.

How to disconnect from a thought

Let us imagine that you are aware of the thought “I am a bad person”².

1. Think the thought “*I am a bad person*” for a few seconds ... notice how that feels.
2. Think “I am thinking the thought *I am a bad person*” for a few seconds ... notice how that feels.

² If you are aware of one of your own “bad thoughts”, substitute that thought into this example.

3. Think “I am aware that I am thinking the thought *I am a bad person*” for a few seconds ... notice how that feels.

What happens when you use this process?

Many people report that the original thought seems less important, or that it is at a distance, or that they have a distance from that thought.

Try it with another “*bad thought*” of your own

1. Think “*bad thought*” for a few seconds ... notice how that feels.
2. Think “I am thinking the thought *bad thought*” for a few seconds ... notice how that feels.
3. Think “I am aware that I am thinking the thought *bad thought*” for a few seconds ... notice how that feels.

What happens?

Questions about the process

Will it work all the time?

Very few things work for everything all the time, but it will work well on many kinds of “bad thoughts”. Practising the technique will let you know where it works best for you. Use it persistently to clear whatever can be cleared up.

Even if you are not able to disconnect from all your “bad” thoughts, you will be better off by not being bothered by those thoughts that you have neutralised. After all any relief is still relief.

Will my mind stay clear for long?

You may find that the thought you worked on no longer bothers you, however you might find that it returns after a few seconds or minutes. Remember, you have been unconsciously practising these thoughts for a very long time, they are your current habit. If and when they return you may need to repeat the process.

Old habits can't be thrown out of the window, they must be coaxed down the stairs one step at a time
- Mark Twain

If I disconnect with the thought will I stop caring about it?

At first glance it might look as though if you disconnect from the thought you will become indifferent to the situation you are in.

For example: If you use this process on the feelings that go with “I made a big mistake and my wife is angry with me”. Will you not care that you made your wife angry and just do the same thing again.

This process will help you disentangle yourself from the power of your thoughts to carry you along tracks of excessive rumination. It won't get you out of difficult situations or absolve you of responsibility for your actions you will still have to deal with whatever situation you are in.

However if you are not enmeshed in unhelpful thinking patterns you will be able to make smarter decisions and be more skillfull than you would have been if you were still guided by unhelpful thought processes.

Isn't this just running away from your thinking?

Aren't you just trying to escape from your thoughts and pretend that they are not happening or not important? No, quite the reverse, in this process we attend to our thoughts very clearly and change our relationship to them.

If you are standing chest deep in a rapidly flowing river, you will know that the current is strong and you might be swept away at any moment. It takes all your energy to stand still or make any progress whatsoever.

If you climb out of the river and sit on the bank, you can see that it is a rapidly flowing river that could sweep you away at any minute.

If you want to move forward, which would you do, stand in the river and try to push against the current one step at a time, or climb out and walk along the bank?

In either case you know the power of the river.

This process is like throwing yourself a rope so that you can climb out of the river and walk along the bank. The river may draw you back in, but you can still climb out when you want to. The more you climb out and walk along the bank, the more progress you will make and the wiser you will be about the river.

The “60 Seconds Process”

In the preceding chapters we have introduced the 60 second mindfulness practice and one way to disconnect from our thoughts.

By itself the mindfulness process is a very useful way of changing the way we relate to our thoughts. However, it takes time and discipline to be able to separate ourselves from our negative thought patterns using mindfulness alone.

The thought disconnection process will help us disconnect from a negative thought pattern, but it is easy to forget to use the process in the heat of the moment.

What we need is a way to merge the benefits of a mindfulness approach with the power to disconnect from the thoughts to arise. Now, we can put these pieces together to create a process that will help us clear our minds and help us to be able to do that whenever we need to.

Instructions

1. At first put a watch down in front of you to time the 60 seconds (with practice you will be able to gauge the time accurately for yourself).
2. Sit in a comfortable position, stop what you are doing and be still for 60 seconds (remember to breathe normally)
3. If a “bad thought” arises in your mind
4. Immediately say to yourself (silently) "I am thinking “*bad thought*”
5. Wait a second
6. Follow with (silently) "I am aware that I am thinking “*bad thought*”
7. Wait a second
8. Notice the difference
9. Go back to paying attention to what is going on in the mind.
10. When another “bad thought” arises repeat this process
11. Continue until the 60 seconds are up.

Example

Let's imagine that you have just had a meeting with someone who you find a bit of a "challenge". The discussion has left you feeling edgy and unhappy. You have a few minutes before you have to do something else, so you sit still and notice what is going on in your mind.

As you are sitting there, being still, you might notice the thought "*that was a pain!*"

You say to yourself: *I am thinking the thought that was a pain*, then pause.

Then you say to yourself: *I am aware that I am thinking the thought that was a pain*, then pause.

Now you go back to paying attention to your inner experience.

Very soon the thought "*This guy is an idiot!*" arises in consciousness.

You say to yourself "*I am thinking the thought this guy is an idiot*", then pause.

You say to yourself "*I am aware that I am thinking the thought this guy is an idiot*", then pause.

Now you go back to paying attention to your inner experience.

Very soon the thought "*He makes me angry!*" arises in consciousness.

You say to yourself "*I am thinking the thought he makes me angry* ", then pause.

... and so on until the 60 seconds is up.

Try the process now

Now that you have done this for 60 seconds:

- How do you feel?
- What is going on in your mind?
- What are your thoughts now?

Of course, you can repeat the process again and again every time you have an idle minute.

If you have not yet tried this process try it now. This will only work if you use it.

Variations on a theme.

Of course we have more than just thought going through our minds. We don't just think our way through the day our mental world also consists of images, sounds and internal dialog. You can vary the disconnection process to work with whatever arises in your 60 seconds mindfulness session.

Disconnecting from images

We can experience mental images that distress us. Snapshots of unhappy memories, vivid images of future problems. An image may come with powerful feelings attached, using this process you can step back from these images.

- I am seeing [*the image*]
- I am aware that I am seeing [*the image*]

For example if you have an image of your angry father pop into your mind leaning down to tell you off. You could use:

- I am seeing *this image of my father*
- I am aware that I am seeing *this image of my father*

Important: If the images are very disturbing: flashbacks or hallucinations this is not the process to be using for these kinds of images. Get professionally trained help to work with those kinds of intense experience.

Disconnecting from sounds

Sometimes we can remember unpleasant sound: replays of unpleasant voices, things we were told, etc. These remembered sounds can come with strong feelings attached.

- I am hearing [*the sound*]
- I am aware that I am hearing [*the sound*]

For example: If (in your mind's ear) you hear your mother's voice telling you off. You could use:

- I am hearing my *mother's voice telling me off*

- I am aware that I am hearing *my mother's voice telling me off*.

Disconnecting from internal dialog

Internal dialog, or self-talk, is a pervasive part of our inner experience. Many of us have a running commentary of what we are doing in our minds.

This commentary may be unfriendly or critical about what is going on. We might tell ourselves “Why did I do that? I am so stupid”, “that's not going to work”, “don't bother you'll never succeed”.

This internal criticism depletes our energy and our ability to do what we want to do. When we attach to those thoughts we can easily be dragged off course.

You can use this process to disconnect from the emotional charge of that inner dialog.

- I am telling myself [*this inner dialog*]
- I am aware that I am telling myself [*this inner dialog*]

For example: If I say to myself “I am so stupid”

- I am telling myself “*I am so stupid*”
- I am aware that I am telling myself “*I am so stupid*”

Using The Process

Since this is a quick and silent process you can use it anywhere that you have 60 seconds to be still.

You can use this as a formal meditation practice or you can squeeze it into some of the 60 second spaces in your life to get on the spot relief just when you need it.

A Daily Practice

To use this process as a self-development process treat it as a micro-meditation and organise it as you would a meditation practice.

- Pick a regular time to practice the process. If you want to make this a daily habit then choose times that are convenient to you. Perhaps at a fixed time in the day e.g. 8am and 5pm or linked to other regular events such as mealtimes or just before bed.
- Create a reminder. Use an alarm or reminder to help you develop the habit of running this process.
- Use the process and take some time to enjoy the relief it brings. If you pay attention to the benefits this will give you the motivation to continue with the technique and make it your own.
- If you have the time, merge 5 or 10 of these 60 second practices into a single short meditation.

The benefits of having a daily practice are:

- You develop the process into a habit
- You get the benefit on a regular basis
- As the process becomes more consistent and habitual you will begin to run it at other times of the day. Rather than be overwhelmed or beaten down by a thought it will naturally occur to you to run this process. Once this process becomes second nature it will expand the benefits in your life.

Another opportunity to integrate this process into daily life is around sleep. If you have difficulties getting to or staying asleep because of a busy mind, this process may help you step off the mental merry-go-round so that you can rest.

- If your mind is very busy before you go to sleep use this process with every thought that runs through your head. As well as disconnecting from the thoughts, slowing them down to catch them for the process will help your mind settle so that you can sleep more easily. You may need to disconnect from very many thoughts.
- If you wake up in the night and can't get back to sleep. Use the same process to detach from the busy mind. As with getting to sleep you may need to disconnect from many thoughts to get back to sleep.

In The Moment

Aside from planned opportunities to use this process there are lots of unplanned 60 second gaps in our day where we

can use this technique to our advantage.

While waiting

We spend a lot of time waiting for something to happen. There may be 60 seconds to spare when you are waiting:

- Queues: while you are standing at the checkout in a supermarket is a great opportunity to use this process on whatever is running through your mind at the time.
- Sitting in a doctor or dentists reception waiting to be called in for your appointment. Many people experience a lot of unhelpful thoughts while waiting for medical treatment.
- Waiting for your bus, train, taxi, plane to turn up. This is a variation on the queue theme, in this case you usually have a lot more than just 60 seconds to spare.
- Waiting for your computer to boot up in the morning.
- While waiting for a lift (elevator).
- While standing in a lift or on an escalator (See [Escalator Meditation](#) for another useful way of spending time on an escalator)

Being a passenger

When you are a passenger you have time on your hands. You don't have to drive the car or bus, fly the plane, or

captain the boat. Someone else is getting you from A to B all you need to do is sit there. This is an opportunity to practice this process and arrive calmer than when you left.

Other opportunities

- Hit the mute button on the TV remote during the commercial breaks and run the process then.
- Pause to “look” in a shop window. You will easily be able to run the process while appearing to look in a shop window – no one will know what you are doing. (See [Shopping Meditation](#) for a similar practice).
- Use this process while you are walking around. When you have had a little practice with the technique you may be able to use it while walking.
- Waiting for your bath to fill.
- While washing the dishes.
- Waiting for the toast to pop out of the toaster.
- Waiting for the kettle to boil for a cup of tea or coffee.
- Waiting for the microwave to ding.

Our lives are full of short gaps – the spaces between activities. Take advantage of these gaps to practice disconnecting from your thoughts.

Getting Started

Okay, you have read this far. You may be thinking this looks interesting how can I get some benefit from it.

Here are some simple suggestions for getting started.

If you haven't already tried this process out. Try it out. In fact, try it out right now!

If you have tried it out, and it helped, how do you get started?

If you want to make it a regular practice. Make a commitment to use it three times a day for one week. That is, use it for 3 minutes a day for 7 days. 21 minutes out of your week. See how that goes.

If you would prefer a more informal approach, make a list of all the opportunities you would have to use it in your daily life (use the list above for inspiration). Find some way to remind yourself to use it – alarms, post-it notes etc so that you remember to do it.

Make a list of the thoughts that run through your head. This can be very sobering if you find your mind is full of poisonous waste. But when you have been using this process for a while you may find that the thoughts that you catch start to change and the ones that previously dominated your thinking become much less powerful.

Reflect on what's different. A good way of motivating yourself to continue is to consider: “What is different in my life since I started using this process?” “How are things changing for me and is this change useful?”.

About me

I'm a Master Practitioner and Trainer of Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP), and a Practitioner and Trainer of Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT). I've been practising NLP since 2000 and EFT since 2004. I'm a member of the Neuro Linguistic Psychotherapy and Counselling Association ([NLPtCA](#)) my professional body and follow their code of conduct. I'm also a member of the Association for the Advancement of Meridian Energy Techniques [AAMET](#)



Since leaving university 30 years ago (gasp!), I've had a variety of jobs including: milkman, assistant steward on an Irish Sea ferry, Residential Social Worker at a centre for delinquent teenagers, Assistant Head of Youth Centre in Brixton, London, a grape picker in Switzerland, a spring grinder(!) in Germany, night porter, barman, software engineer, and now therapist and trainer living in the North East of England.

I specialise in working with people who struggle to accept themselves and feel blocked in their lives.

I've been an undisciplined student of yoga for 20 years, and a practising Buddhist (meditating on and off) for 20 years.

If you'd like to get in touch you can do that by emailing andy@practicalwellbeing.co.uk, calling 0754 700 9116, or visiting my website at www.practicalwellbeing.co.uk