

Passage Meditation: A Preferred Practice

Andrea Miller

Professor, Cataloging and Metadata Librarian, Missouri State University Libraries

What is Passage Meditation?

- Eknath Easwaran's method of unbroken attention on the words of an inspirational passage, which trains the mind & the will, so we can journey to the depths of consciousness.
- Uses memorized passages of timeless wisdom from many traditions
- You become what you meditate on
- It takes your mind to obedience school, like a puppy learning to sit & stay

- Sit upright & close eyes
- Repeat memorized passage slowly & silently
- When concentration strays, patiently bring it back to the passage—to the very beginning if you completely lose the thread (the mind will gradually begin to quit running away)
- Repeat the passage or start a new one
- Work up to 30 minutes (ideally every morning)
- Is part of Easwaran's 8 point program of disciplines that support & reward all day long

Who Developed It?

Eknath Easwaran (pronounced *Ish-warren*) Easwaran is his given (first) name, Eknath is his family (last) name.

- English literature professor in India
- Fulbright Scholar to US in 1959
- Taught 1st for credit meditation class at a major univ. (UC Berkley in 1968)
- Founded Blue Mountain Center of Meditation (BMCM) in Tomales, CA
- Mystic who sought the spiritual path within a busy everyday life
- Author of 40+ books & translations/commentaries on spiritual literature
 - Over 2 million books in print
 - His translations of the Bhagavad Gita, Upanishads, & Dhammapada are best-selling editions & used in religion courses
 - Extremely engaging writer

Why Should You Try It?

- Is suited to modern racing minds
- Can be a follower of any or no religion

- Passage gives a compelling focus for attention, unlike a flame or breath
 - A flame requires open eyes, inviting distraction. The object is to unplug from all the senses
 - Focusing on breath is hard because of our energy & drive, & can interfere with physiological processes

- A mantra (2nd point in program) is better used throughout the day to quickly steady the mind
- Upset happens because of an untrained mind
- For health:
 - The body needs to be active
 - The mind needs to be still

How to Learn It?

- Read Easwaran's book *Passage Meditation: A Complete Spiritual Practice*, 4th ed.
 - Available from BMCM.org or booksellers
 - In EBSCO Academic Ebooks Collection

- BMCM.org website
 - Instructions online
 - Free 1-hour introductory webinar
 - Retreats to deepen your practice
 - Thought for the Day emails
 - Free subscriptions available to *Blue Mountain Journal*
 - Satsang (fellowship gatherings) available online & all over the world
 - a. Over a dozen groups in California
 - b. Fun fact: *Laurel's Kitchen* best-selling vegetarian cookbook was written by his students

QR Code for
<https://www.bmcm.org/>
Easwaran's Blue Mountain
Center for Meditation



- Videos on YouTube
- Practice is key

Easwaran's 8 Point Program

- 1. Meditation on a passage**
 - a. Memorize a spiritual passage(s)
 - b. Slowly & silently repeat it
 - c. Gently bring straying attention back to the passage

- 2. Repetition of a mantram (mantra)**
 - a. In spare moments throughout day
 - b. Fosters inner strength & peace
 - c. Read *The Mantram Handbook*
 - d. Choose from long-sanctified mantrams like:
 - i. Jesus, Jesus
 - ii. Hail Mary
 - iii. Barukh atah Adoni
 - iv. Allahu akbar
 - v. Rama
 - vi. Om mani padme hum (jewel in the lotus of the heart)

- 3. Slowing down**
 - a. Deliberately slowing rapid pace of thinking & doing
 - b. Leads to greater awareness & effectiveness

- 4. One-pointed attention**
 - a. Focus on 1 person or activity

- 5. Training the senses**
 - a. Practicing making beneficial choices in talking, food, & media
 - b. Delay bad choices by an hour

- 6. Putting others first**
 - a. By prioritizing the welfare of others, our own is increased
 - b. Start with family & friends

- 7. Spiritual fellowship**
 - a. Spend time with others to practice, learn & support
 - b. Increases spiritual growth

- 8. Spiritual reading**
 - a. Easwaran's books
 - b. Great mystics of all traditions

Selecting Passages

- Easwaran recommends positive, uplifting passages from the great wisdom traditions

- Over 150 passages free on BMCM.org
- See the text & hear it read by Easwaran & wife Christine
- Can filter by type:
 - Agnostic & atheist
 - Buddhist & Taoist
 - Christian
 - Death & grief
 - Getting started
 - Help for a crisis
 - Hindu
 - Jewish
 - Love & compassion
 - Patience & forgiveness
 - Stress & anxiety
 - Sufi & Muslim
 - Transforming anger

- Passages are also in *God Makes the Rivers to Flow* book
 - BMCM.org, booksellers, or in EBSCO Academic Ebooks Collection

References

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Contact Information:

Andrea Miller
Missouri State University, Duane G. Meyer Library
901 S. National Ave, Springfield, MO 65897
AndreaMiller@MissouriState.edu
(417) 836-7695

Missouri State
UNIVERSITY