

10 Tips to Calm Your Chattering Mind During Meditation... or Anytime!

by Stephanie Noble,
author of [Tapping the Wisdom Within, A Guide to Joyous Living](#)

Whether you meditate or not, there are times when you wish your busy mind would ease up and let you enjoy the present moment with your full attention. The constant drone of recurring thoughts endlessly planning and remembering, can really get in the way of enjoying a walk in nature, listening to a friend, playing with your children, or enjoying an intimate time with the one you love.

Wouldn't it be wonderful to be fully present to enjoy life as it is? Here are some simple techniques you can use to calm a chattering mind. Because each of us is different, some of these will suit you better than others. Try them and see what works best for you.

1. Tension check

Where in your body are you feeling tightness? Loosen your jaw, move your neck gently back and forth, stretch, relax and massage whatever is holding tension. This tension sets up an environment conducive to the busy mind. Relaxed alertness creates an environment conducive to being fully present in your experience.

2. Be kind to your mind.

Getting upset about the chatter will just cause tension and stimulate a sequence of negative thoughts to play out. So don't scold your mind for its busyness. Instead just be aware of the chatter, then simply say, "It's okay" or "I'll think about that later" or "Just meditating" or "Just breathing" – whatever simple compassionate phrase works for you – and bring your attention gently back to the focus at hand. You may find you have to do this many times, but don't be discouraged.

3. Blue Sky

Trying to clear your mind of thoughts is like wishing the sky was always clear. But thoughts, like clouds, do come. And like clouds, thoughts are a natural occurrence, not to be pushed away. Instead, observe the thoughts as you would the clouds. If you get caught up in the fog of a thought, once it has passed, simply note its passing; don't judge yourself for having thoughts. That sets up tension and defeats the process.

4. Loving Kindness I

Whatever situation or person you are thinking about, send a wish for the situation or the person to be well. That is the most you can do from this place and time, and it lets you come back to the present feeling less judgmental for letting your mind wander elsewhere.

5. Training the Puppy

When you have a puppy who bounces around and wanders everywhere and doesn't follow orders, how to you train it? With harsh words and whippings? No, with love and encouragement.

Your mind is a puppy trying to learn a new set of skills. Treat it with love and encouragement. When it wanders, bring it back gently like a puppy on a leash.

6. Vortex

If so many thoughts are whirling around your mind that it's more of a full-blown storm than a cloudy day, visualize the whirling increasing, creating a vortex so strong you can't see any individual idea. It's all a blur. Then sit in the calm center of the tunnel cloud you have created and enjoy the peace.

7. Outgoing Tide

Imagine sitting on the beach watching the waves coming in and washing your thoughts away on an outgoing tide. Match the tide to your in and out breath.

8. Noting

Every thought you have is either in the past or in the future, remembering or planning, with pleasure, regret or worry. When a thought comes in, you can note whether it is remembering thought or planning thought. If an emotion rises up, simply note 'emotion'. While you can get overly caught up in cataloging, noting does enable you to begin to see your thoughts and emotions for the wisps of ever changing inner activity they are.

9. Loving Kindness II

Sending kind compassionate thoughts to yourself, loved ones, strangers, situations and the world at large, is a traditional Buddhist meditation. You can use it for the final part of any meditation, or as your regular meditation. Be sure not to skip sending 'metta' to yourself first. It may be harder than you think! Once you have the hang of it, challenge yourself to send loving kindness to those you find most difficult.

10. Here and now

This, just this...ah, bliss! Allow yourself to be fully present with your body sensations without identifying them. If you hurt from sitting, try to be with the sensation without labeling it 'pain' and see how that is. If you hear something, try not to visualize what is making that noise or follow the thoughts that arise. Simply listen with interest to the sound itself.

Perhaps one or more of these ideas will help you stay more present in your meditation and your life. Let go of all preconceived notions of what meditation should be. This is your experience, just for you. No comparisons, no judgments, just the experience itself held lightly in your compassionate embrace.

You can find more useful information about meditation at <http://stefnoble.blogspot.com/>