

THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF MEDITATION E-JOURNAL



Sharpening
Your Skills of Observation

NICK KEOMAHAVONG

THE
BUILDING BLOCKS
OF MEDITATION
E-JOURNAL:

Sharpening Your Skills of Observation

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MY MEDITATION TOOLBOX

mind wandering

MY MEDITATION TOOLBOX

sleepiness

MY MEDITATION TOOLBOX

tension

MY MEDITATION TOOLBOX

miscellaneous

INTRODUCTION

About This E-Journal

Although putting pen or pencil to paper certainly has its charm, there are those who prefer the speed and ease of typing to the more artistic, yet often more cumbersome reality of handwriting. And since our electronic devices tend to be extensions of our bodies in the 21st century, an electronic journal can certainly add an element of convenience to this transformative practice of observing our meditation experiences. So that's why we created this e-journal!

This e-journal provides you with a more minimal, electronic version of *The Building Blocks of Meditation Journal: Sharpen Your Skills of Observation*. Although much of the theory behind journaling and various other sections found in the print copy are absent from this free electronic rendition of the journal, much of this introduction, the blank journal entries, the meditation toolbox, and the other resources found in this version will look identical to the paperback. But despite the similarities, you will also find that there are many functionalities to this fillable PDF that greatly expand the possibilities of meditation journaling.

Tips & Tricks for Effective E-Journaling

This e-journal can be opened and typed on in virtually any software and on virtually any device that will allow you to view PDFs. Although you certainly have many options, Adobe Acrobat Reader is a good choice that we recommend. The interface is very user-friendly; it has a lot of functionality; and there are apps for Android, iOS, PC, and Mac.

This software also comes with 2GB of free cloud storage that will sync across any device that you have it downloaded on. This means that if you save a journal entry you make on your laptop to cloud storage, you can open it up on your phone and pick right back up where you left off. I know, right? So cool.

But just wait! It gets cooler. So we tried this out and got so excited when it worked. Hopefully, it'll work on your phone or device as well. Are you ready? So after clicking in the text box that you want to type in, you can use the "talk-to-text" function on your phone and it will type your journal entry for you! Isn't that just mind-blowing! Imagine how fast and easy journaling can become.

If the text is too small for you to read comfortably, it is very easy to just zoom in and continue typing or reading. Also if you would like to toggle forward to the next text box, you can press "tab" on your computer or "next" on your smartphone. To toggle backwards, you can press "shift + tab" on your computer or "previous" on your smart phone. There are other functions such as adding bookmarks, searching for keywords, and more that you can explore on your own so feel free to experiment and have fun with it!

E-Journal Structure

Meditation Toolbox

This e-journal will be broken up into various sections. As you have likely already seen after flipping through the first few pages, there are four pages at the very beginning with the heading “My Meditation Toolbox” with a specific heading underneath.

The purpose of this toolbox is to consolidate all of your best practices into a short, well-organized list. This will enable you to quickly and conveniently reference and review your own personalized list of methods that have proven effective in stilling the mind. The structure of this four-page toolbox will enable you to scan its compartments quickly and discover the tools that have helped you overcome specific obstacles in the past.

The toolbox is divided into four compartments that occupy one page each. Three of these four compartments correspond to each of the three most common obstacles that people face in meditation. The general idea is that anytime you discover a method that helps you overcome mind wandering, sleepiness, or tension, you can briefly summarize that tool in the appropriate compartment. The fourth compartment will be the place where you can store any miscellaneous methods that are not necessarily related to a specific obstacle.

As you continue to practice meditation and discover methods that work for you, you will have the raw materials necessary to fill up each compartment. Your toolbox will become progressively more powerful as a result. Then, instead of trying to sift through the

details of countless entries to discover a solution to a roadblock you are currently facing in your meditation, you can simply reference this section and easily find what you’re looking for.

Return to your toolbox whenever you feel stagnant in your practice and it will present you with the know-how to get unstuck. By building and reviewing this section often, you will become like a skilled worker with the mind. You can swiftly and confidently filter through your tools until you find one that helps you achieve stillness in any situation.

Clarify Your Why

The second to last section before you reach the blank journal pages will help you clarify your “why.” Getting clear on the most powerful reasons why you want to create and maintain a meditation habit is a very beneficial exercise both at the beginning and along the way of your meditation journey. At first, there will most likely be some resistance and struggles as you seek to incorporate this behavior change into your daily life. And there will also likely be rough patches in your practice where you don’t feel so motivated to sit. So having a one page sheet of your deepest motivations for practicing can be an easy way to reconnect with a powerful source of internal motivation.

Favorite Sessions

With a similar objective, the section that follows will give you a place to make note of the highlights, the rating, and the page number of your favorite meditation sessions so you can reconnect with them easily. This section will also include an explanation of the rating

system, so you can understand how it can help your journaling practice. Reconnecting with both your reasons for meditating and the good inner experiences you have had can help you persevere in the face of resistance. So these last two sections will guide you on how you can create such resources for yourself.

Proper Mindset for Journaling

Before I release you into the wonderful world of journaling, where you will undoubtedly craft an incredible roadmap to meditation mastery, I would like to give you two last pieces of advice. These tips will help you adopt the appropriate mindset when approaching meditation journaling.

First of all, when journaling . . . please, be kind to yourself.

We discussed this quite a bit in the other book, but it's worth reiterating here. There will be ups and downs in your practice. There will be times—perhaps more often than not—where your mind will wander for a majority of the session. Maybe it isn't still for the whole time you are meditating. And that's ok. That is normal in the beginning and even during certain stressful or busy time periods in our life.

Journaling is not about being a harsh judge of your experience. It's not about determining whether you are a good meditator or not. Or whether you are better or worse than your friend. Rather, it is about sharpening your skills of observation.

And as was a central theme in the main book, the key to effective meditation and refined skills of observation is neutrality. Both

inside and outside of our meditation session, we observe things neutrally. Keep in mind the perspective that there's no such thing as a "bad" meditation session. Just opportunities to get a better understanding of our own mind. So, again, please be kind to yourself when journaling.

And last, but certainly not least, make sure that you have fun with this process! Get creative. Get excited. Draw pictures. Share your experience with your accountability partner. Celebrate your efforts towards implementing this wholesome habit together. Feel proud of yourself for undertaking this journey. And just approach this meditation path with a very lighthearted, not-so-serious mentality. With this approach and the guidance provided in this journal and book set, I am confident you will have an incredibly transformative and enjoyable experience. :)

CLARIFY YOUR WHY

Take some time now to brainstorm and get clear on some of the powerful reasons why you are incorporating meditation into your life. Then go ahead and jot them down on the next page, on a separate piece of paper, or on the printable template from the QR code or link provided below. Once you feel like you have listed a few strong points, keep this in a prominent place where you can reconnect with that internal source of motivation to keep staying consistent in this transformative practice. Feel free to add more reasons to this list as you progress on your journey and experience new positive benefits in your life.



QR code and link to access printable templates:

<https://nickkeomahavong.com/meditation-1>

CLARIFY YOUR WHY

Why is a meditation practice important to you?

FAVORITE SESSIONS

Adding your favorite sessions to the next page can help you easily reference an inspirational session when you need a little encouragement and motivation to meditate. This page will serve as a reminder of how meditation has made you feel.

A note about the rating category found here and in the blank journal entries: it is not prompting you to judge your experience as good or bad. Rather its purpose is to help you easily find the entries for “stiller” meditations and identify the steps they have in common both before and during the meditation. This will clue you in on which things to repeat. It will also help you do the same with the “not so still” experiences, so you can see what to avoid. Keep in mind, there is no such thing as a bad meditation, only opportunities to hone in on your most effective method to stillness in all situations.

FAVORITE SESSIONS

| Page | Rating | Highlights |
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SUMMARY OF STEPS TO GET STARTED

1. Meditate.
2. Write about your experience.
3. If you found a tool that worked, add it to the master sheet.
4. Take a moment to feel proud of a job well done.
5. (Optional but recommended) Chat with your accountability partner to either motivate, support, get feedback, or just discuss your meditation journey together.

**HAPPY
JOURNALING!**

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Venerable Nick Santacitto



Venerable Nick, previously a practicing psychotherapist, has been ordained as a Theravada Buddhist monk in Thailand since 2018. His books capture his unique perspective by interweaving the tools of the mental health world and the wisdom of Buddhism into simple and practical guides to healing. With a background as a YouTuber and a professional hip-hop dancer, Nick likes to keep it real and deliver his message to the reader with a refreshing, modern flavor. The directness of his writing cuts past the fluff and gets to the point in a way that is relatable and easy to connect with.

Nick has acquired a diverse range of professional experience in the mental health field over the past decade, including but not limited to: being the lead clinician at a foster home for over one hundred kids aged twelve to eighteen being a program therapist at a drug treatment center in Malibu, California; being a bereavement counselor at a hospice; and being the founder and owner of his private practice, True Nature Counseling Center, in San Diego, California.

However, at the pinnacle of his professional success, Nick left it all behind to become a Buddhist monk in Thailand. He wanted to delve deeper into his own healing and become a more refined practitioner of the tools that he was teaching. As he fully focused his energy on becoming more deeply congruent and aligned with his true nature, his understanding of human suffering and how to heal it matured greatly. It is his highest mission to share this knowledge with others in order to help them discover their true nature and live their most authentic lives.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Venerable Michael Viradhammo



After discovering the healing power of Buddhism and meditation, Venerable Michael decided to abandon material pursuits, dropped out of university, paid back his loans, and went to ordain as a Buddhist monk in Thailand, where he has been a monk since 2017. After ordaining, Venerable Michael has spent much of his time teaching meditation and wisdom to travelers at the Pa Pae Meditation Retreat in Chiang Mai as well as teaching and mentoring men who become monks with the international ordination program.

He is also an avid writer and is pursuing his passion by cowriting books about practical wisdom to help readers overcome their suffering with his monk brother, Venerable Nick. By learning, applying, teaching, and writing Venerable Nick's unique perspective that bridges mental health with spiritual health, Venerable Michael is deeply dedicated to continuously aligning his life with his true nature and helping others do the same.

CONNECT WITH THE AUTHORS



Visit Venerable Nick's website for a central place to access all of the projects that he has completed and is currently working on: <https://nickkeomahavong.com/>

Get a better feel for the broad range of topics, concepts, and stories that Venerable Nick has an interest in by visiting his YouTube channel: [Nick Keomahavong](#).

Stay updated with any new resources, products, or other announcements by signing up for Venerable Nick's mailing list: tinyurl.com/nickkeomahavong

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