

Silence Your Inner Television

an interview with David Less

*The following is R. Wieselman's December 2010 interview with David Less about Less's book, **Universal Meditations - Recipes for a Peaceful Mind**.*

wieselman: What was your intention and your hope in writing *Universal Meditations, Recipes for a Peaceful Mind*?

Less: My intention was to write a guidebook for people who were complete novices to meditation and also for people who had been meditating for many years. There was a need for a template of meditations that were not attached to any particular culture or form of meditation, yet incorporated the wisdom and techniques of many different paths. I was hoping that the book would be written in a way that was clear and simple and concise and that people could experience meditation immediately, rather than wading through texts that were difficult to understand and not necessarily in rhythm with our lives today. I also wanted to have meditations that were short--fifteen or twenty minutes maximum--and meditations that included human feelings, rather than taking us away from our feelings. I believe that our feelings, our passions, can make meditation real and profound.

wieselman: Why do you think that Meditation is so important today?

Less: For the first time, we have technology that unites all people globally, and that is a wonderful event in human history. The negative impact of that event is the speed of global electronic communication. It has increased the rhythm of our minds to a dangerous point and increased the distraction level that many people experience throughout the day.

I think that meditation, at this time in history, is very important to create moments of quiet to create space between the thoughts to create an antidote to the input of form and energy that comes at all of us throughout the day. Even a simple act like driving an automobile has us making life or death decisions by the hundreds in a period of 20 or 30 minutes. All of this creates both confusion and traffic in our subconscious mind. Meditation relieves some of the tension of holding those impressions from the day, and also now from the night.

I also feel that meditation increases health, lowers blood pressure, and extends our ability to relax, focus and concentrate. And these gifts are being lost because we're not using them.

wieselman: So meditation has not only an emotional component, but health and psychological benefits as well?

less: Yes, the cumulative benefits of meditation are profound and long-lived. They are similar to deciding that you are going to eat a diet that is healthy and in harmony with the human body. In a very short period of time you feel a difference, but over a prolonged period of time you hopefully enter into a state which is permanently healthy.

wieselman: What makes meditation so difficult for some people?

less: Many people don't value silence, and actually are afraid of it. In fact, many people keep their television set on twenty-four hours a day--without anyone watching it--just to have noise in the house. What we're doing outwardly, we're also doing inwardly. Because we fear silence, we also keep our minds switched to "on" twenty four hours a day. Meditation allows us--after a fashion--to experience silence, but because we're not used to silence we resist that which we are actually trying to create in meditation.

Another reason meditation is difficult is that in order for meditation to be successful, the physical body must be kept still and quiet and many people find that very difficult for the reasons mentioned above about the mind. When the body is moving we know we're alive. And for meditation the body must be kept still.

Meditation brings peace. Peace is not activity, but peace can occur within activity, but first peace must be experienced and then brought to activity.

So often people speak about meditation as a means of attaining enlightenment and they create that as a goal. When that is not at-

I always teach lessons about the breath. Breath is life.

tained in a short period of time they give up meditation and move on to something else. How can people work with that?

I don't know if enlightenment should necessarily be the only goal. I think that if we could have relaxation and health and peace and bliss as goals, they are more easily experienced.

After we've obtained those goals, if we want to up the goals to illumination, why, I think that would be a worthy idea. But let's start with that which we know and that which we can experience and that which we can imagine.

wieselman: What are the techniques that you put forth in your book?

less: One of the primary techniques is the use of creative imagination and visualization. Many meditation techniques ascribe a sense of formlessness and silence, and I think these techniques are very wonderful and gifts to humanity. In our world today, however, we are used to using our mind and our imagination, so what I've done is encourage people to channel their imagination in a way that will create a true peaceful and meditative state.

The other techniques that I have emphasized have been used for eons, including the use of sound. So there is one week with study on sound and making pure sounds without meaning; I also work with light and connecting meditation to science. And most importantly, to me, is connecting meditation to nature. Not human nature, but actually the nature of the planet, for the Universe is expressing itself in

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nature and when we look at that we can experience that in our own meditations.

wieselman: Can you tell me something about yourself and what drew you to meditation?

less: Initially, I was not the least bit interested in meditation, as my mind was very active and I enjoyed activity in life. I had just finished law school and was in business and enjoyed the life of a young bachelor in New York City. However, I began to be drawn to those moments when I would experience quiet by listening to music. My mind would settle down, and through that I began to experiment with the idea of just sitting quietly. From there, I connected with spiritual teachers on many different spiritual paths who all guided me in the same direction of peace and inner quiet. What emerged was not just an interest, but a love for meditation. I became quite skillful at being able to meditate myself and to transmit that feeling of peace and meditation to others, especially through the use of words, as well as silence. Out of that technique I began teaching, and out of that this book has developed.

And I've been teaching meditation for forty years. So I have quite a storehouse of experience that I'm delighted to share.

wieselman: Do you have any follow up plans for this book?

less: I've been working a great deal with the topic of death and dying--how we can help prepare people who are dying, as well as family and friends for the loss of someone they love dearly. Meditation is an integral part of the transition from this world to the next and we are not given that instruction which is so impor-

tant to carry us peacefully through the process of death. And so my intention is to write Universal Meditations for Death and Dying, which I hope will be done within eighteen months.

wieselman: Is your book available in other languages besides English?

less: My book has been translated into German and French already and will be released shortly. It is in the process of being translated into Chinese and Spanish. There was a great demand for the book in China, which frankly shocked me, and I've just received a request to see if we can translate the book into Turkish.

wieselman: Are there any audios of you leading meditation that we can sample?

less: Yes, if you go to the website www.UniversalMeditations.com, there are samples of meditations from the book. There are also other meditations that are not included in the book.

wieselman: I notice in your book that you speak about preparing the body and utilizing breath. Can you speak about that?

less: Yes, I had found, in looking at many other teachings on meditation available to the public, that there weren't instructions given in posture and holding the body in a certain way and using the breath to promote awakening and deepening of experience. I'm a firm believer in Hatha Yoga or Tai chi or Qigong as a means of familiarizing the body with certain profound postures, and I feel like all of these wonderful disciplines actually lead us to our ability to naturally sit and stand and experience deeper states of consciousness, so I've given instruction in both sitting and breathing

that I feel will help anyone, regardless of their physical condition.

wieselman: Can you speak about the breath?

Less: Breath is life itself. One cannot do any kind of inner work, inner transformational work, without an awareness of the breath. So the breath is mentioned continually throughout the book and when I teach meditation and seminars, which I do globally, I always teach lessons about the breath. Breath is life.

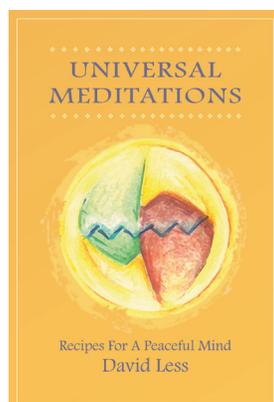
wieselman: One more question. What is the essence of meditation?

Less: The essence of meditation is that we live and move and have our beings in a cosmic oneness of which we are not aware. Medita-

tion enables us to remove some of the individuated coverings that we use to function in this world and experience our self, not just as part of cosmic consciousness, but as the potential to be all of cosmic consciousness. Does every human being have that potential? Every human being, good or bad, has the potential to experience infinite consciousness. We call that--for lack of a better word--LOVE. And if you look at the way we live our lives, we begin to love people. We love our parents; we love things; we love a new shirt; we love activities; we love another human being; and we continue loving form and objectivity, but that is ultimately leading us to the experience of pure love without an object. Meditation is one of the ways to get there.



David Less has traveled throughout the world for decades, teaching meditation, peace-building, and inter-spiritual harmony. He is also the International Head of the Universal Worship, an organization founded in Paris in 1920 that is centered around the celebration of all the faiths of humanity without cultural or religious bias. David's book *Universal Meditations – Recipes for a Peaceful Mind* draws on his 40 years of experience with universal spiritual practices to create easy to follow meditation recipes for everyone everywhere.



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