

# a course in **MEDITATION**

self-paced learning in the art of  
natural meditation



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“Ted Phelps has created an introduction to meditation that is extremely friendly and accessible. I especially like the way he has presented meditation in a non-mystical fashion: as a basic practice that can be the underpinning of all other forms of inner work. He has made it as accessible as possible without watering it down, and that’s an achievement!

“The book also feels true to the tradition, which is important, and I am pleased by the similarities with this and my own work. Referring to the process of meditation as a “meditative function” resonates strongly for me. It’s also interesting to note how many of us—many Siddha Yogis as well as many of Maharshi’s students—use the phrase *I am* in our meditations, and how effective it is!

“So many meditators get derailed when they find that they can’t keep their minds steady right from the beginning. The explanation and diagram of the flow of attention should make it possible for students to understand how to work with their own flow of attention rather than becoming frustrated by it.

“The book is a classic manual for basic practice, which will help so many people enter meditation, understand their own practice, and deal successfully with some of the key obstacles that arise.”

Sally Kempton  
Carmel, CA  
author of *The Heart of Meditation*  
contributing editor of *Yoga Journal*



# How to Use This Book

The book has three parts. The first two parts, *Classroom* and *Student Reading*, are for learning how to meditate in a natural style. The third part, *Talks*, gives in-depth background and theory on the natural principles in meditation.

FOR AN INTRODUCTION, including a quiet meditative experience, read *Open House*.

TO LEARN HOW TO MEDITATE, read *Open House* and do the *Classroom* through Day 4.

TO LEARN HOW TO MAKE A DAILY PRACTICE, do the *Classroom* through Day 7.

TO UNDERSTAND THE THEORY OF NATURAL MEDITATION regardless of whether you have taken the course, read the five *Talks* on “Meditation in Perspective.”

If you have the audio CD, *Natural Meditation, a guided launch with Ted Phelps*, you can use that right away, before doing any reading. It provides an audio equivalent to the Guide Cards used on Day 1 and provides other basic instruction given in *A Course in Meditation*.



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# personal note

Every Wednesday evening at a Buddhist congregation I belong to, a senior student takes newcomers aside for about three minutes to show them the sitting posture and describe the order of the service. Then as the group begins meditation, the priest says, “Let your mind dissolve into the sound of the bell. When you have a thought, observe it and let it go.” He strikes the bell, and the room falls silent for 24 minutes. That’s it. That’s your “course in meditation,” and you make of it what you can. Rev. Monshin Paul Naamon is well trained in these ways and knows that the deep learning comes through *doing* and that it takes years.

If everyone who wanted to learn meditation could go to a place like that once a week, there would be no need for *A Course in Meditation*. But most people can’t, or won’t, or just don’t get to such a place. After all, there isn’t one next to every Post Office. People may want to learn, but don’t get around to it because they see problems with all their options. The school is too far away; the class is the wrong day; the program costs too much; the tradition is too religious, or the wrong religion, or male-dominated.

To those who meditate regularly, that list can sound like a bunch of weak excuses. Meditation is a treasure. And it's a pleasure. We all had to overcome obstacles to get into it. But, whatever others think of these objections, they represent real stoplights on the road to meditation, red stoplights that may never turn green. I saw this 30 years ago when I was teaching the popular Indian method called Transcendental Meditation®, and I still see it today. So, what does a teacher do about it? Not necessarily anything, because meditation, even more than other arts, cannot be learned by a lazy mind. Teachers are not wrong if they simply let people figure out how to get themselves over the barriers. Yet, the opposite is also true: when you see a barrier in the road and know that it can be removed, your impulse to get out and move it is a good one.

My own impulse to remove barriers was with me from the beginning of my teaching, but it took a leap forward in 1994 when I designed the Natural Meditation teaching method. It eliminated barriers of religion, culture, authority, and gender. In 1999 I began writing out the main discourses used in teaching Natural Meditation, and since that was progressing well, I began to wonder, "Could I put an *entire course* in written form?" For me, that meant wrapping my textbook ideas inside a carefully honed set of instructions that would actually bring them to life. Although my target audience would be self-motivated readers, designing these instructions would be a challenge because natural meditations are an organic process, not just a mental task. The challenge was to show the reader how to be both student and leader. The leader would need new tools to be effective, ones I had never seen attempted in print. It was a worthwhile challenge because a stand-alone course would remove barriers of time, cost, distance, and the occasional need to learn meditation anonymously. I was moving

out on a limb, supported only by the conviction that meditation is natural and that the unique meditative condition in mind and body can come alive in a motivated student without the personal attention of a live teacher.

I worked through the winter of Y2K and by spring of 2000 was ready to test the *Course* in its web (computer) format with three nearby students. One was a young woman in college who had wanted to learn to meditate earlier that year but had not yet tried any method. The second was a middle-aged woman who had failed several times, by her own assessment, to learn a couple of different styles of meditation. The third, a middle-aged man, had also unsuccessfully tried several forms over many years. Each agreed to take the course alone and to visit me right away after completing it so we could discuss questions and I could assess what they had learned. Even I was surprised at how well it went. Their experiences were classic, beginners' experiences, indistinguishable from those of people I have taught in small classes since 1972. The two who had been frustrated with meditation found their pathway to success and built regular daily practices.

So, I put the course online and watched as the Internet learned about it and eventually made it one of the top selections (out of tens of thousands) for searches like, "free course in meditation" and "non-religious meditation."

Although this course teaches a single method, one that I consider an excellent lifelong companion, I recognize how valuable it can be to meditate in various styles. The willingness to explore is an essential component in the pathway I have taken, and without it, I would not have developed the Natural Meditation teaching method.

Before becoming a TM teacher, I meditated in the Japanese tradition with a small gathering of fellow Yale students connected with Philip Kapleau's Zen Center in Rochester, NY. I did a common Zen practice called *shikantaza*. This pure, open method is, in my terms, an essential form of natural meditation and one I still enjoy many times each week.

For several years, I practiced the Christian form called Centering Prayer, formulated by Father Thomas Keating and others. I'll always be grateful for an afternoon in the winter of 1994 spent in conversation with Father Raphael Simon of St. Joseph's Abbey in Spencer, Massachusetts, the birthplace of Centering Prayer. We talked of intention, will, and mantras in meditation and contemplative prayer. That talk and Fr. Simon's book on contemplation, *Hammer and Fire*, sparked new thought that led to my formulating the Natural Meditation teaching method.

My experience in these and other varieties of meditation eventually showed me that meditation methods share an underlying reality. They release a significant, built-in human function—I call it the *meditative function*—that isn't widely talked about by their traditions. The mind opens, expands, becomes more fluid and abstract, and the body rests, relaxes, and cleanses itself. This function is naturally occurring and represents the basic foundation or essence of the meditative condition. If the varieties of meditation were drinks at the grocery store, they might be orange juice, grape juice, green tea, coffee, milk, soda, beer, wine, soymilk, and bottled-at-the-source spring water. These drinks differ in flavor, rarity, cost, nutritional value, and culture of origin. Each has a special purpose conveyed by its proteins, vitamins, sugars, minerals, or in the case of bottled water, the absence of anything extra. The pure forms of natural meditation are the bottled spring water.



There has been no finer or more profound influence on my thinking, practice, and teaching, than that of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, who came to the West in the late 1950s with the sort of ideas that today are the cutting edge of the integral philosophical movement. It was a wide, integral philosophy tightly integrated with a clearly taught transformative practice. His teaching style and clear vision regarding the natural basis of meditation soaked into me years ago. He has a gifted sense for the delicate effects of the teacher's words on the mind of the beginner and is one of the greatest advocates for the naturalness of the meditative state.

The Natural Meditation teaching method takes this naturalness vision one long step further in its own direction and presents meditation in a pure, natural, framework independent of specific cultural ideas and articles of faith. It uses verifiable experience and concepts of psychology and physiology. The *Course* is like a street-level front office in a skyscraper. It's a public, barrier-free entry to a vast, complex, layered interior.

Even if you have been meditating for a while, the *Course* can be helpful. This is especially true if you haven't yet launched meditation as a daily practice, are unsure about your technique, or just need an infusion of fresh air.

In case you need something more advanced than the *Course*, that addresses issues unique to the meditative journey several years out, I am happy there's a book that does this well and does it in a way that resonates with the theory and purposes of Natural Meditation. It is *The Heart of Meditation* published in 2002 by Siddha Yoga Foundation and written by Swami Durgananda, or Sally Kempton, a popular American meditation teacher of 35 years. Kempton writes, "If the great question for a beginning meditator

is ‘How do I get into it?’ the question for a person who has meditated for a while is ‘How do I hold on to it?’” Here, “hold onto it” means keeping the effects of meditation during the day and bringing them to bear on the way we live. Kempton’s book is a rich, warm, detailed, inch-thick answer. It is based in a particular form of Yoga, but is delivered with an open style well suited for culturally independent practitioners. Zen teacher and author Peter Matthiessen calls it, “A thoughtful, intuitive, and uncommonly well-written book that can only be welcomed by all who follow the way of meditation (no matter the tradition) and especially those—the great majority of us, I suspect—who can benefit from a good jolt of fresh energy and inspiration in our practice.”

May you find further peace and health in your meditative journey.

Ted Phelps

Valatie, NY

October 23, 2006



# Open House

- Course description
- The natural meditative function
- An experience of quiet sitting
- Description of Natural Meditation
- Course plan

## *Overview*

*A COURSE IN MEDITATION* IS A CAREFULLY DESIGNED set of instructions that enables self-motivated readers to learn an enjoyable, relaxing, health-supporting style of meditation in a few days and to learn it in a low-cost, culturally neutral format based in natural functions of the human body and mind. The seven-day course builds the following skills:

**Sitting:** The ability to let yourself enter a natural meditative state of mind and body for 15 or 20 minutes, sitting almost anywhere, at any time, on anything reasonably comfortable.

**Practice:** The ability to do one or two sittings of meditation nearly every day and to understand how meditative growth fits into one's aspirations for life.

## *Welcome*

I welcome you to this Open House, which is intended to give you a taste of the course as well as a taste of the meditative experience. This is the new version of the course that was first published on the Internet by Natural Meditation Initiatives ([www.natural-meditation.org](http://www.natural-meditation.org)) in July 2000. It has helped people all over the world learn to meditate.

Some have thanked me for offering the course free of charge, some for offering it in a culturally neutral format, some for teaching classic concepts in a down-to-earth way, and some for letting them remain anonymous (no registration is required). But mostly, I am just glad to hear the course has worked. I never take that for granted—not even in teaching students face to face. I can't take it for granted because meditating, for me and millions of others, is the actual *waking up* of a meditative function or process that lives within the human body and mind, something borne within us, perhaps right in our DNA. *Waking up* the meditative function is not the same as *reading about* meditation. In fact, the waking up will not happen while reading. It can only happen after you put the book down and begin letting meditation come alive on its own within your body, mind, and heart. That's an art. Learning it is art. Teaching it is art.

The new version (that you are reading now) is designed to bring the reader close to the experience of being in a live class in Natural Meditation. The lessons, or “classes,” are called *Day 1*, *Day 2*, through *Day 7* and are in the next section, *Classroom*. They carefully build layers of concept and experience and all focus on developing the two skills, sitting and practice.

The student has choices in this course, which is why it is called *self-paced*. The student sets the schedule and manages the sessions. But, don't worry. If you just want to settle in and be shown each step of the way, you can do that. We'll have a clear, specific sequence for each day.

The course also has a textbook, separated into two parts. Most of it is optional reading. The second part of the textbook, *Talks*, has five chapters on “Meditation in Perspective” that address people with a focused interest in meditation theory, whether from a student's or teacher's practical perspective or a scholar's academic perspective. They put the subject of meditation and its naturalness into perspective with respect to a wide variety of concepts. You might enjoy reading the first of those talks right after the Open House.

So, let's start the Open House, now, with a talk of the kind presented in the classes. It answers a good question, one that students in a class might ask. (I present questions with a “Q:”).

Q: “Why is this type of meditation called *natural*?”

Consider that question for a moment, even if you are just guessing—or did I already hint at the answer? Try to come up with an answer you would be willing to give aloud in class. Then keep reading.

### ***Q: Why is this meditation called “natural?”***

#### *No Striving*

A method of meditation can be called natural when it doesn't require the practitioner to concentrate or try hard for results. A natural style of meditation is a gradual, graceful process of opening, and when we sit, we welcome and encourage that opening, as it happens and in the way it happens, without in any way attempting to make it happen by our own skills, effort, or willpower.

I know that may not sound like what you have read about meditation. Most books and articles I read use the words *concentrate* and *focus* at least once. And it seems logical to wonder: *How can you meditate without concentrating, trying hard, and focusing? How can you even drive a car like that, or paint, dance, or do much of anything but fall asleep?*

It is true that we fall asleep without trying, yet scientists tell us that sleep is a complex, necessary process. Clearly, something besides our own good efforts runs the sleep function for us. Well, the same is true—or *can* be true—of a session of meditation. That leads to the second point...

#### *Let Nature Meditate Within Us*

A natural style of meditation is designed around natural functions and doesn't try to do anything artificial with them. To me, it feels like a cool drink of pure spring water. Meditation is not just something to be done with the mind, like reading or thinking. Of course, there *is* something that we do with the mind during meditation, but there is also something that *happens to us* when we meditate. And if we are not trying to control the

experience, yet something complex happens within us, then whatever is happening must be built into us.

The natural function that happens in meditation does good work for us, work that, in some ways, nothing else can do. It lowers high blood pressure, clears out stress hormones, gives us distance and perspective, and softens or opens the heart. Many of meditation's benefits can be gained with other practices, too, such as yoga, aerobic exercise, t'ai chi, and a healthy diet and lifestyle. But, a natural form of meditation can be the sweetest way and the most graceful way to drop a teaspoon of health into the veins.

Meditation also has its unique work, a transformative work that shows up suddenly here and there and gradually builds over years and decades. It inspires growth in the mind and heart, a creative, intelligent, caring breakthrough into new territory. These transformations are sometimes called insight, growth of wisdom, and enlightenment. Each sitting of meditation drops a teaspoon of wisdom into the veins.

### *The Meditative Function*

What happens within us during meditation is a wonderful gift of nature. So, it ought to have a proper name. I simply call it the *meditative function*, but it was called the *relaxation response* in the early 1970s by Herbert Benson, M.D. of the Harvard Medical School. He and physiologist, Robert Keith Wallace, Ph.D. had studied the physiological features of meditation and discovered that during meditation, oxygen consumption drops significantly farther than it does during an eight-hour session of sleep. This drop implies a significant, natural ability to get a profoundly deep rest. Benson and Wallace published their findings in *Scientific American* and *American Journal of Physiology*, calling this effect a

“wakeful hypometabolic physiologic state.” Benson later wrote about it in a bestselling book, *The Relaxation Response* (1975). There have now been hundreds of studies showing significant changes during meditation and beneficial effects that come after sitting. You will learn more about this during the course.

The meditative function has both mental (subjective) features and physiological (objective) features. Here is a brief list:

- It is physically and mentally restful and can be even more restful than sleep.
- It changes the chemistry of the blood to soothe, heal, and release tension.
- It changes the brain’s and mind’s activity to create a quiet inner awareness in which the mind opens and expands and the heart softens.

If you haven’t previously heard about the scientifically verifiable process that goes on in meditation, you’re not alone. Unfortunately, it still is not widely taught in high school health. It’s not that reporters ignore it. They have been working hard to get the word out for many years. The latest major attempt I know about was admirably mounted by TIME magazine in August 2003 with “The Science of Meditation” by Joel Stern. Of course, TIME is one of the most-read newsmagazines in the world. It reaches about nine million people each week, half of them outside of the US. TIME didn’t just write a great article, rich in information and graphics showing what happens during meditation. They *all but shouted* it from the newsstand with an inch-high “MEDITATION” lettered across an eye-catching cover of actress Heather Graham sitting in Transcendental Meditation®. I can’t think of anything more a newsmagazine could do to get busy people to stop and look—and to *like* what they saw. Inside, the article jumped right in with:



“Scientists study it. Doctors recommend it. Millions of Americans—many of whom don’t even own crystals—practice it every day. Why? Because meditation works.”

Despite good articles on health and meditation like the TIME article, the health-related story of meditation—a fascinating, highly significant story—still seems to pass over, under, and around most people. But if you are ready to catch that story and make it your own, to become conversant and even expert in the personal practice of a health-based meditation, this course will get you launched. It will, at a minimum, make you conversant in the natural meditative process. You’ll learn about the meditative function, learn what it does, what it is good for, why you might like to use it regularly, and most importantly, you will learn how to wake it up within yourself. You will graduate with something I like to call “meditative literacy.”

### *It’s Right Here*

The meditative function is a treasure, but I don’t think of it as *buried* treasure. The ever-readiness of the meditative function is clearly demonstrated to me each time I teach a live class or give a public talk and lead people in a brief taste of meditative flow. The room slips into a kind of silence that is unknown to me except when people meditate. It is not that I have *asked* anyone to try to be silent. I give some open, flowing imagery to help them glide into place, and soon the room is quiet...very little shuffling and shifting. Libraries of readers are not this quiet; a congregation praying is not; an audience listening to a poetic reading or a string quartet is not; and even a room of sleeping people can be filled with the noise of heavy breathing, turning, snoring, and mumbled

speech. So, it is a noteworthy silence that graces a group of people meditating. From where has this ability to be silent come? Clearly, not from far.

### *A Quiet Moment*

[ACTION]

Let's switch gears now and do an "exercise." Actually, it will seem quite the opposite of exercise. You will have a quiet experience similar to that of a natural style meditation. You won't need any special skills to enjoy this because you will be experiencing something that has always been with you, which is the *natural flow of the mind*. You have always had thoughts, and you have always had feelings, and in this experience, you will ride with that flow of the mind. Very graceful and accepting. If you have a friend with you, one of you can read this aloud to the other, and if you are alone, try reading it aloud to yourself in a soft voice or in a silent word-by-word manner. Read and feel it like a poem...

[READ OR LISTEN]

Sit comfortably and put both feet on the floor. You can lightly cross your legs at the ankles.

You'll be taking a quiet, solitary meditative ride. You can think of this as being something like getting into a familiar canoe and going down the lake for a while on a summer evening. The water is calm, there's a gentle breeze at your

back, and a gentle current, a gentle flow, helping you go where you want to go. You'll be riding along on that flow, gently assisting with the paddle.

Now, that's just an image. And you can let that image fall away or stay with you.

The flow of the lake is a metaphor for the flow of the mind.

The flow is the thoughts you are having...

The flow is the background sounds you hear...

The flow is the feelings that gently circulate through the body...

All this is the lake. And it flows.

When you hear a sound or have a thought, you're feeling your flowing mind. And it is *helping*. It's carrying you in the right direction.

In a moment, close your eyes and sit for a few minutes. Maybe five minutes. Don't try to time it. Just let your thoughts and feelings *flow as they will*.

Close your eyes and enjoy a few quiet minutes.

[QUIET TIME]

## *A Demonstration of Sorts*

Welcome back!

I hope you had a pleasant experience. For some of you, this is a first taste of the gentle, cooperative ride nature is ready to take us on during meditation.

At about this point in my live classes, I like to give a quick demonstration of meditation. It is not all that exciting, I must say. I move about as much as this line drawing. But, there are lots of styles of meditation that look quite a bit different from Natural Meditation. So a demonstration has some value.

To give a demonstration of sorts, let's just look at the line drawing. The person has chosen to sit on a chair that supports her back yet lets her head move freely. Her hands are placed on her



lap, and both feet are on the floor so that the legs aren't crossed at the knee. She sits in an almost casual way, yet we can tell she isn't sleeping or working on a solution to a problem.

Q: "How can you tell that?"

I guess it is something subtle, a bit hard to describe. She seems to care about what she is doing. That's different from what we see in someone sleeping or lost in a daydream. The posture is neatly symmetrical without being formal or rigid.

Recently, when I stepped onto a morning commuter bus, my eyes fell immediately upon a person sitting at the back of the bus with her eyes closed. The seats had headrests; so all I could see was her face. But even so, I immediately thought, "She is meditating and probably doing TM." Having taught the form of meditation called TM (Transcendental Meditation®) full time for about five years in the 1970s, I had seen a lot of people doing TM, and having spent over a year in meditation residence settings, I have seen a lot of people meditating in lots of places, including busses and trains. Over the next three days, I saw her each morning in the same seat doing the same thing—sitting with hands in lap, eyes closed for most of the 30-minute commute. She could have been sleeping. Why not? A great many of the commuters seemed to be. But, a few days later, I happened to see her at a baseball game. She recognized me from the bus, and we began chatting. I ventured what I consider to be a somewhat personal question, "Are you meditating on the bus in the morning?" As you can guess, she was indeed meditating. In fact, she has been meditating daily since 1972—and doing TM.

So, there is something subtle that shows even in a natural style of meditation that has no formal posture, such as TM, Centering Prayer, and Natural Meditation.

Q: “So, you can do this pretty much anywhere?”

It just needs to be somewhere safe and relatively quiet, but not necessarily a special room. The woman in the drawing might be in her living room. It could be in her office or the library. She has probably thought about the surroundings, the chair, her posture, and possibly her clothing so that she makes these reasonably comfortable and supportive of the meditative function. Other than that, she is “come as you are” casual. As we have just heard, you can even meditate every day on a bus.

Q: “What time of day do you meditate?”

Many of us do it just before breakfast and again before dinner. Beginners should avoid doing it just before going to sleep at night because meditation’s effects can keep you awake. You can do sports or exercise either after or before meditation, but should separate the two by at least half an hour.

Q: “How long does it last?”

20 or 30 minutes.

Q: “Would she be moving—if she weren’t a drawing?”

Actually, she might be almost as still as a photograph after two or three minutes. If we watched her closely, of course, we would see some movement. But, she is not *trying* to stay still and will move as much as she needs to. This stillness is just one of the natural effects of the meditative function as it brings in a deep, metabolic rest and settled mind.

Q: “What do you think about or focus on?”

Well, remember that in a natural meditation, we don't concentrate or focus attention and don't try to blank the mind or cut out noises and sounds. Instead, we start out with an intention to be in meditation and to let nature do some important work for us. It is an executive's kind of standing back and allowing the team to do what it does best. The “team” is the natural process we are calling the meditative function. Then, within that open attitude, we gently recall—but do not *focus* on—a specific meditation word or phrase without trying to make it special or doing anything to it. Other thoughts float in and out. Awareness of the room shifts in and out. At times we go more deeply into the enriched state of consciousness that is unique to meditation. If you have been meditating in a way at all similar to this, you understand what I mean. Otherwise, it might sound a bit odd. That's why we have a nice seven-day course laid out to go into this carefully.

Q: “Is meditation a trance?”

No. And this is important to understand. In meditation (at least the natural styles) we are quietly involved, or absorbed, the way we are when we're reading a good story. But, we are not at all stuck, or under some influence. Let's take a closer look at our patient demonstrator's face. Does she look like she is lost or stuck



inside and unable to do whatever she wants? I don't think so. There is a definite inwardness in her look, but I would say it looks sentient and aware and not like the inwardness of sleep and dreaming.

Remember, she is in charge of the session, like a company executive, but she is not trying to control it. She has delegated her sitting time to the meditative function.

Q: "So I guess she can end it whenever she wants to."

Oh, definitely. Whenever she wants to end, she just lets go of the intention to meditate and takes a few minutes to come up from the deep restfulness of meditation.

### ***The Course Plan***

The *Classroom* section presents instruction, actions, and homework for each day of your first week of meditation. The



chapters are called “Day 1,” “Day 2,” etc., through “Day 7.” You can complete the course effectively just by “attending” the classroom and meditating each day.

We will learn the technique of meditation in three stages: First, the structure of the technique (Day 1 and Day 2); then the dynamics of staying in meditation (Day 3); and finally, the inner direction of a sitting of meditation (Day 4). That will complete the first skill of the course. The last three days will address the second skill, building a daily practice.

Q: “How much time should I plan to spend on each day?”

The classroom reading on each day may only take 15, 20, or 30 minutes. You can fit it into your schedule pretty much anywhere—at the office, during a lunch break, after dinner, on the bus or train. Outside of the classroom, you will do one or two 20-minute meditations each day. The meditations should be separated by several hours and should not come right after a full meal. A good time for many people is just before breakfast and again just before dinner.

The “Student Readings” in Part 1 of the textbook are important but optional and can be postponed until later if you choose.

Q: “I might not have time on seven consecutive days.”

That is part of the value of a *self-paced* course like this. You can fit this into your life. You can have a day or two come between the Day lessons if you need to. I would try to have Day 1 through Day 4 be as close to consecutive as possible. But, whatever you can do and enjoy doing is what you should go for. If you are

interested in meditating and do it regularly, the seedling you start in the course will grow in time into a strong, healthy meditation tree.

If you just want to learn the technique and don't plan to use meditation as a practice, just study Day 1 through 4. You can return to the course later if you decide to make it a regular thing.

Thank you for attending our Open House. I hope to see you later in the *Classroom*. If you want to continue this kind of introduction, read Chapter 6, *The Nature of Meditation*. If you like to read or are a teacher of meditation and want to learn more about the theory and experience of natural style meditations, you can continue and read all of the *Talks*. This can be done before (or without) taking the 7-day course.