

Imagination and Meditation: Two ends of the transcendence spectrum?

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Using examples from two distinct forms of meditation (as exercises, time permitting), this presentation will explore the role of imagination within meditation practice.

Most traditional meditations aim to still the mind: a noble aim! At most the imagination is used 'say hello to your toe', for example. Imaginative thoughts are usually contrary to the intent of meditation. And yet our creative thoughts, often express inner truths and profound insights. Our imagination can be a powerful tool in releasing our blocks and moving on in life. Visualisations that enable and trigger the imagination are thus seen as an important alternative to single-pointed focus meditations.

(Reference: Keith Beasley & Julie Rose Bill: *'Rosy Tinted Glasses: Imagine your life transformed'*, ISBN 978-1-84753-246-6 see www.lulu.com/content/647201)

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1. AIM OF MEDITATION

In most traditions: to still the mind, to let go of our thoughts

Usually involves focus on one THING

- to discourage emotional, rational or imaginative thoughts

2. IMAGINATION = NON-RATIONAL THOUGHT

From where? Sub-conscious? Higher self? Outside of us?

Either way, there's often feelings, ideas, insights there

That are useful to us

So 'better out than in'

3. SPECTRUM OF TRANSCENDENCE

To transcend: to rise above normal rational/emotional mental state

Maybe THIS is a more useful way of defining Meditation?

So we have a spectrum depending on extent to which we try to still . . .
or make use of our imagination:

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Conventional Med. No thoughts	Focus on a flame, etc.	Breathing light into body part	Free-style Visualisation
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4. HORSES FOR COURSES

Each of these methods is valid and useful, though in different ways.

Depends for example on:

- our needs at the time
- our experience with med.

TRY DIFFERENT METHODS!

Insights can come from traditional meds; deep peace can come from visualisations!