

## The Least Amount of Effort in Meditation

Post by Nirmala  
Thursday, 01 July 2010 10:01

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Someone emailed me with some questions about the role of effort in meditation, and about their tendency to try too hard until they felt a sense of strain while meditating. Here is my response:

Your questions are very good ones. It seems to come down to the question of effort or no effort. And yet there is an in-between place where you make the very minimum amount of effort. That is what meditation is really for: to find the place where you are exerting the very least amount possible. The very least amount of effort is to just notice what is happening and then allow it to be the way it is.

This does require effort, but so little that the tendency is to still try too hard, for example by focusing the noticing in some way, like noticing the thoughts. Even more simple is just noticing whatever awareness touches whether it is a thought, a sensation, a blank or empty experience, or even an arising of presence or Being.

The point of this minimal effort is to simply to be present. The only measure of whether it was a "good" meditation or not is whether you sat there for the allotted time or not. Anything else that happens or any results of the meditation are not your concern. Even surrender is not something you do, it is just something that happens to you. By meditating, you are present if surrender happens to you. You are also present if conditioning gets triggered, or total dissolution of the ego and merging into the Absolute happens. You are also present if your butt starts to ache or you get restless. You are present if nothing happens. Your only job is to be present. Everything else is in the hands of Being or Presence.

However, there is a little twist to all of this in that if trying too hard arises, then you can just be present to the experience of trying too hard. You mention a feeling of strain that arises. What is that like? How do you know there is strain? What sensations are present that let you know there is strain present? Are they bad sensations? You do not need to fix or change the experience of straining. Just give it attention like anything else.

There are practical things you can do to allow yourself to be more present. One of them is to

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drop into the Heart as you mention, or you may also try dropping your awareness all the way down into your belly. Then just let the noticing happen from the Heart and/or belly. This accesses the natural capacity of your Being to just notice. It is easier to give this very least effort of noticing from the lower centers of the body without the sense of strain arising, or the confusion that comes from trying to figure all of this out with the mind.

Lastly, you can simply know that it is working perfectly. The actual unfolding and awakening of your consciousness is again not something you do. It is just something that happens to you. Meditation and even self-inquiry are just a means to be home when Presence arises. They do not cause Presence to happen, they just mean that you are noticing when it does happen.

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*free satsang videos*

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