



Start Here Now: An Open-Hearted Guide to the Path and Practice of Meditation

Susan Piver

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A concise, jargon-free guide to learning what Buddhist meditation is—and isn't—with advice on how to start a meditation practice.

If you want to meditate but have no idea where to begin, this book by best-selling author and Buddhist teacher Susan Piver will help you: it contains everything you need to know to start a meditation practice and, even more important, to continue one. It defines what meditation is (and what it is not); dispels the three most common misconceptions about it; advises ways around obstacles; addresses the most frequently asked questions; and shows how meditation can have positive impact on relationships, creativity, and difficult emotions. However, Piver presents meditation as something more than the self-help technique du jour—it is a path to love, joy, and courage. This book contains two self-paced programs to help you start here—now!

Start Here Now: An Open-Hearted Guide to the Path and Practice of Meditation Details

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Cal says

This is my second first on meditation. The first one being "the miracle of mindfulness." Unfortunately, a lot of the points laid out by Thich Nhat Hanh were brought up in this book, so not much new material was brought to the table for me. I would recommend this book if you have read zero in regards to mediation, as it is an easy read and makes its points easy to understand. Although, would not recommend to people with some research into the field. Personally.

Matt says

Great advice on starting a meditation practice. Especially interested in the weekend meditation retreat plan, will give that a try.

Susan says

I came across this title because I was reading a description for a workshop given by Susan Piver. I found a list of her books and decided to read this one. A great book for anyone interested in learning about meditation, whether you have meditated before or not. Easy to understand. Less than 200 pages including a question and answer chapter and a list of resources. Many non-fiction books tend to be wordy, this one is not, which I appreciate. It's to the point. One of those books that you might find yourself taking notes, if that is something you do. Author explains that there are different types of meditation techniques. Makes suggestions to help start a practice. This book is a good reference with suggestions of other books to read about meditation, Buddhism, etc.

Dominique says

Interesting book on the history and lineage of meditation techniques and clear instruction. Definitely appreciated the perspective and believe it will have a positive and invigorating effect on my practice. It gave me a lot to think about when it comes to following one method of meditation and not combining different lineages. With our western culture being such a melting pot of ideas and theories it is easy to take on the practice of picking and choosing the parts of different beliefs that "work" for us. Susan gives a very compelling case for really doing the research to uncover the practice that speaks to you and then getting an actually teacher. Definitely got me thinking and being more intentional in how I structure my practice time ... all in a very positive way!

KJ Grow says

An excellent resource and warmly written guide for those interested in beginning and exploring meditation practice.

KWinks says

It may seem silly that it took me a week to read a teeny tiny book, but it is a tiny book full of big ideas. I couldn't just read it in one sitting. Here is the thing, it's a great starter book for mediation. Also very helpful—the videos on the website that go along with the book. The cat in the videos gets five stars in my opinion!!! Great read. Well done. It really helped me decide where I want to go next with my brand new practice.

Kevin says

Some of the recent books I've read have led me to start researching meditation. This is a good book to read if you want to start meditating.

However, I'm just not sold by the author as far as the purpose of meditation. There are too many times she says, "trust me".

Kathy says

I adore Susan Piver. I've attended two meditation retreats that she's led, and in each, she has been insightful, clear, and warm. This book is a great place to start if you want to investigate meditation. It also useful bits for those who have been meditating for a while. And it's a great reminder of the instructions!

Jill Salahub says

Start Here Now: An Open-Hearted Guide to the Path and Practice of Meditation by Susan Piver is brilliant. It's an easy to digest overview of the practice of meditation, just what a reader would need to begin, but also includes a wealth of resources to support deepening the practice. The book includes what meditation is and is not, gives an overview of various types of meditation, discusses the obstacles to mediation, and considers how the practice impacts specific aspects of one's life. The book also provides an easy to follow seven day meditation challenge to help the reader get started, along with a plan for a weekend meditation retreat at home. The other resources made available are extensive – online materials created specifically as companions to the book, three different appendixes (an F.A.Q, a list of important figures in the Buddhadharma, and other resources, including books and in person support for the practice), and of course, the Open Heart Project.

This book follows in the tradition of the best dharma books, ones like Pema Chödrön's *When Things Fall Apart* and Sakyong Mipham's *Turning the Mind into an Ally*. One way it does so is that each chapter is relatively short and to the point, clear and direct. One doesn't need a lot of time to be able to read a chapter, and there is plenty in each chapter to keep one in contemplation for some time. And, it would be easy after having read the book from beginning to end the first time, to go back and consult it a chapter at a time, in no particular order, as each one stands alone in the wisdom it communicates at the same time as it adds to the whole of the book. I know I will come back to this book again and again, flipping directly to the chapter I need, as a reminder, as inspiration.

This book is perfect for someone new to the practice of meditation. However, I've practiced meditation for nine years, the last three with Susan's direct instruction, and I found myself underlining multiple somethings on every page of this book.

The foundation of this book is Susan Piver's many years of practice and teaching, and it is infused with her love of the practice and her students. She ends the book by sharing her personal story of how she made her way to meditation. The story of her own life, how she found her path is an inspiration. Her good nature, wisdom, kindness, and sense of humor fill the book with genuine warmth. To read this book, to make use of the resources offered truly is to have your very own personal meditation instructor. Susan Piver makes the practice of meditation accessible, possible, and even desirable.

Pam says

An excellent guide for those new to meditation. Her advice is simple and well-constructed. Be aware that she is teaching a specific kind of meditation and so some of her recommendations may be different from what you have heard from other sources.

Matt Root says

I heard an interview with the author where she laughed at herself, saying that she knew the last thing the world needed was another book on meditation, but that she apparently had a book on meditation inside her that needed to get out. I for one am very glad she did. It's concise, humorous, helpful, and cuts through a lot of crap.

Jason Pettus says

As part of a big transformation that's been going on in my life over the last year and a half (including going back to school last year at the age of 47, so to completely change what I do for a day job), I have started adding several new-agey-sounding things to my regular routine, including now seeing a therapist twice a month, practicing "radical empathy" towards people who piss me off, and doing a daily "gratitude journal" as well as meditating, albeit a completely secular, atheistic form of meditation that's much more akin to medical health advice than to spiritualism. But after recently sharing my insights with a friend about what I've been learning from these new activities, and having that friend remark that it sounded "surprisingly Buddhist," I thought it might be worth it to pick up a handful of completely random books on Buddhist meditation from my local library, just to see what they were talking about and whether it really does jibe with what I've been learning from my secular explorations of meditation (more commonly referred to by us non-religious types as "mindfulness").

This is the first one I read, by a media-savvy Buddhist who's been on Oprah among many other places, and who apparently runs the largest online mindfulness community on the planet, and I have to say it was pretty good; a systematic look at meditation for complete beginners, the eye-rolling language of so many of these kinds of books is kept to a minimum here, with Piver instead talking in a casually conversational and non-pretentious tone about both the "high concepts" of meditation (like the history of Buddhism, its various schools of thought, and how these differing schools will affect the way you meditate based on which you follow), and about the nitty-gritty stuff like literally how you should hold your body while meditating, how long you should do it, what it might mean if you keep falling asleep in the middle of sessions, and a lot more.

Now, that said, despite Piver insisting that Buddhist meditation is not a "religious practice," it's hard to discuss Buddhism without bringing a lot of spirituality into it, the part of all this stuff that as an atheist always goes south for me; and I have to confess, I also didn't care for the parts about building a little shrine where you meditate, starting your sessions with a "request to the universe for blessings," or any of that other stuff that to my humanist ears starts sounding an awful lot like a *Portlandia* comedy sketch. Ultimately I like to think of my meditation practice as simply another self-directed step towards better health, much like how I switched several years ago to an all "Mediterranean Diet" eating plan; and just as I'm not actually a North African even though I now often eat like one, I also feel like I can learn beneficial things from Buddhism even while not actually being a Buddhist (specifically in this case, realizing that when I told my friend how meditation has been great for separating whether I feel good or bad about myself on any given day away from any good or bad things that actually happened to me that day, I was pretty much accidentally repeating what Buddhists have to say about non-attachment to suffering). So in that sense, this was a quite worthwhile read, and it's recommended for others who are interested in meditation whether or not they're interested in becoming Buddhists as well.

Rachel says

I love this. It gave me exactly the grounding and propose I have been looking for in my meditation practice.

Dong says

This kickstarted my morning meditation practice (again), so it was definitely effective. It's a short book and

you can read it in one seating. Learned a lot about the different types of meditation and a lot more details / traditions behind the one the author practices. Overall it was informative and enjoyable. Easy to understand with actionable points / steps for the reader to follow

Meghan says

This book gives a good, vague overview of meditation. I'm not sure why, but I was not expecting it to be so personal from the author, and some of the chapters frustrated me with their fillers, but overall, I enjoyed a springboard into the world of mindfulness-awareness.
