

Ep #121: Meditation Series Part 3: Active Meditations



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Susi Hatley

[From Pain to Possibility](#) with Susi Hatley

Ep #121: Meditation Series Part 3: Active Meditations

Male Announcer: You're listening to *From Pain to Possibility* with Susi Hatley. You will hear Susi's best ideas on how to reduce or even eradicate your pain and learn how to listen to your body when it whispers so you don't have to hear it scream. And now here's your host, Susi Hatley.

Welcome, and welcome back. This is the next part in my multi-series on meditation. And with this episode I want to dig into active meditation because so often when we think about meditation, it's about sitting quietly, of coming back to the breath, of using words or a mantra, of noticing when the mind goes off and then bring it on back. And that can feel really constricting and very unappealing to many people.

It feels like, for some, it could be just adding more tension into their day, as opposed to releasing tension. There are times when an active meditation would be so much more appropriate. And I remember being first formally introduced to an active meditation when I trained with Dr. James Gordon about 25 years ago. And he is a psychiatrist in the United States who was doing a lot of mind-body work and continues to do mind-body work.

Dr. Gordon wanted to create a healing community of healers across the spectrum, whether that was in allopathic medicine or integrative care, and to train others to really tap into the capacity to help and to heal both ourselves and one another.

And I remember being in the hotel room where he introduced the active meditation, we stayed, like imagine the size of a chair. So we were standing with our chair behind ourselves and bouncing just a little bit, knees bending, hips moving, shoulders moving. And I'm actually doing this as I talk about this. And the arms are moving, the breathing comes out through the nose, and it [0:00:1:59 Susi demonstrates quick exhales through the nose].

So it's not just sitting, there's a movement of bending and straightening the legs, not all the way straight, but just this gentle bounce. And the breathing is not one that goes into hyperventilation, it's a breathing that enables the air to really move out of the lungs and then the body is moving as well. And

[From Pain to Possibility](#) with Susi Hatley

Ep #121: Meditation Series Part 3: Active Meditations

we did this for about 90 seconds, perhaps two minutes. And then after that he put on a track of Jimmy Cliff, You Can Get It If You Really Want.

So then we moved from this sort of chaotic breathing practice into more of this melodic reggae music, which was really, really quite fun. So you could feel the sense of being grounded and being light simultaneously.

After I did that training I happened upon other forms of active meditation that really had the same idea. And the purpose is really to help move the air out of the lungs and not sit. Give yourself a chance to move and what movement can do and allow yourself to embody and come into your sense of your physical realm as opposed to staying up in your head.

And for many people this can be a really, really powerful connection because they spend so much time up in their head. It can also be a place to go where if there's a lot of anger, or rage, or irritation, or there's a frozenness in the central nervous system, that coming into a place of movement can help free that up. I'm not saying that it will. I know a lot of practitioners who will use the practice for that purpose.

One of the techniques that is formalized out there and branded is a dance meditation technique called the 5Rhythms. And the 5Rhythms was created by Gabrielle Roth back in the 70s. The 5Rhythms correspond to flowing, staccato, chaos, lyrical, stillness. And they are related to our states of being and really a map of us as a human and our consciousness. Where flowing really is our fluid state, receptive to our inner and our outer worlds. Just think about how if you were to move fluidly, what that would feel like.

And then after working in the fluid melody we move into staccato. And you think about the comparison to fluid, staccato is a lot more incisive, boundary, there's an edge, there's a structure. So flowing is often considered more the feminine movement pattern where staccato is more of a masculine energy. It's strong, it's percussive, right? There's a connection with the rest of the world that's like in your face.

Ep #121: Meditation Series Part 3: Active Meditations

Then with this connection of flowing and staccato, there's somewhat of a container which then enables an entry into chaos. And then this chaos, we now can start to let go of brain and let go of body and just allow for release and letting go to happen. There can be this liberation, not dissimilar to what I mentioned before the work I did with James Gordon.

So instead of the flowing and staccato happening at the beginning, with James Gordon's technique we were doing the flowing at the end and the chaos at the beginning. In the 5Rhythms the chaos is happening partway through, right? So different ways of approaching this.

So chaos takes us into the unknown and can be very cathartic. Which then, if you can think about it, what happens after chaos, we move into this lyrical state. It's the coming out of chaos. It's the sort of settling in, breaking out of destructive patterns, surrendering into a depth that is fluid and soulful, of connection within.

And then as we are there, we then naturally move into stillness, where stillness and doing nothing are very, very distinct. There's slow motion where our body's energy really is now coming alive after having been through those other stages. And there's a convergence with the inner world, with our body, with our being, with our brain.

So that's the 5Rhythms. And you can find the 5Rhythms by going to the 5rhythms.com website. You can also find it all over the internet. The 5Rhythms has teachers trained all over the world, it's a real quite a global movement. And you can find classes that are run online, as well as in person. There are teachers all over the world so that you can connect in either in the center that you are in or online.

So you might find that doing something like that, like a structured type of active meditation, like the 5Rhythms, or something a little less structured, like what I shared with you about James Gordon, or simply just moving.

Putting on music and just moving your body and not really thinking about anything, and then just choosing a piece of music that really just works for

Ep #121: Meditation Series Part 3: Active Meditations

wherever your emotion and your energy is at and allowing yourself to go with, right? Tapping back into that primal sense of knowing, that inner sense of knowing, and then seeing what occurs.

Sometimes I find if I really want to do a sitting meditation practice but it's not available, like I just can't find myself seated, like it would take way too much effort. Then I will start with movement and then allow myself sometimes to go through the 5Rhythms or just simply move and allow that to evolve into a stillness, and then I can sit. And I can find that really, really helpful.

So active meditation, very distinct from a sitting meditation or a mindful walking meditation. A lot more movement, less focusing on the mind, and can still bring about an amazing sense of groundedness and a lightness. I'll put the links to James Gordon as well as 5Rhythms into the show notes. And then I would Google, if I were you, if you're interested in the 5Rhythms just Google 5Rhythms so that you can find the YouTube channel that makes the most sense for you and just play around with it and see how it feels.

Now if this resonates for you, we are going to be getting into these practices in next month's Healing and Revealing program. If you want to dig into this and really experience and apply these concepts in the process of your healing journey, you want to check out functionalsynergy.com/synergy.

It's a group teaching and coaching program where you're with other like-minded people who are on this path of recovery and healing, and are utilizing all these techniques of yoga and of meditation, of connecting with our mind, our mindset, and our thoughts, and how this connects with our body and our symptoms and our being. Helping you move beyond where you are to where you really want to go. And again, that's functionalsynergy.com/synergy. I would love to see you there.

If this episode has resonated and you're looking to deepen this idea of getting your body back on board, of listening deeply to your symptoms, of

[From Pain to Possibility](#) with Susi Hatelly

Ep #121: Meditation Series Part 3: Active Meditations

listening to the whispers so you don't have to hear the screams and you're looking for one to one support or professional training, then reach out to us at health@functionalsynergy.com where we can customize your learning path. That's health@functionalsynergy.com. Looking forward to hearing from you.