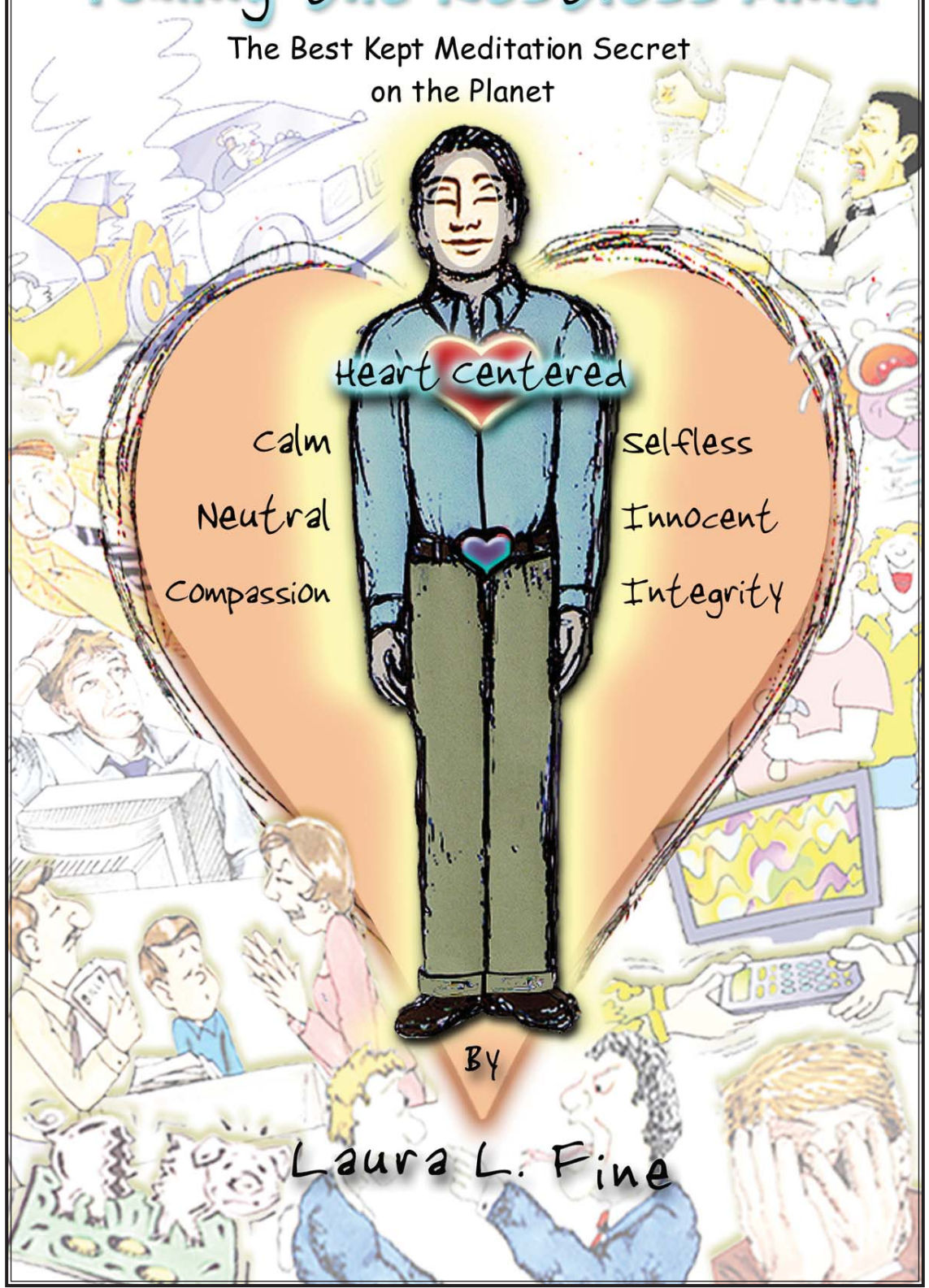


Taming the Restless Mind

The Best Kept Meditation Secret
on the Planet



Heart centered

calm

selfless

Neutral

Innocent

Compassion

Integrity

BY

Laura L. Fine

*Taming the Restless Mind:
The Best Kept Meditation Secret
on the Planet*

By Laura L. Fine

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Chapter 1

Understanding the Nature of the Mind

*“True Wisdom originates in the Heart,
not the Mind”
Vedic Scriptures*

One of my meditation teachers said once, “The Nature of the Mind is to be fickle, moody and changeable.” The mind is immediately impressionable. Have you ever noticed when you leave the grocery store or the mall you’re invariably humming “Memories...da..da..daaaa da da...moonlight...” the last ‘tune’ that was playing on the PA system while you were browsing through

the housewares department? As you head toward your car you catch yourself thinking, “Aaahh, I hate that song!” Perhaps on your drive home you pass a real estate billboard at a bus stop and the image of *Sylvester Parsons, the man you can count on for quality service!* He reminds you of your third grade elementary school teacher and your mind is off to the playground where you and Billy used to hide behind the bushes to jump out and startle your friends. Then on your twenty minute drive home you’re rehashing memories of Billy and the little pudgy freckled girl, what was her name that lived next store etc. etc. etc. only to realize how much useless mental chatter your mind is recycling yet again. The mind is like an unruly and excited puppy. Its nature is to be curious, changeable and erratic. Our minds are like unfiltered memory cells, they absorb millions of impressions throughout the course of a day all stored in our mental database. Is it any wonder many of us have difficulty stopping our thoughts and relaxing enough to get a good nights sleep?

Many meditation techniques teach us that the goal of meditation is to quiet the mind and for this reason we become quickly discouraged at the thought of this daunting and impossible task. The concept of stilling the mind, however, is tremendously appealing as we innately recognize the great need to have an internal peaceful oasis where we can dwell, away from the abrasive daily exposure to our increasingly fast paced technological culture. No wonder so many of us turn to drugs, alcohol, food, TV, internet, movies and computer games. We are constantly seeking a way to divert the mind away from the inner anxiety of our frantic over burdened mental circuitry. We

are at a loss as to how to easily and successfully create calmness in the mind. The good news is that meditation is much easier than most of us think and once we learn how to utilize the *natural* tendencies of our mental nature in meditation we will become hooked on this very healthy, no side affects and FREE drug!

In order to explore what it means to be fully present to meditate we need to understand a little bit about the nature of the mind and how it functions. Why do we get so easily distracted, bored, spaced out, restless and pre-occupied with worry? Let's regard the mind for a moment as its own entity, separate from your body. It has its own nature, its own energy bubble in which it lives. According to its nature it becomes attracted to certain objects, people, ideas. It becomes stimulated, why? It is attracted to pleasure. Whatever our individual nature is, collectively complied from its past programming, like a computer, the mind is designed to seek pleasure. It is attracted to objects, people, ideas and situations that may provide pleasure in order to achieve one thing only, happiness. Why this particular form of pleasure, attraction or desire? This is due to the years of acculturated programming from our life experiences. These likings create attachment to situations, people, ideas and objects, for example, that new house will make me happy, good health will make me happy, a different job will make me happy, if my spouse changes his/her behavior, then I will be happy, when my child makes better grades then I'll be happy. These attachments will often show up in the first stages of our meditation practice. In life, when the mind focuses on thoughts that are about striving to control external circumstances, people or

situations with “attachment to a particular outcome” then pain or pleasure result dependent on whether or not we achieve that desired outcome. Meditation allows us to shift to a transpersonal dimension where we can begin to objectify the dualistic yin/yang nature of the world. By developing a neutral perspective from an objectified position we decrease the range of pain that results from our dramatically elevated or devastated reactions to life circumstances. We can still feel pleasure and pain but through meditation we develop another component, an Objective Observer that allows us to more easily ‘go with the flow’ of all the ups and downs of life and continue to be able to navigate the waters, even if they are deep. We can maintain our footing and clarity within when faced with positive or negative stressors.

The mind has another component, the Intellect. The intellect is the aspect of the mind that makes decisions and controls the greedy desirous mind. It is the intellect that says, ‘no’ to the second piece of chocolate cake. It is the intellect that objectifies sets of circumstances, set limits and make choices. The intellect ‘gives in’ or ‘controls’ the greedy and spontaneous nature of the mind. Like a spoiled but creative child, the mind must comply with the ‘deciding’ aspect of the intellect. In our meditation practice we continually navigate between the mind and the intellect.

As we practice training the mind to focus on and connect to “seeing through the eyes of the heart” in the Heart Centered Meditation in this book, fears relax and free up our mental psychic energy to be more at ease yet energized in the present moment. This practice allows us to develop to a greater capacity, our awareness of the spiritual

qualities of our Objective Observer. Through the practice of these spiritual qualities, the mind becomes freer to tap un-accessed portions of the brain and the energy system. As these energetic aspects of the self relax and open, more life force (chi) is available to us increasing our presence of mind, physical power and psychic energy.

In my explorations of meditation over the past 32 years I found myself typically practice a particular technique for two to three years before I got bored with it or found it stopped producing results. During the first 18 years of my meditation experience I tried innumerable techniques until I settled on the current heart centered meditation that I have been practicing for the past 14 years. I'm still not bored. A key reason for that lies in the effectiveness of the teacher. Like playing tennis with someone better than you, once you reach their level of expertise you won't improve your game unless you play with a better player. It means we must find a teacher who is more adept in the ability we wish to develop within ourselves. Before we can find a good teacher we must be clear on what it is we wish to really achieve. What is your meditation goal? Here are some examples of goals:

- Calm obsessive thoughts
- Improve my ability to easily fall asleep
- Help me relax and sit still
- Increase my mental clarity
- Increase my intuitive capabilities
- Spiritual growth and feeling of connection to a higher power
- Enlightenment
- Become a calmer and more centered person
- Feel more relaxed and confident

Whatever is your goal if we seek a teacher who embodies the goal we are striving toward we will be most likely to achieve it.

The technique I am going to guide you through is a simplified version of my current heart centered practice which is rooted in Bhakti Yog meditation. Bhakti Yog is a devotional meditation practice. You can learn more about it by going to www.BarsanaDham.org.

Here is a list of a few of the goals and benefits that are potentially available through the practice of the Heart Centered Meditation that you will learn about in this book.

- Calm the nerves
- Soothe the mind
- Ease stress and anxiety
- Help you sleep
- Aid in life transitions
- Increase clarity of thought
- Improve your ability to stay centered
- Feel more loving
- Increases intuitive and psychic abilities
- Facilitate health and healing
- Expand conscious awareness
- Eases grief
- Opens the heart
- Spiritual advancement
- Increase confidence