**MEDITATION FOR PEOPLE WHO DON’T GET IT BUT REALLY NEEDS IT**

**Chalene** **Johnson**: Okay, true confession - most of the topics on The Chalene Show are, well, I mean, they’re kind of self-serving pursuits for me to improve myself. Truth be told, I say I’m doing it for you but I’m really doing it like for us. I’m in this with you. You guys leave me messages and you’ll say, “Chalene, I’m a lifer,” but I want you to know I’m your lifer, like we’re in this together at the same time.

So I’ve been studying something for more than 25 years and it’s not fitness, it’s not design, it’s not business, it’s not social media, it’s not exercise, it’s not nutrition. Nope. It’s successful people. I’m fascinated by the details that separate an average person from those people who seem like they just have this ridiculously amazing life.

Now, most successful people seem to share a series of morning rituals. Most all of which I can say I’ve been able to adopt not overnight, it’s taken some time, but most all of these habits I’ve made a part of my own morning ritual. Nearly all of them. I can honestly say that I think of myself as being pretty successful, by my own definition. Yes, of course, that includes, you know, my financial security. But that’s kind of like last on my list now.

I consider myself successful because I’m living my life by my design. And I’m not even joking. Like, I do what I want to do, with who I want to do because I love them, because I love what I’m doing and it’s an awesome feeling. I have today total control over my day, my decisions. I spend my day as I choose and I’m able to help people, and I’m able to say yes just to the things that feel right and that are in alignment with my own priorities.

And I attribute a great deal of that success to just adopting the habits of extremely successful people. So these are some of the things that I’ve learned to do. They are habits, they’re a part of who I am. I start my day every day by planning my day. I make my bed in the morning, I begin with a moment of gratitude. I pray. I exercise before the rest of the world wakes up and I’m not a morning person.

I’ve learned to create a fortress around my focus. I prioritize just two to three things per day that move me forward towards my push goal. And I meditate.

Well, okay, actually, truth to be told, that’s the one I struggle with. It kills me. That’s the one. I just can’t do it. I’m like not a mind-body girl. Slowing down is really difficult for me and people who meditate, well, I actually feel bad saying this, but I always feel like they’re kind of weird. Like, don’t weird people meditate? I pray. Isn’t that good enough? Like I run, isn’t that the same thing as meditation? I plan my day. Like, dude, do I really need to meditate?

But it just keeps coming up. Dang it. Every time I talk to someone who’s successful about their morning routine, they say, “And I meditate. Well, you meditate, too, Chalene, right?” And I’m like, “Yeah, kind of.”

So, it’s time for me to bite the bullet. Because if you’re trying to make the perfect cake and you’re leaving out one very key ingredient, the same ingredient that successful baker after successful baker seems to include in their recipe, well then, you should probably consider adding it to your own recipe. And to be honest, I just haven’t truly given it my serious effort.

So I told Kristin who’s our podcast manager for The Chalene Show and she also happens to be my personal life manager/personal assistant, I told her, “I need to find someone who I can learn to meditate from.” Because I bought the books, I’ve listened to the audios, I’ve listened to podcasts, I’ve read blogs and posts and I’ve talked to friends who do it. But I really needed somebody, somebody who could teach me how to do this. And she found him.

His name is Andy Kelley. He’s a reformed white collar stress case. Perfect. He’s a guy’s guy with a love for all things sports, all things bust. And he was raised a catholic and he’s not a yogi. He doesn’t wear Birkenstocks. He doesn’t teach yoga. And the scent of patchouli oil doesn’t enter the room five minutes before he does.

He’s a dad. He’s a normal guy. He’s a dude. And he wanted to learn to do this for his family. And since that time, he’s become an expert. He teaches people like me or like you, those of us who have a serious resistance against meditation.

Okay, open mind, open heart, here we go.

Okay, Andy, you have got your hands full today. I will say this, though. I’m really excited to learn this because I’m convinced. I’ve read the science, I study people who are successful. I know - this is like that one thing where I’m like, “Dang it. I’ve got to master this.” And so I’m really excited to have you on the show because I just think you’re like - you’re going to be my dude. You’re going to help me get this.

**Andy Kelley:** Well, I can’t tell you how grateful I am for you to have me on the program. I’m excited because I know after this short amount of time, you will be healed.

**Chalene Johnson:** Really? Okay. Okay, so let me just start because I know I’m speaking on behalf of my lifers, people who listen to The Chalene Show, they’ve heard me talk about the importance of meditation. They’ve also heard me talk about the importance of daydreaming and the importance of regenerating that energy to your brain.

And what I love about the stuff I’ve read from you and your practice and your beliefs is how important it is for us to kind of manage our energy.

**Andy Kelley:** Yeah.

**Chalene Johnson:** So that we don’t lose anyone right now who’s like I’m not listening to this show, I don’t want to meditate, let’s…

**Andy Kelley:** Sure.

**Chalene Johnson: …**I think that’s probably a good portion of people. But everybody wants to be able to have more energy. So can you tell us how meditation actually gives you more energy?

**Andy Kelley:** Sure. I think it’s - a great way to think about it is sometimes like when you have your iPhone or off to use the iPhone, you wake up in the morning, its fully charged, it’s ready to go, whatever your mobile device is, it’s ready to go. And then, you know, you get to about 3 in the afternoon and you’ve been on it all day and it’s pretty much on empty. And the next call you’re about to make, you’re going to - you’re going to drop.

I believe that we have, you know, a reserve of energy that we can tap into and strengthen during the day. And so meditation for me is plugging in my phone in the middle of the day to give me more energy. So yeah, I’m taking time away from what it is that I’m doing, but I’m actually going to gain time on the other end because I’m strengthening my attention to not be so distracted when I’m done. Does that make sense?

**Chalene Johnson:** It does. You know, just the analogy that pops into my head is - I don’t know if you’ve ever driven a battery-operated like golf cart of anything.

**Andy Kelley:** Sure.

**Chalene Johnson:** And, you know, it’s when the battery starts to die and you still are moving, but you’re moving so slow that it barely has purpose. And that if you actually just pulled over and plugged it in and recharged it, you could there so much faster. But sometimes, we don’t like to slow down in order to speed up.

**Andy Kelley:** Right. And a lot of people don’t get that. And so what we try to do is help them find ways to renew their own personal energy because I think meditation gives that back to us. You know, you’re able to shift back to your own self and recharge your own batteries. And sometimes you just drop it into neutral for 20 minutes and then don’t think about anything else. It’s not necessarily about, you know, coming out of it, like out of a trance or waking up and loving everyone. It’s more you get a highest, you know, productivity in the shortest amount of time.

**Chalene Johnson:** Well, let me preface this to those listening to share with them a little bit about you and your story. But I want to begin by saying what really had me excited about doing these calls, I’m like, “Oh cool, he looks like a normal dude.”

Like you’re wearing a Boston Celtics t-shirt and, you know, you just look like you’re normal average guy where I think most people when they - when they think of meditation, they think of someone who talks like this and someone who hangs out with Deepak Chopra.

**Andy Kelley:** Right.

**Chalene Johnson:** And wears all white, you know. But like you’re just a dude. So how did you get into this?

**Andy Kelley:** Well, I figured - really, into - in one - in a word, overworked and two words, I would say stress. So, you know, it’s nobody wakes up and says, “You know what, I want to be a meditation teacher,” let alone, you know, meditate.

But I was just finding that I was working - I was working in television production, so I was working seven days a week, 12, 14 hour a day. And the time, I’ve had, you know, a wife and a baby boy at home that wanted and needed my attention.

And what I found that I’d be so exhausted, I’d come home, get in front of the TV, watch a ball game, have a beer and go to bed and only to wake up at 2 in the morning going, why didn’t I do this? Why didn’t I do that? I could have prepared for tomorrow better. I could have made the kids lunches or whatever, right?

So I just wanted to find some sanity to be normal, to be like a nice person. And I felt like I was shortchanging the people that were most important in my life, which in my case was my family.

So I looked at the other areas, you know, the pillars of my life. You know, you try to work yourself, you know, your family, your career and what it is you’re passionate about. And I never felt like I was really making a great contribution in producing what we’re producing in **[news 0:10:03]**, you know what I mean?

I just thought that I can do it, I love what I’m doing, I love the people that I’m meeting. But some days, you could dread going in to the office and you never want to be doing anything or accept anything that you dread.

So when I started to meditate, I realized that I was getting personally an enormous amount of joy out of that work in myself, fixing myself, you know.

**Chalene Johnson:** You talked about being stressed and overwhelmed, which I’m sure almost everyone listening can relate to. Was your first thought, “Oh, I know what I should do, I should meditate? I mean I think most people think I should have a glass of wine or I should take more time off. Or maybe I should take up exercise.” Who was it or what was it about meditation that was interesting to you?

**Andy Kelley:** So I always go back to my spiritual guru, and you have to have one, right? And mine is my wife and my kids. My wife gave me a book by Deepak Chopra. And me being the Irish, the very gothic, the sports guy, in Boston, thought, who is Deepak Chopra? And maybe is he related to Tupac and Tupac wrote a book on meditation. And I’m not reading this book.

So it took a lot of - it took - I thought maybe, though, I did think that I can give it to someone and that they would think, “Oh my god, he’s so spiritually enlightened, he’s giving me this book.”

But because it was from my wife, I did read it. And I connected with the small snippet on meditation. And really, the fact was I had already tried, you know, obviously I said I could come home and have a good beer and fall asleep. I can wake up at 2 o’clock in the morning and take Tylenol PM or whatever to help me go back to sleep.

But then I wasn’t making the best choices I like to run. So I wouldn’t wake up or I feel too craggy. And I say, “I’ll run later,” which never happens, right?

**Chalene Johnson:** Right.

**Andy Kelley:** So I saw like a cascade of bad choices being made throughout the day. And that’s to the point where I was so stressed, believe it or not, and I wasn’t sleeping. And if I’m not sleeping, I’m not making good choices.

**Chalene Johnson:** Right.

**Andy Kelley:** And I’m irritable and just not fun to be around. So it was enough to say, you know what, even though I don’t want to go, I decided that my wife and I would go - the Chopra Center had a little outfit in New York City, so we decided to go for the weekend and go out and learn to meditate.

I have to tell you this because it’s important part of the story because I didn’t really get as much out of it as I thought I would, right? So you go to New York and you’re spending the weekend there, you’re learning how to mediate, you think this is going to be awesome.

**Chalene Johnson:** And the two of you went together?

**Andy Kelley:** Yes, yeah.

**Chalene Johnson:** Okay. Who was more excited to be there?

**Andy Kelley:** Of course, she was. It was somewhat her idea.

**Chalene Johnson:** Okay, got it. Now, you said you didn’t get a lot out of it. Did she?

**Andy Kelley:** Yes, but…

**Chalene Johnson:** Okay. Did you feel like there was something wrong with you?

**Andy Kelley:** No. And this is a problem I have with a lot of people, a lot of meditation, or yoga classes is, you go in there and you learn how to meditate…

**Chalene Johnson:** Okay.

**Andy Kelley:** And first of all, I’m a guy, so I walk in, it’s all women. It is, you know, nurse practitioners and physicians and psychotherapists and me, you know. They’re all drinking jasmine tea. I’m drinking a big thing at Dunkin Donuts, right?

**Chalene Johnson:** Got it.

**Andy Kelley:** So I’m sitting there and…

**Chalene Johnson:** So you have it backwards. I got you.

**Andy Kelley:** Right. And we’re - then we’re all meditating and we decide it’s time to start talking about experiences. And all it really did was make me more aware that I had a ton of thoughts and that I told a lot of stories in my head. And sometimes I wish I didn’t know that, that I was probably better off just, you know, driving the car with my pedal to the metal, with the emergency break up. I would still get places, even though I do a lot of wear and tear on my body.

But when they started to talk about their experiences, you would hear things like, “I just let go of all my thoughts.” And now I think, one, I didn’t do it right. Then they’d say things like, “I just felt like I saw a, you know, wrapped in this blanket of bliss or all these ponies and rainbows.” And all the stuff which I’m sure did happen. And I might be exaggerating slightly.

But none of that happened to me. And in fact, even, retelling the story right now, I can feel a little bit constricted in what my expectations were.

And so because, you know, we spent the weekend, we spent some money to go do this, I said, “I’ll do it for 30 days. I’ll give it a college try. And I’d really sit for 20 minutes in the morning. I’d wake up in the morning early, which I wasn’t a very early morning person. I would do this, I would wake up early. I’d meditate for 20 minutes and just go about my day.

Then I would, you know, take a break sometime in the afternoon when I start to feel myself tired around 3:34 in the afternoon, go sit in my car or go into my office, shut the blinds, shut the door and meditate for 20 minutes and then just go about my day.

And about a weekend, my wife, not even me, started to notice that I wasn’t getting up in the middle of the night. And so that was a huge turning point for me. And even though I didn’t want to admit it then - because it’s only a weekend - and here I am saying, if I can get six hours of solemn sleep at night, then I can handle any stress thrown at me during the day.

So that was the number one reason I kept with it for 30 days. I don’t know if I would have lasted if I wasn’t sleeping soundly. And so that for me was a big reason.

And then after a month with it, I started to notice that all of these little things in my life were changing. Like I was becoming more mentality flexible with people that come into your office, you know, and you know what they want. And you’re already judging them. And you know why they need a day off. And I was able to step back a little bit and put a little space between what was really going on in my mind, in the story I was telling me and what was really going on in that moment, which was totally different.

**Chalene Johnson:** Wow. Okay. Now, I have never done this before and I don’t know if you have, Andy. But I think it’s really useful because it’s where my brain wants to go. I want to hit with like 10 rapid fire objections to why I think most people reject meditation. And if you will, I want you to give me the - like almost a yes/no and then I’ll let you pick the one that you think is most important for us to go into first, okay?

**Andy Kelley:** Let’s do this.

**Chalene Johnson:** Are you down with that?

**Andy Kelley:** I am.

**Chalene Johnson:** Okay, cool. Do I have to be religious to meditate?

**Andy Kelley:** No.

**Chalene Johnson:** Does it violate my religion if I’m, you know, Catholic or Christian? Is there something I should be aware of that I shouldn’t be meditating?

**Andy Kelley:** No. It enhances it.

**Chalene Johnson:** Okay. Do I have to close my eyes and be sitting like on a white pillow with incense in the background?

**Andy Kelley:** Absolutely not.

**Chalene Johnson:** Do I have to close my eyes?

**Andy Kelley:** No.

**Chalene Johnson:** Is it about emptying my mind?

**Andy Kelley:** No, not at all.

**Chalene Johnson:** Okay. And do I have to do this at a certain time of day?

**Andy Kelley:** No. No.

**Chalene Johnson:** Is there more than one style of meditation?

**Andy Kelley:** Yes, a gazillion.

**Chalene Johnson:** This is fun, this is fun. Okay. And from what I’ve heard, you’ve just got to practice it to get good at it. Is that true?

**Andy Kelley:** Yes.

**Chalene Johnson:** And how soon can the - obviously, some people are going to probably find it transformational. But on average, in your practice, as someone who teaches this to the masses, to executives, to children in school, all ages, all ranges. In your experience, how often does the average person - how long does it take for them to experience the benefits of meditation?

**Andy Kelley:** I would say 30 days if you’re doing it - and I use the word religiously loosely here…

**Chalene Johnson:** Okay.

**Andy Kelley:** …twice, twice a day.

**Chalene Johnson:** Wow. Okay. So, see, like to me, I just have to tell you, that’s discouraging. So I’m not even going to feel any benefits unless I’m doing this twice a day for 30 days?

**Andy Kelley:** No. I’m just saying that’s what happened from my experience.

**Chalene Johnson:** I got it.

**Andy Kelley:** And then what I - what I - what I find from most people too, and particularly teenage boys and men, I think, women, believe it or not, they are at a different set point. They tend to get it a lot quicker. And I would say some people report right away, immediately, the benefits. And some people see it a week in.

So everyone’s different. So I just go with what I know and I know that the science that backs up what I’m saying is that, in just, as little as a month, of doing something repetitive twice a day, that you can - once you get good at it and you practice over time, you’re developing those neural networks in the brain that actually strengthen your attention, your memory, and your empathy, and who doesn’t want more of those three things?

**Chalene Johnson:** Exactly. Now just as I would explain to anyone who’s thinking about starting an exercise program, and to say to them, you know, just get yourself moving a couple times a week, maybe 30 minutes each time. That might provide for you some real results. But in order to transform your body, you’ve got to do more than that. But at the minimum, would people be able to expect some type of benefit if they are just doing it once a day?

**Andy Kelley:** Yes. I sometimes will say it’s like treading water. Like you want - you can tread water, right? Or you can swim. And sometimes, to me, I don’t - I don’t get the second one in. But sometimes, I supplement it with something else, something that actually uses the same neural networks like yoga, like running, like exercise or some form of connecting with an objective and then not losing your focus. So there are so many different ways to meditate and use mindfulness. And I think maybe it’s helpful to kind of get into that a little bit.

**Chalene Johnson:** Yes. Okay. And that’s where I want to go next but my last question before we go there, is there a particular minimum length of time?

**Andy Kelley:** Yes. There’s news - there’s science out there that support that you can - that you can get the same neural growth with 10 minutes twice a day, right? But there’s also, I think, I don’t know who has published, but I’ve read something somewhere. I think it was out at Stanford so you can’t - I don’t think I have the support material that has it down to six.

But I can’t stand saying stuff like that because for me, and someone who is a leader in the fitness and the exercise industry, I need to know, you know, some type of not wanting to do it to understand why I’m doing it. It’s like when I go up for a run, I can talk myself out of it at the first 13 minutes. I can say I got to go back, I got to do laundry, I got to x, and I got to do this, y and z.

But if I can get pass that 13 minutes, for me, I can run for hours where - and when I’m meditating, I need to know that I’m going to go through a little discomfort because that’s part of life. And if I can get through that five - first five, six minutes of meditation and kind of over that hump into a rhythm, then I know that not only am I getting the benefit but then you start to feel some of that relaxation.

**Chalene Johnson:** Okay. Well you have been very cooperative and you did an exceptional job with my rapid fire questions. Thank you for that.

So which of those areas do you think is most useful for us to explore so that we can start to adopt this into our, you know, twice-a-day daily lives?

**Andy Kelley:** Well, it’s funny, there were - every single one I wanted, I was really biting my tongue and then I - tongue and then I like obviously gave up towards the end. And I think what’s hard is that people don’t have the time, right? That’s the number one thing that anyone says to me, I don’t have the time. And so, usually what I would say is, “Okay. Well, do you have 10 minutes?” You have 10 minutes to devote to yourself, right? And then, I - then I have to take it aback step further, say, well -- well then, why do want to meditate? Right?

**Chalene Johnson:** Yeah.

**Andy Kelley:** Because the why is the reason that you’ll sit on the days you don’t feel like sitting. If you could figure out why you want to meditate, you want more, you know - do you want to improve your focus? Do you want a better memory? Do you want to enhance your life in more balanced and loving way? Then your why, you know, write that down.

And I would also suggest don’t write down the first things that comes mind because they’re usually - I don’t trust them. It’s usually just something that I was conditioned to say…

**Chalene Johnson:** Interesting.

**Andy Kelley: …**or what I should think. So, I write down why I want to meditate and then I say, “Okay, well then, let’s just get some consistency going. Let’s get some consistency going. Try to do it, just today, twice a day, five minutes in the morning, five minutes in the afternoon.” And in fact, I’d rather you do five minutes in the morning and five minutes in the afternoon because the brain wants to build on that stability of knowing that you’re going to be doing something fitted and it doesn’t really like when, you know, when it’s not used to something.

So it’s going totry to talk you out of it anyway. Particularly if it’s a new healthy habit that doesn’t feel like you’re doing on anything. So if you sit for just five minutes, get used to it at 5 in the morning and then again, later on, it’s better than sitting for 10 minutes at once.

**Chalene Johnson:** Okay. So I want to pretend for a moment selfishly that this is just me calling you for a consultation and I’m begging you Andy to help me master this because I’ve tried and I didn’t - here’s how it went. Okay, I read a bunch of articles, I picked up a couple of books, I’ve talked to plenty of friends, and I just decided to sit calmly and try for just five minutes to just sit there calmly.

And very quickly, I found myself on my phone, searching through the podcasts for a guided meditation. And I’m like, “Oh cool, this is great.” And then I started listening to a guided meditation and I was kind of like weirdedout by the guide’s voice and he started talking about being like enveloped in an egg. I’m like, “Why am I in an egg?

**Andy Kelley:** Right, right.

**Chalene Johnson:** Like I can’t even think right now. Why am I in an egg?

**Andy Kelley:** Right, right.

**Chalene Johnson:** And so, that was the extent of it. Then I - then I convinced myself, you know what, when I’m running, I’m just thinking and letting my minds go where it might go so does that count as meditation? And I assume it doesn’t. I just - I just - okay, coach me. Coach me to do this.

**Andy Kelley:** Well - well, here’s - there’s so much - so much in there. Part of it is like guided meditations can be great if you like - but you’ve got to find the one that you like. That could take some time. The fact is that we’re constantly distracted by our mobile phones, by technology that our brains, actually, in the prefrontal cortex needs that stimulation.

And maybe you’re that type of person which I am sometimes, but if I’m too tired, I need someone to tell me exactly what to do. If you can tell me exactly what to do every time I get distracted, then that’s great.

Now there are some, unfortunately, people out there that do other types of meditations that I don’t teach but they find great value on. And so I’m not - I’m not putting them down. I’m just saying, I don’t - I’m not a very visual person so I don’t take people on sightseeing tours to the mountains or anything because I want them to be able to deal with it right now in this moment.

**Chalene Johnson:** Yeah.

**Andy Kelley:** And usually, whenever you take someone on a sightseeing tour, they’re longing to be some place that they don’t want to be which is 90% of what we already do during the day. I don’t need help with that.

**Chalene Johnson:** Yeah.

**Andy Kelley:** What I need help is to focus on one particular thing and then notice when I’m distracted and so…

**Chalene Johnson:** Okay. But talk to me. So tomorrow, I want you to coach me through - like tonight. I want to meditate on my first five minutes, tell me what to do.

**Andy Kelley:** All right. You got to set a timer on your phone, right?

**Chalene Johnson:** Okay.

**Andy Kelley:** One that not a jarring. Just get like a bell or something…

**Chalene Johnson: [Done it 0:24:44]**.

**Andy Kelley:** And so you’re going to sit and then you’re going to notice that you’re breathing. You’re kind of going to become a detective kind of and say, “Oh wow, I’ve never noticed that I’m breathing right now.”

**Chalene Johnson:** I need more specifics. Where am I sitting? What’s in the room? Are my eyes open, close?

**Andy Kelley:** This is great, this is great. So you’re going to sit wherever you want. You’re going to get as comfortable as you want. A lot of the times, people say you have to sit in that cross-legged position and I understand why. You know, they want you to be proud of yourself and hold yourself high and get the oxygen flowing to the brain. But the reality is, yogis sat on the floor cross-legged because they didn’t have comfortable couches. They didn’t have comfortable chairs.

**Chalene Johnson:** Okay. I love it.

**Andy Kelley:** So, we sit in a chair and if we’re cold, guess what we do? We put a blanket over us. If we’re having itch, we scratch it. And we can close our eyes or - I suggest in the beginning, eliminating as many obstacles as possible. So while you don’t have to close your eyes to meditate, I suggest that you do.

**Chalene Johnson:** Okay.

**Andy Kelley:** So you close your eyes. You’re as comfortable as can be. You’re sitting in a chair. Your head is kind of up. If you cannot, recline back. It’s really, what I would say - look, the bottom line is if you’re not comfortable, you’re not going to meditate tomorrow.

So it’s not good, it’s not going to be good for me if you only do it once. So you’re as comfortable as you can, you start to become aware that you’re breathing by paying attention to - I’m going to up a work right now, right?

**Chalene Johnson:** Okay.

**Andy Kelley:** You’re going to - you’re going to pay attention to this nonsense word called so hum. So, it’s S-O H-U-M. And this is why. So you’re brain wants to know that you’re doing it right and if you’re thinking of this nonsense word, then you’re doing it right.

**Chalene Johnson:** Is that something you learned, that word so hum, or did you just make that up?

**Andy Kelley:** Yeah, so hum, it actually translates to I am. But what I’m trying to do is not get you to identify with the I am because what will happen is you’ll say, I am what…

**Chalene Johnson:** True, true.

**Andy Kelley:** You know what I mean?

**Chalene Johnson:** Yeah.

**Andy Kelley:** So I’m trying to make it as a pattern interrupt almost, right?

**Chalene Johnson:** Okay.

**Andy Kelley:** So you’re sitting and you’re just gently reciting, as relaxed as possible. You’re noticing your breathing and all of the sudden, you just start thinking of this mantra, so hum, right? This is going to stabilize your focus. So this gathers all your attention and your focus on so hum.

At some points, you’ll be sitting there and it doesn’t matter, it can be so hum, so hum, so hum or as easy as so hum.

**Chalene Johnson:** Am I saying this out loud or am I thinking this one?

**Andy Kelley:** No, you’re just thinking it silently in your mind.

**Chalene Johnson:** Okay.

**Andy Kelley:** And as you think this mantra, right, there will come a point where your mind will get distracted. It has no choice. Your mind’s job is to produce thoughts. So you’re focused on the mantra and then you’re distracted.

As soon as you notice you’re distracted, right, and it’s usually a sound outside in the environment, some thought or story you’re telling in your mind or some physical sensation that says that this is not for me, I want to get up and move away.

As soon as any of those three things happen, your mind has been distracted. And as soon as you become aware of that, now that’s the magic moment of my list, because now you have a choice. Now you have a choice to either stay distracted and numb out to the experience for the five minutes or come back to the mantra, come back to whatever your focus is.

And so, the process never changes. I mean, every meditation kind of falls - I would say 90% of meditation, you have a focus, your mind wanders, you become aware that your mind wanders, you bring it back to the focus.

And so that’s why if you’re able to do that until the timer goes off and then you don’t think about all the, you know, the stories that you told in your head, what you’re actually doing is you’re building space between the what Viktor Frankly would call the stimulus and the response.

And so, we have all the stimulus throughout the day and we’re constantly bombarded with stimulus. What we want to do is just make a little space before we react to everything.

**Chalene Johnson:** Okay.

**Andy Kelley:** Right.

**Chalene Johnson:** So just to back up because I know my lifers love the step by step tutorial. We’re going to set a timer on our phone. We’re also going to turn our phone to airplane mode, right, so that we’re not…

**Andy Kelley:** So smart.

**Chalene Johnson:** …not hearing any sounds and we’re not expecting any. Because we do know that the brain, once if it knows that there could - it could receive a message to our phone, we’re automatically distracted.

So we’re going to put it on airplane mode. We’re going to set our timer for five minutes. We will sit comfortably with eyes closed. We’ll use the word or term so hum. And use that term each time we recognize that we’ve kind of drifted off and started to day dream. Is that accurate? Okay.

**Andy Kelley:** Yes, yup.

**Chalene Johnson:** And then, so my five minutes is up. How do I know when I’m getting better at this?

**Andy Kelley:** Overtime, you’ll start to see that the stories that you tell in your mind are just stories. And if you can start to see them as stories in your meditation, you naturally start to see them in the rest of your day. And that…

**Chalene Johnson:** I don’t understand that.

**Andy Kelley:** Okay. So in your mind, we, you know, we have facts and we have stories.

**Chalene Johnson:** Okay.

**Andy Kelley:** We usually mistake the facts for the stories. So we’re constantly telling these stories because the mind likes to, you know, keep us alive and it wants to tell these stories. And so, I’ll give you an example. In one of my meditations, like if I think of my boss who is usually so nice to me. But lately, she’s not talking to me and she’s sending me emails at 3:00 in the morning and texting me at 5:00. And who is she to think that I’m going to be up at that hour and why should I answer these emails? And I’ve done everything. Doesn’t she know how hard I work, right?

And so, that’s the story, right. That’s in one of my meditations.

**Chalene Johnson:** Okay.

**Andy Kelley:** And then, I come back to the so hum. And then I go into the office. And then the reality is my boss only trusts me. Her kid is sick in the hospital. She emailed me and texted me early in the morning because she realized she wasn’t going to be in the next day and only entrusted me to do that.

That’s the facts. But we constantly can’t strip away the story because we’re hooked on it. And it’s…

**Chalene Johnson:** So, how does meditation help me to make sense of a story that’s very fictional?

**Andy Kelley:** You become aware by repeating this word. So every time you start to tell a story, it’ll start off like, you know, “Frank is a real jerk, so hum. He really went out of his way to throw me out of the bus, so hum. I bet he planned it, so hum.”

**Chalene Johnson:** So it’s almost like a word that says, you know, like wipe it away, strip it away. It just - I like it. It brings you back.

**Andy Kelley:** Yeah, it brings you - it trains your mind to focus on the present moment. And it also tells you when you start to drift into these stories that we weave. And pretty soon, it’s, you know, you go to say, “Frank is a real - Frank is, you know - I’m creating the story about Frank.”

**Chalene Johnson:** So if I’m going to do five minutes in the morning, my morning routine now is I wake up, I listen to a podcast, usually some type of personal development, I go and I exercise. I come home at around 6:45. I spend 15 to 20 minutes creating - well, first I will often pray in my car because it’s silent there.

And then, I will create my to-do list for the day also in the solitude and quietness of my car. And then, I go inside and join my family. And so, like I start helping with my husband to get the kids’ breakfast and lunch ready and interact with the family before they’re off to school.

But based on what I’ve just described to you, should I meditate midmorning, should I meditate before I start listening to a podcast?

**Andy Kelley:** Here’s what I do. And then, you - I say there’s not a perfect time to meditate. It’s finding your own time where you’re not going to feel the pull a million different things. And for me, once my kids wake up, my day is shut. So, I need to - I need to become that morning person.

So, I get up early and I back it up. I started with five minutes and now I do it up to, you know, 20 to 30 minutes in the morning. And what I’ll do is I’ll just get up super early and do that, because that’s the time where most of my lists are coming in. Most of the stuff I need to do, most of those stories start to generate **[despite 0:32:35]** when I wake up with all of the reasons why I can’t be sitting.

And it’s a great way to strengthen that muscle early in the morning. And in that way, I’m ready to use, you know, that stillness that I’m bringing back into the day a little bit with me until I run out of gas at like 2:00 or 3:00. And I do it again.

**Chalene Johnson:** Ah.

**Andy Kelley:** So, it’s finding the times in the day where you’re starting to run out of gas, you start to notice if you’re, you know, a little bit aggravated, irritated, angry, lonely, tired, whatever, all of those fun little things. Then you start to see, “You know what, I could probably choose to be more productive if I stay for…”

**Chalene Johnson:** Very good. Very good. Because I was just thinking to myself, “Okay, I will meditate in the morning and then I’ll try meditating again in the evening just before I go to bed.” But it seems as though for me, I would probably benefit from doing it like around 4 o’clock which is when most people feel that like midafternoon, I need to eat because I’m tired.

You know, like you kind of need to get your second wind. And if I’m hearing you correctly, you benefit more when you can use that recharge while you’re awake.

**Andy Kelley:** Yeah, absolutely. And people would say, “Can I do it before bed?” Yeah, but you can also run into two issues. You could all of a sudden get more energy and you’re not going to be able to fall asleep. Or you could start to tackle a project at 11 o’clock at night and all of a sudden run out of gas at 2:00 and be like, “Oh, my gosh. Now, my next day is kind of off its pattern.”

So I always use that as a way to recharge. And it’s usually when I’m struggling with some communication. I’ll notice I don’t want to hurt this person’s feelings but I’m speaking from the heart. And this person wronged me in this way or the other. And should I write this note? And then, I was like, you know what you should do is step away and meditate.

**Chalene Johnson:** So where does someone do this who works in a busy office environment?

**Andy Kelley:** Yeah. It’s so funny. And this is coming, remember, from a guy that didn’t even want anyone to know I was meditating when I first started.

**Chalene Johnson:** Right.

**Andy Kelley:** So I’ve come a long way. I’ve come a long way. I used to go out to my car, put my ear buds in and put sunglasses on. And whether I was listening to a guided meditation or not, I would sit there and just feel more comfortable in a parking lot because in my office, although I did have an office with a door, but if people saw me in there or my - you know, I didn’t remember to turn my monitor off or put it on airplane mode, there’s just too many distractions.

And then it comes to the point where I got comfortable, like that real authentic you starts to come back. I’d say the one that’s always afraid to make mistakes, particularly in an office environment, starts to shut away and then you don’t - then you stop caring and you know it’s more about why you’re trying to do it.

And then I can meditate in the office. But I say you can pretty much meditate anywhere because you need to hear a noise in the environment...

**Chalene Johnson:** Oh.

**Andy Kelley:** …to know that - to know that you’re not focused on the mantra. You need to know that you’re thinking to not - to know. It’s training the mind to come back to whatever is going on in that moment. If someone’s knocking at the door, that’s a little jarring. So I say, try to isolate the - in the beginning, you’re going to want to isolate your surroundings.

**Chalene Johnson:** So, are you suggesting that I not do it in pure silence with noise cancelling headphones that I - you know, you try to do it where there might be ambient sound?

**Andy Kelley:** I’ve tried to do it in like that. But I’d be lying if I said I didn’t try exactly that when I first started meditating, because I did. I did. I wanted to control and I also lived in a house with a kid who loves to bounce a basketball.

So, I didn’t want to hear that. So, yeah, I will use that or I’ll use some calming white noise or, you know, bowls, or bells, or something that sounds nice. Just anything that doesn’t have lyrics.

**Chalene Johnson:** Okay.

**Andy Kelley:** Nothing that will engage your mind into the story.

**Chalene Johnson:** Do you have a recommendation of a type of track, or maybe a CD or an artist?

**Andy Kelley:** If you go to - iTunes has one called Tibetan Bowls. You can just type that in. It’s Tibetan Bowls or guided meditations.

**Chalene Johnson:** Cool.

**Andy Kelley:** That’s a great one because you don’t know when they’re coming. And they’re exact - an exact - and you know what, they’re 20 and 30 minutes.

**Chalene Johnson:** Oh.

**Andy Kelley:** So, if you just set it and forget it to kind of…

**Chalene Johnson:** Okay. I’m going to do this. I have one last question. I know we’re running up on the end of our time together. But that is - actually, I have two questions. I lied.

**Andy Kelley:** Sure.

**Chalene Johnson:** First is, am I doing it wrong if I feel like I’m going to fall asleep?

**Andy Kelley:** In the beginning, no, because here’s the deal. We’ve gotten so much of our lives going, going, going, right? And now, I’m telling you, okay, “I want you to sit. I want you to close your eyes and not do anything.”

And your body is going to do two things. It’s going to ramp up your thoughts one way or it’s going to shut you down, because you’ve just physically accumulated so much stress throughout our lives and our days that the body just will naturally shut down. So, if you’re doing this everyday twice a day, you will definitely fall asleep for that first month. And that’s okay.

And again, remember, this is from the guy who is only doing it because he’s a horrible sleeper. So I was like, “That’s got to be bull. Like I don’t buy that.” And now I’m nervous that I’m not going to be falling asleep if I’m falling asleep during my meditations.

But your body has a way of kind of rebalancing. It’s reconnecting the mind with the body. And it’s an excellent barometer to know later on, like months down the road if you’re still with this that if you’re falling asleep, it’s most likely because you either had a workout or a very stressful day.

And you start to use your body more as a barometer, a way to feel your way through the present moment of the day as opposed to just reacting to it and crashing at the end of the day.

**Chalene Johnson:** My last question is one of pure resistance. I’m just going to tell you, I’m going to call it like it is, but is there science to support that there’s more benefit to actually doing this kind of concentration work with your eyes closed, which we’re calling meditation, versus sitting quietly for 10 minutes with your eyes closed in prayer? Like is there science to tell me that one is better for my brain than the other?

**Andy Kelley:** Not that I know of. And you know what, to be honest, the - if you look at both of them, right, a lot of the times, you’ll say that meditation for me - and as a catholic, this has been huge for me because I had a tough time and just my own catholic upbringing, someone that went to church all the time and then I stopped doing it because we were interviewing a lot during their infamous sex scandal in the late ‘90s.

So, I was interviewing a lot of these people. So I distanced myself. And when I started meditating, I actually have a much stronger faith now. And I’ve come back because they’re really two separate things. When I’m meditating, I’m really, you know, listening to God in a way.

**Chalene Johnson:** Okay.

**Andy Kelley:** I’m listening.Whereas when I’m praying, I’m talking or I want something.

**Chalene Johnson:** Oh.

**Andy Kelley:** And I’m holding - I’m holding my mind at that level of the intellect. So there’s like a - almost like a dialogue, right? Both of them have a **[similar output 0:39:16]** but you can’t deny - I can’t deny the fact how good I feel when I’m not meditating - I mean, when I’m done meditating, I feel great.

And I also can’t deny the fact when I leave church, how good I feel, maybe until I get to the parking lot and then somebody cuts you off.

**Chalene Johnson:** Now, that’s really beautiful. It’s really beautiful and I thank you for that. That’s really insightful. That helps a lot. This has been incredibly insightful. I think we need to do a challenge. As people who are listening to The Chalene show, I think we need to do a challenge.

So, I’m going to post something up on my Facebook wall. You’ll have to scroll through it to look on my Facebook wall. Find that post about our meditation challenge and let me know that you’ve listened to this episode and that you are - we’re going to do it. We’re going to do it twice a day. Find…

**Andy Kelley:** Chalene, I am in.

**Chalene Johnson:** Okay.

**Andy Kelley:** I’m in.

**Chalene Johnson:** Awesome. Well, Andy. I promise you, I’m going to do it twice a day. I’m a woman of her word. Five minutes each. And I will report back to you. In fact, let’s journal about it, okay? Everybody just, you know, write down your thoughts each day, how well you thought you did, what it made you feel. And we’ll go 30 days and see how it goes.

Andy, where can people learn more about your services and what it is you offer?

**Andy Kelley:** Well, you could definitely find me online at thebostonbuddha.com. Also, TheBostonBuddha on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. But one more thing, can I just add in? While you’re journaling, I want people to be writing down, not necessarily, I don’t care what happens in the meditation, I want to know also what’s happening, is your day a little bit easier? Are things going a little bit easier and are you able to let some of the stress roll off your back a little bit more outside of meditation? I think it’s far more valuable.

**Chalene Johnson:** I love that. Okay. That sounds great. So, in general, we want to give ourselves kind of a rating on the day. Like, was it a lighter day? Were we able to handle setbacks and arguments, or distractions a little easier? And just kind of figure out as we go through this challenge, how our meditation is making that easier to deal with.

This has been fantastic. Thank you so much, Andy, for your wisdom. Thank you for guiding me through this. Thank you for coaching me. And thank you for challenging me to do this.

**Andy Kelley:** You are the best, Chalene. I totally enjoyed this call. I hope to do it again.

**Chalene Johnson:** Awesome. Well, that was super helpful. I don’t know about you, but that answered a lot of questions for me. It helped me to lower my resistance. And I’m going to do this. If you’re with me, I’m going to ask you to go to my Facebook wall. Now, depending upon when you’re listening to this episode, you may have to scroll through and look for the post that I did on today’s date, May 28.

So, scroll back to May 28, find the post on meditation and commit to doing 30 days of this. Twice a day, five minutes. Now, here’s what you need to understand.

If you hit your mark 80% of the days, you win. That means mission accomplished. You succeeded. You don’t have to do 30 days twice a day, five minutes each time. I just need you to hit the mark 80% of the time.

Now, I downloaded the app called Relax Melodies. And it has a little timer, along with like a very soft bell that increases with intensity as the alarm continues. And I’m going to start my challenge tonight. I hope you’ll join me. If you will, please jump on my Facebook wall, let me know that you are down for the challenge. And we can keep going back to that particular post. And to do exactly what Andy suggested, which was to just kind of keep track of how we are able to deal with life’s stresses.

Like, is it helping you overall in your general ability to deal with life’s up and downs, like to be more calm? Like I - my why is my family. I have a difficult time when my focus is interrupted. So, what I’m going to do is meditate. My goal is to meditate everyday like around 4 or 5 o’clock. I think that’s really going to help my family. They’re going to be my why. I’m excited to try this. And I’m really excited to have you join me.

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I’d love for you to just experience a taste of it. So, please be my guest by going to chalenejohnson.com/confidencetips. Now, if you don’t feel like writing that web address down or remembering to go there later, all you have to do is, while you’re listening from your phone, send me a text message. The number is 949-565-4337.

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So, thank you for checking out my free tools by going to chalenejohnson.com/confidencetips.

**[END OF RECORDING]**