

Dear Friend,

What a special blessing – mahalo plenty. A meditation group helps, a teacher is important at certain stages, and good dharma books are always helpful (people like Thich Nhat Hahn and Pema Chodron). But, you can progress quite a ways on your own. Be patient with yourself. Some mornings, especially when my insomnia has been bad, I am kind of bleary and it seems pointless to sit. But I remember how much it helps me and so give myself a little push and sit anyway. Sometimes it's not really great – getting sleepy, being distracted by random wild thoughts, planning and reviewing. But I keep at it and some days are good and I go deeper. The process is cumulative and gets easier overall (not always). Positive motivation helps. Wanting to be drama free is a good start. Wanting to attain awakened consciousness so you can help other beings eliminate suffering is best. Give yourself the gift of sessions of stillness. Be patient and keep walking along the path. Sometimes the clouds clear and the sky is awesome and vast.

Yes, good sit or not, keep sitting, keep practicing. Keep on the path and the clouds WILL clear, a little more each day (most days), and one day the mists of obscuration will evaporate completely. I have been learning lately about the importance of bringing practice into your daily life (at work, while taking a walk or swimming, or talking to someone) – to try and always keeping coming back to being present in the moment. And to use the in-between times – waiting for something, folding clothes, doing dishes – to also practice mindfulness. The book I read talked about “calm abiding in the spaces between”. I try to use awareness of the breath to open to that calm abiding. While sitting I use the “space between” when holding breath and then the moments between exhaling and the next inhalation to also rest in calm abiding. It's started to help me stay present and fly away into runaway thought flights less frequently. Every little tool helps. Above all – enjoy the path, enjoy the practice. The point is opening to overflowing bliss. The haiku below sums it up succinctly. Be well, take care (real kind). David T

Follow Your Bliss

Screw normal, be the  
Bliss, that's your very essence  
Here,now, Buddha