My mind can find a million reasons every day why I don’t need to have my daily sit. In the past, my extensive to-do list, the people who need me right now, and the false belief that I’m fine without it have gotten in the way of my practice. More truly, I have let them get in the way of my time to just be.

Now to be fair, I meditate regularly and I have for years. But, I confess, for years I have not been meditating every day. Sure I do mindfulness exercises most hours of every day. It is what keeps me well most of the time and one of my spiritual teachers, a Trappist monk, once told me that I don’t need to meditate long if a short prayer brings me back to the present. But he meditates for 12 minutes as many as seven times a day.

He was very kind in making room for my brain to work differently than his. He was gentle in not demanding more of my practice. Here’s the thing: mindfulness is essential. We want to be mindful all the time. It is not an option. But meditation is a special kind of mindfulness and it really needs to be a part of every day.

Here are five insanely powerful reasons why. I hope they convince you to start today — maybe even right now.

First, there is the research. Dr. Amishi Jha argues that at least 12 minutes a day strengthens attention and working memory. She’s practiced it with the armed forces. A movie star supports her research. Each of us can find 12 minutes. We don’t, but we can.

Second, you can be like Buddha or JC. Buddha tried everything and it was only sitting that gave him the belly full of belief that suffering could be alleviated. When Jesus got stressed, he went to a deserted place. All you have to do is sit
and breathe. Isn’t it a relief to realize that to be like the greatest spiritual teachers you only have to sit in a chair for 12 minutes. No Ph.D or earth-shaking idea required.

Third, you want to be successful, be like the successful people. Deepak, Oprah, and CEOs meditate. Why? It shows them what’s worth getting stressed about and what is a function of the alarm in their brain. It reminds them that nothing is as important as this moment. In the middle of crazy lives, it is their oasis.

**Why You Must Meditate 12 Minutes a Day**

practice. If you meditate all the time, you may have some crazy thoughts as you continue your practice. And sitting every day reminds us we do not have to let crazy thoughts make us crazy. We can let them come and go. We can feel truly at peace in our own bodies and lives. Meditation can be the difference between losing control and feeling grounded when life turns upside down.

Finally, we can change the world together. I have started doing a little accountability exercise after my sit to make sure I don’t slack. I hope you will do it with me because I need the encouragement. Tweet or message where you meditated with the hashtag #12aday. Take a picture of the place or just describe it. Imagine if you did a search for #12aday and it filled with millions of people meditating? Why wouldn’t we encourage each other to make this happen?

Dr. Jha says that more than 12 minutes is even better, but 12 is the minimum. I can do that. I’m even starting to add minutes just a few weeks in. Imagine the difference in your life if you always felt a home in your own skin? 12 minutes a day of sitting and it is possible. I’m heading to my chair right now.

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