

Start Here Now: An Open-Hearted Guide to the Path and Practice of Meditation

Susan Piver

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Newbies to meditation couldn't ask for a better guide to the practice than Susan Piver. The best-selling author of many books, including *How Not to be Afraid of Your Own Life*, *The Quiet Mind*, and *The Hard Questions*, has been practicing Buddhist meditation since 1993, took formal Buddhist vows in 1995, and is a trained instructor in the Tibetan Shambhala tradition. She has taught meditation worldwide as well as online through her nondenominational mindfulness community, the Open Heart Project. In *Start Here Now*, Piver takes a no-nonsense, jargon-free, and totally down-to-earth approach to meditation that offers an understanding of what it really is (a combination of mindfulness and awareness), an overview of its benefits ("if it were a medication, it would be heralded as the miracle drug of the century," she quotes fellow meditator Jonathan Foust), and all that's needed to establish a lasting, fulfilling, even life-changing practice.

Those with basic questions on the how-tos of meditation will find answers given with love and understanding. Those who already know the answers but can't seem to make it to their meditation cushion regularly will find both challenge and encouragement given with a good dose of humor. Piver has also provided resources for those who want to deepen their study, including access to her own online community.

Life doesn't come with an instruction manual, and even if it did, it's unlikely that it would work for everyone. But meditation shines a light on the path and gives us a way to access our truest compass: the heart. "It has helped me build a life of joy and meaning," Piver writes, "and given me ways to cope when joy and meaning seem to disappear."

KRISTINE MORRIS (Fall 2015)

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