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The Spiritual Art of Mediation

Assignment 1

I have experience of a variety of meditative practices through my spiritual journey to date. I have studied magick, Buddhism, and Catholic mysticism, and these have introduced me to several types of meditation. I have practiced concentration exercises, which consisted of focusing on a single object for a set period of time then noting how my mind reacted. If I lost focus, I was taught to gradually bring my attention back to the object. I saw how our minds like to aimlessly wander and do not like to be tamed. The next stage of this practice was then to focus on a candle flame for period of time then close your eyes and see how long you could retain the image

of the flame in your mind's eye. I also practiced focal point meditation where I concentrated on the sound of a metronome for five minutes. This was used to still the mind before going on to other practices. I have also practiced basic yoga (Surya Namaskars). This consisted of ten exercises that you performed in the morning whilst chanting set mantras. If practiced every day, they were supposed to improve your physical well-being. Whilst practicing Buddhism I focused on breathing meditation. The meditations consisted of focusing on your breath as it entered your body whilst others were counting breaths. For counting breath meditations, I used fourfold breathing. I also have an interest in Catholic mystical practices, which led me to attend silent retreats. Part of these silent retreats included 45 minutes of spiritual direction every day, and these sessions often would include reading meditations (e.g. lectio divina) and guided meditations/visualisations on a passage of scripture where you put yourself into the scene. More recently, my meditations have been breathing meditations and guided meditations using the Insight Timer app. Of the practices listed in, "the three steps in Meditation Development," I would say that the one I am

weakest at, and need to work on, would be visualisation. I tend to start a course of visualisation practice well, however, the longer I practice the weaker my visualisations become. I then struggle to get motivated to do the practice and become disillusioned. This is something I would hope to improve over the course of my training. Word count - 375