

Effortless English

stabbing: v. to push a knife into something
kidneys: n. part of body that cleans the blood
unavoidable: adj. can't get away from, can't avoid
scanned: v. to look at quickly
searing: v. burning
flesh: n. skin (& muscle)
numb: adj. without feeling, cannot feel pain
ache: n. a "dull" pain
panic: n. strong fear and confusion
butterflies in my stomach: idiom. nervous, worried
gulped: v. swallowed
sensations: n. (physical) feelings
advisors: n. teachers
flee: v. run away from, run from, avoid
dispassionately: adv. without emotion
delved into: v. go (deeply) into
drained away: v. went away, left slowly
heaved: v. moved suddenly
exhaled: v. breathed out
wash through: v. idiom. go (completely through)
crept: v. came slowly (present tense- to creep)
intense: adj. strong, powerful
vibration: n. shaking
escape: v. get away from
broke through: v. made a big improvement (or change)
Vipassana meditation: n. a kind of mental training
insight: n. understanding
consists of: includes
systematic observation: n. careful & organized looking
variants: n. variations, kinds

Vipassana

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It felt like two hot knives were **stabbing** me in the back-- right into my **kidneys**. It was a burning pain-- **unavoidable**.

As my mind **scanned** this area of my back, it imagined two white-hot spots **searing** through my **flesh**. My knees also burned. My ankles burned. My feet were **numb** with a dull **ache**. But my back was the worst.

I felt a wave of **panic**-- **butterflies in my stomach** and a tremendous urge to get up and run away. I **gulped**, refocused my mind on the **sensations** in my body, and remained still. I tried to follow the **advisors** instructions-- don't **flee** from the pain, go deeply into it. My mind concentrated on the burning kidneys. I tried to observe the pain **dispassionately**. What was it exactly? What is pain? How, exactly, did it feel? How large was the painful area? How deep?

As I **delved into** the pain, an amazing thing happened-- the panic and fear **drained away**. My body **heaved** suddenly with a long, slow, very deep breath. As I **exhaled**, I felt a deep sense of calm **wash through** me.

A natural, unforced smile **crept** onto my face. My mind remained focused and suddenly the intense pain didn't seem "painful". I noticed that the pain was, in fact, an area of more **intense vibration**--- but I was no longer experiencing it as something to **escape** or avoid.

That was the moment I **broke through**-- at the end of the 8th day of a 10 day **Vipassana meditation** course.

Vipassana is a form of meditation, sometimes translated to English as "**Insight Meditation**". It **consists of** a deep and **systematic observation** of one's mind and body. Vipassana has many **variants** and is taught by many different meditation schools, teachers, and groups.

methods: n. ways of doing something
transformations: n. big changes, deep and longterm changes
intense: adj. powerful
participants: n. people who join, people who participate
theory: n. (research) ideas
philosophy: n. ideas about how to live, life values
unique aspect: special part, special feature
donation: n. money given to help someone, money give to a charity
voluntary: adj. by choice
coercion: n. force, persuasion
sense: n. feeling
centered: adj. balanced, calm
initially: adv. at first
meditate: v. to focus the mind
got out of the practice: v. stopped practicing, stopped doing
as a result: therefore
volatile: adj. changing a lot and changing quickly, chaotic
unstable: adj. not firm, not the same, not consistent
gotten: v. idiomatic. “got”, made me...

The course I took followed the **methods** of S.N. Goenka. Goenka learned Vipassana in Burma and was so amazed by the **transformations** it caused in his life, he wanted to teach others. After some time, Goenka developed a 10 day course. The course is very **intense**. **Participants** do not speak during the course and they meditate from 4 AM to 9 PM, with only short breaks.

The focus of the course is on the direct experience and practice of meditation rather than **theory** or **philosophy**. Another **unique aspect** of the course is that it is free. At the end of the course, participants may give a **donation** if they wish to help others do the course-- but this is **voluntary** and there is no **coercion**.

When I finished the course I felt a powerful **sense** of calm. I felt **centered**. My mind was clearer than it had ever been. The course was one of the most powerful experiences I've ever had in my life-- and one of the most positive.

Unfortunately, that was almost 3 and a half years ago. **Initially** I continued to **meditate** after the course. But slowly I **got out of the practice**. Its been quite a while now.

As a result, I feel my mind and emotions have grown **volatile** and **unstable** again. Which, lately, has **gotten** me thinking about Vipassana.

There are Vipassana courses and centers all over the world, so it would be easy to find one.

To learn more, go to www.dhamma.org

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Vipassana Article

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vipassana>