

# **5 ZEN PRINCIPLES FOR A BETTER LIFE**



# Introduction

Today's busy life constantly comes with packages of stress, anxiety, and apprehension; all of which are not invited to a healthy happy life. To cope, people search for therapies and guidance on how to limit or eradicate these things from daily schedules. However, the answer may be much simpler than that. If anything, it is to calm down and take everything slowly; the definition of Zen.

## **What is Zen?**

Now when some people think of the word Zen, they immediately relate it to a Buddhist somewhere off in the mountains, peacefully sitting in the utter silence of nature, ignoring the ongoings of modern society. It's certainly something that not everyone is adaptable to. But while it is true that Zen originates from the tranquil practices of Buddhism, it doesn't mean that you have to be on that level of Zen practices to achieve a peaceful life.

Quite the contrary, the general idea of achieving Zen or peace in life is to simplify and tone down the excitement that goes on every day.

This works on both a mental and physical level. It is considerably easier to change your habits on a daily spectrum, but the mental challenges can prove tedious.

Here's a good starter for understanding the principles of acquiring a Zen life you can apply to your everyday routine. With practice and punctuality, you'll soon find that adapting Zen habits can fill your life with peace and prosperity and is much easier to maintain than you may have thought previously.

Here are five very basic yet effective Zen habits to adapt to a calmer, more relaxed lifestyle.

# **Zen Habit #1**

## **Adopt a Positive Mindset**

Simplicity is the key to a happy life, but it isn't that simple to achieve. To start yourself off on the journey to peacefulness, you need to start thinking about your mindset.

### **Identify and Accept Your Way of Thinking**

Everybody has a separate way of viewing the world. Some see it with the eyes of an optimist, others are pessimistic about what lies ahead. And yet others like to think that they are realists, always looking to the facts and statistics to determine whether or not their day will proceed well.

It doesn't matter what you believe you are, what matters is that you accept this. Acknowledge your ups and downs in the way you think and act. If you fail to see them, then ask somebody about what they believe you are like. You can get some very helpful pointers from a

third perspective. Sometimes they may see something blind to your eye.



Nobody can really instruct you to a happy thinking pattern, because everyone is unique in this way. But what you can do to help yourself think positively on a daily basis is surround yourself with practical, beneficial people, places and things.

## **Realizing the Problem**

The first step to improving your thinking patterns is by realizing where you become negative. You may not always have a pessimistic opinion on matters. It may only be when you encounter a new or unexpected situation where you suddenly propose the worse possibilities.

Sometimes, a certain place or person that holds significant bad memories or influence can immediately turn on your negative perspective. Once you are able to distinguish what makes you feel upset or causes an uprising of unsettling emotions, you can take the necessary steps to overcome this and relax your conscious state.

## **Rethink Your Solution**

All the time your mind is in constant action, thinking about something. When you find yourself in a situation that you are uneasy in or that stresses you, your mind will jump to the quickest solution it comes up with. Your first resort may not always be the best one.

In a tense situation, your mind might tell you to run away while in a frustrating one, your mind may direct you to resort to verbal abuse to minimize the frustration. But before you do anything, think about the impact it will not only have on you, but on those surrounding you.

Will running away really solve anything? Will shouting angrily really get you the help you need? Or is there a better way to go through with the situation? Perhaps the Zen way!

Here's a case scenario for those who need a picture in mind. You find that the copier machine at work has stopped working. You have the choice to ignore this and walk away, get angry about the fact that it has stopped, or try to solve the problem for both yourself and others. The best solution is to solve the problem.

Instead of copying the document, reprint it until you've got enough copies. Tell your director that the copier isn't working which is an inconvenience in the office. Say it nicely so they don't take it as an accusation.

The best thing about adopting a Zen lifestyle is that it's simple steps like these that can help you find a happier place to be in, and they can be taken every day in the most insignificant places. Without all

of the aggression and disturbance, go about your problems nicely, and always remember to let go.

Don't hold on the pent-up eruptions against trivial matters for they'll only confuse and obstruct your day. Habits need to be built up one stepping stone at a time and they'll only stick if you take those steps.

Your goal should inevitably be to satisfy yourself and solve all your problems or let them go. Never let any feelings stick to you, positive or negative.

If you let positive feelings stay with you, then you can build up an ego which creates arrogance; a bad trait to have. If you keep negative feelings tucked up inside you, you'll have outbursts of illogical anger pent up from all the petty matters you never let go. So as soon as a moment passes by, let it pass because there are so many more coming up.

## **Surround Yourself with Positivity**

You pick up many things from your surroundings, more than you tend to realize. If you're engulfed in a glum, depressing environment, then you're going to find yourself constantly in a bad mood.

What you can do is reach out to the people who make you happier or find places where you can relax and enjoy the time you have to ourselves. If you do find that you're building up negative feelings, try to exert them in a way that won't frustrate you or hurt anyone. Reroute them into better ideas and think about the good rather than the bad. There is always a nicer side to any case.

Keep a note on all of your emotions so that you can better understand which seem to occur more often in the day. If you enjoy your days more and seem to have positive thoughts all the while, then you're on the way to finding your peaceful mind.

## **Zen Habit #2**

### **Clear your Schedule**

Clearing your schedule is a lot different than cleaning it out. It doesn't mean you're taking anything out of your daily tasks, only that you're simplifying all that you do while you're doing it.

#### **Plan out The Day**

It may have become clear by now that organizing yourself is one of the steps to maintaining a relaxing lifestyle. It tags along with many Zen habits.

You have to keep your mental and physical aspects in check, whether you feel in control of the way you think and feel. Without any slim sense of control, we immediately resort to depressing thoughts, which bring down our perspective. So it's best to have a proper system in the way we work.

You don't need to have a written schedule, although some may prefer such, all you need is to have a mental clock for the layout of your day. That way, you're ready to shift into the next part of the day. As vague as it is, it's preferred to have some idea rather than none at all.

## **Professional vs Personal**

This may take some analyzing and time, as you need to create a balance between your personal and professional life. There are some people who don't understand that there is a line needed to differentiate between your two personalities. The way you operate at home is much different than how you present yourself in front of your colleagues.

Your professional life shouldn't leak into your personal life, because it takes time away from you to be you, which can mess you up severely. Your job should take up eight hours of your day, and eight to ten should be for your sleep.

The rest is for you to exert your personality with your friends, family and free time. If any more time is given to your job, you'll be submitting yourself to your monotonic working counterpart.

Some people tend to allow work to consume their days, with the feeling that if their day wasn't filled to the brim with work, then it wasn't a productive day. This is untrue as the most important thing in your life should be you. If you aren't your priority, then your perspective of yourself is low.

## **Catering To Your Work Schedule**

For those who fail to push aside some space for themselves, here are a few things you can do to make that space.

1. Before you take up or start working on a job, ask yourself how important it is, and if you really need to obstruct time for it. If it isn't something due in a while, don't feel afraid to divide the load of the work between days so it doesn't take a day away from you. This can also deal with bad procrastination issues that cause stress.
2. Don't agree to take anyone else's workload. It may seem unkind but if you are on a tight schedule yourself then you can't afford to do other people's bidding as well. Just as well, don't hand over your work to others as this is hypocrisy.
3. Make a list of all the things you like doing. Going out for a walk, reading a book, going to a club with your friends or baking.

Insignificant things and all types of projects you've wanted to start, they all go. Once you've made this list, make sure that every week, all the things on your list get a fair amount of time. This way you can practice distributing your time and enjoying your hobbies.

Once you've accomplished an even balance between working hours and free time hours, then practice another habit, living in the moment. You need to learn to value the moments that you have, whether at work, with friends, or by yourself doing your things. Moments are faint and always undermined. It's worth acknowledging them and being thankful for all that you are given.

No moment comes back, so it's vital to realize. If you feel that this is a great memorable moment, then you should save it. Keep all of your memories that were positive in record so that you can always look back to see that good things do happen to you.

They shouldn't bring you sad feelings because that'll only create counterproductive process. You need to be able to look back and realize that you can achieve happiness.

# **Zen Habit #3**

## **Organize Your Surroundings**

### **Understand Your Area**

The word cleaning may irritate you, as you immediately flash back to spring cleaning the gutters and emptying the closets. This doesn't have to be the case for you though. The reason Zen tips will always tell you to clean out your room or your favorite area is because you need to feel comfortable in the area you're in.

Sometimes to feel comfortable where you are, you may not want it spick and span. Some people may enjoy the clutter in front of them, with a full shelf of decorations, pictures, books, whatever puts you at ease.



Some people do find that the clutter is choking, and things not in their proper place disturbs them. So if that's the case, then it'd be better to keep that room spotless. So whichever works for you, make sure it happens.

Once you have surroundings catered to your satisfaction, you'll find it easier to relax in these places. An area you can relax in can also prove a perfect spot for meditation and quiet time.

## **Find Your Happy Place**

It doesn't have to be the whole house that you clean, although that could prove much more satisfying, it can simply be your room. Where ever you feel you spend the most time, organize those rooms to your pleasure.

When it comes to this, nobody can tell you how to do this exactly. All you need to do is feel happy in the areas you spend most of your time and yes, this does include your office space. No matter what job you work in, you must make yourself feel a little welcome.

Find friends if you have a part-time job, modify your desktop if you have a cubicle job. Relax yourself, making sure that the area you work in is an area that suits you.

Others may find that the only place they can really feel happy is outside. If that's so, then you can make a workplace in your yard or balcony. If you have neither, then make sure that every day you can make time to go outdoors and smell the roses. You should be happiest once a day, every day.

## **Make Way for New Things**

While you fix up the state of your home, you should try to fit in new items that can aid you in your journey to finding serenity. Place a yoga mat in the center of your room or by a window, so you can have long sessions of calming meditation in the morning.

Have your favorite soothing playlist on your speakers all the time so you have music to unwind to after a long day. Keep an open space for yourself in your home at all times so whenever you feel the need to let out your energy you can.

Anything that didn't fit before can fit now after you clean up. It always feels better to finish projects and accomplish deserted aspirations. It takes a weight off of your shoulders which helps to ease the mind. It's better than having a nagging sensation clawing at you for not doing certain things in life.

Clear out all of your old things that you don't want or need anymore. At first, it may seem hard to let go of your possessions, but try to think of it with a new approach. Instead of getting rid of sentiment, you are making way for new memories and experiences

by getting rid of the old objects taking up that optional space. They have to go, otherwise, no change will be allowed to take place.

Not to confuse it with hoarding, new hobbies and habits invite opportunity, new friends, books, clothes. They all can spruce up your life in tiny parts to create an exciting environment welcoming to you.

## **Zen Habit #4**

### **Make Time for Yourself**

#### **Unwinding After the Long Day**

There's no better feeling than when you can finally lie down after the long haul. The workday is finally over, and all you want to do is close your eyes and sleep.

But don't. Excessive sleeping can ruin your schedule and wreck your mood. This is the opposite direction of Zen. What you need to do is find a way you unwind without going to sleep. Occasional naps are not forbidden but make them routine and you'll find that you can't shake the habit off.

Try having a hobby instead that you can look forward to. If you feel too tired to commit to anything, go outside and get a breath of fresh air. There is no better freshener than Mother Nature herself. It'll energize you and keep you running for the rest of the day.

Start slow after you come home, and dedicate your immediate time to small activities. Energize yourself after you've regained your balance and are ready to tackle bigger tasks. Remember, when you're enjoying your own time, everything works at your speed.

## **Meditation**

There's nothing that can absolutely replace the pastoral relaxation of meditation. When you find that the world is quiet and still, that's the best time to sit down and contemplate everything you have to offer yourself. Indirectly, this means you should meditate at dusk or dawn when the world watches the sun rise and deplete. It's quietest then and perfect for a few steady moments of contemplation.

Some people enjoy fitting in calming sessions of yoga. You can go with anything, so long as you get a few soothing minutes to yourself every day that can help you clear out your mind.

To start, you need to sit down in a quiet spot by yourself where you can have a few minutes of peace. Since meditation comes with so many benefits and possibilities, most people will worry that they're doing it wrong, or they haven't done it long enough. These are all

irrelevant thoughts that create worry. In the time you have to meditate, your thoughts should be flowing but not concentrated.

Here's a breakdown of what should be inputted to your meditation times.

1. **Commitment.** Meditating is something worth dedicating to as it provides mindfulness which can, in the long run, help you understand you and your life more. You can start to comprehend your way of thinking and expressing just by inquiring your spare moments with yourself.
2. **All of your emotions.** The only way you can have acquaintance with yourself is by understanding how you think, you feel and are feeling. Let all these come out while you relax and are aware of the moment you're currently experiencing. It takes a weight off of your shoulders, knowing and accepting your current emotions. Embrace them, and you'll feel better.
3. **Breathing.** You should always focus on your breathing when meditating. Deep, slow breaths will create a timid beating heart and relax your system. If your breaths are raspy and sharp, then you'll never gain anything from your meditation. You need to live in the moment as it's happening, making every second count.
4. **Other things** you can do is join a group so you're not doing this alone. Doing it with a group, you can also get pointers and help

for if you aren't getting a flow. Some people also tend to work better when there are other people with them. Ask friends to join you who'll sit quietly with you and help your concentration.

All of these factors working together will help establish healthy sessions of meditation with fruitful benefits.

Other than meditation, you can once again, make it routine to apply all your favorite hobbies into your daily schedule. It feels good coming home to something you enjoy.

# **Zen Habit #5**

## **Take One Day at a Time**

Worrying about how the next day's going to go and what you're going to do, all of the things that need to be done, the deadlines coming up, the plans you need to start and finish- It's a lot! Zen says to slow down and learn to pace your life.

Life is so busy, and the days just keep piling onto each other. Your plans may extend to the month being charted down or just the week. The problem that will sometimes present itself is that you get so caught up with the plan when things don't go your way, everything crashes on you.

These are all natural worries and everyone stumbles upon them, but as the saying goes, when you fall, brush yourself and get back up.

## **Get up and Brush Yourself Off**

To understand how this applies here, let's analyze the quote to fit one's everyday life.

Unsuspecting plans and sudden jobs do tend to pop up in our lives, and when they do, they may feel like a blow to your chest. Some people are just not adjusted to handling change that well.

If you're stressed and anxious, then these will really put a strain on the way your day unfolds. When you live a life inhabited with Zen habits, this isn't such a problem.

With a Zen mindset, finding out that your plans will be altered, allows you to be more flexible. You can take in the moment as it comes and head towards the new outcome with ease. Everything in your life can be accommodated for as it is still to come. Like thoughts, the day's outcome will flow along like a train of thought. It's just your job to get on board.

## **Treat Each Moment as a Day**

The practice of taking each moment at a time is a little stretched out here, where you're thinking about only the day. Your morning should be dedicated to the layout of your whole day. You should think about the events you plan to forgo and all of the projects you want to do.

Have a general idea of what your day's going to look like, but don't stick to this layout like glue. Remember, anything can happen and you need to be flexible with your time.

While the day rolls out, only focus on what's going on. This not only helps with productivity but mindfulness as well. When your focus is set on one objective, your mind's at its prime of productivity. It focuses to its best extent on what must be done.

Not only will you feel your job's better accomplished, but your satisfaction will feed your positive emotions which will help carry out the day smoothly.

## **A Key Factor**

So as you may have noticed, concentration's a key factor that works for a Zen-filled day. Concentration on everything going on presently helps filter all of your clustering thoughts which clears your thought process.

The more concentrated you are, the better you feel because you don't have other things pushing their way in your face. Of course, there's a bit of your contribution to this by making sure there are no distractions laid out for you.

If you have too many things trying to work with each other at once, you'll find more chaos than harmony. The best Zen habits are ones that are 100% you. If someone tries to give you a suggestion, you have to think first,

*Is this something that I would do?*

If it isn't, then you shouldn't try to fit it into your habits. Accommodating someone else suggestions shouldn't be your first priority.

Your habits need to be something comfortable for you, habits that you can easily fit into. That's why Zen habits can only be directed so generally. Each person has their own preferences and thoughts that make their personality individual, so evidently, you find your peace uniquely from others.

## Conclusion

If you ever feel like analyzing a happy person, you'll see that all of these factors are practiced regularly. A happy person doesn't mean an irresponsible person who doesn't pick up after themselves and is fine with it, but someone who has an organized and balanced schedule every day with an air of constant preparation. That is a person who has applied Zen habits in their lives.



All happy folks have moments of peace and quiet in their days, a brief schedule that's adjustable to fit the rest of the world's plan in it and perform best in their modified environments.

This can slowly become you, and it's not hard. Just a daily installment of relaxation and 'me time' can guide you to the path of tranquility. And eventually, you'll be a role model for other troubled stressed people stuck in the endless cycle of this bustling life. Try applying these 5 Zen principles into your daily life and watch happiness grow in you like a daisy.