

## One Meditation #13, January 2026 (Jan 21, 2026, 577 w.)

### One Meditation #13, Jan. 2026: “What are the Western ‘Gifts’ of Meditating?”

*Welcome to this monthly meditation email and thanks for being here! Please consider sharing it with others. Subjects range from modern to ancient, Western to Eastern, and scientific to spiritual. To unsubscribe, email me. For more info, see below. – Richard*

#### “WHAT ARE THE WESTERN ‘GIFTS’ OF MEDITATING?”

In the 1960s-70s, I had the honor of meeting three nationally famous mystics. The Reverend Alan Watts, a Taoist and Zen Buddhist, answered questions with deep wisdom. Timothy Leary, Harvard psychologist and psychedelic guru, shone with peaceful awe. Father Daniel Berrigan burned with loving kindness. All three were different. But each had a distinct glow. They carried the gifts of meditating that, spiritual traditions report, are available to everyone.

How can we identify and then develop these gifts? This month’s email explores them in the West. Next month’s message will highlight descriptions in the East.

#### Abrahamic Religions’ Gifts

The three major Abrahamic religions—also called “the religions of the book”—come from a line of practices and scriptures starting with ancient Middle Eastern stories of Abraham and Moses. The earliest of these three, Judaism, describes the “Gifts of the Spirit” in the scripture of Isaiah: “giving justice for the lowly, faithfulness, righteousness, peace, calm, and confidence” (32:16-17, *Sefaria.org*), and “Wisdom, insight, counsel, valor, devotion, reverence, sensing of the truth by reverence for the Presence without judging by eyes or ears alone, [and] judging the poor with equity” (11:2-5). Many of these qualities are acts, but you also can experience them as inner states of being.

The second of these religions historically, Christianity, offers a simple list in the scripture of Galatians: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control” (5:22-23, *BibleGateway.org*). These often are thought of as feelings within, but you also can carry them out as acts.

The third Abrahamic religion in time’s flow, Islam, has no single list. Rather, the *Quran* speaks often of *Ihsan*—justice and generosity (as in *Surah An-Nahl* 16:90). Muslims also point to Prophet Muhammad’s qualities of compassion, humility, justice, patience, control, and purity of self.

#### Science and “Gifts”

Everyone has felt such qualities at times: floating in love at a family dinner, sensing great peace in nature, or, for example, feeling the sheer aliveness of an exciting moment. But can meditation help you reach such states?

Dr. Bruce Lipton’s bestseller, *The Biology of Belief: Tenth Anniversary Edition*, provides context. Each of a person’s millions of cells and molecules has a switch like that of a light or motor. That switch is similar to a magnet: it has two poles with a positive and negative end. A good experience switches the polarities in one direction by the tens of thousands or more. A bad event can reverse them. “The constant, shapeshifting movements of proteins [alone] can occur thousands of times in a single second [and] are the movements that propel life” (35).

Lipton cites hundreds of studies that show “practices like meditation, yoga, deep breathing, and prayer produce...immediate changes in the expression of genes...” (160). In other words, he explains, as you go through each day, you are affected by waves of changing polarities in your cells. A smile from someone can cascade throughout your mind or body to make your body and mind feel more positive. Encountering hate or fear can cause your positive feelings to switch at a molecular level to negative. And these fluxing cellular states can be turned on and off through meditation practices.

Lipton argues that meditating on love is especially powerful in human biology. He quotes the mystical poet Rumi: “Love is the Water of Life / Drink it down with heart and soul” (191). This is just one of many ways to satisfy our thirst.

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**Next Month: “What are the Eastern ‘gifts’ of meditating?”**

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*Peace, Strength, Joy*

Richard Jewell

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*“Meditation has two major definitions: (1) science says it is a conscious calming of the body and mind, and (2) experienced practitioners often define it as aware attention for the purpose of inner growth. Using these two meanings, the word covers most major spiritual practices. Mindfulness, too, say the Mayo Clinic and other scientists, is a type of meditating. All of these outer forms and more are linked by having, in common, very similar purposes and scientific results.” – “One Meditation #1,” Jan. 2025*

© 2025 by Richard Jewell. Please forward this to others who may find it useful. If you’re not on the listserv, email me to be added; your email never is shared. Comments and questions also are welcome. Number of subscribers: about 460. I’ve practiced meditation and researched it since the mid-1960s and have earned graduate degrees in the field. I hope you enjoy being on the list!

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**Previous issues:** <https://www.richardjewell.org/Meditation/default.htm>.

**Retreats and Classes:**

**North Node Lake Pepin.”** Retreat. Small groups of six immersed in the beauty of nature. 3 days, 2 nights. Meditation, breathwork, plant medicine (optional). [www.explorenorthnode.com](http://www.explorenorthnode.com), Michelle at 612-619-1075.

**“Spirituality is Economics.”** Class. 4 wks. in Feb.: two live one-hr. classes per week 2 pm PST Mon., 10 PST Wed. “Why have Spiritual teachings had limited impact? Explore how spirituality should be considered economics: how we engage material creation.” Email Rev. Daniel Wolpert at [micaahprays@gmail.com](mailto:micaahprays@gmail.com).

*If you would like to mention your upcoming retreat or class, then by the end of each month, please send: “Title of Retreat/Class, dates, retreat-center or teaching-group name, and website/contact. The announcement will appear for one month. A repeat request is fine, but please remind me by sending it again at the end of each month.*

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