

You Are a Control Freak

When you treat your mind with kindness, your mind does not want to wander off anywhere.

By [Ajahn Brahm](#)

How far will your thoughts wander if you treat your mind like your best friend instead of an adversary? In the following excerpt from his book, Kindfulness, Thai forest monk Ajahn Brahm encourages us to take a lighter approach in our practice.

Many people try to practice meditation these days. Their biggest problem is that they cannot keep their mind still. No matter how hard they try, they are unable to stop thinking. Why? Let me tell you a story that may illuminate this.

A woman received a call one afternoon, “Hi, this is C.F. Are you free this afternoon for a cup of coffee?”

“Sure,” the woman replied.

“Good,” continued C.F. “We will go to that coffee shop that I like, not the one that you prefer. You will have a short black coffee, not one of those high-cholesterol lattes that I know you like. You will have a blueberry muffin, just like me, not one of those silly pastries that I have seen you eat so often. We will sit in a quiet corner

because that is where I want to sit, not out on the street where you always go. Then we will discuss politics, which is what I like to talk about, not that spiritual mumbo jumbo that you always twitter on about. Lastly, we will stay for 60 minutes, not 50 minutes or 70 minutes, just exactly one hour, because that is how long I want to stay.”

“Umm . . . ” replied the woman, thinking quickly, “I just remembered that I have to see my dentist this afternoon. Sorry, C.F., I can’t make it.”

Would you like to go out for a cup of coffee with someone who tells you where to go, what to eat and drink, where to sit, and what to discuss? No way!

And in case you haven’t figured it out yet, C.F. stands for Control Freak.

Compare this to someone meditating. “Mind, listen up! We are going to meditate now. You are going to watch the breath, which is what I want to do, not wander off wherever you want. You are going to place your awareness on the tip of the nose, which is what I like to do, not outside on the street. And you are going to sit there for exactly 60 minutes, not a minute more or less.”

When you are the control freak who treats your mind like a slave, no wonder your mind always tries to escape from you. It will think of useless memories, plan something that will never happen, fantasise, or fall asleep—anything to not get away from you. That is why you can’t keep still!

You are a control freak—that is why you can’t keep still!

The same woman receives a call: “Hi! K.F. here. Would you like to come for a cup of coffee this afternoon? Where would you like to go? What would you like to drink and eat? We’ll sit where you like, talk about your favourite topics, and stay as long as you like.”

“Actually, I have a dentist appointment this afternoon,” replies the woman. “Heck! Never mind the dentist. I’m coming to have coffee with you.” Then they have such a relaxed and enjoyable time together that they stay much longer than anyone expected. K.F. stands of course for Kindfulness Freak.

What if you meditated by treating your mind like a best friend?

Treating your mind like a best friend involves approaching it with a warm, engaging attitude: “Hey buddy! Do you want to meditate now? What do you want to watch? How do you want to sit? You tell me how long.” When you treat your mind with kindness, your mind does not want to wander off anywhere. It likes your company. You hang out together, chilling out, for far longer than you ever expected.



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