

## 274: Destress Your Life with Meditation (with Madhur-Nain Webster)



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Jen Riday**

[Vibrant Happy Women](#) with Jen Riday

## **274: Destress Your Life with Meditation (with Madhur-Nain Webster)**

You're listening to the Vibrant Happy Women podcast, episode number 274. We're talking about meditation and using it to de-stress your life. Stay tuned.

Hi, I'm Jen Riday. This podcast is for women who want to feel more vibrant, happy, aligned, and alive. You'll gain the emotional, physical, and spiritual tools you need to get your sparkle back and ensure that depression, anxiety, and struggle don't rule your life. Welcome to the Vibrant Happy Women Podcast.

Hey my friends, do you meditate? What are your thoughts when you think about meditation? Maybe you think of people from India with their legs crossed in lotus position, their hands up and they're saying Om. Maybe it's something you do every day and you do a walking meditation or you meditate transcendently, do transcendental meditation. Wherever you fall within this range, it's fine.

The point of meditation to simplify things right here at the front is for you to slow down and go inward, calm your breathing and to focus on one small thing instead of trying to process the entire world at once. Because your poor little brain thinks at least 60,000 thoughts a day, only 10% of which are actually conscious, those thoughts which it tells us to pay attention to. So much is happening where we're not even aware. Meditation is a chance to slow it all down and reregulate, to set yourself up for the day to feel the way you want to feel. It's a place to find calm. And who doesn't want that?

So meditation by the way is absolutely appropriate for those of you who say you don't want to follow an eastern religion. Meditation is not religion at all. In fact those of you who are Christians, Jesus went into the mountains to meditate and pray. Meditation and prayer are very similar. So I want you to stay open to the fact that we all can meditate. It's not a religious thing but it

## 274: Destress Your Life with Meditation (with Madhur-Nain Webster)

can be a very spiritual, calming and grounding thing for all of us no matter what we believe.

So I have an expert on meditation on the show today. And she's going to share some of her strategies and tips and I hope you enjoy and grab one nugget, one method you might try to help yourself regulate and generate those thoughts and feelings you want to have as you calm yourself a little bit every day. Let's dive in.

---

Jen: Hey everyone. I'm talking with Madhur-Nain Webster and she has lived the life balanced by traditions and practices of Kundalini yoga. She's currently based in Napa, California and is a licensed marriage and family therapist running her own practice. Her conviction of the positive influence that meditation has on the psychology and wellbeing of people plays a major role in her approach to therapy and also led her to write her first book, *The Stressless Brain* which we're going to talk about today, so, Madhur-Nain, welcome to Vibrant Happy Women.

Madhur-Nain: Thank you so much. I'm so happy to be here with you and all the listeners.

Jen: Yes. I am excited. So let's dive right in. What led you to develop a love for meditation and to write your book, *The Stressless Brain*, tell us the journey to all of this?

Madhur-Nain: Yes. So I grew up with hippie parents and I grew up in an Ashram with lots of yoga and meditation around me. And when I hit my college years I went off to college and I actually was studying to be an international business marketing woman. And I was super focused on being that and then I realized two years into college that I don't really want

## **274: Destress Your Life with Meditation (with Madhur-Nain Webster)**

to be in the business world. It was very cutthroat. I could do it but I just didn't find it very rewarding.

And so I ended up switching majors and went into counseling. And when I moved to Napa I didn't know anybody and I was just building my practice here. I'd been in Carmel, Monterey before that. And I started teaching yoga classes because it's something I grew up with, it's something was very easy for me. And I started teaching because I wanted to meet people who were somewhat spiritually minded but down to earth.

And I started teaching and then my therapy practice started really growing because people who'd come to yoga would find out I'm a therapist and they would just come and see me in therapy. Clients started saying, "Hey, talk a little bit about what you were talking about in class the other day." And so it was actually my clients who asked me to bridge the two worlds. And I started bringing the yoga technology and meditation interventions into my psychotherapy practice. And I've been doing therapy for over 20 years.

And I love, love learning. I love learning new interventions. I love learning new psychotherapy methods and ways to look at situations. And in that journey of learning I read a lot of self-help books. And what I noticed is so many of the self-help books are really great about empathy and sympathy. And you're reading it and you're like, "Yes, they get how I feel. Yes, that's true, yes." And then the book would be over and I'd be like but I don't know what to actually do.

Jen: I've noticed that myself, yes.

Madhur-Nain: Yes. So I was like, "I'm going to write a book." And I would say half my book are interventions, half my book are tools for different kinds of stress and anxiety, and through breath meditation, and chanting

## **274: Destress Your Life with Meditation (with Madhur-Nain Webster)**

meditations. And the other half is filled with psychology, and yoga technology, and scientific research to kind of debunk the woo-ness of it all.

Jen: I love how you're using the phrase meditation and technology in the same little cluster. I've never considered that. So how would you define the technology of meditation?

Madhur-Nain: Well, technology of meditation is it's a grouping of many things. There is going to be the behavior of the meditations. What you do, if it's a movement meditation, or a chanting meditation, or a breath meditation, if your hands are doing something your eyes have a certain focus, your breath has a certain sequence, or certain words you're chanting. Those all come together and it creates an experience.

And then when we have stress and anxiety or depression, anger, fear, sadness in our life sometimes we just need a formula of step-by-step of what to do to get us out of that rabbit hole, to pull us back out. Because I do believe that ultimately each of us have within us the wisdom and the knowledge to be able to know what to do to shift, and heal, and embrace our lives but sometimes we get blinded. Sometimes we get stuck.

And so these steps, these different kinds of meditations, they're not magic, they don't suddenly make your life perfect or make you perfect. But they allow you to come back into an awareness of a relationship with yourself and to be able to tap into your innate greatness.

Jen: Yeah, that's cool. Well, what was it like growing up in an Ashram?

Madhur-Nain: It was in some ways really, really fun, and different, and exciting. It's a communal living. There's lots of families there. And I felt very loved and connected to the people in my parents' Ashram. On the other hand growing up in that spiritual world of eastern belief system in the

## **274: Destress Your Life with Meditation (with Madhur-Nain Webster)**

western world, it is strange and different, and at times difficult and struggles. And so as I went into my college years I did leave all of it and be like, "I'm out of here, it's just too crazy and cult like." And I'm like, "No, thank you."

And then when I was having kids of my own and building my career and being married, and being in society I did feel like I wanted something to anchor me. And so I ended up coming back to what I remember, the philosophy and the tools of a yogic upbringing. And I kind of was able to, like a menu, I picked and chose what worked for me and I left the stuff that didn't work for me.

Jen: Yeah. That's really neat. You mentioned your form of rebellion was maybe to become more traditional and leave the hippie lifestyle behind. And it made me giggle inside because my husband was raised by a hippie mom. And all of those kids to rebel cut their hair in high school. It's so funny. It's so funny so I love it.

Madhur-Nain: In a lot of ways it is a normal piece because having teenage boys and that there is the stage where it's normal to reject what your parents stand for, even if it's great. And there are some children that don't and feel like I'm going to do the same thing as my parents did.

And I have multiple women friends who became lawyers, ironically I have a handful of them who became lawyers but they felt this pressure from their families, who parents were lawyers or they wanted them to be super successful and then none of them practiced. They ended up choosing to be stay at home moms and really getting involved in that but they've let their law license go. And so I think that there is this journey of having to find yourself. And when our children are little we want our children to look at us as this perfect parent with unconditional love and there on a pedestal.

## **274: Destress Your Life with Meditation (with Madhur-Nain Webster)**

And it is important for us parents to get knocked off that pedestal so that they can find themselves and embark on going out into the world.

Jen: Yes. To get, yeah, I like that. It's normal to rebel in other words.

Madhur-Nain: It is normal. And you want that. I mean obviously it's painful as parents. I mean for me it can be painful when your child, he doesn't want anything to do with what you believe in. And so part of it though it's how do we not get into the right and wrong. And we can get stressed about it and anxious and get like parents we can overly worry about our children. But I really, you know, I work with clients and my own work of really being like, okay, how do I unconditionally love this being? Let them be themselves and be unattached to outcome and yet also have boundaries.

And give boundaries, it's super complicated but that's – it's like you're constantly doing all those things.

Jen: Yeah, it's a lot. And a big cause of much of the stress moms experience for sure. Well, so walk us through a typical day for you as a mom, as a person and how you're using some of the strategies from your book, *The Stressless Brain*.

Madhur-Nain: One thing I like to tell people is I learned or I decided about 14 years ago I was thinking if I'm going to tell my clients that they should meditate every day, that they should use this tool to help them navigate life then I have to walk the talk. And I decided at that moment that I would meditate every single day for the rest of my life. And I can honestly say that I have never missed a day in over 14 years.

Jen: So what do you define as meditation? Does it have to be a certain length, a certain format? What does it mean for you?

## **274: Destress Your Life with Meditation (with Madhur-Nain Webster)**

Madhur-Nain: Well, for me meditation is some kind of breath pattern or some kind of chanting, and some kind of eye focus, and some kind of posture. That's the kind of yoga that I teach, meditation I teach. There is transcendental meditation which is quite popular, it's TM where you sit silently and you work on having a clear space in your head, that you let go of thought. I have found working with clients for many years that that does not work for a lot of people because it creates often, not everyone, but often it can create relaxation induced anxiety.

So people will sit quietly and they start becoming more anxious. Their minds start going faster or they start worrying more. So the kind of meditations that I teach that they're pretty, I mean there can be some very active to very minimally active. But I do meditate at least 11 minutes every day and that's where I started. But now I usually go anywhere from 22 every day to 31 minutes every day plus I do about 30 minutes of yoga.

And that's how I start off every single day for me is I get up, if I know I have to be somewhere at a certain time I just adjust my time. So I can get up to have that time. If I had small children I may not do the yoga part but I would get up and do the meditation part, it just depends. But I would practice that even when they were younger and they would sometimes come in the room and just lay down next to me like I did with my parents in the yoga classes. But for me it's my practice at home. So that is a really, really big part of my life.

And I have a quote that is, 'Breathing keeps us alive, meditation keeps us sane'. And so again, meditation, it's not magic. It doesn't just fix your life and create all these amazing things. But what it does is that it helps the person to tune into the frequency of their own awareness, their greatness, their potential, their clarity so that we can then navigate the obstacles of life.



## **274: Destress Your Life with Meditation (with Madhur-Nain Webster)**

Jen: Yeah. So you specialize in Kundalini yoga and I want to ask a little bit about that. I recently certified as a yoga instructor and learned a lot of things. And we talked briefly about Kundalini, so I love that you're an expert. How is Kundalini different from other forms of yoga and meditation?

Madhur-Nain: So a lot of other yogas is you go into a posture and you're holding it. Maybe you're breathing in and out and holding the posture. Maybe you go into the posture as you inhale and then as you exhale you're coming out of that posture like in flow. In Kundalini yoga we could do one exercise and it could be a holding one or it could be a moving and it could last anywhere from one minute to 22 minutes. So it is definitely, can be a harder yoga to practice.

But the way I look at it is, is that yoga, Kundalini yoga is not an exercise. It's an experience for your organs and your glands. So it's about strengthening your nervous system. It's about working with your parasympathetic nervous system and your sympathetic nervous system. It works on your vagus nerve. It works on stimulating your organs and your glands. So it is really a very deep experience. Sometimes it's really easy and sometimes it's really challenging. And they're kind of weird, Kundalini yoga is weird.

And the thing is, is that when – the yogis believe that our minds think in polarity. Your mind thinks in right, wrong, good, bad, stop, go. And we're always analyzing, it's to some extent. So Kundalini yoga meditation helps to harness the mind. So by doing the yoga you're getting your body out of the way so then with meditation you can work with the mind. And you're teaching the mind to move into a frequency of being more aware, of being more grounded, to being more neutral.

And in psychotherapy we talk a lot about cognitive behavioral therapy which is all about how our mind thinks. And the Dalai Lama says that don't

## **274: Destress Your Life with Meditation (with Madhur-Nain Webster)**

believe everything you think. And so in psychotherapy, if you look at cognitive behavioral therapy, a really great person who's written a few books and very knowledgeable is Dr. David Burns in Stanford says a similar thing just more in a psychological way. And so Kundalini yoga meditation really is about teaching the mind to be in a different frequency.

So as I was sharing earlier, why I always practice my meditation first thing in the morning and I encourage my clients to do the same is, is that when you're waking up, it's a little bit like every morning's a new clean slate. And when you sit and you practice some form of practice, spiritual practice like yoga practice, or if you're religious, a religious practice. You're allowing yourself to channel into the frequency that you want to operate in that day.

Jen: Yeah, practicing the way you want to think and feel really.

Madhur-Nain: Yeah.

Jen: That's really nice. So let's assume there are some people listening who say, "Sure, I've always wanted to meditate but how do I begin", what would you say?

Madhur-Nain: So one way that you can practice is your breath is really our greatest teacher. And so if you don't want to spend a single dime and you don't want to buy any kind of app, or buy a book, or join a class, or anything. You can practice starting with maybe one to three minutes every day sitting and being focused on the flow of your breath and it's as simple as thinking I'm inhaling, now I'm holding my breath, now I'm exhaling, now I'm suspending my breath out. And then you would slow that process down.

And when you inhale you want your breath to start at your belly like you make a nice balloon. So you're inhaling from your navel, it opens up your diaphragm which actually opens up the lungs, you can get more oxygen.

## **274: Destress Your Life with Meditation (with Madhur-Nain Webster)**

And as you have that full breath your shoulders might rise a little bit then you would hold it maybe for three seconds, maybe for seven seconds. And then you would slowly exhale, your shoulders would relax first; your upper chest would relax.

And at the end of your exhale you would want to pull your navel, your bellybutton into the back of the spine so you're collapsing your lungs to really empty out that CO2. And then you would do the same. You would hold your breath out for three seconds, five seconds, seven seconds. And then you would begin at that breathing. And your mind, because remember, the mind needs a job. So your mental mind would be thinking. If you could just try with, what shall I do for dinner? You go, "Okay, I'll think about that later." Come back to my breathing.

So that's a really simple easy and free thing to do. Now, my book and on my website, my book comes with 37 meditations. And it comes with the digital download included with the book. So you'll have all the music and the instructions. And in the book it goes from very easy, just like there is a beginner's meditation, that's what I just described. But you're going to hear my voice chanting Sat as you're inhaling and Nom as you're exhaling. Sat means truth and Nom means identity. So it's connecting to that true identity of yourself.

And then it goes really complicated to lots more words but the music's all there. And I talk about in the book how to go from doing nothing in your meditation to being active in your meditation. A big piece of it is that often people say, "Chanting is weird. I don't feel comfortable doing it." But let me tell you, I'm not kidding you, every single person who says that and then starts with breath meditations and ends up doing chanting, they end up loving chanting more than anything. And it's not singing, it's chanting.

Jen: Just repeating words to help your mind focus.

## **274: Destress Your Life with Meditation (with Madhur-Nain Webster)**

Madhur-Nain: It's repeating and they're usually in Sanskrit. I think there's a couple that are in English. But they're usually in Sanskrit and there's a reason why it's healthy for us to chant in a language that is not our mother tongue. And the reason why is because remember, again, our mind's always trying to analyze and make sense of things.

And if we're feeling depressed, or anxious, or angry, or fearful, if we're chanting something in English like, "I'm a glorious, happy, vibrant woman", if we're feeling an off day, we're chanting it, or saying it, or thinking it, and we end up going, "I'm not glorious." All of a sudden our minds counteract what we're saying and then we're getting in a struggle with ourselves inside our mind. And then that raises our sympathetic nervous system that triggers the amygdala in your mind, in your brain which then goes to fight, flight and freeze.

But if you're chanting let's say in Sanskrit, if it's old eastern Sanskrit or if it's another language like French or Italian, it's not your mother tongue or Latin which is often the language for Christianity, or if it's Hebrew for the Jewish faith and so on. Then we're able to sometimes push through. So there is another chant that I teach often is Humee Hum Brahm Hum which is super easy, it rolls right off your tongue. And so when you're chanting Humee Hum Brahm Hum, Humee Hum Brahm Hum, your mind, because English is our birth language, we're not going to get as hooked.

You can read and see what it says, if you're like, "I don't want to say anything. I don't know what it means." You can read what it means. But when you're sitting there for seven minutes or 11 minutes and you're chanting then you start being able to go deeper into the connection of your own awareness.

## **274: Destress Your Life with Meditation (with Madhur-Nain Webster)**

Jen: Yeah. And it's really soothing even when you chanted just now, the mmm. I could feel that in my body. So I think chanting is really, really beautiful.

Madhur-Nain: Well, interesting thing on a side note that humming, when you hum, even if you were just to hum for your meditation it activates your vagus nerve. And your vagus nerve is in the center of your chest and it connects to every organ and gland in your body except for your adrenals which is the fight or flight. And we don't those. You don't want your adrenals to relax. You want them to be healthy and alert. But you do want to connect to the other organs and glands in your body because a lot of us have inflammation.

When we activate or we bring energy to the vagus nerve and stimulate it, we actually – this is scientifically proven that when you stimulate the vagus nerve, you can lower inflammation in your body. And a lot of autoimmune diseases are connected to inflammation, and depression is connected to inflammation, so chanting or breath patterns stimulates the vagus nerve, and humming does.

Jen: Yeah, okay. Whistle and hum. Maybe not whistling.

Madhur-Nain: No, but whistling is actually also – whistling, the yogis believe that that whistling helps to calm the mind.

Jen: Yeah, okay, let's all whistle while we work, yes. This is beautiful. So in society now as Covid maybe starts to come to an end in some form, we will go back to some kind of a new world. What advice would you have for us to keep our stress levels low and maybe even create a new way of living our lives so that stress doesn't get up to the pre Covid levels?

## **274: Destress Your Life with Meditation (with Madhur-Nain Webster)**

Madhur-Nain: So there's a couple of things. One is I think purpose in life is incredibly important. So it's really looking at what is the purpose in each and every one of our own lives? And what am I doing on a daily basis that connects me to that purpose? So I think that's really important. And meditation as a daily practice, and again it doesn't have to be Kundalini meditation, it could be any kind.

If you're religious and you're really connected to your Jewish faith then I really encourage you to find a prayer in Hebrew that you love and you just start singing it, chanting it, repeating it every day to change that frequency in your brain. If you're Christian then if you think about it, meditation's been around since the beginning of time, even religion, it just wasn't called meditation, it was called singing hymns. It was called reading the Bible as a congregation, that's chanting, that's meditation.

So a daily practice of some kind of awareness practice or mindfulness practice even if it's just seven minutes every day.

Jen: Yeah. And sometimes I feel like finding purpose is easier through meditation. Do you have anything to add there? Insight coming during meditation, or do you kind of want that not to happen?

Madhur-Nain: No. It's so funny that you said that. This morning in my meditation, I'm redoing my website and I kept getting flashes of ideas. And so I would just stop and jot them down on a little notebook and then I'd go back into my meditation because sometimes we can be incredibly creative in our meditation. So if you find that that happens for you, have a little notebook and then just stop for a minute, write down your thoughts and then go back into the meditation. And then later that day you can pick up your notebook and have a little read.

## **274: Destress Your Life with Meditation (with Madhur-Nain Webster)**

Jen: Yeah. So meditation can help us find the purpose and figure out how to carry it out and keep us calm enough to even want to do it. That's cool.

Madhur-Nain: Yeah, and that's the thing, it's like if you think about it, meditation is not going to make all of our worries go away but it creates a frequency in our brain, in our body that allows us to then have what we need to deal with stress of life.

Jen: Exactly, I would agree with that. Beautiful. What are the three big takeaways you would like to leave with us from *The Stressless Brain*?

Madhur-Nain: I would say my three big takeaways would be, one, meditate every day. I don't care how long. I don't care if it's one minute but meditate every day. Second is that the goal of meditation is to create a relationship with yourself and to stimulate that awareness within who you are and get to know who you are. And three is you don't really know what that experience is like unless you can give it a try.

And I really encourage people to always try something at least three times before you evaluate because the first time it's a natural response for our mind to go, to be judgmental, and critical, and try to pick it apart, that's normal. And the second time you're more able to experience it. And the third time you're actually really able to know what it is.

Jen: That's good advice, do it daily.

Madhur-Nain: With anything.

Jen: Yeah, true. Do it daily, create a relationship with yourself and try it three times before you evaluate. I like that. Well, Madhur-Nain, I appreciate you sharing some of these great tidbits about meditation. And I feel like you've made it really doable for us, easy, one minute. We can all do that.

## **274: Destress Your Life with Meditation (with Madhur-Nain Webster)**

Madhur-Nain: Yes.

Jen: Yeah, cool. Well, anything else you'd like to leave with us before we say goodbye?

Madhur-Nain: Well, my favorite quote, which I don't remember who said it but it was said back in the 60s is, "It's not the life you live, it's the courage you bring to it."

Jen: I like that. And where can people find you to learn more about what you're doing, about your book, your meditations?

Madhur-Nain: Yeah. So my website madhurnain.com is the easiest best place to find me and find my book. And of course my book is on Amazon and Barnes and Noble, online. I do charge a lot less than Amazon and I offer free shipping. So I'd always love if you come buy it from my website, but if not Amazon is fine and I get it. And I also, not only do I have my book on my website but I actually have released over 50 different meditations. And so you can even just browse through and look at the different kinds there are, how to do them and pick and choose.

On a side note, all my meditations are always free on SoundCloud for the first three minutes.

Jen: Nice, okay, get a feel for them. Alright, we will link to all of that on our show notes page. And thank you so much for being on the show.

Madhur-Nain: Thank you so much for having me, I enjoyed it.

Jen: Take care.

Madhur-Nain: Bye.

[Vibrant Happy Women](#) with Jen Riday



## 274: Destress Your Life with Meditation (with Madhur-Nain Webster)

---

Okay, action time, which strategy are you going to try out to introduce some meditation to your life, a little more every day, or if you already meditate, to become more consistent. Maybe you do a meditation every time you start your car; maybe you do it when you brush your teeth. Maybe you do it the minute you're feet hit the floor when you roll out of bed. But I love the idea of setting yourself up and training your thoughts, and your body, and your feelings to be aligned and to feel the way you want to feel when you start your day.

Some of you already do this through prayer, or scriptures, or other methods. But whatever you use make sure it's giving you the desired result of feeling aligned, calm and balanced, and the breath is a great way to get there. So try it out, stick with it, start generating the feelings you want to have, this life is your life and you get to feel the way you want to feel. Happiness is your choice. And you can do the things that generate that happiness. That is what this show is all about.

Thank you so much for listening. I will be back again soon, until then make it a vibrant and happy week. Take care.

If you enjoy this podcast, you have to check out the Vibrant Happy Women Club. It's my monthly group coaching program where we take all this material to the next level and to get you the results that will blow your mind. Join me in the Vibrant Happy Women Club at [jenriday.com/join](http://jenriday.com/join).