

Journal Notes on Reflections

A. B.

When I took the “Meditation at School” course at LSF, I didn’t know what to expect from it. I personally hadn’t had much experience with meditation, but the description totally appealed to me. I was eager to get to know new forms of meditation and also to learn about their applicability to children in primary school. Although I had no idea about meditation at that time, I resolved to fully engage in something new.

The first exercise we did together at the seminar was the mindful eating of a raisin. I was fascinated by the effect of the story on my sense of taste. I was able to perceive this raisin very intensely with all my senses and finally ate it with a pleasure like never before. I also found the effect of the lemon story on the body totally exciting.

The first meditation we did together was still a bit hard for me. We were supposed to concentrate on our nostrils and pay attention to our breathing. For this first time, I didn’t manage to let my thoughts pass by like clouds, and to be honest, I thought to myself afterwards: “Next time, I’ll close my eyes and pretend to meditate, because nobody will notice anyway!”

In our second seminar session we meditated with our focus on the ajna center between the eyebrows. Even this form of meditation didn’t work for me at first and I had thoughts like “I’m not cut out for meditation” or “I just can’t do it”.

It was only when we practiced with the Mantra MA-RA-NA-THA that I was really able to engage with meditation and I noticed that from time to time it became easier for me to concentrate only on myself and my body. From then on I was totally looking forward to the seminar and was eager to try the exercises at home. I also tried the other two meditation forms a couple of times and they worked better than the first two times, but the mantra remained my favourite exercise to do at home. It was the exercise I chose most often. Through the inner recitation of the syllables MA-RA-NA-THA other thoughts had hardly any chance to enter my consciousness. I think that is also one of the reasons why I enjoyed this exercise so much, simply because it was the first “right” form of meditation that worked well for me straight away.

The mantra was also often used when I felt like I was passing out while learning because I needed a break. It calmed me down extremely well and grounded me again. Afterwards I often felt much more effective and full of energy.

During the Bodyscan I felt totally relaxed and concentrated at the same time. I had never before thought about the individual parts of my body so intensely and I found the experience totally exciting. Unfortunately, I often felt that the body scan takes too much time and that I should choose another form of meditation. However, even today I still use the body scan to switch off and come down when I am lying in bed and my head is so full of thoughts that I can’t relax and have problems falling asleep.

The exercise helps me a lot to get away from the world for a short time and to really concentrate only on myself and my own body. I am really very grateful to be familiar with this exercise and have already passed it on to friends, who now use it as a sleeping aid from time to time. :)

Meditating has really benefited me a lot. I will definitely continue and search for more meditation courses. Keeping the meditation journal has helped me to stay on top of things and to really do my exercises regularly. I think the idea of such a journal as proof of performance is great. Everyone can put their own individual thoughts into words and is still compelled to keep on going, even if they experience some kind of slump.

Out of my expectant, but also slightly critical attitude from the beginning, an incredible interest in meditation has grown in me. I know that what we were taught in the classroom is really something that one can use effectively for oneself, but also in school with one’s students.

A. U.

What has changed for me through meditation:

In the beginning the single meditation exercises were like single elements that I practiced at a certain time.

But meanwhile this has changed. Meditation and to the other exercises are now something that I always “carry with me”, something that can help me (if necessary, very quickly) in everyday life, such as conscious breathing, walking meditation, mantras etc.

If I feel strange or I only have a few minutes, I sit down for a moment and close my eyes and try to be more conscious and attentive. Often even a brief moment of this helps me to feel better.

All in all, I have noticed that through meditation, I have become calmer and more relaxed in everyday life. I increasingly have the feeling that I can get off this “hamster wheel” and get a kind of “meta-view”, particularly in situations that used to stress me out and throw me off track. The longer meditations that I usually do in the evening (before going to bed) help me especially. This is when I try to understand my feelings and behaviors by looking for their cause. Particularly in the last few days I have had the feeling that due to meditation, a door has opened which has brought me a little bit further in this respect.

Above all, through the trust and better contact with myself, which I am building more and more through meditation, I have the feeling that I can go deeper into my themes and gain clarity. This is a nice feeling, because I have found a way to handle (better) difficult situations and to feel less helpless and alone. I find the body scan in particular a totally beautiful and effective form of meditation.

On the other hand I have the feeling that meditation can also make you aware of things. For example, I find mindful eating incredibly difficult. Many times I have tried to do this exercise, but it always pushes me to my limits.

In the beginning I was very annoyed and I almost cursed this exercise until I took a closer look at it and tried to examine “behind the scenes”. By becoming aware of my otherwise not so great eating habits, I went in search of the root causes and discovered amazing things. This has opened up a lot of new possibilities and areas which I can now deal with and which may bring me a big step forward. I am far from having finished this task. But I am working on it and I am on my way!

All in all I can say that I am incredibly happy to have gotten to know meditation. It is like a gift, and the changes I have experienced are amazing.

Meditation has become an integral part of my life that I don't want to miss anymore!

B. K.

It's over ... and on we go

Tomorrow I'll be turning in this journal. Hard to believe the semester's already over.

Thank you very much for this great course; it was very nice and I am looking forward to the advanced meditation courses.

I already know that, in the future, I want to work in the same field as you do. You have shown me that the working world is becoming more receptive and that it's possible to gain a foothold in the field of coping with stress, meditation etc. This is great for me, as I now have a goal for my professional life. Thanks so much for that!

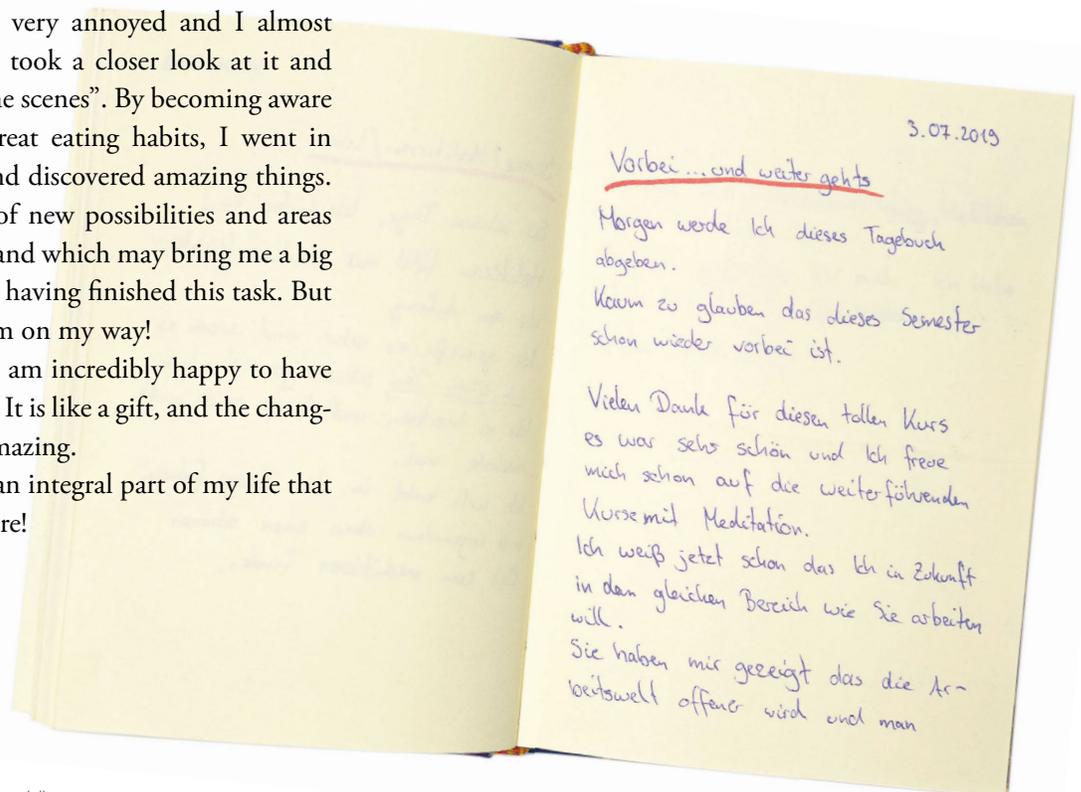
C. W.

I would say a lot has changed in the time from the start of the course up to now. Already the exercise of loving kindness alone, which I automatically incorporate into my daily life every day in all kinds of situations, continually opens up new perspectives for me and allows me to live in a much more relaxed and peaceful way.

Every week I have looked forward to the meditation courses, to new exercises, to new stories that inspire me to think further.

I am very grateful that many students have the opportunity to be introduced to meditation in the context of a lecture!

All I can say is that these seminars were/are very enriching for me. In the meantime, I see meditation in a com-



pletely different way than I did at the beginning, where I was often thinking about time or saw meditation as something where I have to achieve something, where things are good or bad, right or wrong. None of this matters!

During the meditations I'm able to spend time with myself, to withdraw from society – so to speak, and find my inner self.

My view of the world alone has already changed. I don't know if this is due to meditation, but before this I had so many thoughts about suffering, wars and injustice and I doubted so much and couldn't comprehend that if there is a God, why there are so many innocent people who are starving, dying etc.? I can't answer this, but the doubts, anger, incomprehension are simply no longer there. It is difficult for me to explain, but I trust life all of a sudden. I can see everything in a much more relaxed way, I am not afraid of the future, but do the best I can for myself and my fellow men.

In many ways meditation gives me strength, faith, a means of deep relaxation and joy!

I thank you for your time and everything that you're sharing with the world!

E. M.

I had heard a lot about meditation and its effects before the seminar. But I wasn't able to imagine much about it, especially not how it could be implemented in the context of a school setting. At first I wasn't quite sure I was doing it right either. When thoughts kept coming into my consciousness, I really thought that I was doing it wrong. But as I continued, I noticed that something was different.

I noticed this specifically when I went to the doctor for treatment. The doctor wanted to give me an injection. But I have a phobia of injections and needles, which often causes me to cry. Despite a bit of anxiety, the thought of using "Maranatha" occurred to me, so I tried to concentrate on my breathing and on "Maranatha." I noticed that my body was restless and that my heart was beating faster. Yet my body's response was much more relaxed than usual. Although, in retrospect, I would rate this treatment as one of the most painful, I was amazed by my steadfastness.

Moreover, I have noticed that my reaction in relation to the behaviour of others has become more considerate and inquisitive. When I encounter negative behaviour I'm not immediately annoyed – it's reduced, or rather I try to not become upset. I think about why someone is

Reflexion

In der Zeit - zu Beginn des Kurses, bis jetzt - würde ich sagen, hat sich viel verändert. Alleine die liebende Güte Übung, die ich täglich automatisch in alle möglichen Situationen in meinen Alltag einbaue, öffnet mir immer wieder neue Blickwinkel und lässt mich viel entspannter und friedlicher leben.

Ich habe mich jede Woche wieder auf die Meditationskurse gefreut, auf neue Übungen, neue Geschichten, die zum Weiterdenken anregen.

Ich bin sehr dankbar, dass viele Studierende die Möglichkeit haben, Meditation im Rahmen einer Vorlesung kennenzulernen!

Ich kann nur von mir sagen, dass die Seminare sehr bereichernd für mich waren / sind. Mittlerweile sehe ich Meditation ganz anders als zu Beginn, wo ich die Zeit oft im Kopf hatte oder meditieren als etwas gesehen habe, wo ich etwas erreichen muss, wo es gut oder schlecht / richtig oder falsch gibt. Dabei spielt das alles

acting in this way and what the reasons might be. It helps me to regulate my quick-tempered emotions.

I also noticed that I felt less stress before exams. I had less insomnia, less fear or panicky thoughts. You could even say that I went into the exam relaxed. The meditation helped me during the learning process to concentrate. In fact I meditated more during the learning phase than the rest of the time. It was my tool to overcome any learning blocks. Even time constraints and a heavy study load didn't upset me.

I often notice that when my thoughts center around meditation, I feel a tingling sensation on my forehead. This also happens when I use the Maranatha meditation. During meditation, the tingling on my forehead is my control mechanism, and shows me whether I am still meditating with concentration or my focus is already slipping. The more intensively I feel the point on my forehead, the more fixed I am in meditation.

I will try to meditate a lot despite the absence of learning stress. Meditation has helped me a great deal to regulate my emotions. But, I'd still like to even better control my affective behaviour and thus be more conscious in emotional situations.

F. S.

Meditation continues to help me to feel calmer and more balanced. I have been able to learn a lot about myself. I need rest more often. I ought to allow myself to rest more often, physically and mentally. I have found that I am stressed a lot by my environment and the people around me and that this causes an imbalance in me. I find everything stressful. Few people are able to find peace and quiet. I see this every day when I take the S-Bahn [commuter train], for example. Everybody is looking at their mobile phones, nobody's there. I often try to block it all out or close my eyes to find my inner peace. But everything around me is rushed and stressed. There are always new appointments or times that one "has to" keep. Often I cause myself stress, through all sorts of expectations I put on myself or through expectations of others on me. I try to live up to all this, but often I do not listen to myself. [...]

My thoughts about myself have changed. It's OK to make mistakes and to have faults – that's what distinguishes a person. Only machines run perfectly. I know that I can draw strength from nature itself. That is why I now go more often to nature or to places that are quiet and harmonious. So that I myself can bring harmony back into my inner being. I have now found a direction and a way. I know what's good for me and what's not. Thanks to meditation I am finding the way to myself more and more. I absolutely intend to continue this.

H. K.

Reflection of the past semester

This seminar was very important for me. It provided very interesting content and I was able to gather many ideas for my future profession as a teacher. This course was particularly valuable for me, as I am also engaged in this topic in my private life, but here I was able to learn about different points of view and new methods, which I found very well facilitated.

I especially enjoyed observing how I was progressively able to get a better feel for the methods, especially for "conscious breathing", how my body and mind became better and better attuned to it, and how I was able to develop a different, better feeling for my body over time.

If I look back at my journal again, I can see that in the beginning I still had difficulty concentrating and finding the right state and maintaining it. Also letting go of my thoughts caused me some difficulty in the beginning. But over the course of the semester I was able to better em-

pathize, discovered the right sitting position for myself and was able to fully concentrate on the meditations. Of course there were also situations throughout the semester where I had to pull myself together to do the exercises. But when I did them anyway, I felt very good afterwards.

I found it especially remarkable how my body was able to adjust to the meditations better and more quickly and how I relaxed more and more.

My everyday life has also become somewhat lighter since then, and I am able to enjoy each day in a much more calm and serene way. I also noticed that I approached certain problems in a much more relaxed way and was able to solve them more easily.

Through this experience I firmly resolved to try to incorporate meditation into my everyday life. I especially liked the "mindful breathing", the "body scan" and the "walking meditation". Another very valuable observation for me was that I found it better to do the exercises in the morning than in the evening, so that I was able to start and manage my days in a much more relaxed way.

J. W.

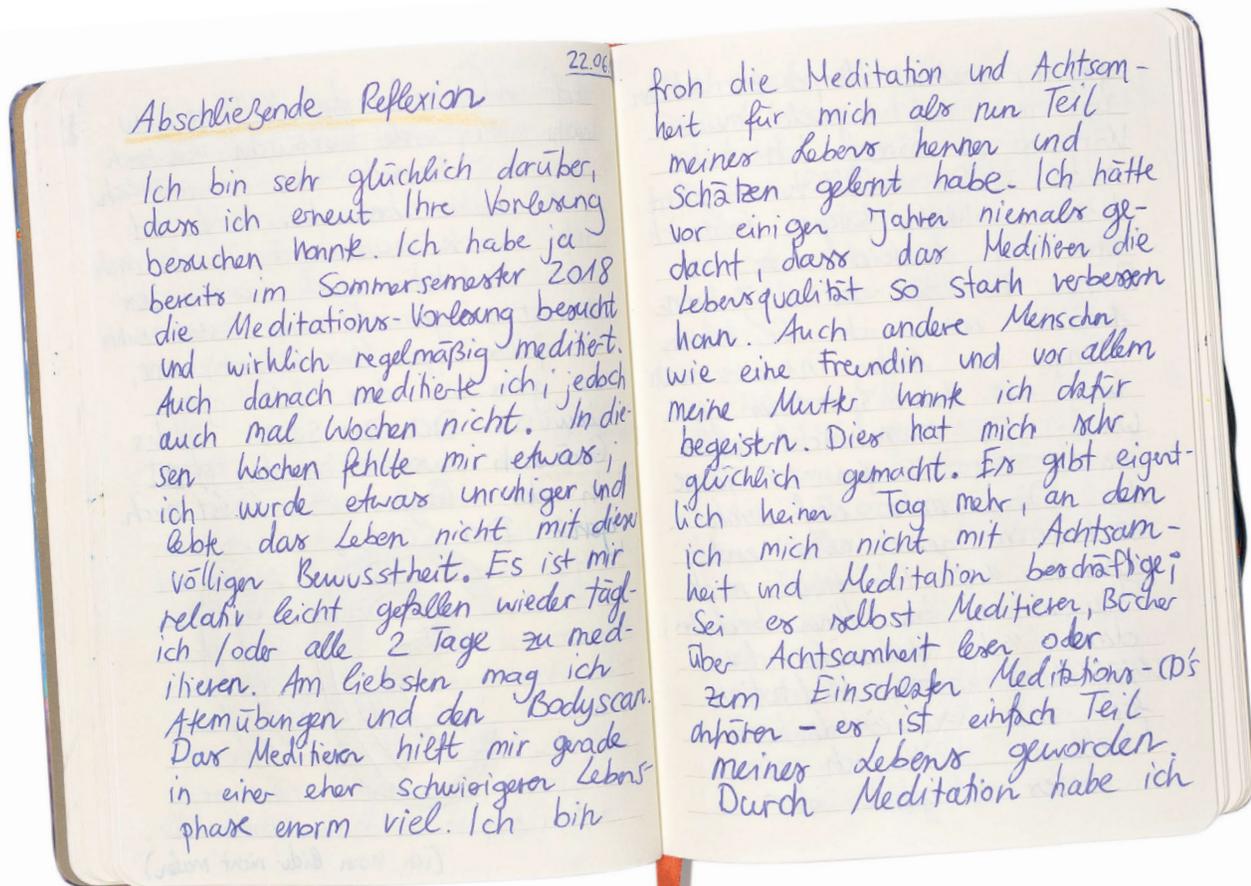
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I am very happy that I was able to attend your lecture again. I had already attended the meditation lecture in the summer semester 2018 and actually meditated regularly.

I also continued to meditate afterwards, but sometimes I didn't practice for weeks. During these weeks I felt something missing, I became a bit restless and did not live my life with such full awareness. It was relatively easy for me to meditate again daily or every 2 days. I like the breathing exercises and the body scan best. Meditating helps me enormously, especially during a difficult period of my life. I am glad to have got to know and appreciate meditation and mindfulness as a part of my life. A few years earlier I would never have thought that meditating could improve the quality of life so much.

I was able to inspire other people, such as my girlfriend and above all my mother, to also do so. This has made me very happy. Actually not one day goes by now without my being occupied with mindfulness and meditation. Whether it's meditating myself, reading books about mindfulness or listening to meditation CDs to fall asleep – it has simply become part of my life.

Through meditation I have learned to appreciate my body and to listen more to signals coming from my body. I have come to know myself better and can really say that I am much more at peace with myself than I was 1-2 years



ago. In addition, I perceive the small things in everyday life more intensively and I have become more spontaneous. Everything need not go according to plan. I allow things to come more to me, I approach everything in a more relaxed way.

I can only thank you for giving students the opportunity to discover meditation for themselves. Perhaps without this offer from the university I would never have discovered the path to mindfulness and meditation. Now it is almost inconceivable for me to live a happy life without mindfulness and meditation.

L. M. W.

I must say that I feel much better after your "Meditation and Stress Management" course. I have learned to handle experiences, activities and emotional states with greater awareness and consciousness. Unfortunately, I suffer from ADD and have to take medication every day in order to be able to concentrate. Since I have been in your meditation course, I have been able to greatly reduce the dosage of these pills and am mostly free of medication.

I'm super happy that I had the opportunity to come to your course and have such positive experiences.

L. R.

I was very happy to be able to take a seminar on meditation as part of my studies. Looking back, I enjoyed this seminar very much. Every Monday I would go to the university with a sense of joy because I knew that I would again be able to meditate and experience and learn something new and interesting. Shortly before the seminar, I happened to read the autobiography of Paramahansa Yogananda, which gave me new insights into life. I am also familiar with a few yoga techniques (e.g. sun salutation). Without realizing it, I was already practicing mindfulness before this, immersing myself deeply and consciously in one activity (e.g. cooking, walking, cleaning, playing an instrument etc.). I also found the film "Monks in the Laboratory" very interesting.

The topic of meditation is becoming increasingly more popular in western countries. Even science is paying greater attention to this topic and there are many new findings that demonstrate the positive effects of meditation.

Of the meditation techniques I learned in this seminar, I particularly liked focusing on the ajna center and the walking meditation. Often I have been able to integrate these exercises into my everyday life. So it's these exercises that have most intensively engaged me this semester and

I will continue to practice them. For me, meditation is like a key to myself. Through it I find peace in my often stressful and transitory daily life. The practice has already helped me in certain situations (especially during exams). I look forward to using these techniques in schools and practicing with children.

M. K.

Prior to the seminar, I personally had never meditated before and I had never had the feeling that I could ever manage to just sit quietly and watch my breath. Likewise, I couldn't imagine that I would be able to draw any added value from it for my state of being in everyday life.

Inwardly I was constantly evaluating my meditation and was annoyed when it didn't work out the way I imagined it should. In the course of time I wouldn't say that meditation has gotten easier, but my attitude with respect to meditation has changed. I have learned that it doesn't always work the same way and that it's not a straightforward process. I have learned to see the whole thing in a more relaxed way, because it's all about relaxing. Over time I have noticed how meditation has changed me.

I like the idea of keeping a meditation journal very much, because I was so "compelled" to meditate and afterwards I was forced to consider what actually takes place in me through meditation.

M. N.

I started this course without any expectations. In the meantime, I have come to realize the effectiveness of meditation as an instrument for self-discovery, stress management and concentration. I will continue to meditate into the future. Thank you very much for your great introduction to this interesting topic!

T. F.

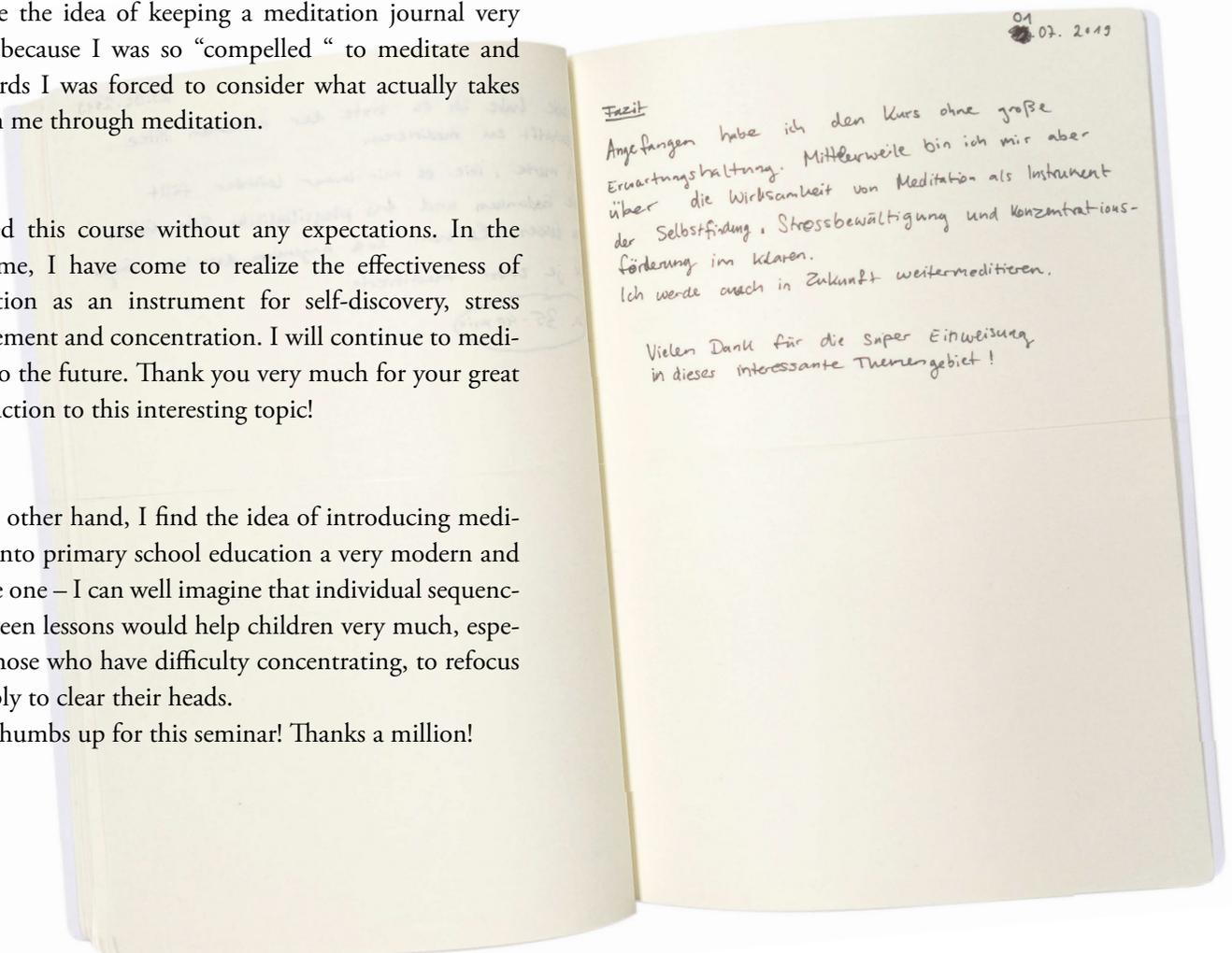
On the other hand, I find the idea of introducing meditation into primary school education a very modern and sensible one – I can well imagine that individual sequences between lessons would help children very much, especially those who have difficulty concentrating, to refocus or simply to clear their heads.

So, thumbs up for this seminar! Thanks a million!

T. K.

When I began my studies, I thought that they would be just as easy for me as it was while finishing my technical baccalaureate; to manage everything reasonably well without a lot of effort. However, already in the first semester (engineering and management), I realized that, this time, it wouldn't work out that way. The sheer quantity and volume of subjects was overwhelming compared to regular school.

In the first semester I failed in 1/6 subjects, in the second in 4/8, and in the third semester in 1/7, which forced me to try a third time. In the fourth semester I failed the last 2/7 exams and since then I have passed everything more or less right away. As you can probably imagine, all the second attempts and one third attempt (especially in my general studies) caused additional pressure that I didn't know how to relieve. This led to complete nervous breakdowns during exam preparation, which were so bad that my mother wanted me to temporarily quit my studies. Once I had, to some extent, come through the third examination phase of my studies, and it was over, it was



clear to me that something had to change. I looked for ways to reduce stress and even attended some seminars on how to deal with stress. There it was often said that for some people meditation offers a refuge.

As I had already heard in my first semester, from friends who were further along in their studies than me, how enthusiastic they were about your course, I have been trying to get into your course ever since. Unfortunately without success.

When my last semester was approaching and I still had an elective subject open that I had “saved” in the hope of getting into your course, I thought I’d write you an email just before the start of the semester. You were so kind to accommodate me and made it possible for me to participate in your course despite once again not landing a place in the lottery. For this, I am really very grateful to you!

I have gained so much from your course that it would likely go beyond the scope of this journal entry to describe it all in more detail. Therefore I would like to concentrate on what is by far the most important thing for me, mindfulness. I notice how the habit of mindfulness has helped me to live a much more intense lifestyle, and by intense I do not mean more action-packed, but rather a more conscious perception of my surroundings and myself. Already in this short time I’ve learned to listen much more to my inner being and to work on myself much more.

I have even managed to delete all social media apps from my smartphone and use the time to spend a quiet 5 minutes with myself rather than constantly staring at the phone and checking what’s new.

Now I know that it’s not important if anything new is happening on social media, because I haven’t even really explored what I already know – namely my immediate surroundings, and in particular myself. And that’s my next goal. To get to know my inner self better and to create a permanent sanctuary for when I have a quiet minute or two.

I would like to thank you for your open-minded, friendly and sympathetic manner and also for giving me the opportunity to be part of your course.

W. W.

Before each lesson, we’d first discuss everyday things or talk about the previous lesson. I liked this very much and this is one of the reasons why I find this “class” better than the usual ones, because it’s personal and it’s really concerned with us students as human beings and not as “working machines”. Of course, this also depends on one’s course of studies, but I, for example, study business administration and there isn’t much attention given to the students. Or it’s simply not about being human, which is clear. But it’s also a pity, because you still have to deal with people and you also mustn’t forget yourself.