

# Like cutting a pathway through to reality

 [wccm.org/weekly-readings/like-cutting-a-pathway-through-to-reality](http://wccm.org/weekly-readings/like-cutting-a-pathway-through-to-reality)

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**An excerpt from John Main OSB, “Straying from the Mantra,” THE HEART OF CREATION (New York: Continuum, 1998), pp. 9-10.**

Meditation and the constant return to it, every day of your life, is like cutting a pathway through to reality. . . And it is no small thing to enter reality, to become real, to become who we are, because in that experience we are freed from all the images that so constantly plague us. We do not have to be anyone’s image of ourselves, but simply the real person we are.

Meditation is practiced in solitude but it is the great way to learn to be in relationship. The reason for this paradox is that, having contacted our own reality, we have the existential confidence to go out to others, to meet them at their real level. And so the solitary element in meditation is mysteriously the true antidote to loneliness. Having contacted our own reality, we are no longer threatened by the otherness of others. We are not always looking for an affirmation of ourselves. We are making love’s search, looking for the reality of the other. In the Christian vision of meditation, we find the reality of the great paradox Jesus teaches: If we want to find our lives we have to be prepared to lose them. In meditating, that is exactly what we do.

**After Meditation, “The Lyric” by Tom Clark, from *Light & Shade: New and Selected Poems*. Minneapolis: Coffee House Press, noted in *Writer’s Almanac*, 2.7.2007.**

Suffering  
lament, sorrow and wild  
joy commingle in

the lyric — a collective  
sigh of relief comes cascading  
out of the blue —

a yearning to submerge  
in life like the swimmer  
in the pool forgetful

immersed and quenched —  
water trailing scattered  
diamonds in a rustling  
voice of resigned subsidence

as though in the same stroke  
everyone alive were speaking through you —