

# Meditation: A Personal Profile | Jamie Wilde

According to the NHS, 1 in 4 people in the UK will experience a mental health problem each year. Furthermore, medication has also been reported as the most common type of treatment prescribed for mental health problems.

From a personal perspective, I am a statistic of this 1 in 4 figure who has been prescribed medication for a mental health problem in the last few years. This came about as a result of a traumatic experience I encountered back in 2017 where I found my late grandmother on the floor in her home one morning after she had collapsed and died during the night.

Being twenty years old at the time, this was extremely overwhelming. However, I gradually learnt to channel this horrific event into a more positive light to help me gain the most out of my university studies, my music with my band, and ultimately my life as a whole.

I was later prescribed anti-depressants from my doctor to help me deal with the anxiety I was suffering as a result of the shock I'd been through. Luckily this did help to alleviate my symptoms in the short-term. However, from my point of view, I was not keen to rely upon medication as a long-term solution to my mental health issues. This was when I discovered meditation.

For me, the Headspace App was where I first discovered meditation. I began to spend around five to ten minutes each day to sit down and meditate which allowed me to briefly escape from the suffocating anxiety that had clouded my mind for several months. Over time, and practice, I was able to incorporate the lessons from my daily meditations into my every-day life as my anxiety started to alleviate. This proved not just beneficial for me, but also for those around me such as my close family and friends, which was hugely important.

I can honestly say that I would not be where I am today without having discovered the benefits of meditation. At the time of writing this piece, I'm currently one week away from reaching my target of meditating at least once a day, every day for an entire year.

Although I know that my anxiety cannot be 'cured' in the sense that it can completely disappear, regular and consistent meditation allows me to be accepting of the complexities of my mind and to recognise the importance of being present in everyday life. More importantly, meditation has helped me to achieve my personal goals and ambitions over the past few years and I've never been happier or more confident in myself as a person.

In light of this, I was extremely pleased to hear of Branch Out Streetwear's latest clothing project 'Meditate, Don't Medicate' which aims to highlight the existential benefits of meditation through the medium of clothing. I feel this project can open up various opportunities for people to talk about meditation far beyond its local context within Dundee whilst also inspiring those within the country's burgeoning fashion scene to spread messages of positivity within their work.

Importantly, regardless of whether you are dependent on medication, are suffering from physical or mental health issues, or are purely looking to gain an alternative outlook on life, I feel the benefits of meditation cannot be understated and I fully support Branch Out's current positive ethos.

Hopefully this brief profile of my own stories and experiences with meditation has the capability to either help, motivate or inspire yourself or someone you know. If this is the case, please feel free to share this piece, support the ethos of Branch Out Streetwear and, most importantly, talk to people about how you feel.

It's okay to not be okay :)