

Meditation

In our busy lives and hectic world the importance of taking time to still the mind can not be over emphasised. Let us look at it from this perspective. Have you ever been in the situation where you have so much to do, so much on your mind, you become breathless and the rational mind and clear thought eludes you. If this is not checked you may end up in what is commonly known as a 'stressed state'. This is when the body is in the 'fight or flight' response mode and normal day to day functions and thinking become a challenge. The body releases adrenaline which is used when presented with an emergency situation, but where is the emergency? Calm thought eludes you. Mistakes may be made which in turn causes more stress. This situation affects the mind and the body to such a degree that if left unchecked blood pressure may rise and the heart beats faster and at an irregular rhythm. Alarm bells are ringing in the body, and if this situation is not corrected then the body and mind begin to shut down. One cannot think clearly. It is a merry go round which is not very merry. Stress is one of the main causative factors of ill health these days.

If one is in this 'state' how can we possibly be of use to ourselves let alone to others. Therefore it is our responsibly to ensure that we are taking care of our mind, body and our soul. This is where meditation can come in and save us from this merry go round of negative emotions, thoughts and actions. Meditation will still the mind. Ok I hear you say thats easier said than done when one has deadlines to meet and stressful family members etc which are all outside pressures. However, when you are in this stressed state that is when you need to meditate even more. Meditation will save you form making rash decisions and prevent you from making mistakes as well.

Mental Benefits of Meditation

1. Reduction of Stress & Anxiety
2. Greater Sense of Inner Peace
3. More happiness & flow in your life
4. Improved mental & emotional wellbeing
5. Heightened connection to spirituality/ better connection to universal energy
6. Increased confidence and self esteem
7. Improves mental awareness, focus and memory
8. Better and more restful sleep

Physical Benefits of Meditation

1. Stimulates your parasympathetic nervous system, or the branch of your peripheral nervous system helping your body to return to a calm relaxed state. Especially beneficial after we have been exposed to stressful situations or daily stress. When this branch is activated your body can rejuvenate and repair itself.
2. Improves respiration
3. Boosts immune system by slowing the production of the stress hormone cortisol.

When one first begins to meditate it is a challenge just like anything new in life that we learn it takes time to get proficient at it. We must be patient and practice... practice.. practice. At first you may only be able to sit for five or ten minutes. Be gentle with yourself, there is no hurry.

When you first begin you will find that quieting the mind is the biggest challenge, you will want to think about the shopping, work, the children, what you are cooking for tea, friendships the list is endless. That is ok allow the thoughts to come and pass through your mind and see them pass out the other side, do not focus on them, just allow them to go. Surrender to it.

When you first start to meditate you might find it usefully to follow a guided meditation, that is when you follow a voice through the mediation which usually takes you on a journey of some kind accompanied by relaxing music. This is a great way to start as the voice provides you with something to focus on and prevent the mind from wandering.

As you become more experienced you may be able to listen only to music, eventually progressing to silence. This takes some discipline and really should only be attempted when one feels proficient enough to sit with a guided meditation for at least thirty minutes. The type of music you choose to listen to is very personal to you, so go for what you like and what uplifts you. Classical and some New Age music is very helpful for meditation.

As you become more experienced you may not require any music at all and be able to simply sit in the silence and connect with the energies. However, when you are first starting out you may find this too challenging. The most important thing is to do what is right for you.

How To Meditate

When you are ready to begin mediation make sure you will not be disturbed, that you are comfortable and warm enough. I tell my family that I must not be called upon unless the house is on fire or there is an emergency otherwise you may find that as soon as you sit to meditate the whole world calls upon you. Ensure your phone is not nearby, or if it is that you have switched it off.

Set your intention, by that I mean decide how long you would like to sit for and is there anything you wish to achieve during your meditation. You may wish to ask for guidance on a certain matter, or healing if you are feeling a little tired or under the weather.

Begin by closing your eyes and taking some long deep breaths. Hold the breathes in and gently let out, breathing down as deeply as you are able, do not struggle or force the breath allow it to happen naturally. Do this for a few minutes and now you are ready to begin your meditation whether it is a guided one or simply musical, what ever your choice has been, begin now.

If you are not sure how long you can sit quietly for just come out of the meditation when it feels right to do so.

Most importantly this needs to be a relaxing exercise and should feel enjoyable. Remember, you may only be able to sit for about five or ten minutes when you first start so just go with the flow of what feels right for you.

Blessings
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