

THE MULTIPLE BENEFITS OF MEDITATION PRACTICE

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Meditation is the new buzz word of the day and for good reason. It works. Today it is more than spiritual teachers who encourage the practice of meditation for the full range of benefits it can bring. Meditation has become a mainstream recommendation for numerous physical health issues especially those dealing with stress. Stress is known to contribute to over 80% of the diseases plaguing the 21st century, and meditation can give our bodies and our minds a chance to slow down, unwind, and rejuvenate.

In the hustle and bustle of our ever busier lives, meditation can be a calm refuge from the chaos of the outer world and more importantly the inner world. With the growing science and understanding of the body mind connection we are now aware that stress is mind made. Yes, mind made. Think about it. What stresses out one person may not stress out another. What makes the difference is how each person thinks and feels about it. The good news is this, if we create stress in our over busy minds, then all we need do is slow down our mind, and we slow down or release the stress.

Teachers like Eckart Tolle remind us there are many different ways to practice a meditative state of mind, sitting, walking, washing, drinking and eating to name a few. Anyone can learn how to meditate the challenge is to be in the practice for what it is not some spiritually unobtainable nirvana or non thought. All meditation is a form of awareness practice which simply put means being aware of and choosing where you are directing your attention. Focusing on all the obligations, deadlines, chaos and problems of your day creates stress mentally, emotionally and physically. Meditation releases stress mentally, emotionally and physically. A simple meditation practice of ten minutes once or twice a day can beneficially lower high blood pressure, reduce muscle tension and headaches, increased serotonin and uplift in mood and behaviour, reduce acidic and arthritic conditions, improve memory and concentration, reduce anxiety attacks and more. Is it worth it? Practice and discover the answers for yourself as millions of other supporters have.

Transcendental Meditation was the first teaching that came to my own awareness way back in 1979 when my Dr. recommended it as a practice for preparing for natural childbirth. Natural childbirth preparation is a perfect example of the 'body awareness' technique. If we could all learn to quiet our minds and pay better attention to the messages the body sends, we may avoid a lot of health crisis or complications. Just to take the time to sit quietly within yourself, with nothing to do but be aware, to witness your thoughts, follow your breath, drift into the silence behind the sounds, ride on the wave of the wind or the scent of a flower, is what it's all about. Once you get into a consistent practice, positive results will present in all areas of your life but most importantly, the relationship you embrace with yourself. The feelings of calm, pride and confidence that come from the disciplined practise (which is keeping your word to yourself) cannot be understated or understood until you experience it yourself. Imagine the rewards being calm, open, centered, alert, focused and peaceful could bring to your life personally and professionally. Meditation practise is a breath of fresh air amidst the congestion of our stressful lives and the simplest way to meditate is to be with your breath.

Take a moment now even as you read this and do what I call a stress check. Be aware of your brow, now relax it, relax your jaw and let your teeth part, swallow, drop your shoulders, relax your belly, let your hips and buttocks settle into the chair, be aware of a slight sensation of energy or tingling inside your feet. You are feeling, sensing if you will, the life force within your feet. Now gently become aware of your breathing. No need to control it just be aware. Notice the gentle rhythm of your lungs as they expand and contract. Just witnessing you notice your breathing is nice and calm. If your mind wanders or thoughts get your attention, simply notice them, and come back to following your breath. Come back again and follow your breath. You may want to count every exhale to keep you focused or not. That is it. Just breathe.

There is nothing more important in this moment than you, simply being. Can you do it? Can you give yourself the gift and opportunity to challenge your ego conditioned mind full of fears, expectations, should's and have to's, and simply be. In time this simple practice can bring you closer to your Self and that will gift your life. Take the challenge. Find a style that suits you. Commit to the practice and reap the rewards.