

The Art of Meditation

Meditation is sometimes thought of as the art of doing nothing. The word meditate can be traced to the Latin origin of *mederi* meaning “to remedy or heal.” In many ways, it does just that. For years, meditation has been used in the medical community to relieve high blood pressure and within “Corporate America” to disable the effects of stress. For me it was a curious nature, which lead me to dabble in this “nothingness”.

When I started out, I could NOT sit still, much less still my mind. I was like a cat chasing its’ tail. Thankfully, there are many forms of meditation. *Open Eye* and *Moving Meditation* were two forms, which I started out with, and still enjoy today.

Open eye meditation is as it implies. You could experience this while looking at a flower or watching the waves roll onto shore. Your eyes are open, your mind is quiet and your emotions are calm. You may experience a connection to spirit, or the vastness and essence of life. The charm to open eye meditation is that it can occur without trying to make “it” happen.

Moving meditation can be experienced while doing yoga, t’ai chi, nia or another form of movement, such as walking through the woods. Again there is the existence of being calm and centered. For example, in order for me to stay in a balancing pose such as tree (*Vrikasana*), it is best that I stay focused on my breathing, looking at one spot (*drishti*) and being in tune with my body. When my mind begins to think of something else, such as my “to do” list or what’s for dinner, that is when I find myself toppling over.

Meditation has also been described as the means of being fully present in the moment. Dr. Joan Borysenko says her all time favorite meditation is “a small moist piece of chocolate cake eaten with exquisite attention and tremendous gratitude.” This attention is described in two other forms; *Focusing* and *Mindful Meditation*.

Focusing meditation is when you choose one thing to focus upon internally. This could be a symbol or a color. It could be focusing on a word, mantra, prayer, or on your breathing. Once you choose one item, you stay in full attention of it, usually with your eyes closed. When and if your mind becomes distracted, you simply bring it back to full attention upon your chosen item.

Mindfulness meditation or *Vipassana* is a form of Buddhist meditation, which differs from focusing meditation in that you remain aware of your thoughts and body sensations. The emphasis is on working with everyday sensations to heighten awareness of what is uncomfortable or disturbing so that you can change unhealthy patterns.

Through the years I have found all forms of meditation useful. Some have been easier than others as my discipline and abilities have changed. Regardless of the form, it is the outcome wherein lies the power and reward. When we become so calm, so centered and completely free of thought, we create the setting to experience our true connection to spirit. And no amount of words can truly describe this experience!

Perhaps you’ve been meditating in some capacity and weren’t aware of it. Perhaps, you wish to concentrate on a specific practice. Or perhaps, you can relate to this article and appreciate the opportunity you give your SELF when you meditate.

Wishing you well in all ways.

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