

Meditation at Work

By relaxing the mind, it is much easier to make decisions.

By Neal Harris - December 2007

If you poll most people at your company about what they do for relaxation, few will say they practice meditation. Before we get into the reasons why people avoid meditation, let me give you three components that can be found in the majority of meditation practices.

The first is paying attention to the breath. This is a Yoga tradition. The breath is considered to be a major determining factor in our ability to maintain our health. The second is some form of prayer, which may include imagining that the creator is bestowing upon us great wisdom, compassion, understanding, love, and a greater ability to serve humanity. It may also take the form of being thankful for all the blessings that we have been given. The third component is the letting go of thoughts, or watching thoughts as they parade by in the mind. With this practice, we recognize that we are not our thoughts, and so it becomes easier to avoid reacting to unproductive thoughts.

So why wouldn't your colleagues practice meditation? Three reasons; and I'm not writing this to judge the correctness of these, only to bring to awareness that they exist. One is the old adage that "Idle hands (minds) are the workshop of the devil." Therefore to empty the mind (the heart of Buddhist and Tibetan meditation) welcomes in the possibility that "evil" will enter and fill the gap. The second is that sitting forms of



meditation can be quite frustrating.

Many people in my relaxation seminars report something like "It's almost impossible for me to sit still when a million thoughts are bombarding me, and so my attempts to quiet my mind are dismal at best."

The third reason is that lately meditation has been lumped together in our society with the practices known as visualization and guided imagery. If a person doesn't value or enjoy visualization, they tend to transfer that dislike to meditation. While visualization and guided imagery can begin the meditation, it is usually not continued throughout the practice session.

Having practiced meditation, off and on since childhood, I can attest to the experience that meditation is a way to see the larger picture in the face of conflict. By learning to relax the mind, it is much easier to think through all options before making decisions.

Continued on page 21

Neal Harris is a Licensed Clinical Professional Counsellor, with a Master's Degree in Applied Psychology, and a diplomat of the American Psychotherapy Association.

He is the managing director of Relax4Life, a holistic education and services center in Barrington, Illinois, and has been a workshop leader in the holistic health and self-enrichment fields since 1985.

Neal's experience stems from training in both the United States and India. In addition, he was also a member of the first bodywork team invited to China to study Tuina, a form of Traditional Chinese Medicine and massage. Neal has been teaching traditional Usui Reiki for over 10 years and been providing Reiki therapy for over 20 years. Neal is also certified as both a Quantum-Touch® practitioner and instructor. In his private practice, Neal assists those individuals who are experiencing a variety of concerns including life-affirming conditions such as Diabetes, Cancer, Heart Disease as well as anxiety and more general concerns.

To promote healing on many levels, he uses relaxation and meditation training, EFT, Reiki, Quantum-Touch® as well as his own modality "labyrinth counseling" (using a specialized 2-person finger labyrinth design known as the Intuipath). This work explores integrative medical options, as well as the psychology and spirituality of illness and recovery.

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Continued from page 17

This is in direct contrast to feeling compelled to react the same way in similar situations over and over again, even though the results each time are equally unproductive and get us into trouble. It's no wonder that several CEO's of large corporation's report that they meditate, and why many TV, movie, radio personalities and sports figures do the same.

Aside from this benefit, meditation has been researched by medical science over the past thirty years. Some of the results of daily meditation include: lower blood pressure/blood sugar, respiration rate and slowing down the rate of physical aging.

'meditation will help keep the cost of recurrent surgeries and expensive treatments down'

Dean Ornish, a renowned cardiac physician, teaches his cardiac patients meditation, and a large health insurance corporation covers the training. This insurance company knows that for those patients who learn it; a consideration for the H.R. Departments out there who are looking to cut healthcare costs.

In my previous training of corporate groups in various forms of meditation, participants are encouraged to choose which practice works best for their particular temperament and lifestyle. Some corporations noticed a reduction in sick days and health care costs among those who chose to maintain a daily practice.

There are many forms of sitting meditation, but for those who cannot sit still for any length of time, there are more active forms of meditation; "Right Mindfulness", (every act you perform with complete attention is a meditation, e.g. sipping your coffee, walking in a park and so on) various forms of Yoga, Martial Arts forms such as T'ai Chi and Chi Gung, and one that is relatively new to this area of the country, but very old in origin, "walking or fingerwalking a labyrinth."

Neal Harris and John Robertson are teaching a workshop on 'Relaxation, Meditation & Chinese Therapy Balls' on Tuesday, April 22nd from 9:00am to 4:00pm. There you can learn several simple, fast and effective relaxation, meditation and self-development techniques. And you will learn about Chinese Therapy Balls; how they can assist with hand dexterity, Carpal Tunnel, repetitive stress, joint strain, rheumatism, arthritis and circulation. These practices will help you learn to tap into your intuition and spiritual growth as well as learn to control how your mind and body respond to stress. To register call 847 842 1752, or register online at <http://www.relax4life.com/relaxmedit.html>