

MEDITATION !!!

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What is Meditation???

- 1) Meditation is a practice in which an individual trains the mind or induces a mode of consciousness, either to realize some benefit or as an end in itself.
- 2) In every age of humanity, the mind has always needed a break from thought, worries, and external stimuli.
 - Meditation is a typical rest to calm the mind from sensory overload.
 - Meditation is not a religion. Rather it is a solitary practice of reflection on internal rather than external stimuli.
 - The practice of meditation is the oldest recognized relaxation technique known.

Types of Meditation!!!

- 1) From the seeds of Eastern philosophy grew two distinct branches of meditation:
 - exclusive or restrictive meditation
 - inclusive or opening up meditation
- 2) Whether individuals practice a form of exclusive or inclusive meditation, people often refer to these modalities as insightful meditation because of the natural thought processes.

Exclusive Meditation

- 1) Exclusive meditation involves the restriction of consciousness to focus on a single thought.
- 2) Restrictive mediation advocates a closed awareness to the external senses and all outside simulations, and directs the focus of ones thoughts inward.
- 3) There are five actions used to refine one's attention on a single focused thought:
 - mental repetition
 - visual concentration
 - repeated sounds
 - physical repetition
 - tactile repetition

Meditation Position :)

- 1) The most recognized posture is the lotus position.
 - In the lotus position, an individual sits with their legs crossed and folded, each foot resting on the other thigh.
- 2) A more comfortable way position for beginners is the half-lotus position, with the legs crossed in a comfortable manner.
 - The hands can be placed on the thighs or either with the palms down

The Relaxation Response...

1) Four basic steps to follow:

- A quiet environment- It can any room with few distractions and a room or area that is comfortable.
- A mental device- Any object or tool used to replace all other thoughts.
- A passive attitude- Open to thoughts rather than blocking them out.
- A comfortable position- To relax the mind, individuals must relax the body.

Split-Brain Theory

- 1) Split-brain theory is the idea that there is a distinct dichotomy of human thought process.
 - anatomical studies seemed to support this idea when it was discovered the human brain was an organ consisting of two hemispheres.
- 2) This theory became reality in the 1950's, because of Roger Sperry and his attempt to find a cure for epilepsy.
 - a series of experiments conducted were designed to alleviate the intensity of grand mal epileptic seizures in monkeys.
 - found by severing the corpus callosum (connects the left and right hemispheres) the seizures decreased in both frequency and severity.

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- 3) After the first success four patients volunteered to undergo this surgical procedure.
 - After surgery it was then noticed that the right side of the body was controlled by the left hemisphere and vice versa.
 - through more extensive testing they were able to conclude that each hemisphere appears to be responsible for specific types of thinking processes.
- 4) We now know that each hemisphere is responsible for different tasks and yet they work together as on at the same time.

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- 5) Some people have even gone so far as to conclude that Eastern and Western Cultures are opposite so their right and left brain dominant thinking processes must be too:
- Western Culture is left brain dominant
 - Eastern Culture is right brain dominant

Altered State of Consciousness

- 1) Altered state of consciousness is a shift in one's thought process, typically from left to right brain thinking, to become more aware and more receptive.
- 2) After Roger Sperry's results were made public in 1964 researchers saw similarities between the right hemisphere and the traits associated with the altered state of consciousness which are produced by meditation.
- 3) We can tell how we are feeling based on our brain waves.
- 4) There are 4 different types of brain waves:
 - Alpha: at ease, neutral, sluggish and pleasant
 - Beta: Logical, rational, worried, investigative and challenged
 - Theta: Ambiguous, fuzzy, unreal and dream like
 - Delta: sleep
- 5) As you can tell when you are meditating your brain waves will be alpha.

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- 6) There are 6 characteristics that will occur once you reach an altered state of consciousness, and your brain switches from left to right brain dominance.
- Time distortion
 - Ineffability
 - Present-centeredness
 - Perception distortion
 - Enhanced Receptivity
 - Self-transcendence

Physiological & Psychological Effects of Meditation

- 1) Direct influence on mood states, immune function, sleep, chronic pain, & other various aspects of physical, mental, & emotional well-being.
- 2) Physiological effects:
 - decreased oxygen consumption
 - decreased blood pressure
 - decreased heart rate
 - decreased muscle tension
- 3) Who benefits?
 - cancer patients
 - adolescent substance abusers
 - college students

Neuroplasticity

- 1) The ability of the human brain to form new neural connections and pathways in response to stimulation, development, damage, or dysfunction.
- 2) Benefits:
 - Areas of the brain used in meditation practice grow in size & form new connections.
 - Increased activity in the left prefrontal cortex & the limbic system, the areas of the brain that reflect processes of sustained attention and emotional regulations.
 - Growth in portions of the brain associated with compassion.

Meditation & Chronic Pain

- 1) Zen meditation - Lessen or possibly eradicate pain by involving both the mind & spirit.
- 2) Mindfulness meditation - Overcome the pain by becoming familiar & comfortable with it.
- 3) Exclusive meditation - A temporary escape from the pain by dissociation.

Steps to Initiate Meditation

1) Required:

- quiet space
- a receptive attitude
- mental tool to clean the corners of your mind

2) With regular practice, your concentration will get better & you'll see more benefits.

Best Application of Meditation

- 1) Meditation allows us to escape from the all of the overstimulation, & retain our sanity.
- 2) 20 - 30 minutes a day is best.
- 3) Even 5 minutes to focus on breathing is beneficial.

Youtube Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=utfw-rJUvy4>