

***“You have within you right now, everything you need to deal with whatever the world can throw at you.”***

**- Mac Anderson and BJ Gallagher**

I'll admit it. I've had a pretty rough month. It happens to the best of us....things completely out of our control that totally overwhelm us. I was challenged in ways I never thought possible. But I survived. It wasn't easy, but it made me realize that no matter what life throws at us, we really do have the strength and the power to deal with it and get through it. It also helps to have good friends to support you along the way. They know who they are. When the pain is over and done, we ultimately come out stronger on the other side. So if you're at that point where you think you can't take it anymore, know there are better times ahead. So since I've been so caught up in my own head, I struggled to come up with a topic for this month. Fortunately, one of the people who helped me through my rough time made a great suggestion. Not only did I take his very good advice, I decided to write about it. If you need help or even a shoulder to cry on, please be sure to contact me.

Yours in health,



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## **Why Meditation Can be Helpful**



I'm a big fan of Deepak Chopra. My dad was too. One of his guiding philosophies is that meditation can heal you and it can also reverse the biological effects of aging. That sounds pretty great, right? But what exactly is meditation and is it really good for you?

Let's start with what it isn't. Meditation has nothing to do with religion or yoga. According to the Mayo Clinic, meditation is a way to reduce stress by focusing your attention on something specific and getting rid of the stream of jumbled thoughts crowding your mind. The practice of meditation can take many forms, such as visualization, mindfulness, contemplation or silent observation. But the root essence of meditation remains the same without regard to the approach or the technique you choose. It can only be described as a state of conscious awareness. With practice, you can experience a thoughtless state of mind where a deep inner peace, vibrant energy flow and an extreme level of calmness can be experienced while you're completely awake and alert. Meditation is a channel through which you're able to communicate with your inner self on a much more intimate level. Dr. Chopra believes you can practice this ancient relaxation technique anywhere and anytime. Many people are terrified of meditating and there's a lot of incorrect information out there that I'd like to clear up for you. Here are six common myths about meditating:

1. **It's hard.** Many people think only saints, holy people and yogis can meditate. Though it's best to learn from someone who's experienced at meditating, there are many simple techniques you can learn on your own to do it successfully. Focus on your breathing or silently repeat a thought or statement that means something to you. One reason why meditation may seem difficult is because we try too hard to concentrate, we're too focused on results or we're not sure we are doing it right.
2. **Your mind must be completely silent to meditate successfully.** Meditation isn't actually about stopping our thoughts or trying to empty our mind. Both of these approaches can ultimately create stress because it's hard to stop or control our thoughts. But we can decide how much attention to give them. Through meditation, we can find the quiet that already exists in the space between our thoughts. As you start to meditate regularly, you'll end up spending more time in a state of expanded awareness and silence.

3. **It takes years of practice to receive any of its benefits.** The real benefits of meditation are both immediate and long-term. Many people show that meditation can have a profound effect on the mind-body physiology within just a few weeks of starting to do it. In fact, a study led by Harvard University and Massachusetts General Hospital found that as little as eight weeks of meditation helped people experience less anxiety and more feelings of calm feelings. It also produced growth in the areas of the brain associated with memory, empathy, sense of self, and stress regulation.
4. **There isn't enough time.** We're all busy, but if you make meditation a priority, you'll do it. Block off time on your calendar, even if it's only a couple of minutes. Remember, just a few minutes of meditation is much better than none. When we meditate, our breathing and heart rate slow down, our blood pressure lowers and our body decreases the production of stress hormones and other chemicals that speed up the aging process that give us the feeling that we're "running out of time." When we meditate, we're actually in a state of restful alertness that's extremely refreshing to our body and mind.
5. **It requires spiritual or religious beliefs.** I'm not at all religious and the good news is that meditation doesn't require a specific spiritual belief. Many people who meditate don't have any particular religious beliefs or they're atheist or agnostic. They simply meditate to feel inner peace and to feel its many physical and mental-health benefits. The original reason that I started meditating was to heal a broken heart. Meditation helps us enjoy whatever we do in our lives.
6. **We're supposed to have some crazy experience when we meditate.** Some people are disappointed when they don't experience visions, hear songs in their heads or glimpse something special when they meditate. Although we can have a variety of wonderful experiences when we meditate, that shouldn't be the reason we do it. The real benefits of meditation are what happens when we're going about our daily lives. When we're done meditating, we should feel some stillness and silence in our heads, which allows us to be more creative, compassionate, centered, and loving to ourselves and others we encounter.

Meditating has several benefits, a few of which I'm listing below.

- **Relieves Stress:** Just 10 minutes a day can help to lower stress levels.
- **Reduces Anxiety:** Meditation helps reduce anxiety, blood pressure and help improve the quality of life.
- **Treats Insomnia:** Lack of sleep can lead to serious health implications, including fatigue and lack of appetite. Studies have been conducted to test the effect of meditation on sleep patterns and the results suggest that the regular practice of mindfulness meditation may help reduce chronic insomnia.
- **Lowers Blood pressure:** Research suggests that practicing meditation may help reduce blood pressure in people who face the risk of high blood pressure.
- **Helps with Depression:** Meditation may also be useful in reducing pain and treating anxiety and depression.

Keys To Help You Meditate:

- **Location:** Choose a quiet location that minimizes distractions.
- **Open attitude:** Be open, but don't lose focus. It may take time, but with regular practice, it's possible to block out outside distractions. Try your best to eliminate them.
- **Find a Focus Point:** Different types of meditation use different things on which to focus. Find one that works for you. The goal isn't to eliminate all your thoughts, but to become more aware and eventually transcend the mind as you slip into an altered state of consciousness. You become much more in tuned with the sensations of the moment and then you can simply become an observer. The observer is the one doing the mediation, not the one occupied with the activities of a busy mind.

At first, I couldn't believe that a simple daily meditation practice could affect my life so powerfully. So I started doing research and devoured all of the scientific studies on meditation I could find. I was amazed at what I found. It turns out that meditation can transform nearly every area of your life. There are many physical benefits of meditating such as increased production of serotonin, increased blood flow, enhanced immune system because it promotes a powerful and healthy energy flow, lower blood pressure and an increased tolerance to exercise. There are also many psychological benefits such as improved self-esteem and confidence, improved focus and concentration, decreased symptoms of depression, enhanced levels of creativity, decreased anxiety, fear and phobias. If you want more specific detail, be sure to reach out to me.

Have a wonderful and meditative month.