



Meditation

Meditation is a mental discipline by which one attempts to get beyond the conditioned, "thinking" mind into a deeper state of relaxation or awareness. Giving yourself time and space to connect on a deeper level with your being is essential for peace and harmony in life.

Meditation is an ancient practice that has been used as a tool both spiritually and emotionally in Eastern cultures for centuries. Many people are new to meditation as it is a growing practice in the West. At the core of meditation is the goal to focus and quiet your mind. As you progress, you will find that you can meditate anywhere and at any time, accessing an inner calm no matter what's going on around you. But first, you have to learn to tame your mind.

Steps to Developing a Meditation Practice

1. Set aside time: Making time to meditate is a key to learning how to meditate. It is best to set aside the same time every day. You can start with 5 minutes, then work up to 10, 15, and 20.

2. Find a quiet spot: Create a special space where you meditate. Keep it clear of distractions like phone, television, or other noises.

3. Sit in a comfortable position: Sitting is preferable to lying down, as it is less likely you will fall asleep. Meditation is about being aware, not asleep.

4. Awareness: Keeping your eyes open and concentrating on a focal point is a good way to stay aware and not doze off. A candle flame can be a great focal point. Others find that closing their eyes can be very peaceful and relaxing. Try both and see what works for you.

5. Breathing: Breathe deeply from your gut as opposed to your chest. Follow your breath as it moves from your abdomen to your chest and back down. Concentrating on the breath is good way to stay present

6. Relax: Do not try to push your thoughts away. While the goal is to move beyond thoughts, pushing them away will not achieve this. Just relax and notice your thoughts. Let them float by as they enter your mind. Relax the muscles in your body and keep breathing deeply.

7. Focus: Focus on a point, on your breath or a mantra to help still the mind. A mantra is the repetition of a phrase or word. Choose a phrase that is meaningful or calming to you. Another method for focusing is counting from 1 to 5 with each inhale, then 1 to 5 with each exhale. See if you can count from 1 to 5 without a thought entering. Finally, visualizing a peaceful place is another way to focus. From here, silencing the mind will be easier as you begin to focus on nothing at all.