

Meditation

Reverend Suzanne Raby

Meditation: A “New Age Miracle” or an age-old formula for self-care? The Bible gives us “Be still and know”. Readers of the “Autobiography of a Yogi”, by Paramahansa Yogananda, find numerous stories of meditation.

Meditation has been practiced for centuries and is still being “discovered” today.

With meditation we have a simple formula for personal well being. How to become a more serene, more centered, more active and controlled individual.

More and more health care centers are prescribing meditation to their patients to help heal a multitude of maladies. It has long been recognized as a tool to reduce stress, lower blood pressure, ease pain and treat sleep related problems. It is now a part of the Interactive Medicine program at the University of Arizona and Scripps Memorial Hospital in La Jolla. Please note that medication and meditation both come from the Latin root word meaning to cure.

Individuals who meditate find that since they are centered they are better prepared to meet the challenges of life and enjoy its rewards.

How do you meditate? Here is the best part. You do not have to empty your purse to buy anything. You do not have to build a special retreat. You do not have to find your own cave in a mountain. You only need a quiet space – anytime – anywhere. It is not necessary to bend yourself into a pretzel or sit on a special mat. You only need to make yourself comfortable. A simple chair will do. You do not need special clothing, only something comfortable – loose fitting – non-binding.

Meditation is quite simply – **stilling of the mind**. As simple as it sounds, however, if your mind has had total control of you for all your years it is up to you to bring it into submission. Find something to focus or concentrate on, breathing for example. Be mindful of each inhalation and each exhalation. Do this for a few minutes concentrating only on your breathing, if your mind begins to wander, gently bring it back to your breathing. The object is to bring your mind to total stillness; however briefly. You might instead select a simple flower, a Gerber daisy for example, to concentrate on. Focus your attention on the daisy, being mindful of every detail, the color the petals, the veins in the petals, the stamen and the pollen on the stamen. If your mind starts to work on your plans for the day, bring it back to the daisy. Try to maintain your focus for two to three minutes, twice a day. After you have been able to hold your focus on the daisy or your breathing, close your eyes and imagine your focus closing down like a lens in a camera to total nothingness and be at peace. Rest in the stillness.

When your mind takes control again, take a deep breath, give thanks for the quietness you have enjoyed and begin your day.