Meditation ~ Inducing a Mode of Consciousness

by Regina Ann

According to Wikipedia, There are almost as many styles of meditation as there are meanings and contexts. Some of the earliest references to meditation are found in the Bible and the Hindu Vedas. There are both spiritual and secular forms of meditation, both of which have been subjects of scientific analysis. Since the 1960s over 1,000 published research studies have shown various methods of meditation have been linked to changes in metabolism, blood pressure, brain activation, and other bodily processes. Meditation has even been used in clinical settings as a method of stress and pain reduction.

In his book, Tantra for the West, Marcus Allen shares accurate observations about meditation. While meditation is very beneficial for the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual bodies, it can also cause as much or more harm as it can good. Like other forms of self healing and evolution, when the practitioner becomes obsessed with the form to the point that the neurosis created from practicing the form outweighs the benefits, its time to change strategies.

The key to success in meditation is to relax! One of the most profound statements I have heard in reference to meditation is, "in meditation, success is not a destination but the journey." My translation, the reward is not in achieving a specific "destination" or expected outcome but in allowing the joy of the journey getting there. My most rewarding meditations have been experienced since I released all expectations of a specific "destination/outcome." When expectation was released I was free to experience joy in each aspect of the meditation time.

Another important key to meditation success is to throw away all the pre-conceived ideas of what meditation is supposed to look like. Meditation can occur when you are walking, sewing, washing dishes, sitting in silence or following a specific mantra for meditation. When you throw out scripts of what meditation is supposed to be and allow yourself to simply BE Present in each moment, you achieve the connection, the joy you were looking for through meditation.

For me, successful meditation is any moment where I choose to release all thought, breathe, be present in the moment, connect to myself and all that is around me and allow thought to flow in and out without judgment. This is how I practice and how I teach others to practice. Success for me is in keeping it simple. When strict rules and expectations enter into the equation it becomes a chore that I fear messing up instead of a time of joy of freedom and connection.

Meditation can occur in silence and stillness where you seclude yourself in quiet surroundings. It can occur in motion such as during a walk, exercise, or something you love doing like sailing. You can even meditate while washing dishes, sewing or doing your favorite form of art or craft. Gardening is an excellent form of meditation that also allows you to connect to the earth (important for those of us who need extra help being

grounded.) Meditation can also be achieved through guided affirmations, mantras, or guided meditations. These methods are beneficial for those desiring to achieve specific changes in their life.

With all the information there is out there about meditation, the most important thing I wish to convey is to drop any and all fear or pre-conceived notions you may have about meditation and who meditates. Everyone meditates - everyone. Anyone who has ever cleared everything out of their mind to focus on one specific thing has meditated. Meditation is what you choose to make of it. You choose to make it a beneficial, freeing, joy-filled time of connection or to make it a stress-filled, guilt ridden chore. The choice is yours.

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