

EXPLORING MEDITATION COURSE WEEK SIX - OTHER TYPES OF MEDITATIONS

QUOTES:

“I HAVE BEEN A SEEKER AND I STILL AM, BUT I STOPPED ASKING THE BOOKS AND THE STARS. I STARTED LISTENING TO THE TEACHING OF MY SOUL.” – **RUMI**

“OUR THINKING MINDS DEPRIVE US OF THE HAPPINESS THAT COMES WHEN WE ARE LIVING FULLY IN THE MOMENT.” – **RAM DASS**

“THE REAL MEDITATION PRACTICE IS HOW WE LIVE OUR LIVES FROM MOMENT TO MOMENT TO MOMENT.” – **JON KABAT-ZINN**

THIS IS THE LAST SESSION OF OUR EXPLORING MEDITATION COURSE. WE HAVE EXPLORED SEVERAL DIFFERENT TYPES OF MEDITATION:

BODY RELAXATION: WE SCAN THE BODY AND CONSCIOUSLY RELAX EACH PART.

GUIDED IMAGERY: USING ALL THE SENSES, IT CAN BE USED FOR DEEP RELAXATION OR TO SUPPORT HEALING OF THE BODY.

SOUND HEALING: USING CHANTS OR MANTRAS CAN HELP US TO FOCUS THE MIND AND THE VIBRATION OF EACH SOUND AFFECTS OUR BODY IN SOME WAY.

GUIDED VISUALIZATION: THIS IS THE ONE WE ARE MOST FAMILIAR WITH. LISTENING TO THE GUIDE’S VOICE, ALLOWS YOU TO FOCUS ON ONE THING. THE JOURNEY IS USUALLY RELAXING. WE USED MUSIC AS WELL.

LOVING KINDNESS/METTA MEDITATION: SENDING OUT GOOD WISHES FOR EACH PERSON, INCLUDING OURSELVES, TO BE HAPPY, PEACEFUL, WELL AND LOVED.

MINDFULNESS AND VIPASSANA/BREATHING MEDITATION: MINDFULNESS IS DOING ANYTHING WITH 100% OF YOUR CONSCIOUS AWARENESS AND FOCUS.

VIPASSANA OR BREATHING MEDITATION IS BEING MINDFUL OF THE BREATH. YOU FOCUS ON THE BREATH AND USE IT AS AN ANCHOR TO ALWAYS COME BACK TO WHEN YOUR MIND WANDERS.

AND THROUGHOUT WE DID SOME SILENT MEDITATION. HOPEFULLY YOU ARE A LITTLE MORE COMFORTABLE DOING THAT.

I HOPE YOU HAVE FOUND A WAY OF MEDITATING AND GOING DEEPER THAT WORKS FOR YOU. REMEMBER TO BRING YOURSELF BACK TO THE BREATH WHEN YOUR MIND STARTS TO WANDER.

OTHER TYPES OF MEDITATIONS

THROUGH A MEDITATION PRACTICE WE WANT TO LEARN TO BRING THAT QUALITY OF MEDITATION AND MINDFULNESS INTO OUR DAILY LIFE. YOU CAN

BRING THE MEDITATIVE QUALITY TO ANY ACTIVITY YOU DO. NEXT TIME YOU ARE MAKING THE BED, TRY TO BE MINDFUL OF EACH STEP IN THE PROCESS. WHEN YOU ARE CLEANING, SEE IF YOU CAN BRING A MEDITATIVE QUALITY TO WHAT YOU ARE DOING.

AN INTERESTING MEDITATION TO TRY IS MINDFUL EATING.

AS YOU ARE EATING, BRING YOUR CONSCIOUS AWARENESS TO THE ACT OF EATING. NOTICE THE COLOR, SMELL AND LOOK OF THE FOOD. AS YOU BRING THE FOOD TO YOUR MOUTH DO THAT WITH GREAT AWARENESS. AS YOU ARE EATING FEEL THE TEXTURE OF THE FOOD AND HOW IT GOES DOWN YOUR THROAT. NOTICING WHEN DO YOU FEEL FULL? ARE YOU FEELING SATISFIED? SIT SILENTLY FOR A FEW MINUTES WHEN YOU ARE FINISHED. YOU MIGHT EXPRESS GRATITUDE FOR THE FOOD THAT IS NOURISHING YOUR BODY.

STANDING MEDITATION IS ONE OF THE FUNDAMENTAL TRAINING METHODS OF CHINESE MARTIAL ARTS SUCH AS TAI CHI OR QIGONG. IT IS USED TO CULTIVATE MENTAL AND PHYSICAL RELAXATION, TRANQUILITY, AWARENESS, AND PERSONAL POWER. TRY THE FOLLOWING:

STAND WITH YOUR LEGS SHOULDER-WIDTH APART, FEET PARALLEL, KNEES SOFT. RELAX YOUR NECK AND SHOULDERS, AND LET YOUR ARMS HANG BY YOUR SIDES. TAKE A MOMENT TO REST YOUR ATTENTION ON THE SENSATIONS AT THE BOTTOM OF YOUR FEET WHERE THEY TOUCH THE FLOOR AND ON THE CROWN OF YOUR HEAD, THE TOP OF THE HEAD.

VISUALIZING THE BREATH IN ANY WAY YOU WANT: AS A RAY OF LIGHT, A STREAM OF WATER, OR JUST EXPERIENCE THE SENSATIONS, ON YOUR INHALE PICTURE YOUR BREATH RISING FROM YOUR FEET UP THROUGH YOUR BODY, AND OUT THROUGH THE CROWN OF YOUR HEAD.

ON THE EXHALE, FEEL YOUR BREATH MOVING FROM YOUR HEAD, DOWN THROUGH YOUR BODY AND OUT THROUGH YOUR FEET INTO THE GROUND.

BE AWARE OF HOW YOUR BODY FEELS AS YOU DO THIS. CONTINUE AND REPEAT THIS AS MANY TIMES AS YOU WANT. YOU CAN DO THIS EXERCISE ANYWHERE — EVEN WHILE STANDING IN LINE.

DOING A WALKING MEDITATION IS ANOTHER WAY TO BRING CONSCIOUS AWARENESS AND MINDFULNESS TO AN EVERYDAY ACTIVITY.

YOU WALK WITH EYES OPEN, AND AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE, BE TOTALLY AWARE OF EACH STEP THAT YOU TAKE. NOTICE HOW YOUR BODY FEELS AS YOU ARE WALKING. NO JUDGMENT, NOT EVEN TRYING TO CHANGE ANYTHING, JUST NOTICING.

ARE YOU FEELING HEAVY OR LIGHT, STIFF OR RELAXED? ARE YOU WALKING FAST OR SLOW? NOTICE HOW YOUR FEET MAKE CONTACT WITH THE GROUND BENEATH YOU. YOU WILL START TO MOVE INTO A SENSE OF DEEPER AWARENESS AS YOU ARE WALKING. TRY WALKING MEDITATION IN NATURE AND TRY IT ON THE STREET. NOTICE THE DIFFERENCES.

IF YOU ARE A RUNNER, YOU MAY WANT TO TRY THIS RUNNING.

DANCING:

YOU COULD TRY A FEW MINUTES OF ACTIVE DANCING AND THEN SIT DOWN AND GO INTO MEDITATION. AFTER RELEASING STRESS AND TENSION DURING THE DANCING AND BEING ACTIVE, YOU WILL FIND IT EASIER TO DROP INTO MEDITATION.

THE BREATHE TOGETHER CLASS THAT WE DO INCLUDES THE ACTIVE BREATH AND TONING AND THEN MOVES INTO MEDITATION. IT IS MUCH EASIER TO GO INTO MEDITATION AFTER YOU HAVE BEEN ACTIVE.

LATIHAN:

THERE IS A BEAUTIFUL ANCIENT MEDITATION CALLED LATIHAN. YOU PUT ON SOME BEAUTIFUL MUSIC (NO PEAKS & VALLEYS, NO WORDS) AND STAND. YOU SAY TO YOURSELF "I AM A CHANNEL FOR LIFE FORCE/DIVINE ENERGY" AND THEN YOU WAIT. YOU WILL START TO FEEL YOUR BODY MOVING ON ITS OWN. YOU ARE NOT INITIATING THE MOVEMENT NOR ARE YOU STOPPING THE MOVEMENT. IT WILL START SLOW. ALLOW IT TO HAPPEN AND SEE WHAT COMES THROUGH. WHEN YOU FEEL COMPLETE, STAND IN SILENCE. YOU WILL STILL FEEL THE ENERGY MOVING THROUGH YOU.

MIRROR GAZING IS A VERY POWERFUL AND INTERESTING MEDITATION. IN A DARKENED ROOM, WITH JUST A CANDLE OFF TO THE SIDE, SIT IN FRONT OF A MIRROR AND GAZE INTO YOUR FACE. TRY NOT TO BLINK.

YOU WILL START TO SEE DIFFERENT FACES IN THE MIRROR. SOME SAY THEY ARE FACES OF PAST LIVES OR OF DIFFERENT MASKS THAT WE WEAR IN DAILY LIFE. JUST GAZING INTO YOUR FACE IS VERY POWERFUL. THEN CLOSE YOUR EYES AND SEE HOW YOU FEEL.

EXCERPT FROM THE TIBETAN BOOK OF LIVING AND DYING BY SOGYAL RINPOCHE: ON MEDITATION:

“SOMETIMES PEOPLE THINK THAT WHEN THEY MEDITATE THERE SHOULD BE NO THOUGHTS AND EMOTIONS AT ALL; AND WHEN THOUGHTS AND EMOTIONS DO ARISE, THEY BECOME ANNOYED AND EXASPERATED WITH THEMSELVES AND THINK THEY HAVE FAILED. NOTHING COULD BE FURTHER FROM THE TRUTH. SO LONG AS YOU HAVE A MIND, THERE WILL BE THOUGHTS AND EMOTIONS...

JUST AS THE OCEAN HAS WAVES, OR THE SUN HAS RAYS, SO THE MIND'S OWN RADIANCE IS ITS THOUGHTS AND EMOTIONS. THE OCEAN HAS WAVES, YET THE OCEAN IS NOT PARTICULARLY DISTURBED BY THEM. THE WAVES ARE THE VERY NATURE OF THE OCEAN. WAVES WILL RISE, BUT WHERE DO THEY GO? BACK INTO THE OCEAN. AND WHERE DO THE WAVES COME FROM? THE OCEAN. IN THE SAME MANNER THOUGHTS AND EMOTIONS ARE THE RADIANCE AND EXPRESSION OF THE VERY NATURE OF THE MIND. THEY RISE FROM THE MIND, BUT WHERE DO THEY DISSOLVE? BACK INTO THE MIND. WHATEVER RISES, DO NOT SEE IT AS A PARTICULAR PROBLEM. IF YOU DO NOT IMPULSIVELY REACT, IF YOU ARE ONLY PATIENT, IT WILL ONCE AGAIN SETTLE INTO ITS ESSENTIAL NATURE.”

IN SILENT MEDITATION REMEMBER TO LET YOUR THOUGHTS FLOAT BY, NOT BEING ATTACHED. IF YOU ARE DISTRACTED COME BACK TO CENTER, GENTLE BREATHS TO SUPPORT THAT.

WE LEARNED MEDITATION WAS ABOUT FOCUSING THE MIND ON ONE THING, KNOWING THAT EVENTUALLY THAT ONE THING WILL DROP AND THAT WILL BE THE TRUE STATE OF MEDITATION.

NO JUDGMENT OR FEELING OF SUCCESS OR FAILURE. IT IS WHAT IT IS FOR THIS MOMENT. AND THAT IS FINE. HOW EVER YOU DO MEDITATION, ALLOW IT TO BE SOMETHING THAT FEELS GOOD, THAT YOU CAN ENJOY, AND WHEN YOU COME OUT OF MEDITATION, SEE HOW MUCH CALMER, CLEARER AND OPEN HEARTED YOU FEEL. ENJOY THE JOURNEY!

I ENCOURAGE YOU TO READ THROUGH EACH OF THE CLASS NOTES AGAIN AS A REMINDER OF THE DIFFERENT ELEMENTS OF MEDITATION. THIS IS NOT THE END, THIS IS JUST THE BEGINNING OF A BEAUTIFUL TOOL, AS WELL AS A BEAUTIFUL STATE OF BEING THAT YOU NOW HAVE ACCESS TO.

IF YOU WANT TO WRITE A FEW SENTENCES ABOUT HOW YOU EXPERIENCED THE CLASS, I WOULD LOVE TO HEAR. LET ME KNOW IF I MAY USE SOME OF YOUR WORDS AS TESTIMONIALS ON MY WEBSITE, WITH JUST YOUR INITIALS.

EVEN THOUGH THE COURSE IS OVER, FEEL FREE TO EMAIL ME WITH ANY QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS IF THEY COME UP IN THE FUTURE.

THANK YOU FOR JOINING ME!

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