

Why Meditate - Three Reasons

Contributed by Steve Gillman
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Stress Reduction

The relaxation effect of meditation is not just a temporary thing. Research has shown repeatedly that those who meditate regularly have a reduced level of stress throughout their day. Given that stress has been implicated as a contributing cause to over half of modern illnesses, this isn't a small matter. The bottom line is that it is good for your health.
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But stress reduction isn't just about health. It is also about quality of life and the quality of your decision making. The quality of life issue speaks for itself - who enjoys a life of stress? But the effect on your thinking is often overlooked.

When stressed out we tend to react according to the patterns that have been set in us over time. WE are not very open to new or creative solutions. Meditation helps us here tremendously. When are you more likely to make a good decision - when you are red-faced with stressful feelings or calmly and peacefully addressing an issue? Why meditate? To help yourself make better choices in life.

Self Awareness

When you sit quietly and allow yourself to watch your thoughts, even if it is only for a few minutes, you become aware of how much junk is in your own mind. This presents you with an opportunity to clean it up a bit, a chance to redirect your attention and allow better thoughts to prevail. Self awareness of this sort is crucial to your growth as a human as well as your success in the world.

A New Approach To Life

Along with that awareness that develops when you regularly meditate, you start to see that many of the ways you approach situations are counter-productive to your true values. For example, in watching your own thoughts while you sit quietly, you see that rushing so you can eventually have everything done and so relax is actually not the cure for stress, but a cause of it. Seeing things like this makes it possible to let go of old habits and approach life from a fresh perspective, more "in tune" with what is actually happening in the moment.

Contrary to what many think, this learning to "live in the now" does not preclude planning for the future. In fact, much of what prevents a better future can only be dealt with effectively if we stop and see what is going on in our own minds in a given moment. Our own thoughts mislead us and promise us all sorts of things if we just keep following their advice. For example, they tell us we need to worry so we will do what is necessary to prevent future worry. This is nonsense, of course, and we need to be here now to see that and correct it.

A Quick And Easy Meditation

This is almost as easy as it gets (okay, brainwave entrainment CDs are even easier). Just sit still, relax your muscles, close your eyes and breath deeply and slowly through your nose. Pay attention to your breath, and observe your busy mind as it brings up all sorts of thoughts. As it does so, keep returning your attention to your breathing, to the breath as it

passes in and out of you nose.

Continue this for five or ten minutes. Of course there are many little tricks and techniques to make this easier and more effective, but this simple meditation will get you started. Why meditate? Try it a few times and you'll answer the question for yourself.

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