

Meditation: How to Just Be with Yourself

By Jeanna Zelin

It's Saturday morning, and I'm driving north on the 101 to Scottsdale. Only this time I'm not heading to Scottsdale Fashion Square or to some hip, new restaurant. I am off on one of my boundary-expanding adventures. I am stepping out of my daily routine to learn how to meditate.

It's already around a hundred degrees out, so I figure sitting in a cool, studio suite learning to clear my inner clutter might not be such a bad way to spend the day. Besides, taking a break from the techno-charged world of cell phones, e-mail, IPODs and Blackberries might do me some good.

Sarah, the teacher, has a very soothing manner, and her eyes dance as she describes the practice of meditation and what we will be learning over the course of the weekend.

My mind wanders as I contemplate how I will ever be able to sit through a class on keeping my mind from wandering.

I would later learn that meditation is not about forcing my mind to be quiet; rather it's a process to rediscover the quietness that is already there underlying the chatter of my thoughts.

Sarah talks about how there's no good or bad meditation, no judgment and no criticism. "Anyone can meditate," she says. "Just bring your attention to your primordial sound, and whenever you notice your attention has drifted to other thoughts in the mind, or sounds in the environment, bring your attention back to your mantra. It doesn't matter how many times you lose your mantra."

In just a half-hour spent in my own silence, I learned more than I ever would in my usual, hyper-distracted and information-overloaded life.

So I decided to delve deeper into the realm of meditation. Here's what I discovered.

Meditation: What is It?

Webster's Dictionary defines meditation as "engaging in mental exercise (as concentration on one's breathing or repetition of a mantra) for the purpose of reaching a heightened level of spiritual awareness". Other definitions I've heard describe meditation as a way to tap into the sacred silence that lies within or how to get in touch with your true nature.

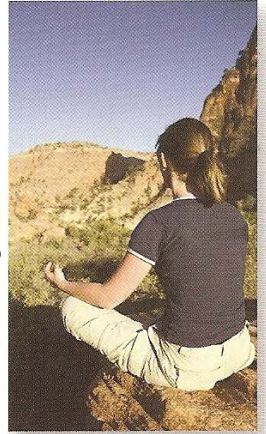
The word meditation is derived from two Latin words: meditari (to think, to dwell upon, to exercise the mind) and mereri (to heal). Its Sanskrit derivation medha means wisdom.

I like Victor Davich's definition from his book, *8 Minute Meditation: Quiet Your Mind. Change Your Life*. He says that meditation is allowing what is.

Sounds too easy.

Of course I would find out that it's not that simple. Meditation requires patience (with yourself) and practice (by yourself).

Meditation usually involves slow, regular breathing and sitting



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