

What is Meditation?

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A lot of people have a misconceived notion of what meditation actually is. Some people believe you are suppose to make your mind go blank or that meditation is a fabrication which is suppose to slowly lull you into a dreamy state, but mediation is neither of these ideas. Meditation is really about awakening your mind and your senses and concentrating on the here-and-now.

Meditation has been empirically proven to lower blood pressure, slow heart rate, dilate the arteries, decrease anxiety, improve immune function, increase vitality, and improve sleep. Although meditation can really be done anywhere a good way to facilitate the practice is to clear your area of all distractions such as a ringing phone, a barking dog, or other people talking and create a sacred space where you sit or lie down for at least 10-20 minutes a day focusing on something such as your breath (I will talk more about correct breathing in next months article), a word that has meaning for you, or the natural sounds around you. Undoubtedly, your mind will start to wander and begin to think about something you need to do or it will want to ruminate over something you said which you regret and wish you could change. When your mind does wander the key is to gently bring it back to your breath, the word you are focusing on, or to the sounds of nature around you without harshly judging yourself.

When you begin to cultivate your awareness in this way you will begin to see how the mind works and notice thought patterns and emotions tied to those thoughts that may have kept you stuck in old belief systems for many years. Being able to interrupt this

thought pattern literally rewires your brain and helps you to see that you are not your emotions, that emotions are just a reaction to a belief that may or may not be valid.

Meditation gives you the clarity to know you are much more than your thoughts, beliefs and emotions and knowing this gives you the power to make different choices regardless of what you may be feeling at any given moment, knowing ultimately you are the author of your life and only you can decide what your next chapter will be about.