

7. TECHNIQUES FOR TRANQUILLITY

In education mindfulness both in teaching and learning has become a very important topic. Many books are being published on how one can become mindful to relieve stress, to study and retain, etc. Mindfulness is making mind tranquil even for a few minutes. Here are a few tried and proven techniques to make your mind tranquil. These techniques relieve you of your stress. The exercises will also make you take a closer look at yourself. In doing so, other thoughts will subside. A constantly active mind makes one restless and exhausted. These techniques provide antidotes to the unnecessary activity, chattering and wandering of the mind. They will make the mind calm and remove limited notions of yourself. You don't have to do all the exercises at one sitting. Choose one or two according to the place and mood.

Any of these exercises consciously done over a period of about 20 minutes is a meditation. The following benefits of meditation have been established by scientific research in medicine and neuroscience. <http://www.drweil.com/drw/u/ART02791/self-healing-meditation.html>

1. Helping lower blood pressure
2. Decreasing heart and respiratory rates
3. Increasing blood flow
4. Enhancing immune function
5. Reducing perception of pain
6. Relieving chronic pain due to arthritis and other disorders
7. Maintaining level mood
8. Bringing awareness and mindfulness to everyday aspects of life

Meditation makes one perform better. There are several websites on meditation and benefits. e.g. <http://www.tm.org/benefits-classroom#benefits-classroom-1>

INCREASED HAPPINESS: University of Michigan researchers found that meditating middle school students showed increased happiness and reduced anxiety and depression compared to controls. The following results are noteworthy.

Problem solving skills improve.

Powers to heal the body.

Focus the mind.

Release the stress.

Biochemical effects – Doctors teach students with ADHD how to do meditation to reduce its effects. Neuroscientists find that front side and back side of the brain are coherent.

You build up the connections.

Teaches how to react to people, how to react to situations.

People get sick less.

People are focused. Makes students confident. Improves the sense of Self.

A tranquil mind is a reservoir from which the river of creativity flows. Whatever career one is interested, a tranquil mind is the key to success. Do not be afraid of a thoughtless state. It is like a calm lake without ripples. You can see the bottom of the lake when the water is still. When there are no thoughts, your inner nature will shine through. When no thought exists, real You or Self exists. You are filled with bliss when your mind is tranquil. Discover your true nature. The ideas you need to shine in your life originate at that place. Discover your potential!

You know the power of building a dam on flowing water. It can be used for generating electricity or irrigation. Similarly a tranquil mind is a power which can do a lot of good in your life. Success in your relationships, your work and keeping good health are very much dependent on your ability to keep your mind calm in any situation. You need to build this power in yourself to such an extent that you should say to your mind, " Stop!" and it should stop instantaneously. You can develop the calmness only by a regular daily practice. Everyday take 20 to 30 minutes out to practice some techniques.

These exercises are recommended by psychologists, ancient and modern religions, and successful people and are being tested scientifically by neuroscientists, educators and sociologists.

1. Watch your breathing. Next to our Self, breathing is very important. From the time we were born until we die, we breathe. This is the only constant thing that we can observe physically. Breathing is closely connected to the mind. When you are excited, you breathe rapidly. When you are calm, you breathe slowly.

Sit comfortably in a chair with your back straight and feet resting on the floor, or lie down on your back. If you feel like closing your eyes, go ahead. Fix your attention on breathing. Watch the breath coming in, filling the lungs. Watch the pause before it rises to go out. Watch the breath going out. After all the air has gone out through the nostrils, there is a momentary pause, watch that pause. Watch the breath coming in again. Do it for ten minutes or more, whenever you want to be alone by yourself.

As you watch the breath, you will also observe your thoughts slowly subside. This practice overcomes restlessness of the mind.

2. Note the place of origin of breath. Either sit or lie down as in exercise 1. Fix your attention on the place of origin of the incoming and outgoing breath. This is a distance of three fists or twelve fingers outside and inside the body from the nostrils. You can feel it outside if you like.

3. Think of the people who have quieted their minds. Think of a person who is your inspiration. The reason for this is that the mind takes on the qualities of the subject it dwells on. Do this consciously, sitting or lying down quietly.

A word or a line has inspired your role model or if s/he has asked you to repeat, repeat it focusing on yourself. If another thought or concern intrudes on the concentration, say to

the thought that you will take care of it later. Repeating the word, once as you breathe in and once as you breathe out, calms the mind.

If you like to pray and read philosophical literature that can calm your mind. Do take daily time out at the beginning of your busy schedule and devote to prayer and reading.

Such activities destroy ANTS (automatic negative thoughts) that arise in mind.

4. Gaze on vast spaces. Cast your gaze on a vast space or a region in which there are no trees or other obstructions. For example, go to a beach. Sit down comfortably on the sand and take in the vastness of the ocean. Or lie down on the ground, or stand on a mountain top, where there are no trees, buildings or any other obstructions. Gaze at the vastness of the sky.

Your mind will be quiet. You will lose the sense of limitedness.

5. Watch the intermediate state between waking and sleeping. When you are about to sleep, you observe yourself going to sleep. Concentrate on that state between waking and sleep when all external objects have faded out of sight. Nothing else is there, not even awareness of the body. In this state each of us is conscious of the fact "I am" but nothing else. There is a similar state when you are just waking up from your sleep.

6. Seated on a bed or seat, contemplate your body as without any support. Close your eyes. Let all hands, feet, neck and mouth hang loose. Feel like a rag doll. Visualize that there is no support for your body. Do this for a few minutes.

Many times we feel we are confined by our body and mind. This exercise makes all thought-constructs and undesirable mental tendencies vanish.

7. Withdraw the mind from an intense emotion. When a desire, fear or anger arises strongly in your mind, and there is no other emotion or thought present, suddenly withdraw your mind from that emotion. Fix your mind again at the root of the emotion, not as that particular emotion, but as your very energy manifesting as that emotion.

You have always the freedom either to run away with the emotion or stand back and take a second look.

8. Contemplate. Sit comfortably. Contemplate with mind unwavering and free from all objects, senses and emotions that your whole body and the whole universe is Consciousness. Visualize the existence of all details like buildings, rivers, oceans, continents fade away. Visualize your face, head, hands, and feet etc. fade away. Visualize everything as a vast ocean of Conscious Energy. Some cosmologists, scientists who do research on how the matter gets created, say that this statement is true.

9. Contemplate the entire universe and your body as a mass of joy. In one sweep of attention think of the entire universe and your body, not in bits and pieces, but in its totality as filled with joy.

10. Dwell on the satisfaction. Wherever the mind finds satisfaction, without agitation, let it dwell on that. Keep your body still, close your eyes and taste the satisfaction to your heart's content.

11. Contemplate oneness. Contemplate that your own Consciousness is present in all the bodies; there is no difference in it anywhere. Realize that everything in essence is the same Consciousness.

12. Wherever through sensory organs of seeing, hearing, touching, tasting and smelling, we experience any object outside our body or subjectively within, if we become aware that it is the Consciousness revealing itself as our own conscious nature, the mind becomes absorbed, we are filled with joy.

Most people living in older times did not know the details of the organs of perception or action; but a student of modern science can observe the intricate fascinating functioning of these various organs. For example, studying how each tiny organ of the body functions, we would be amazed. If we go to an ophthalmologist, we can really admire the various tests the ophthalmologist takes. The measurements he/she takes, makes one wonder at the complicated functioning of the eyes. As for touch, we can watch how a minute touch anywhere is felt instantly. How with our fingers we can collect tiny particles from the floor. Likewise the function of any other organ of perception or action is so beautiful, so complicated, and so perfect. The nervous system, endocrinal system, digestive system, etc. are so fascinatingly work to keep most persons in a tip top condition. In short, if we examine the functioning of our body, we can become aware of the most intelligent Consciousness functioning perfectly.