

Relaxation Through Meditation

My preference would be to call meditation relaxation - conscious relaxation, chosen relaxation. These are words that are more universally understood, more comfortable. Constantly working toward the goal of discovering my own ability to reach a state of serenity, I have learned to meditate.

Meditating is actually easier than you might imagine. Most of us have dabbled in meditation by participating in conscious relaxation. Maybe during an exercise class or to manage pain at the dentist or anxiety before a test. We start by paying attention to our breathing. The practical effort to focus completely on our breathing takes our minds away from the "mind clutter" that constantly tries to invade our mind and eliminate feelings that will lead to a time of calm. With repeated effort the goal of clearing your mind - to think of nothing, does occur and the process of meditation takes on its own energy. The result is, and I guarantee this, peace, serenity, calmness, eventually opening yourself to new insights.

Meditating for Life

Too much stress, stress reduction, chill out, let it go, detach - familiar phrases to all of us. Our world is fast, fun and exciting. It is also challenging, trying, demanding and frightening. These two sides of our lives produce stress, emotional reactions, anxiety, worry and anticipation. Our bodies and minds can tolerate only so much of any of these. After a while, each of us reaches a saturation point and the results become uncomfortable at best; for some it may be unbearable, even unendurable.

No magic pill is available to eliminate these feelings. The reality is, as the wise old man said, the answer is inside all of us. To manage these universal concerns we must go inside ourselves. Among the steps we can take is the learning and practicing of meditation.

What to Expect

With time and faith in the commitment to practice frequently, (daily meditating is ideal), during your meditation time you may "leave the moment." A feeling of separation exists where the mind is clear, clean and blank. You will still hear sounds around you, but they will not interfere with your meditation.

Sometimes you may weep -- you may not even be aware of what is making you weep. It is your own emotions having a voice of their own. Sometimes you may feel a smile across your face -- that is contentment showing itself. Sometimes you may fall asleep and awaken truly refreshed.

There is no right or wrong behavior during your meditation. It is your time for you. Everyone deserves this kind of personal attention. This is a self-care activity; loving oneself! Teach it to your children instead of a time-out in their room or corner. Teach it to your friends, family, anyone who will listen. We can share this gift and get back as we give. We are all better because of each person who meditates. The peace and joy felt by those who meditate enters the world for all of us as positive energy. From it the world is a better place. Imagine if we all practiced meditation!



Sit in a chair. It is important to have both feet on the ground. You may choose to be barefoot. Let your arms rest comfortably by your sides. Take several deep breaths. While letting your breathing become deeper and even, picture yourself standing with your feet apart, hands by your sides with your fingers naturally open. Keep this picture in your mind as you continue.

Inhale ... Exhale ...

Allow your breathing to relax your body and clear your mind.

Picture a circle of energy near the base of your spine. This energy is strong. It connects you to the earth. This energy generates instinctive feelings of survival. It urges you to love and care for yourself.

Move up to the next circle of energy in your pelvic area - this is the center of your emotions. Your acceptance of pleasure springs from this energy source. Accepting the joy and contentment derived from physical pleasure will contribute to overall balance in life.

The energy of the third Chakra is near the naval area. Your creativity will flow from here. The essence of your spirituality begins with this positive energy source. Your heart Chakra energy is about love. It is the source of active love that is in everything you do. Your ability to love comes from here and includes your capacity for empathy, sympathy, forgiveness and allows the abundance of all life to be available to you. The positive essence is an overwhelming sense of fullness felt as love.

The throat Chakra involves the energy of your own inner voice - guiding you to be open and honest with yourself and others. This is your voice of wisdom. When listened to this will lead you to take actions that will keep you balanced and true to yourself.

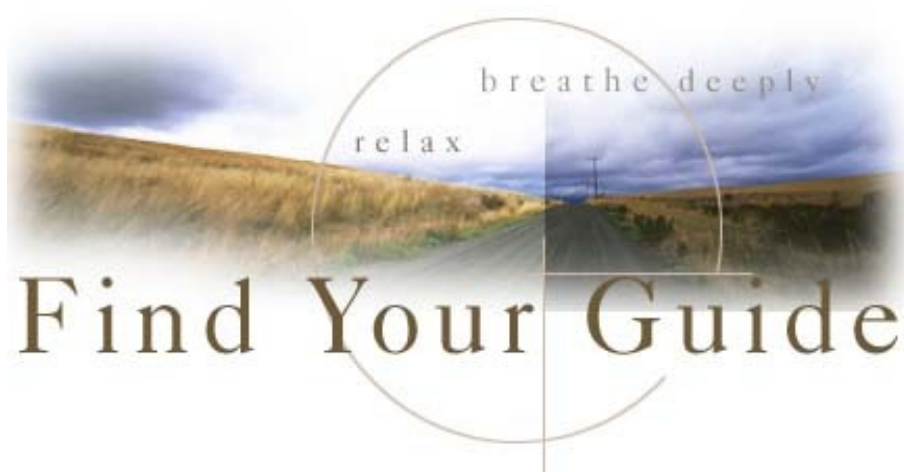
The next energy level near your forehead will guide you to awareness of your soul. Imagination is the magic of this Chakra. Let yourself free your mind and as you accept the power and the awe of your own soul, so will you realize the soul within everyone and everything.

Finally to the top of your head, the energy flows out and above you. It is directly connected to your spiritual self and all spirituality in the world. With this Chakra, flashes of enlightenment will occur -- moments of true understanding of the world and all it contains. All events and emotions are clear and during those moments,

everything makes sense. This highest energy source is the essence of all life and existence. It is true magic and it is yours.

Envision your whole being fully energized through your having focused on the Chakra points. The body connection to each energy source will guide you to heed its request for attention through physical sensations - a headache, a stiff back, butterflies in your stomach.

Think ... what is going on in your life that may be blocking the positive energy flow - are you so busy with tasks that you must do that you have no time to be playful and enjoy the day? Are you so involved with the technical side of daily activities that you have no time for fantasy? Are you so busy taking care of everyone else's needs that you ignore your own needs and desires? Trust that these sensations mean something. Think about it ... Permit yourself to realize that as you notice these connections, you will naturally save yourself, your soul your spirit. You will be more vital in all that you do.



Allow your body to gently relax. Move yourself around on your chair until you feel perfectly comfortable.

Now I want you to move your attention DOWN from your head to your chin and DOWN from your chin to your throat and DOWN from your throat to your chest. DOWN, DOWN to your stomach.

Now move down into that safe place deep within yourself, that place which is just below your navel. This is your sacred sanctuary, a place that only you know about.

From that place, I want you to move into the hallway in your mind. Along the hallway are many doors. One particular door is of golden light. You feel drawn by that door and you move through the door of light into a place of peace, comfort and protection.

Once through the door, you find yourself on a path through the woods. As you move along the path, you faintly hear the sound of water. Birds sing in the trees. The sunlight filters through the canopy of deep, green trees overhead. A warm, gentle breeze caresses your face and blows lightly through your hair. You feel as if

you are being kissed by God. The smell of the forest and of wild flowers surrounds you, bathing you in an essence so sweet and so wild that your senses are reeling.

You come to a body of water. Because it is part of the enchanted forest, this water is pure, clean and clear. It is cool and inviting. You sit on the edge of the bank and dip your cup into the sacred water and you drink. You are comforted and refreshed.

You arise and continue moving on your path through these wondrous woods. Soon you come to a clearing in the trees. The clearing is surrounded by stately oaks, their branches extended to protect you. The color of the wild flowers stands out strong against the greens of the grasses and the brown-black of the tree barks. You breathe deeply of the sweet air. You know this place... you've been here before. Maybe in your dreams or maybe in life - it doesn't matter. You just know that it is your haven.

There is wonderful, soft green grass growing here and it invites you to sit down and rest. Now you begin to hear in the distance other-worldly music, Tibetan bells... flute music... soft chanting... You listen carefully, as you feel drawn to the music.

You look up and see purple mountains in the distance. As you look, a tiny golden Light appears. It draws closer and closer to you. It floats gently up the path toward your little sanctuary. Its light is soft and gentle. Yet it shines with a brilliance you have never seen.

As it reaches the outer edge of your sanctuary, it stops and becomes a large pulsating crystalline light. You watch. You wait. You give the light permission to enter your space.

The light draws forward and hovers just before you. The Light shimmers. Soft strands of gold stream forth like a flower blossoming. As each petal of this light unfolds, you see that something or someone is inside.

Then you see before you a wondrous being that you recognize as your spirit guide. You know it is your spirit guide because you feel a strong surging of love pouring out from it to you and you feel, deep in your heart, a strong answering outpouring of love from you to it. You feel completely safe with this being. It may or may not tell you its name, but it calls you by your name.

Spirit Guides will take any form that you need to understand right now. It can be in the form of a human, an animal, an object or some divine form. See it! imagine it! Know it is real!

What form is your spirit guide in? What shape is it? If it is human, is it male or female? What does it smell like? What color is it? What does it feel like?

Begin to carry on a conversation with this wondrous being. Ask its name. What is its purpose? Why has it come to you?

Let this being communicate itself to you and tell you why it is working with you.

Ask it for its help and guidance. Ask your guide what you need to know about your life at this time. Tell your guide anything that is disturbing to you at this time. Ask it how best to call upon it in the future.

Ask it to let you know it is there, consciously, within the next few days, whenever you need help.

When you feel finished, thank your guide for the opportunity to meet and work with it.

As the golden light folds back up around your guide, send it off with your best thoughts and love. As it withdraws from your space, moving back up the path, you sit back down in your spot. You understand that in this inner sanctuary you invite any and all of your guides into your awareness.

This is exciting and you are fascinated with your experience, your experience of expanding your horizons. You breathe deeply, relaxing and reliving in your mind, what has happened. BREATHE.

As you do so, the path and the woods begin to fade and you find yourself gently coming back to the present... to this room, this time and this place. When you are ready, be sure to drink some water and maybe eat a slice of bread to ground yourself.

Right now, it would be helpful to you if you wrote down all you have experienced, exactly as it happened.

Bless you.



Find a comfortable space, either sit or lie in a relaxed position. As you become settled, begin to focus on your breath.

Inhale, then exhale at a comfortable pace - an even breath.

Close your eyes.

Continue your rhythmic breathing. If you become distracted refocus on your breath.

As you sink into comfort and relaxation, see yourself basking in a waterfall of sunlight and crystal eldar water.

As the sun and water cascade over your body you absorb the healing oxygen carried within your blood vessels though your whole system.

The oxygen heals and releases the holding contraction of each muscle. Each muscle becomes taffy... soft and pliable.

All tension gives way to relaxation. The cascade of sunshine reminds you of the source of all energy.

Your whole being sings with release and renewal as the source refuels and fortifies your body and spirit.

In healing all is possible. As you heal your spirit and body your gifts to the universe emerge.

Your loving compassion explodes for sharing with your fellow travelers. As you heal yourself you heal all who cross your path. Your connection to others heals as you move to your new level of evolution.

You are the incarnation of universal healing. It begins with you.

The healing vision of cascading sunshine and water is yours whenever you want it to be. Come back to this space whenever you want to, know that this space is always available even for a moment.

Be aware once again of your breath.

Inhale... exhale as your re-enter the space around you. Open your eyes and carry your renewed energy to all with whom you come in contact.



Walking alone has always provided me with the time to mindfully quiet my thinking. Early morning is my favorite time to walk. I mean really early. The traffic sounds are at a minimum, the waking birds

are at their most vocal.

I begin by just being aware of the environment. I notice the color of the sky, the mood the trees set, the way the air touches my skin and certainly, the sounds.

I always take deep breaths as I start out. Big, steady strides- not necessarily fast, but steady. Then, when I feel like I'm in sync, I begin to consciously turn my mind off.

I concentrate on my breathing. I inhale for two or three steps then I exhale for the next. If thoughts come to mind I discourage them leading to solo conversation. I just ignore myself.

Before I know it I am engrossed in doing nothing but moving and I am as relaxed as if I were in my sitting meditation position. The pace matches the rhythm of my breathing. My pulse is slow and steady.

I thoroughly enjoy nothingness. Often my spirit will divulge important messages to me as if by osmosis; they just occur to me completely. Not as a thought; I am not thinking, but as a fact, a feeling, a sense. a sensation.

From these messages I may decide upon a few words to use repetitively. Invariably this phrase touches exactly upon what my spirit and soul know I need to address. I continue on until I know it is time to return.

Walking meditation has long been practiced by people who are both physically and spiritually enlightened. The two practices go together naturally. Each provides the time and space to connect with your soul. Silent or with music, anything goes.

Try it!



listen

Authentic Self

close your eyes

We are ready now for a period of relaxation.

Move your body so it can be in a comfortable position with your spine straight, your palms facing up, and your feet flat on the floor.

Slowly close your eyes and start to breathe slowly, deeply and rhythmically.

Take a moment to get settled.

Continue to breathe deeply as you proceed with your meditation.

I will help you attain a relaxation level where you will be mentally awake, but your body will be comfortably asleep. Count from one to ten. Remember, the higher the number the more deeply relaxed you become.

One...

Two...

Three...

Four... feel the sounds and energy in your body.

Five...

Six...

Seven... the boundaries of your body are gently disappearing.

Eight...

Nine...

Ten...

Your mind is awake and your physical body asleep.

Your mind has expanded beyond the boundaries of your body, free from physical tension and constraints where you can experience profound insights and life-transforming breakthroughs.

Imagine a place where you feel peaceful and truly yourself. Use all your senses.

My place of peace is in a meadow by a running brook, flowers are all around. Red rock formations are in the background, birds are singing. The sound of water splashing on the rocks, the smell of spring flowers. There is a slight breeze on my face. What do you see? What colors are there? What do you smell? What sounds do

you hear? What do you feel touching you? What emotions do you feel? Feel the vibe, the peace that is here. Make it as real as possible.

And in this place of peace, imagine that coming toward you is YOU at your fullest potential. Use all of your senses. What are you really like? What qualities do you have within that reflect themselves to you now? What do you look like? Can you list the qualities of your fullest potential, the love and intelligence that you are? Can you feel the power, the goodness and the gift of life that you bring? Can you see this potential unfolding in everything you've learned so far? Do you see the mission and the courage and the path you are taking? Get a sense of it for a minute. Tune in. Can you talk to your full potential self? Can you get the message? Does your full potential self have a particular message for you now? How are you doing in your life?

You'll find that you can come back anytime you want to enjoy the peace of this place and commune with your full potential self. As we count down from ten to one you will be aware of an inner calm, a profound connection to your true self. You will retain an inner knowing of who you are as you live your daily life. Count from ten down to one. When we reach one you will be wide awake both physically and mentally, rested, relaxed and alert.

Ten...

Nine...

Eight...

Seven... You'll be wide awake and rested when we reach the count of one.

Six...

Five...

Four...

Three...

Two...

One...

You are wide awake and alert.

Why Learn to Meditate

The purpose of meditation is to make our mind calm and peaceful. If our mind is peaceful, we will be free from worries and mental discomfort, and so we will experience true happiness; but if our mind is not peaceful, we will find it very difficult to be happy, even if we are living in the very best conditions. If we train in meditation, our mind will gradually become more and more peaceful, and we will experience a purer and purer form of happiness. Eventually, we will be able to stay happy all the time, even in the most difficult circumstances.

Usually we find it difficult to control our mind. It seems as if our mind is like a balloon in the wind - blown here and there by external circumstances. If things go well, our mind is happy, but if they go badly, it immediately becomes unhappy. For example, if we get what we want, such as a new possession or a new partner, we become excited and cling to them tightly. However, since we cannot have everything we want, and since we will inevitably be separated from the friends and possessions we currently enjoy, this mental stickiness, or attachment, serves only to cause us pain. On the other hand, if we do not get what we want, or if we lose something that we like, we become despondent or irritated. For example, if we are forced to work with a colleague whom we dislike, we will probably become irritated and feel aggrieved, with the result that we will be unable to work with him or her efficiently and our time at work will become stressful and unrewarding.

Such fluctuations of mood arise because we are too closely involved in the external situation. We are like a child making a sandcastle who is excited when it is first made, but who becomes upset when it is destroyed by the incoming tide. By training in meditation, we create an inner space and clarity that enables us to control our mind regardless of the external circumstances. Gradually we develop mental equilibrium, a balanced mind that is happy all the time, rather than an unbalanced mind that oscillates between the extremes of excitement and despondency.

If we train in meditation systematically, eventually we will be able to eradicate from our mind the delusions that are the causes of all our problems and suffering. In this way, we will come to experience a permanent inner peace, known as "liberation" or "nirvana". Then, day and night in life after life, we will experience only peace and happiness.

Breathing Meditations

Generally, the purpose of breathing meditation is to calm the mind and develop inner peace. We can use breathing meditations alone or as a preliminary practice to reduce our distractions before engaging in a [Lamrim meditation](#).

A Simple Breathing Meditation

The first stage of meditation is to stop distractions and make our mind clearer and more lucid. This can be accomplished by practising a simple breathing meditation. We choose a quiet place to meditate and sit in a comfortable position. We can sit in the traditional cross-legged posture or in any other position that is comfortable. If we wish, we can sit in a chair. The most important thing is to keep our back straight to prevent our mind from becoming sluggish or sleepy.

We sit with our eyes partially closed and turn our attention to our breathing. We breathe naturally, preferably through the nostrils, without attempting to control our breath, and we try to become aware of the sensation of the breath as it enters and leaves the nostrils. This sensation is our object of meditation. We should try to concentrate on it to the exclusion of everything else.

At first, our mind will be very busy, and we might even feel that the meditation is making our mind busier; but in reality we are just becoming more aware of how busy our mind actually is. There will be a great temptation to follow the different thoughts as they arise, but we should resist this and remain focused single-pointedly on the sensation of the breath. If we discover that our mind has wandered and is following our thoughts, we should immediately return it to the breath. We should repeat this as many times as necessary until the mind settles on the breath.

If we practise patiently in this way, gradually our distracting thoughts will subside and we will experience a sense of inner peace and relaxation. Our mind will feel lucid and spacious and we will feel refreshed. When the sea is rough, sediment is churned up and the water becomes murky, but when the wind dies down the mud gradually settles and the water becomes clear. In a similar way, when the otherwise incessant flow of our distracting thoughts is calmed through concentrating on the breath, our mind becomes unusually lucid and clear. We should stay with this state of mental calm for a while.

Even though breathing meditation is only a preliminary stage of meditation, it can be quite powerful. We can see from this practice that it is possible to experience inner peace and contentment just by controlling the mind, without having to depend at all upon external conditions. When the turbulence of distracting thoughts subsides and our mind becomes still, a deep happiness and contentment naturally arises from within. This feeling of contentment and well-being helps us to cope with the busyness and difficulties of daily life. So much of the stress and tension we normally experience comes from our mind, and many of the problems we experience, including ill health, are caused or aggravated by this stress. Just by doing breathing meditation for ten or fifteen minutes each day, we will be able to reduce this stress. We will experience a calm, spacious feeling in the mind, and many of our usual problems will fall away. Difficult situations will become easier to deal with, we will naturally feel warm and well disposed towards other people, and our relationships with others will gradually improve.

Meditation Posture

When we practise meditation we need to have a comfortable seat and a good posture. The most important feature of the posture is to keep our back straight. To help us do this, if we are sitting on a cushion we make sure that the back of the cushion is slightly higher than the front, inclining our pelvis slightly forward. It is not necessary at first to sit cross-legged, but it is a good idea to become accustomed to sitting in the posture of Buddha Vairochana. If we cannot hold this posture we should sit in one which is as close to this as possible while remaining comfortable.

The seven features of Vairochana's posture are:

(1) The legs are crossed in the vajra posture. This helps to reduce thoughts and feelings of desirous attachment.

(2) The right hand is placed in the left hand, palms upwards, with the tips of the thumbs slightly raised and gently touching. The hands are held about four fingers' width below the navel. This helps us to develop good concentration. The right hand symbolizes method and the left hand symbolizes wisdom - the two together symbolize the union of method and wisdom. The two thumbs at the level of the navel symbolize the blazing of inner fire.

(3) The back is straight but not tense. This helps us to develop and maintain a clear mind, and it allows the subtle energy winds to flow freely.

(4) The lips and teeth are held as usual, but the tongue touches against the back of the upper teeth. This prevents excessive salivation while also preventing our mouth from becoming too dry.

(5) The head is tipped a little forward with the chin slightly tucked in so that the eyes are cast down. This helps prevent mental excitement.

(6) The eyes are neither wide open nor completely closed, but remain half open and gaze down along the line of the nose. If the eyes are wide open we are likely to develop mental excitement and if they are closed we are likely to develop mental sinking.

(7) The shoulders are level and the elbows are held slightly away from the sides to let air circulate.

A further feature of Vairochana's posture is the preliminary breathing meditation, which prepares our mind for developing a good motivation. When we sit down to meditate our mind is usually full of disturbing thoughts, and we cannot immediately convert such a state of mind into the virtuous one we need as our motivation. A negative, disturbed state of mind is like pitch-black cloth. We cannot dye pitch-black cloth any other colour unless we first remove all the black dye and make the cloth white again. In the same way, if we want to colour our mind with a virtuous motivation we need to clear away all our negative thoughts and distractions. We can accomplish this temporarily by practising breathing meditation.

When we have settled down comfortably on our meditation seat we begin by becoming aware of the thoughts and distractions that are arising in our mind. Then we gently turn our attention to our breath, letting its rhythm remain normal. As we breathe out we imagine that we are breathing away all disturbing thoughts and distractions in the form of black smoke that vanishes in space. As we breathe in we imagine that we are breathing in all the blessings and inspiration of the holy beings in the form of white light that enters our body and absorbs into our heart. We maintain this visualization single-pointedly with each inhalation and exhalation for twenty-one rounds, or until our mind has become peaceful and alert. If we concentrate on our breathing in this way, negative thoughts and distractions will temporarily disappear because we cannot concentrate on more than one object at a time. At the conclusion of our breathing meditation we should think 'Now I have received the blessings and inspiration of all the holy beings.' At this stage our mind is like a clean white cloth which we can now colour with a virtuous motivation such as compassion or

bodhichitta.

How to Meditate

by

Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche



The practice of mindfulness/awareness meditation is common to all Buddhist traditions. Beyond that, it is common to, inherent in, all human beings.

In meditation we are continuously discovering who and what we are. That could be quite frightening or quite boring, but after a while, all that slips away. We get into some kind of natural rhythm and begin to discover our basic mind and heart.

Often we think about meditation as some kind of unusual, holy or spiritual activity. As we practice that is one of the basic beliefs we try to overcome. The point is that meditation is completely normal: it is the mindful quality present in everything we do.

The main thing the Buddha discovered was that he could be himself--one hundred percent, completely. He did not invent meditation; there was nothing particularly to invent. The Buddha, "the awakened one," woke up and realized that he did not have to try to be something other than what he was. So the complete teaching of Buddhism is how to re-discover who we are.

That is a straightforward principle, but we are continuously distracted from coming to our natural state, our natural being. Throughout our day everything pulls us away from natural mindfulness, from being on the spot. We're either too scared or too embarrassed or too proud, or just too crazy, to be who we are.

This is what we call the journey or the path: continuously trying to recognize that we can actually relax and be who we are. So practicing meditation begins by simplifying everything. We sit on the cushion, follow our breath and watch our thoughts. We simplify our whole situation.

Mindfulness/awareness meditation, sitting meditation, is the foundation of this particular journey. Unless we are able to deal with our mind and body in a very simple way, it is impossible to think about doing high-level practices. How the Buddha himself, having done all kinds of practices, became the Buddha, was simply to sit. He sat under a tree and he did not move. He practiced exactly as we are

practicing.

What we're doing is taming our mind. We're trying to overcome all sorts of anxieties and agitation, all sorts of habitual thought patterns, so we are able to sit with ourselves. Life is difficult, we may have tremendous responsibilities, but the odd thing, the twisted logic, is that the way we relate to the basic flow of our life is to sit completely still. It might seem more logical to speed up, but here we are reducing everything to a very basic level.

How we tame the mind is by using the technique of mindfulness. Quite simply, mindfulness is complete attention to detail. We are completely absorbed in the fabric of life, the fabric of the moment. We realize that our life is made of these moments and that we cannot deal with more than one moment at a time. Even though we have memories of the past and ideas about the future, it is the present situation that we are experiencing.

Thus we are able to experience our life fully. We might feel that thinking about the past or the future makes our life richer, but by not paying attention to the immediate situation we are actually missing our life. There's nothing we can do about the past, we can only go over it again and again, and the future is completely unknown.

So the practice of mindfulness is the practice of being alive. When we talk about the techniques of meditation, we're talking about techniques of life. We're not talking about something that is separate from us. When we're talking about being mindful and living in a mindful way, we're talking about the practice of spontaneity.

It's important to understand that we're not talking about trying to get into some kind of higher level or higher state of mind. We are not saying that our immediate situation is unworthy. What we're saying is that the present situation is completely available and unbiased, and that we can see it that way through the practice of mindfulness.

At this point we can go through the actual form of the practice. First, it is important how we relate with the room and the cushion where we will practice. One should relate with where one is sitting as the center of the world, the center of the universe. It is where we are proclaiming our sanity, and when we sit down the cushion should be like a throne.

When we sit, we sit with some kind of pride and dignity. Our legs are crossed, shoulders relaxed. We have a sense of what is above, a sense that something is pulling us up the same time we have a sense of ground. The arms should rest comfortably on the thighs. Those who cannot sit down on a cushion can sit in a chair. The main point is to be somewhat comfortable.

The chin is tucked slightly in, the gaze is softly focusing downward about four to six feet in front, and the mouth should be open a little. The basic feeling is one of comfort, dignity and confidence. If you feel you need to move, you should just move, just change your posture a little bit. So that is how we relate with the body.

And then the next part--actually the simple part--is relating with the mind. The basic

technique is that we begin to notice our breath, we have a sense of our breath. The breath is what we're using as the basis of our mindfulness technique; it brings us back to the moment, back to the present situation. The breath is something that is constant--otherwise it's too late.

We put the emphasis on the outbreath. We don't accentuate or alter the breath at all, just notice it. So we notice our breath going out, and when we breathe in there is just a momentary gap, a space. There are all kinds of meditation techniques and this is actually a more advanced one. We're learning how to focus on our breath, while at the same time giving some kind of space to the technique.

Then we realize that, even though what we're doing is quite simple, we have a tremendous number of ideas, thoughts and concepts--about life and about the practice itself. And the way we deal with all these thoughts is simply by labeling them. We just note to ourselves that we're thinking, and return to following the breath.

So if we wonder what we're going to do for the rest of our life, we simply label it thinking. If we wonder what we're going to have for lunch, simply label it thinking. Anything that comes up, we gently acknowledge it and let it go.

There are no exceptions to this technique; there are no good thoughts and no bad thoughts. If you're thinking how wonderful meditation is, then that is still thinking. How great the Buddha was, that's still thinking. If you feel like killing the person next to you, just label it thinking. No matter what extreme you go to, it's just thinking, and come back to the breath.

In the face of all these thoughts it is difficult to be in the moment and not be swayed. Our life has created a barrage of different storms, elements and emotions that are trying to unseat us, destabilize us. All sorts of things come up, but they are labeled thoughts, and we are not drawn away. That is known as holding our seat, just dealing with ourselves.

The idea of holding our seat continues when we leave the meditation room and go about our lives. We maintain our dignity and humor and the same lightness of touch we use in dealing with our thoughts. Holding our seat doesn't mean we are stiff and trying to become like rocks; the whole idea is learning how to be flexible. The way that we deal with ourselves and our thoughts is the same way that we deal with the world.

When we begin to meditate, the first thing we realize is how wild things are--how wild our mind is, how wild our life is. But once we begin to have the quality of being tamed, when we can sit with ourselves, we realize there's a vast wealth of possibility that lies in front of us. Meditation is looking at our own back yard, you could say, looking at what we really have and discovering the richness that already exists. Discovering that richness is a moment to moment process, and as we continue to practice our awareness becomes sharper and sharper.

This mindfulness actually envelops our whole life. It is the best way to appreciate our world, to appreciate the sacredness of everything. We add mindfulness and all of a sudden the whole situation becomes alive. This practice soaks into everything that we

do; there's nothing left out. Mindfulness pervades sound and space. It is a complete experience.

Meditation Handbook

A student helping student project.

Meditation is inner astronomy. You discover the stars, the moon, and the sun are all inside you.

What is Meditation?

Most dictionaries define the Western (Jewish, Christian, Islamic) meaning of the word 'meditation,' but usually do not describe the Eastern (Hindu, Buddhist, Taoist) concept of meditation. The most appropriate dictionary definition I could find reads as follows. "If you meditate, you give your attention to one thing, and do not think about anything else, usually as a religious activity or as way of calming or relaxing your mind." This definition implies that meditation means thinking about something, be it religious or mystical in nature, and that a constant thought process goes on while one meditates. The purest Eastern definition of the word 'meditation' means not thinking at all, but rather focusing consciousness on the cosmic whole, "the all and the everything," as George Gurdjieff called it, without thought, judgment, or distraction.

We can define 'meditation' as the art of consciousness becoming aware of itself on the grand and cosmic scale. Meditation cannot be called a science as yet, because science requires objective testing with objectively proven methods and results.

Meditation is on the road to becoming a real science, however, and not just an intuitive art veiled in mystery. [see [brain scans prove meditation changes the brain](#)]

Why meditate?

Meditation brings a sense of fullness and completion, and is the only permanent source of tranquility available to human beings. All other forms of serenity are temporary and dissolve into conflict and chaos over time. The euphoria of drugs quickly lead to misery and self-destruction. The wholesomeness of love, so beautiful and ethereal, is a relatively short lived and fleeting experience. As J. Krishnamurti said, meditation brings order and "That order is the order of the universe. It is irrevocable and doesn't depend on anything." Meditation is the eternal essence of nature taking on conscious form within the mortal human frame.

Meditation is an adventure of self-discovery. How can you live without knowing who or what you are? If someone asks you who you are during the day, you may state your name, as if a temporary label actually means something important. Ask yourself who you are when you are in deep sleep, unconscious, and without even a dream to prove that you exist at all. Ask yourself who you were ten months before you were born, and who you will be just one moment after your body dies.

Meditation increases awareness of the natural phenomena that is actually going on behind your own eyes. Self-knowledge has intrinsic value, even without the indescribable bliss nature generously unleashes in those who practice meditation with sincerity and patience.

Sitting Meditation

Classic sitting meditation is a vital part of all meditation traditions and has taken many forms, some more effective than others. Some traditional approaches demand that the student sit motionless for hours on end, as if becoming a frozen human statue is the key to enlightenment. A more scientific approach does not make the human body our enemy, but rather works with our natural physiology to allow more intense meditation with less effort and discomfort. Masochism is not an effective path to self-realization.

Begin by finding a relatively quiet place to meditate where you will not be disturbed. All forms of classic sitting meditation should be done in silence, with no background music. You can sit cross legged Asian style on a meditation pillow on the floor, or use the Recliner Chair Method described below. Eyes may be fully open, half open, or slightly open, letting in just two small slits of light. Meditating with eyes fully closed is fine as long as the room remains brightly lit, so that enough light passes through the eyelids to keep your brain alert. I use a powerful 500 watt halogen torchiere lamp to illuminate my meditation room, and this lamp projects a pleasing yellow-orange glow on my closed eyelids.

Meditating in a darkened room presents fundamental physiological problems. When you sit quietly with your eyes closed in darkness, your brain interprets this situation as a signal to start shutting itself down for sleep. Sleep inducing hormones such as melatonin are released at the same time your heart rate and circulation are reduced due to lack of movement. You feel swept away on a sea of quiet relaxation. This pleasant experience may be light sleep state hypnosis, not meditation at all, and thus does you little more good than taking a nap. Meditation means that you are relaxed as if sleeping, but your consciousness is fully and intensely awake. Therefore, if you meditate with your eyes closed, the room must remain brightly lit, so that a significant amount of light passes through the eyelids.

The Sit-Stand Method

Another defense against sleepiness is to break up your formal meditation into three fifteen minute sessions that are easy for your body to tolerate. Sit in quiet meditation for fifteen minutes. Then stand for two minutes. Then sit for another fifteen minutes. Then stand for two minutes. Then sit for a final fifteen minute session. This forty-nine minute technique can be done once, twice, or three times a day for intense practice. You can time yourself by making a tape recording with the sound of a bell or a gong to let you know when to stand up, sit down, and begin and end meditation sessions.

The sit-stand method largely eliminates the problem of cramps, soreness, and numbness in legs often experienced by students attempting to sit for longer periods of time than the body was naturally made to sit. The standing breaks increase blood circulation which helps wakefulness. Comfort is maintained and we avoid the light sleep state hypnosis problem mentioned earlier.

The transitions between sitting and standing in this method are an opportunity to practice meditation in action. Normally, unless we are physically ill, our waking lives are spent in motion and activity. Meditation must not be thought of as

something that is only done in a physically rigid state, far removed from the world of work and play. The goal is to become meditative continuously, so that your very being becomes cosmically conscious permanently and irrevocably. When you stand up and sit down during meditation sessions, feel the inner flow of meditation continue. Observe that your body is moving, but your basic existential identity remains the same.

The Recliner Chair Method

Sitting for long periods of time in the traditional Asian cross legged position is uncomfortable for most Western students of meditation. This physical discomfort, which does nothing in itself to aid meditation, can be entirely eliminated through the use of a recliner chair. The Recliner Chair Method is the most healthful method of sitting as it avoids blocking vital blood circulation in the legs, yet has 100% of the benefits of sitting on the floor in the full lotus position with back held rigidly straight.

Every living cell in your body produces energy, and when you increase blood flow to your legs you increase the amount of energy produced by your leg muscles. This is significant because during meditation sessions you become acutely aware that your entire physical energy output is one unified phenomena. Using this method, students who cannot comfortably sit for twenty minutes on the floor are often able to sit for one full hour or even longer without back pain, numbness, or leg cramps. I highly recommend the Recliner Chair Method as the first choice sitting method for all Western students of meditation.

Contrary to popular belief, sitting with the back held rigidly straight does nothing to aid meditation. The energy that rises up the back during meditation sessions is like water in a garden hose. If you gently bend a hose into a mild arch, the flow of water will not be affected in any perceptible way. With the Recliner Chair Method, the back is held fairly straight in relationship to itself, but rests at an off-angle in relationship to the floor rather than exactly perpendicular to the floor as in the full lotus position.

In addition to our solid physical body that has weight and form, human beings have a second body of energy created by the active energy content of the total human nervous system. The electric like energy of the second body is constantly being washed out through our hands and feet. This energy loss can be stopped by locking the hands and feet together, creating a closed loop of energy that builds up over time. This conserved energy is needed to strengthen the second energy body and push us higher into meditation. The Recliner Chair Method is more effective than the full lotus position in recycling second body energy, and is therefore the fastest acting and most powerful sitting method available. [see explanation of the second energy body in [*The Realms of Consciousness*](#)]

With this method you sit in a recliner chair that is set to a medium reclined position. Shoes and socks should be removed for best results. If your feet get cold, drape a towel or light blanket over your feet to keep them warm. The bare soles of your feet should be pressed against each other and your legs relaxed, knees pointed out to the sides of the chair. Hands can be locked together, laying comfortably in

your lap, or better yet, pressed against the center of your chest, one on top of the other over the center of your emotional heart. By using this technique, energy that is normally washed out through your hands is channeled directly into your heart center, which fortifies both your heart center and your hara (belly center) simultaneously, as all of your centers are connected. The exact internal wiring of your centers and their electrochemical relationships to corresponding nerve bundles in the brain are not currently understood. Fortunately, you do not have to scientifically understand the phenomena of internal psychic centers to enjoy their benefits.

The Recliner Chair Method can be used in conjunction with any of the sitting meditation techniques described on this web page, and usually eliminates the need for the sit-stand method mentioned earlier. On occasion, I have had such intense meditation sessions using this technique that I lost track of time and meditated for two hours straight without the slightest physical discomfort. At the end of the session I easily stood up, with no numbness, soreness, or physical discomfort of any kind.

What do you do while sitting?

The most basic approach to meditation is to relax, let go, and do nothing. Surrender to the moment and watch yourself as a silent witness. If thoughts come to mind, then observe the thoughts without adding to them by your active participation. Be a detached and passive observer and simply feel your most basic fundamental being. This inherently immense entity has been called "the ground of being."

The enlightened teacher J. Krishnamurti used the term "choiceless awareness" to describe his own meditation method. This means being conscious without the thought process choosing something smaller than your vast fundamental being to focus on. Consciousness is like a glass ball floating in the depth of space. Light and sensory input flows into the field of consciousness from all directions. When you think, you focus your attention on just one area of sensory input, or you create a thought from memory stored within the brain. With choiceless awareness, you are not thinking or remembering, just floating and letting sensory input flow through you from all directions without manipulating that input with the thought process. You live in the moment and become totally open. This openness attracts energy from all sides of the universe, which pushes you even higher.

Krishnamurti's choiceless awareness is the same "methodless method" that Zen monks call "mindfulness." Hindu yogis sometimes call it "one pointed vision." A more accurate term might be **one object vision**. This means that you observe yourself, the sky, the trees, and the entire universe as one object. You no longer see the world as a multitude of parts and disconnected events. Instead, you accurately perceive the observer and the observed as exactly the same thing, with no artificial wall of separation blocking the limits of consciousness. This singular entity becomes acutely aware of itself in all its vastness. The one cosmic being, as Krishnamurti said, is "beyond time" and is "untouched by thought." The revered sage Ramana Maharshi described it as "infinite" and "bigger than the human race."

Another useful method is to lend special awareness to the breathing process felt in the belly. Just behind and below your navel (belly button) lies the hara, which is felt

as an ethereal ball of energy. The hara is a natural balancing point of your consciousness which can be thought of as the center of your being. Subjectively and poetically speaking, the hara is where man and universe meet. It is the gateway where we merge and become **man-universe** and **universe-man**. No one really knows what the hara actually is, but we can use it to our full advantage. Consciously developing a powerful hara center is the most important secret of meditation.

When your consciousness is centered in the hara instead of the head, your thinking process slows down and you can relax in the expanded world of being. Trying to stop distracting thoughts through will power alone leads to more thoughts and a self-defeating inner struggle. By transferring your center of awareness to the hara, thoughts gradually disappear on their own without inner conflict. That is why you see Buddha statues with a big belly. It is an esoteric message that the hara is the key to meditation.

Sit quietly and focus on your belly as it moves in and out as you breathe. Over time the hara point will become more noticeable as your meditation grows stronger. Sudden emergencies, such as near collisions on the highway, tend to activate the hara center. We often get a "gut reaction" from sudden danger. You can nourish the feeling of the hara by simply paying passive attention to it. This relaxed concentration is very close to doing nothing, yet it is still a subtle effort. Drinking herb tea or hot water before meditation sessions relaxes the gut and facilitates awareness of the hara. Overeating and consuming cold drinks tends to make hara awareness more difficult.

Here is a [picture of Ramana Maharshi](#). If you look deeply into the photograph you can sense his hara point. Energy from all corners of the universe is flooding into his powerful hara center. Observe the look of sublime contentment on his face. Those interested in the phenomena of the hara may be amused by [my unproven theory about the hara](#).

One can also concentrate on the heart center or the forehead center during formal meditation sessions. The forehead center may simply be the frontal lobes of the brain, which are known to become activated by meditation. I refuse to use the corny old "third eye" label. The hara, heart, and forehead center are all somehow connected, but I suggest you maintain healthy skepticism as to the old Asian explanations of exactly how they are connected. If you activate the heart or forehead center, the hara will automatically become energized.

The forehead center can be physically stimulated by gently rubbing the fingertips on the skull at a centerline spot just above the hairline. The forehead center internally feels like it is just behind the upper forehead, but I have found its most effective finger stimulation spot to be higher into the front of the hairline. If you use the full palm of the hand instead of just the fingertips, however, then placing the palm directly on the upper forehead seems to work best. This may vary from person to person as our skulls and exact brain locations are all a little different. I therefore suggest you experiment as you gain progress. Trying to stimulate the forehead center before you feel a great deal of inner energy is probably a waste of time. It is not the

physical touch that does the work. It is the energy coming off the palm and fingers that reaches the target.

Sweeping House

This easy technique is designed to quickly sweep the clutter of thoughts from your mind. It is one of my favorite techniques, and I am continually amazed at how much it helps with so little effort. It can be used at the start of formal sitting meditation sessions, or you can continue repeating the method every ten minutes during the meditation session itself.

Begin by placing both hands behind your head. Rest your hands at the point where the neck and head meet. Then quickly sweep your hands over the top of your head. Imagine that your hands are gathering up all your thoughts as they move across the top of your skull. When your hands reach just below your forehead, use a flicking motion to throw your hands away from your face. Feel as if all of your thoughts are being swept out of your head and thrown out into empty space. Repeat this rapidly between ten and thirty times as needed. While accomplishing the sweeping motion, feel that your center of consciousness is dropping down from your head to your hara center in your belly. Rest in your hara center as you continue to meditate.

Sweeping House with a Kicker

A variation of the sweeping house technique is to add a breathing stage after the sweeping stage is complete. Place your right palm (reverse hands if you are lefthanded) on your upper forehead and place your left palm on the back of the right hand. Now take four to seven deep breaths through the nose and feel as if you are drawing the air all the way down to your belly. Fully exhale in a normal and relaxed fashion after each breath. This breathing technique is not the baskriya method used in traditional yoga. It is ordinary deep breathing done with intensity and fullness. After exhaling the last breath, sit motionless for a few moments with your hands still on your upper forehead. Cooperate with any upward flow of energy you may feel. This energetic method can be done every ten minutes during an hour long sitting meditation session to create a safe and effective kundalini technique.

WARNING Avoid the use of mantras and long repetitive chanting. Repeating the same words over and over is a method of forgetfulness that will bore the mind and leads to the light sleep state hypnosis problem mentioned earlier. I would define a mantra as the repetition of words, usually meaningless, for a period of two minutes or more.

Mantras have traditionally been used for hours on end by students who become mentally calmed and dulled by their use.

Mantras have proven to be medically helpful for some, because they can unleash hormones that temporarily calm the mind. Mantras are healthier than taking tranquilizers, but are fundamentally different from meditation, which relies on the purifying fire of self-observation. Self-observation is a difficult task that requires courage and an endurance of character and spirit. Real meditation has the real payoff of leading to a naturally calm and expanded state of consciousness, not just an artificially silenced mind that remains fundamentally shallow.

A Self-Inquiry Incantation

The use of meaningful incantations is quite different from mantra use, and can help bring consciousness to greater clarity. Words can help because our minds are organic

hybrid analog-digital computers that process symbols, and words are symbols. The words that deepen meditation form a strategic questioning, not a mantra.

Ramana Maharshi was a beloved Indian teacher who reached enlightenment through self-inquiry, by asking the most fundamental question "Who am I?" Here is a self-inquiry technique that expands Ramana Maharshi's method to make it even more powerful. Speak out loud the following incantation with total intensity before and/or during formal sitting meditation sessions. By the term "total intensity," I mean the same level of intensity you would feel if you were just told that you only had one hour left to live. Be emotional, be Italian, use your hands and body language if it helps. Plead with the universe the following question.

What is this ball of consciousness? What is this ball of consciousness? What is this ball of consciousness? - You can repeat this question more than three times if the spirit moves you. Go with the flow.

I am not this library of memories. I have no history. I have no biography.

I am the space. I have always been the space, and I crush these bonds of attachment now!

When speaking the words, "**I crush these bonds of attachment now!**," strike your upturned left palm with the back of your right hand, like a hammer hitting an anvil, upon saying the word "**now!**" Reverse hands if you are lefthanded. Do not overdo it and hurt your hands. Just hit forcefully enough to produce a soft cracking sound, which adds drama and helps wake up the central nervous system.

Resonate the words deep inside you without thinking of intellectual explanations of who you are. Just asking this question is purifying and ennobling. Self-inquiry is an innocent and fundamental endeavor, and you need an innocently naked mind to see reality directly without the distortions of memory and thought. You can use this questioning technique only at the beginning of formal sitting meditation sessions, or you can repeat the incantation every ten minutes during meditation sessions to help keep your energy focused.

Over time you will find the words become a trigger mechanism which allows you to instantly drop all peripheral involvement and come home to your primordial eternal being. We all have the same essential being, and that being is cosmic. No one is left out of this universe. If you are part of the universe, you are all of the universe! The small 'I' is dropped, and only the big 'I' remains. Then you can have a good belly laugh, and that is the way I end most of my own meditation sessions. I meditate until I start laughing from the hara center. Then I know I am cooked!

A gentler, less rigorous approach to this method is to mentally repeat the question, "**What is this ball of consciousness?,"** about a dozen times without vocalization. This small amount of repetition will enhance and center your consciousness rather than dull it. For many students this softer approach is all that is needed.

Word exercises are not for everyone. If you try them and feel nothing, then concentrate on other methods first. As you slowly change your methods will change with you. A method that is unusable now may be of great help to you in the future.

Some students find that the use of a mirror virtually doubles the power of their meditation sessions. Sit in front of a mirror and gaze into the reflected image, setting your focus just above the head so that you view the wall behind you. Looking directly at the face or eyes may be too intense an experience for many students, and may lead to silly concern about personal appearance. Using this technique one only views the physical body as a shadowy peripheral silhouette. Continue gazing for twenty minutes, allowing the eyes to deeply relax their focus.

Enjoy the mirror gazing for twenty minutes, then stand for two minutes, maintaining the heightened awareness as you change position. Then resume sitting in quiet meditation for a further twenty minutes with eyes closed. This mirror gazing technique takes forty-two minutes, but may be extended to one full hour if desired, with eyes open and eyes closed sections remaining equal. Please practice this mirror gazing method no more than once a day. Strong meditation techniques are medicine and you should not overdose.

Mirror gazing is a form of **tratak**, the ancient yogic practice of fixing one's gaze on an object with total intensity. You may practice tratak by staring at a candle's flame, a distant tree, the picture of an enlightened teacher, or any object that is pleasant to view. While practicing tratak, one must remain motionless and allow oneself to become totally absorbed by the object you are viewing.

Eye Gazing

To practice this technique you must have a partner of the opposite sex, preferably someone you love. It is similar to the mirror gazing technique described above except that you look into the eyes of your loved one. Sit together, staring softly into your partners eyes for twenty minutes. Then stand silently for two minutes. Then sit in quiet meditation with eyes closed for a further twenty minutes. This technique can readily lead to romantic intimacy, so pick your partner carefully.

Cathartic Dancing Meditation

Cathartic Dancing Meditation is a cosmic powerhouse that can be practiced by students in good health with a normal cardiovascular system. As it is a physically strenuous exercise, one should get a complete physical examination by a competent physician before experimenting with this technique. Explain the method to your doctor, and ask if it would be physically dangerous for you to do. He probably won't understand your motives for wanting to do it, but he can tell you if he thinks your heart can safely handle it. As with jogging or mountain climbing, you must practice this method at your own risk.

Cathartic Dancing Meditation is similar to Rajneesh Dynamic Meditation but is simpler, easier to do, and is more likely to keep you interested month after month, year after year. Neither method is really new. Sufis, Druids, and countless other esoteric and tribal cultures have used similar techniques for centuries. Most students will benefit from doing Cathartic Dancing Meditation daily for a period of between one to five years. After five years it has usually done its job, and the student can then concentrate on more subtle meditation methods.

Cathartic Dancing Meditation changes you from head to toe, and benefits all the other meditation methods you practice. It also helps develop a powerful hara center. I am reluctant to bring up the subject of kundalini (see definition near the bottom of the page) because of the common misrepresentations of its manifestations. I feel compelled to inform you, however, that this physically vigorous meditation method is the most powerful kundalini awakening technique I know of. Cathartic Dancing Meditation has three stages and lasts for 40 minutes.

Stage #1 (ten minutes) Start by standing with your eyes closed and breathe deep and fast through your nose continuously. If you are only physically capable of doing deep breathing for five minutes, then reduce the length of the first stage. Remember that you are doing this method to help your meditation, not to physically injure yourself. Allow your body to move freely as you breathe. You can jump up and down, sway back and forth, or use any physical motion that helps you pump more oxygen into your lungs.

Stage #2 (twenty minutes) The second stage is a celebration of catharsis and wild and spontaneous dancing. Totally let go and act as an ancient human dancing in tribal celebration. Energetic, nonverbal background music is recommended. African tribal drum music works especially well. You may roll on the ground and do strange spontaneous body movements. Allow your body to move within the limits of not hurting yourself or others. Screaming is encouraged. You must act out any anger you may have in a safe way, such as beating the earth with your hands. All of the suppressed emotions from your subconscious mind are to be released. If at anytime during the second stage you feel that your energy level is starting to decline, you can resume deep and fast breathing to give yourself a boost.

Stage #3 (ten minutes) This stage is complete quiet and relaxation. Flop down on your back, get comfortable, and just let go. Be as if a dead man totally surrendered to the cosmos. Enjoy the tremendous energy you have unleashed in the first two stages, and be a silent witness to it. Observe the feeling of the ocean flowing into the drop. Become the ocean.

This spontaneous dancing meditation technique is intended to grow with the student and change as the student changes. After a few years of vigorously practicing this method, the first two stages of the meditation may drop away spontaneously. You may then begin the meditation by taking a few deep breaths and immediately enter the deep tranquility of the third stage. If practiced correctly, this method is health giving and fun.

Almost all Westerners are head oriented and emotionally repressed. For us a chaotic, spontaneous, and emotionally cleansing technique like Cathartic Dancing Meditation is vital for serious progress to be made quickly. The physical benefits of this technique obviate any need for hatha yoga or traditional kundalini yoga methods. I strongly recommend that the Cathartic Dancing Meditation technique only be used in combination with traditional quiet sitting meditation methods. While active meditation methods can be very helpful, they are not complete systems in themselves. If you rely on active meditation techniques alone you will only be doing half of the

internal work that needs to be done.

WARNING Obviously, one must practice Cathartic Dancing Meditation in a safe location and not near the edge of a cliff, or on a hard surface where one might fall and break one's skull. A large room or hall with thick carpeting is good. Outdoors in the early morning on a soft and well tended lawn with group participation is best. Do it on an empty stomach and avoid falling into dangerous objects such as windows. It is allowable to briefly open one's eyes occasionally to maintain your location. Create a safety zone around your dancing and spontaneous body movements. Be courteous to neighbors and delete the screaming if it will be heard by others.

Total Awareness

This advanced method is recommended for those students who have practiced other meditation techniques long enough to gain a feeling of floating bodilessness. Begin this method by sitting with eyes fully open. Softly gaze at a blank wall, or more preferably, look out a window at a distant vista. With the mind's eye (the eye of consciousness behind your body's purely physical eyes) define your field of visual consciousness as a circle. Imagine the top of your field of consciousness as the 12 o'clock position on a clock, and the bottom of your field of consciousness as the 6 o'clock position. With your mind's eye, not your physical eyes, slowly sweep your attention clockwise from the top 12 o'clock position down to the 6 o'clock position, then on to the 9 o'clock position, and then back up to the 12 o'clock position. Repeat this process in the counterclockwise direction. Mentally strain to observe the very outer edges of your visual field of consciousness where the light of consciousness turns into the darkness of empty space. Go on repeating this process until you feel you have had enough.

This is an powerful awareness exercise, not an eye exam, and that is why it is recommended only for students with a number of years of experience in meditation. After practicing this method for some time, you can begin to transform the method into one of sudden expansion of awareness. You can gain the ability to perceive the complete 360 degrees of the outer edges of your consciousness in one jump. This feels like stepping back, literally out of your own mind, and looking back into your mind from a close and friendly distance. You become identified with the Void, and the perception of deep space around the flame of consciousness makes the flame grow brighter. This esoteric method is difficult to fully explain, and there are aspects of it that you will have to learn on your own through practice.

One discovers from this technique that our visual field of consciousness is roughly football shaped, with greater width than height. This is because our brains evolved out of a need to look for food and danger more on the horizontal axis than on the vertically axis. To survive you need to be aware of what is on your right and left more than what is directly below your feet or above your head. This powerful awareness method has a deprogramming effect that allows one to appreciate the play of existence as an ever changing drama. You feel as if you are in it, but also out of it and beyond it.

You can be creative

After you have become comfortable with the meditation techniques individually, you can learn to incorporate them simultaneously to multiply their effectiveness. For example, combining hara awareness and the use of the self-inquiry incantation can be an extremely powerful method. There are no rigid one-size-fits-all meditation techniques. Follow your intuition and let the methods evolve to fit your own

individuality. Don't take the time suggestions for methods as set limits. If you desire to extend your meditation sessions, then go with the flow.

How long should I meditate?

The time a person needs to spend in formal meditation sessions to gain maximum benefit depends on ever-changing individual circumstances. If you are meditating with a group, you will gain from the group energy and go further with less effort. If you are fortunate enough to be living close to an enlightened teacher, you may be able to absorb some of his high energy without any effort at all. If you are meditating alone, without support from others, then you will have to do all the heavy lifting yourself.

My general recommendation is that a single forty minute meditation session practiced every day is a minimum effort, and scientists have proven that amount of meditation is enough to physically enlarge portions of the brain involved in awareness. Meditation only works for those who are hungry for it, and if you cannot spare forty minutes a day you will probably not gain substantial benefits. If you wish to go faster, with clearly recognizable progress, then I suggest two or three formal meditation sessions every day. A specific recommendation for young, physically fit beginners would be to practice Cathartic Dancing Meditation in the morning and one of the quiet sitting meditations at night.

It is of paramount importance to practice mindfulness throughout the day. To be of any real value, meditation must become a full-time way of living rather than a strictly segregated activity. Choose methods that make you feel more positive.

Meditation should be a form of cosmic hedonism, not a penance one must perform as an obligation.

The wanting mechanism

What keeps us diverted from meditation in the here and now? Look inside your mind and find the wanting mechanism. The wanting mechanism continuously constructs images of new experiences the mind desires, derived from memories of the past. The mind becomes enamored with these new fantasy images and is diverted away from what actually is, here and now. The eternal cosmic consciousness exists here and now, never in the future, and never in the past. Future and past are illusory and do not exist in any real physical form outside of projections of our own minds.

What exists now is everything, and you already have it.

Wanting is part of life, creativity, family building, wealth creation, and the survival instinct. In the sense of preserving the human race on planet earth, wanting is a very good thing. In the sense of an individual becoming an awakened Buddha, wanting is a hindrance. Wanting creates duality, the wanter and that which is desired.

Siddhartha Gautama taught that desire is a root cause of suffering. The question is, how many of us can and should take the last steps to enlightenment by dropping the wanting mechanism entirely?

Not wanting means not wanting anything, not just dropping the desire for sex, money, and power, but also dropping the desire for justice, family, and nation. It is

not what you want that matters, it is the wanting mechanism itself that is the barrier. Deep meditation is a giant leap beyond logic and the norms of society. It is dissolving into infinity and oblivion and not coming back. Very few humans have been able to manage that radical transformation totally, and that is why enlightenment will always be an extremely rare phenomena. Ending the wanting mechanism brings time to a halt, annihilates the future and the past, and expands consciousness to the far reaches of the universe.

If everyone in the world suddenly became enlightened, in my opinion, the human race would come to an end. There would be a lack of sufficient desire to keep people motivated enough to have families, raise children, grow crops, and protect society from all the natural threats, from disease to ecological disaster. That said, I certainly believe that enlightenment is a desirable goal for those who really want it, but you can see the impossibility of the situation. When you "want" enlightenment your wanting mechanism is still active and enlightenment will not happen to you. So we can all breathe easy that everyone in the world will not become enlightened, all at the same time, anytime soon.

Ask yourself these questions.

- 1) If you want something, how can you stop thinking about it?
- 2) If you don't want anything, what is there to think about?
- 3) If you don't want anything, is there anything to be angry about?
- 4) If you don't want anything, is there anything to make you unhappy?

Rocks and other inanimate objects do not want and they do not suffer, but they are unconscious and dead. How does a living human being enter a no-wanting state while fully conscious and filled to the brim with life energy? That is the incredible contradiction and difficulty in becoming enlightened.

At some point in your practice of meditation you may see that wanting is a barrier to further progress. Only when you can perceive this very clearly should you try to step back from the wanting mechanism, otherwise you will suppress desires and lead a false life. Stepping back from the wanting mechanism is a form of intense self-observation, not suppression.

Things to do, things to avoid, and things to consider

- Work in groups when possible as group energy can multiply the energy of an individual many times over.
- Remember that meditation is an escape to reality, not an escape from reality. Avoid any guru or group that asks you to deny truth.
- Don't limit yourself to just one teacher. The single guru approach can lead to cult thinking with its small mindedness and us vs. them syndrome.
- Hatha yoga can make you more energetic and fit for long meditation sessions, but do not take it too seriously, or become obsessed with extreme gymnastics. The easy and basic hatha yoga exercises work best. Extreme kundalini yoga exercises that involve fast breathing in bizarre positions may be dangerous and

are not recommended. Men should never sit with their heels pressed behind their testicles, as some yogis and Buddhist monks instruct, as this practice is unhealthy and can cause sterility.

- Having a separate room used exclusively for meditation can be very helpful. It is possible to build up a vibration in a room so that the moment you enter it your mind becomes silent and ready for deep meditation.
- Avoid fads (see [New Age therapists kill girl](#)) and complicated philosophies that give your mind more to think about. Meditation is a step beyond the thought process. No philosophy can adequately describe man's place in the universe. Concentrate on meditation in this moment and not on ancient scriptures. Many old scriptures were written by madmen and fools, and have gained respect from society simply because they are so old and dusty.
- It is essential to maintain a nutritionally adequate diet without becoming a food fanatic. Most people find that a semivegetarian diet supplemented with dairy products and eggs is generally best for meditation, but not essential. If you have a medical problem, such as hypoglycemia, you may have to eat meat just to survive. Even the Atkins high fat, high protein diet is perfectly compatible with meditation.
- Food should not be made the fundamental basis of your practice of meditation. Adolf Hitler was a vegetarian, yet his diet did not make him virtuous or even nonviolent. Most Tibetan lamas and Asian Zen monks eat meat, so obviously meat consumption is not a serious obstacle to cosmic consciousness. There is no scientific evidence to suggest that a vegetarian diet extends lifespan or improves health. Nations with the highest longevity rates, such as Japan, Sweden, and Australia, are all populated by avid meat eaters.
- Fasting is a waste of time and will weaken you physically. Like taking LSD, fasting creates strangely entertaining short term experiences but produces no long term benefits and can cause permanent neurological damage. When you fast your body literally feeds upon itself. If your brain needs protein for repair work, your body will be directed to eat away its own own muscles, or worse, your own peripheral nerve cells. People fast because their heads feel cluttered with thoughts and they hope planned starvation will purify their minds. The human body is made of mud (water and dirt), so the idea of a perfect, spiritually purified physical body is misguided. The way to end the cluttered feeling is to change the way your brain and energy body function, and this can be accomplished through the use of meditation techniques.
- I do not recommend solitary meditation retreats longer than seven days duration. To maintain health one must eat a balanced diet and get rigorous physical exercise every day. To maintain full brain function one must also get mental exercise through interaction with other human beings and through problem solving. If you meditate in isolation for months or years continuously, your body and brain will become deconditioned and atrophy. You may develop strange hallucinations and delusions, and come back physically weaker with a measurably lower IQ.
- Avoid drugs and alcohol. Carlos Castaneda was a talented fiction writer who

misled many people. Drugs are not an effective path to enlightenment, but they are a quick path to misery and insanity.

- Have sex when you wish and do not force celibacy upon yourself in the hopes that it will lead to enlightenment. To meditate one must be in a very natural and relaxed state of mind, without repression or tension. Celibacy can only be of value if it occurs spontaneously, without effort. The majority of famous gurus who have claimed celibacy publicly have practiced intercourse privately. Why make sex a big secret, and why have two faces? Many fully enlightened humans have had sexual relations even after enlightenment.
- Practice choiceless awareness (one object vision, mindfulness) throughout the day. Meditation must become as continuous and spontaneous as breathing.
- Don't make meditation a competition, and drop any hidden agenda you may have to use it to control others. Legitimate motives for meditation are the desire for tranquility and ecstasy, freedom from suffering, and the adventure of self-exploration.
- Don't turn your meditation into a business. People who make a profit from intercourse have turned something beautiful into something ugly. Those who make money from meditation have transformed a noble path into a sordid back alley. Whether you are a sexual prostitute or a spiritual prostitute, the fundamental quality of your mind is the same.
- Be completely honest and have just one face, not two.
- One of the most dangerous thoughts you can have is to think that you have lost your ego!
- For every action there is a reaction, not just in theoretical physics, but in ordinary human life as well. When you create positive actions you will eventually reap positive reactions for yourself and for others. In this way what we call ethics and morality are woven into the very fabric of the universe, right down to the subatomic level.

Enlightenment

The fastest meditation method is to live in the company of an enlightened human being. Enlightened teachers can expand your consciousness without the slightest effort on your part; all you need to do is to be open to the spontaneous transfer of energy. Fully enlightened humans are very rare. There may have been as few as seven fully enlightened teachers in the now past 20th century. I do not know of any fully enlightened teachers still living today, but that does not mean they do not exist. More enlightened teachers will be coming in the future, and it is your challenge to find them while avoiding the many fakes.

When it comes to gurus, even fully enlightened gurus, take the best and leave the rest. No human being has ever been perfect and without major flaws and limitations. [see [*The Ridiculous Teachings of Wrong Way Rajneesh*](#)] Only myths can give you the illusion of perfection. That is why most of society continues to worship invented myths rather than accept reality as it is, warts and all. Enlightened humans are vastly expanded human beings, not perfect human beings.

It is my educated opinion that the traditional guru-disciple relationship is now passé and inappropriate for Western students of meditation. The East has always had an imperial and authoritarian model for the teacher-student relationship. The West must develop its own more democratic traditions based on science and fact, not on myth and tradition. Be a devoted disciple, but make your guru the total life experience itself, not just a single fallible human being. Use human teachers as temporary tools on your path to self-realization, but do not allow yourself to become the captive servant of one fallible human mind.

Christopher Calder - [E-mail](#) - [My home page](#)

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* Definition: kundalini (kʊnˈde-lêˈnê) noun of Hindu origin. The ancient Hindus defined kundalini as a process whereby sexual energy that lies dormant near the base of the spine, in the "Muladhara chakra," is activated and directed upward to the top of the head. A scientific, neurology based explanation for the kundalini experience has not yet been discovered. My own unproven theory is that all of the "chakras" and the kundalini channel itself may reside within the human brain, with only corresponding points located in the lower body and spinal column. The real "Muladhara chakra" (sex center) may reside as a bundle of nerves in the brain, and kundalini practice may simply transfer the neural energy of our powerful sex drive upward to the higher centers of the brain which create cosmic consciousness. This would explain why doctors have not been able to find any physical evidence of chakras in the lower body. The latest research shows that the "subtle body" that mystics claim is "immaterial" is just an illusion created by the material human brain itself.

What is Meditation (Dhyana)?

"Meditation is to religion what the laboratory is to science."
--Paramahansa Yogananda

Nowadays it is difficult to find people who have not heard of meditation. The majority of them, however, have only a vague notion what it is about and how to practice it. Some people equate meditation with a way of emotional healing and stress reduction, others reduce it to a Hindu or Buddhist method of religious worship. At the extreme, people who practice meditation have been labeled as spacey, emotionally impaired, oversensitive individuals, rushing to fix themselves with the latest New Age contraptions, or as antisocial escapist-yogis having no interest in the world. All these criticisms have some basis in reality, for such qualities may be found among people who practice meditation or live in spiritual communities. Whatever the downside or whatever the label, contemplative practice is an inseparable part of all spiritual traditions; it is both the axis and foundation on which the spiritual life is built.

In the last decade meditation has become an important, although still minor, healing modality of psychotherapists and rehabilitation institutions. It is being studied at the world's largest universities. Science is finally confirming what was known to yogis for millennia: meditation helps us to heal emotionally, has a calming effect on our nerves, balances blood pressure, has excellent stress reduction properties, helps us to relax and to control pain. But whatever the 'worldly' benefits of meditation, its most important application is spiritual growth, which is impossible without contemplative practice.

The human mind has two directions, external and internal. Our thoughts are usually directed outward and, much less frequently, inward. And this is natural: in order to avoid discomfort and seek pleasure, we need to be constantly concerned with the external world. So gradually we develop the habit of taking in and reaching out for the external world and, sooner or later, of constantly and restlessly thinking about it. We run after a piece of bread, worry about those close to us, work hard, seek diversions and entertainment when we're tired, and try to resolve our constantly arising problems. This way we are incessantly drawn into the drama of worldly existence, the main hero of which is the restless, ever-curious "me." This "me" has so little time to examine itself that we have but little idea to what degree we are entangled in this drama. We are so lost in, so confused by, the external that we forget who we are and what we really want!

Meditation is a powerful tool, one that not only provides us the opportunity to see this "drama," but also to slow it down, to let it cool off and, finally, to leave it entirely--to finish off our slave-actor career. It helps us to remember and get in touch with what we really long for, to learn about our real needs and to find and connect with our authentic life's calling, which is to follow our inner bliss. (The latter should not be confused with following one's desire.) Through regular and persistent meditation practice we gradually calm down and begin to come alive from within. Sooner or later we begin to see the external world as it is --God's Drama. And having seen this, our imagination, which is fed by the external world, loses its power over us and we gain freedom.

From the point of view of tantra yoga theory, the human soul (*atman*) is a part of the Supreme Soul (*Paramatman*). Like God's Soul, the human soul is infinite in its nature but, by the influence of the "dark force" (*avidya maya*), it comes to desire the objects of the external world. Being of infinite nature, the soul longs for its true soul mate--for the Infinite Beloved, for the relationship, the union with the Supreme Soul. That deep dissatisfaction we frequently feel with life, with our work, with our mates, with things in our closets, is the natural sickness of an estranged soul, longing for its true companion—God. The human

soul can never be truly satisfied with something of a limited nature because it wants, it longs for, the Infinite. Although initially, the dark force confuses the mind and makes it run towards the world of things and ideas, that nagging dissatisfaction will remind us of, make us restless for, the Infinite Supreme. The whole point of the spiritual path--the path of meditation, is nothing but to recognize and satisfy that infinite longing. Without success on this Path, we are doomed to being dissatisfied and restless.

The term "meditation" is often used both to denote the process or technique of meditation, as well as the state "elicited" by meditation practice. Usually during meditation we concentrate on a particular object or idea, such as a flower, a candle flame, a sound, a word (*mantra*), an image of a deity, our breath, or, in its purest form, simply on whatever is. A beginner would benefit most from the insight meditation style: simply concentrating on the breath and whatever is. An advanced practitioner would be served best by the style of meditation that requires a concentrated effort, such as focusing his or her mind on complex visualization (of a *mandala* or a deity) and repeating a specially empowered mantra. Such advanced techniques must be acquired only via the process of initiation and only from a competent teacher/guru. The method of meditation should correspond to your personality, body type and *sam'skara* (karma). For this, it is best to place your confidence in a competent teacher. The practice of meditation will gradually reduce the stream of thoughts arising in your mind. The preoccupation with these thoughts, the certainty of their importance, as well as the false sense that we and our thoughts are one and the same, also gradually diminishes. At first it is hard to free ourselves from the whirlpool of thoughts--it sucks us in. But if we can experience the degree to which we've become caught up in it, there is the possibility of making an effort and learning to escape it, rather than drowning in it.

The state "elicited" by meditation depends on the nature of the person, on the method of meditation and on the experience of the meditator. Relaxation and the experience of inner peace, an improvement in relationships with relatives and friends, as well as an increase in the ability to concentrate and a clarification of the reasoning faculty, are natural signs that the practice of meditation is "successful," that is to say, is going "normally." However much you wish to find out what positive effects meditation will have on you, it is best not to get stuck on such thoughts when you are practicing meditation. Such expectations only add strength to the whirl of thoughts and complicate the practice of meditation.

If at the beginning of your practice you do not feel inner peace, bliss, clarity of mind or any other advertised "benefits" of meditation, this in itself does not indicate that you are practicing incorrectly. It is not important what you are feeling during meditation. It is not important if you are happy, blissful or calm during meditation. The important thing is that you do it on a regular basis and that you apply the appropriate effort (but do not overdo). There is no doubt that regular, diligent practice of meditation under the guidance of a competent teacher will gradually bring about both an understanding of how to do it "better" and a wiser attitude toward life--which all of us could use.

For information on how to begin to practice meditation, [click here](#).

--Anatole
(Translated from Russian)

Beginning Meditation Practice

Introduction to Insight Style of Meditation

There are many methods of meditation: complicated and simple, effective and useless, requiring much time and requiring little. The following method is simple, effective and not too time consuming. It is ideal for beginners. Many teachers, especially Buddhists, limit themselves to it because it is sufficient for attaining enlightenment. This method will provide the "optimum dose" of contemplative activity without which the attainment of the Spiritual Goal is impossible. It will also help in coping with stress, learning how to relax and seeing reality as it is.

Without daily contemplative activity, i.e. meditation, the spiritual path is IMPOSSIBLE! Don't wait for a more convenient time to start doing meditation. It is not going to come. Do not wait for tomorrow to begin your practice. Do not imagine that reading about meditation can replace practicing meditation. Start doing it today! (You must demand, with all due respect, and receive from your teacher as soon as possible all the necessary instructions regarding the spiritual path and meditation practice.)

Familiarize yourself with the following directions on how to meditate, so that you will not be distracted during your practice. Don't worry about how your meditation will go. Meditation is a process the results of which will reveal themselves regardless of how you are doing meditation, only regularity and patience are necessary. Thinking about possible results, worrying about whether you are meditating properly or not will only hinder the practice. Through contemplative activity we are trying not to complicate our condition with additional mental activity but to see it as it is. The best way to begin meditation is simply to start, throwing all preconceived ideas out the window. Do not judge yourself and not worry about results. Shall we start?

Find a quiet, pleasant place and turn off the telephone. Inform your friends that this is the time you devote to yourself and that you do not wish to be disturbed. If you do not have a quiet, convenient place, then adjust the best you can. One can meditate under any conditions.

Sit comfortably on a chair, arm-chair, floor, mat or a blanket, straighten your back, put your hands on your lap one on top of the other (palms facing up), close your eyes. Deeply, slowly breathe in and out 3-4 times to relax a bit.

Then examine your body from inside. How does it look? How do you perceive the inside? Where are the organs? What is their color? What is their condition — healthy, sick, tired, full of life? Slowly, step by step direct your attention to all the major parts of the body, start down, finish up. After this, with an imaginary broom, sweep out the tension and fatigue starting at the bottom with your feet and finishing on top with your head and then gradually, gradually let a feeling of pleasant relaxation enter the body, as if a vast seascape has opened up before you.

Now let into this inner seascape all of the inner and outer happenings — allow all the sounds, thoughts, perceptions and emotions to enter. DO NOT JUDGE OR ANALYZE THEM. Let these inner and outer happenings have a place inside you but do not dwell on them. Let them begin and end of their own accord without your participation.

Register the incessant chatter, fears and hopes that continually surface in your consciousness. Note how you ceaselessly scheme about the future, projects which like the Soviet five-year plan will never come to be. Feel the eternal itch of worry that something bad will happen. Listen to the quiet, aching guilt about past mistakes best left behind.

Sit this way in contemplation NOT JUDGING AND NOT LINGERING ON ANYTHING for

about 15 minutes. After your meditation practice it is beneficial to read an inspiring book, to be alone or to go for a walk.

— Anatole

Meditation

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For other senses of this word, see [Meditation \(disambiguation\)](#).



A large statue in [Bangalore](#) depicting [Shiva](#) meditating

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See also

- [Alternative medicine](#)

Meditation describes a state of concentrated [attention](#) on some object of [thought](#) or [awareness](#). It usually involves turning the attention inward to a single point of reference.^[1] Meditation is often recognized as a component of [eastern religions](#), where it has been practiced for over 5,000 years.^{[2][3][4]} Different meditative disciplines encompass a wide range of spiritual and/or psychophysical practices which can emphasize development of either a high degree of mental concentration, or the apparent converse, mental [quiescence](#).

The word meditation comes from the [Latin](#) *meditatio*, which originally indicated every type of physical or intellectual exercise, then later evolved into the more specific meaning "[contemplation](#)."

Eastern spiritual teachings, including meditation, have been adapted and increasingly practiced in [Western](#) culture. ^[5]

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[edit] Forms of meditation



[Bodhidharma](#) practicing [zazen](#).

Meditation has been defined as: "self regulation of attention, in the service of self-inquiry, in the here and now."^[6] The various techniques of meditation can be classified according to their focus. Some focus on the field or background perception and experience, also called "mindfulness;" others focus on a preselected specific object, and are called "concentrative" meditation. There are also techniques that shift between the field and the object.^[7]

In *mindfulness meditation*, the meditator sits comfortably and silently, centering attention by focusing awareness on an object or process (either the breath, a sound: a mantra, koan or riddle evoking questions; a visualisation, or an exercise). The meditator is usually encouraged to maintain an open focus:

... shifting freely from one perception to the next... No thought, image or sensation is considered an intrusion. The meditator, with a 'no effort' attitude, is asked to remain in the here and now. Using the focus as an 'anchor'... brings the subject constantly back to the present, avoiding cognitive analysis or fantasy regarding the contents of awareness, and increasing tolerance and relaxation of secondary thought processes.^[7]

Concentration meditation is used in most religions and spiritual practices. Whereas in mindfulness meditation, there is an open focus, in concentration meditation the meditator holds attention on a particular object (e.g., a repetitive prayer) while minimizing distractions; bringing the mind back to concentrate on the chosen object.^[8] In some traditions, such as [Vipassana](#), mindfulness and concentration are combined.^[9]

Meditation can be practiced while walking or doing simple repetitive tasks. Walking meditation helps to break down habitual automatic mental categories, "thus regaining the primary nature of perceptions and events, focusing attention on the process while disregarding its purpose or final outcome." In a form of meditation using visualization, such as Chinese [Qi Gong](#), the practitioner concentrates on flows of energy (Qi) in the body, starting in the abdomen and then circulating through the body, until dispersed.^[7] Some meditative traditions, such as [yoga](#) or [tantra](#), are common to several religions^[4] or occur outside religious contexts.

[edit] Hinduism

For more details on this topic, see [Dhyana in Hinduism](#).

Hinduism can safely be considered the oldest religion that professed meditation as a spiritual and religious practice. [Yoga](#) ([Devanagari](#): योग) is one of the six schools of [Hindu philosophy](#), focusing on meditation. In India, Yoga is seen as a means to both physiological and spiritual mastery.

There are several types of meditation in Hinduism. These include (but are not limited to):

- [Vedanta](#), a form of [Jnana Yoga](#).
- [Raja Yoga](#) as outlined by [Patanjali](#), which describes eight "limbs" of spiritual practices, half of which might be classified as meditation. Underlying them is the assumption that a yogi should still the fluctuations of his or her mind: *Yoga cittavrrti nirodha*.
- [Surat shabd yoga](#), or "sound and light meditation"
- [Japa Yoga](#), in which a [mantra](#) is repeated aloud or silently
- [Bhakti Yoga](#), the yoga of love and devotion, in which the seeker is focused on an object of devotion, eg [Krishna](#)
- [Hatha Yoga](#), in which postures and meditations are aimed at raising the spiritual energy, known as [Kundalini](#), which rises through energy centres known as [chakras](#)

[\[edit\]](#) Bahá'í Faith

The [Bahá'í Faith](#) teaches that meditation is necessary for spiritual growth, alongside obligatory prayer and fasting. '[Abdu'l-Bahá](#) is quoted as saying:

"Meditation is the key for opening the doors of mysteries to your mind. In that state man abstracts himself: in that state man withdraws himself from all outside objects; in that subjective mood he is immersed in the ocean of spiritual life and can unfold the secrets of things-in-themselves."[\[10\]](#)

Although the Founder of the Faith, [Bahá'u'lláh](#), never specified any particular forms of meditation, some Bahá'í practices are meditative. One of these is the daily repetition of the Arabic phrase Alláhu Abhá ([Arabic](#): الله ابهى) (God is Most Glorious) 95 times preceded by [ablutions](#). Abhá has the same root as Bahá' ([Arabic](#): بهاء "splendor" or "glory") which Bahá'ís consider to be the "Greatest Name of God".

[\[edit\]](#) Buddhism



Buddha in meditation

Main article: [Buddhist meditation](#)

Meditation has always been central to Buddhism. The [historical Buddha](#) himself was said to have achieved [enlightenment](#) while meditating under a [Bodhi tree](#). Most forms of Buddhism distinguish between two classes of meditation practices, [shamatha](#) and [vipassana](#), both of which are necessary for attaining enlightenment. The former consists of practices aimed at developing the ability to focus the attention single-pointedly; the latter includes practices aimed at developing insight and wisdom through seeing the true nature of reality. The differentiation between the two types of meditation practices is not always clear cut, which is made obvious when studying practices such as

[Anapanasati](#) which could be said to start off as a shamatha practice but that goes through a number of stages and ends up as a vipassana practice.

[Theravada](#) Buddhism emphasizes the meditative development of [mindfulness](#) (*sati*, see for example the [Satipatthana Sutta](#)) and concentration (*samadhi*, see [kammattana](#)), as part of the [Noble Eightfold Path](#), in the pursuit of [Nibbana](#) (Nirvana). Traditional popular meditation subjects include the breath ([anapana](#)) and loving-kindness ([mettā](#)).



[Zen](#) Buddhist meditation or [zazen](#)

In Japanese [Mahayana](#) schools, [Tendai](#) (Tien-tai), concentration is cultivated through highly structured ritual. Especially in the Chinese [Chán](#) Buddhism school (which branched out into the Japanese [Zen](#), and Korean [Seon](#) schools), [ts'o ch'an](#) meditation and [koan](#) meditation practices allow a practitioner to directly experience the true nature of [reality](#) (each of the names of these schools derives from the Sanskrit [dhyana](#), and translates into "meditation" in their respective languages). The [esoteric Shingon](#) sect shares many features with [Tibetan Buddhism](#).

[Tibetan Buddhism](#) ([Vajrayana](#)) emphasizes [tantra](#) for its senior practitioners; hence its alternate name of Tantrayana Buddhism. Many monks go through their day without "meditating" in a recognizable form, but are more likely to chant or participate in group liturgy. In this tradition, the purpose of meditation is to awaken the sky-like nature of mind, and to introduce practitioners to that which they really are: unchanging pure awareness, which underlies the whole of life and death.[\[11\]](#)[\[12\]](#)

Meditation is the way to bring us back to ourselves, where we can really experience and taste our full being, beyond all habitual patterns. In the stillness and silence of meditation, we glimpse and return to that deep inner nature that we have so long ago lost sight of amid the busyness and distraction of our minds.

The gift of learning to meditate is the greatest gift you can give yourself in this life. For it is only through meditation that you can undertake the journey to discover your true nature, and so find the stability and confidence you will need to live, and die, well.

Meditation is the road to enlightenment. - [Sogyal Rinpoche](#), [The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying](#)[\[11\]](#)

Most [Buddhist traditions](#) recognize that the path to [Enlightenment](#) entails three types of [training](#): virtue (*sīla*); meditation (*citta*); and, wisdom (*paññā*).[\[13\]](#) Thus, meditative prowess alone is not sufficient; it is but one part of the path. In other words, in Buddhism, in tandem with mental cultivation, ethical development and wise understanding are also necessary for the attainment of the highest goal.[\[14\]](#)

[edit] Christianity

Main article: [Christian meditation](#)

Christian traditions have various practices which might be identified as forms of "meditation." Many of these are [monastic](#) practices. Some types of [prayer](#), such as the [rosary](#) and Adoration (focusing on the eucharist) in [Catholicism](#) or the [hesychasm](#) in [Eastern Orthodoxy](#), may be compared to the form of Eastern meditation that focuses on an individual object.

Christian meditation is considered a form of [prayer](#). Some Christian prayer is made primarily by using the intellect, through the contemplation of the divine mysteries. However, Christian prayer or meditation through the heart, as described in the [Philokalia](#) is a practice towards [Theosis](#), which involves acquiring an inner stillness and ignoring the physical senses.

According to the [Old Testament](#) book of [Joshua](#), a form of meditation is to meditate on scriptures. This is one of the reasons why bible verse memory is a practice among many [evangelical](#) Christians. "Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it, then you will be prosperous and successful." (Joshua 1:8)

The use of the word meditation in the western Christian tradition has referred generally to a more active practice of reflection on some particular theme such as "meditation on the sufferings of Christ".

[edit] Islam

See also: [Muraqaba](#)

Meditation in Islam is the core of Muslim mystical traditions (in particular Sufism). Meditative quiescence is believed to have a quality of healing and creativity.^[15] The Muslim prophet [Muhammad](#), whose deeds devout Muslims follow, spent long periods in meditation and contemplation. It was during one such period of meditation that Muhammad began to receive [revelations](#) of the [Qur'an](#).^[16]

There are two concepts or schools of meditation in Islam:

- *Tafakkur* and *Tadabbur*, literally meaning reflection upon the universe. Muslims feel this is a form of intellectual development which emanates from a higher level, i.e. from God. This intellectual process through the receiving of [divine inspiration](#) awakens and liberates the human mind, permitting man's inner personality to develop and grow so that he may lead his life on a spiritual plane far above the mundane level. This is consistent with the global teachings of Islam, which views life as a test of our practice of submission to Allah, the one God.
- The second form of meditation is the [Sufi meditation](#), it is largely based on mystical exercises. However, this method is controversial among Muslim scholars. One group of Ulama, [Al-Ghazzali](#), for instance, have accepted it, another group of Ulama, [Ibn Taymiya](#), for instance, have rejected it as a [bid'ah](#) (Arabic: بدعة) (religious innovation).

Sufism relies on a practice similar to Buddhist meditation, known as [Muraqaba](#) or [Tamarkoz](#) which is taught in the [Oveyssi-Shahmaghsoudi](#) Sufi order. Tamarkoz is a [Persian](#) term that means 'concentration,' referring to the "concentration of abilities". Consequently, the term concentration is synonymous to close attention, convergent, collection, compaction, and consolidation.

Muslims meditate during the second stage of [Hajj](#) at "[Mount Mercy](#)", from noon to sunset.^[17]

[[edit](#)] Jainism



Jain [sadhvis](#) meditating

The [Jains](#) use the word [Samayika](#), a word in the [Prakrit](#) language derived from the word samay (time), to denote the practice of meditation. The aim of Samayika is to transcend the daily experiences of being a "constantly changing" human being, [Jiva](#), and allow for the identification with the "changeless" reality in the practitioner, the Atma. The practice of Samayika begins by achieving a balance in time. If the present moment of time is taken to be a point between the past and the future, Samayika means being fully aware, alert and conscious in that very moment, experiencing one's true nature, Atma, which is considered common to all living beings. The Samayika takes on special significance during [Paryushana](#), a special 8-day period practiced by the Jains.

Meditation techniques were available in ancient Jain scriptures that have been forgotten with time. A practice called [preksha meditation](#) is said to have been rediscovered by the 10th Head of Jain Svetamber Terapanth sect [Acharya Mahaprajna](#),[\[18\]](#) and consists of the perception of the body, the psychic centres, breath and of contemplation processes which will initiate the process of personal transformation. It aims at reaching and purify the deeper levels of existence. Regular practice strengthens the immune system, builds up stamina to resist against aging process, pollution, chemical toxins, viruses, diseases, food adulteration etc.[\[19\]](#)

Acharya Mahaprajna says:

Soul is my god. Renunciation is my prayer. Amity is my devotion. Self restraint is my strength. Non-violence is my religion.[\[20\]](#)

[[edit](#)] Judaism

Main article: [Jewish meditation](#)

There is evidence that Judaism has had meditative practices that go back thousands of years.[\[21\]](#) For instance, in the [Torah](#), the patriarch [Isaac](#) is described as going "לִשְׁׁוּחַ" (*lasuach*) in the field—a term understood by all commentators as some type of meditative practice ([Genesis](#) 24:63).

Similarly, there are indications throughout the [Tanach](#) (the Hebrew [Bible](#)) that meditation was central to the prophets.[\[21\]](#) In the [Old Testament](#), there are two [Hebrew](#) words for meditation: *hāgâ* ([Hebrew](#): הָגָה), which means *to sigh* or *murmur*, but also *to meditate*, and *siḥâ* ([Hebrew](#): שִׁיחָה), which means *to muse*, or *rehearse in one's mind*.

In modern Jewish practice, one of the best known meditative practices is called *hitbodedut* (הִתְבּוֹדְדוּת) or *hisbodedus* is explained in [Kabbalah](#) and [Hassidic](#) philosophy. The word *hisbodedut*, which derives from the Hebrew word "boded", בּוֹדֵד (a state of being alone) and said to be related to the *sfirah* of Binah (lit. book of understanding), means the process of making oneself understand a concept well through analytical study.

Kabbalah is inherently a meditative field of study. Kabbalistic meditative practices construct a supernal realm which the soul navigates through in order to achieve certain ends. One of the most

well known types of meditation is [Merkabah](#), from the root /R-K-B/ meaning "chariot"(of God).

[edit] New Age

Main article: [New Age](#)

New Age meditations are often influenced by Eastern philosophy and mysticism such as Yoga, Hinduism and Buddhism, yet may contain some degree of Western influence. Examples of such meditations include:

- [Passage Meditation](#), a modern method developed by spiritual teacher [Eknath Easwaran](#), involves silent, focused repetition of memorized passages from world scripture and the writings of great mystics.
- [Transcendental Meditation](#), a form of meditation taught and promoted by [Maharishi Mahesh Yogi](#).
- [FISU \(Foundation for International Spiritual Unfoldment\)](#) was established by [Gururaj Ananda Yogi](#)'s prime disciples [Rajesh Ananda](#) and [Jasmini Ananda](#) whom are the leaders ever since.
- [Ananda Marga](#) meditation was propounded by a Mahakaula Guru Shrii Shrii Anandamurtiiji in India, who said that it revived sacred practices taught by SadaShiva and Sri Krs'na. His system of meditation, he said, is based on original Tantra as given by Shiva and has sometimes been referred as "Rajadhiraja Yoga". He revised many yogic and meditative practices and introduced some new techniques.

[edit] Sikhism

Main article: [Nām Japō](#)

In [Sikhism](#), the practices of [simran](#) and [Nām Japō](#) encourage quiet meditation. This is focusing ones attention on the attributes of God. Sikhs believe that there are 10 'gates' to the body, 'gates' is another word for 'chakras' or energy centres. The top most energy level is the called the tenth gate or dasam dwar. It is said[*attribution needed*] that when one reaches this stage through continuous practice meditation becomes a habit that continues whilst walking, talking, eating, awake and even sleeping. There is a distinct taste or flavour when a meditator reaches this lofty stage of meditation, as one experiences absolute peace and tranquility inside and outside the body.

Followers of the Sikh religion also believe that love comes through meditation on the lord's name since meditation only conjures up positive emotions in oneself which are portrayed through our actions. The first Guru of the Sikhs, Guru Nanak Dev Ji preached the equality of all humankind and stressed the importance of living a householders life instead of wandering around jungles meditating, as was popular practice at the time. The Guru preached that we can obtain liberation from life and death by living a totally normal family life and by spreading love amongst every human being regardless of religion.

[edit] Taoism

Main article: [Taoism](#)

Taoism includes a number of meditative and contemplative traditions. Originally said to have their principles described in the *I Ching*, *Tao Te Ching*, *Chuang Tzu* and *Tao Tsang* among other texts; the multitude of schools relating to [Qigong](#), [Neigong](#), [Daoyin](#) and [Zhan zhuang](#) are a large, diverse array of breath training practises in aid of meditation with much influence from later [Chinese Buddhism](#) and with much influence on [traditional Chinese medicine](#) and the [Chinese](#) as well as some [Japanese martial arts](#). The Chinese martial art [T'ai Chi Ch'uan](#) is named after the well-known

focus for Taoist and [Neo-Confucian](#) meditation, the [T'ai Chi T'u](#), and is often referred to as "meditation in motion".

Often [Taoist Internal martial arts](#), especially [Tai Chi Chuan](#) are thought of as moving meditation. A common phrase being, "movement in stillness" referring to energetic movement in passive Qigong and seated Taoist meditation; with the converse being "stillness in movement", a state of mental calm and meditation in the tai chi form.

[\[edit\]](#) Other

[\[edit\]](#) Meditation according to Krishnamurti

[J Krishnamurti](#) used the word meditation to mean something entirely different from the practice of any system or method to control the mind. He said, "Man, in order to escape his conflicts, has invented many forms of meditation. These have been based on desire, will, and the urge for achievement, and imply conflict and a struggle to arrive. This conscious, deliberate striving is always within the limits of a conditioned mind, and in this there is no freedom. All effort to meditate is the denial of meditation. Meditation is the ending of thought. It is only then that there is a different dimension which is beyond time." For Krishnamurti, meditation was choiceless awareness in the present. He said "..When you learn about yourself, watch yourself, watch the way you walk, how you eat, what you say, the gossip, the hate, the jealousy - if you are aware of all that in yourself, without any choice, that is part of meditation."[\[22\]](#)

[\[edit\]](#) Active/dynamic meditation

[Dynamic Meditation](#) is the name of one of [Osho's](#) popular [Active Meditation](#) techniques. However, in general active/dynamic meditation refers to any meditation technique which does not have one's body assuming a static posture. Such techniques are widely used in [Karma Yoga](#). An example of such activity could be [Natya Yoga](#) or a [Shamanistic](#) dance, such as described by [Carlos Castaneda](#) or simple exercises that focus on certain parts of the body "to give you the power to profoundly affect your mental and physical state directly and quickly".[\[23\]](#)

[Osho](#), earlier named [Rajneesh](#), introduced the meditation techniques which he termed [Active Meditations](#), which begin with a stage of activity — sometimes intense and physical — followed by a period of silence. He emphasized that meditation is *not* concentration. [Dynamic Meditation](#) involves a conscious catharsis where one can throw out all the repressions, express what is not easily expressible in society, and then easily go into silence. Some of his techniques also have a stage of spontaneous dance. He said that, "If people are innocent there is no need for [Dynamic Meditation](#). But if people are repressed, psychologically are carrying a lot of burden, then they need catharsis. So Dynamic Meditation is just to help them clean the place. And then they can use any method ... It will not be difficult. If they, right now, directly try, they will fail."[\[24\]](#)

[Sri Aurobindo](#) used to meditate while walking.

Also the [Thai monk Luang Por Teean](#) taught a (more conservative) form of active meditation which in Luang Por Teean's translated books is usually translated as 'Dynamic Meditation'. It involves the use of the hands and arms during sitting meditation. He also used walking meditation as a complementary method. His teaching was aimed at developing awareness of the movements of the arms, which are moved continuously in a certain pattern throughout the meditation. The awareness is, however, not limited to the arms but inclusive of the whole life-experience. This type of active meditation is a type of [vipassana](#) meditation, which originated in [Burma](#), but is becoming more well known in the western countries, too.

[edit] Sahaja Yoga

Main article: [Sahaja Yoga](#)

[Sahaja Yoga](#) is a meditative practice started by H.H. Shri [Mataji Nirmala Srivastava](#). Sahaja Yoga focuses on awakening the [Kundalini](#), so that practitioners can achieve [Self-realization](#).

[edit] Secular

Forms of meditation which are devoid of mystical content have been developed in the west as a way of promoting physical and mental well being.

[Jacobson's Progressive Muscle Relaxation](#) was developed by American physician [Edmund Jacobson](#) in the early 1920s. Jacobson argued that since muscular tension accompanies anxiety, one can reduce anxiety by learning how to relax the muscular tension.

[Autogenic training](#) was developed by the German psychiatrist [Johannes Schultz](#) in 1932. Schultz emphasized parallels to techniques in yoga and meditation, however, autogenic training is devoid of any mysticism.

Australian psychiatrist [Dr Ainslie Meares](#) published a groundbreaking work in the 1960's entitled *Relief Without Drugs*, in which he recommended some simple, secular relaxation techniques based on Hindu practices as a means of combating anxiety, stress and chronic physical pain.

[Herbert Benson](#) M.D., of Harvard Medical School, conducted a series of clinical tests on meditators from various disciplines - mainly [Transcendental meditation](#) and [Tibetan Buddhism](#). He first described the results in his 1975 book *The Relaxation Response* where he outlined a secular approach to achieving similar results.

[Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche](#) founded [Shambhala Training](#) in 1976, a secular program of meditation with a belief in basic goodness and teaching the path of bravery and gentleness. The 1984 book *Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior* contains student-edited versions of Trungpa's lectures and writings.

The book *Sensual Meditation (1980)* which was written by the founder of the [Raëlian movement](#) outlines a sequence of non-ascetic meditation exercises which emphasize a [Sensual Meditation](#) involving a physical and sensual awareness connected with current knowledge of how the body and mind are organized.

The 1999 book *The Calm Technique: Meditation Without Magic or Mysticism* by Paul Wilson has a discussion and instruction in a form of secular meditation.

[Biofeedback](#) has been tried by many researchers since the 1950s as a way to enter deeper states of mind.^[25]

[edit] Meditation using beads

Most religions have their own prayer beads or rosary. A rosary consists of pearls or beads linked together by a thread. Christians use a string of beads containing five sets with ten small beads. Each set of ten is separated by another bead. The Hindu and Buddhist rosary has 108 beads and the Muslim rosary 99 beads .Prayers and specific meditations of each religion are different and there are theological reasons for the number of beads. Rosaries may come in different colors, sizes and designs. However, the central purpose, which is to pray repetitively and to meditate, is the same across all religions that use them as a prayer tool.^[*citation needed*]

[edit] Acoustic and photic

Newer forms of meditation are based on the results of [EEG \(electro-encephalogram\)](#) work in long-

term meditators. Studies have demonstrated the presence of a [frequency](#)-following response to auditory and visual stimuli. This EEG activity was termed "frequency-following response" because its period (cycles per second) corresponds to the fundamental frequency of the stimulus. Stated plainly, if the stimulus is 5 [Hz](#) the resulting measured EEG will show a 5 Hz frequency-following response using appropriate time-domain averaging protocols.[\[26\]\[27\]](#) This is the justification behind such inventions as the [Dreamachine](#) and [binaural beats](#).

[\[edit\]](#) Meditation in a Western context

"Meditation" in its modern sense refers to Yogic meditation that originated in India. In the late nineteenth century, [Theosophists](#) adopted the word "meditation" to refer to various spiritual practices drawn from [Hinduism](#), [Buddhism](#), and other [Eastern religions](#). Thus the English word "meditation" does not exclusively translate to any single term or concept, and can be used to translate words such as the [Sanskrit](#) *dhyaana*, *samadhi* and *bhavana*.

Meditation may be for a religious purpose, but even before being brought to the West it was used in secular contexts, such as the [martial arts](#). Beginning with the Theosophists, though, meditation has been employed in the West by a number of religious and spiritual movements, such as [Yoga](#) and the [New Age](#) movement, as well as limited use in Christianity.

From the point of view of [psychology](#) and [physiology](#), meditation can induce an [altered state of consciousness](#), and its goals in that context have been stated to achieving spiritual [enlightenment](#), to the transformation of attitudes, and to better [cardiovascular](#) health.

[\[edit\]](#) Physical postures

Main article: [Asana](#)



Half-lotus position.

Different spiritual traditions, and different teachers within those traditions, prescribe or suggest different physical postures for meditation. Sitting, supine, and standing[\[28\]](#) postures are used. Most famous are the several cross-legged sitting postures, including the [Lotus Position](#).

[\[edit\]](#) Spine

Many meditative traditions teach that the [spine](#) should be kept "straight" (i.e. that the meditator should not slouch). Often this is explained as a way of encouraging the circulation of what some

call "spiritual energy," the "vital breath", the "life force" (Sanskrit *prana*, Chinese *qi*, Latin *spiritus*) or the [Kundalini](#). In some traditions the meditator may sit on a chair, flat-footed (as in [New Thought](#)); sit on a stool (as in [Orthodox Christianity](#)); or walk in mindfulness (as in [Theravada Buddhism](#)). Some traditions suggest being [barefoot](#), for comfort, for convenience, or for spiritual reasons.

Other traditions, such as those related to [kundalini yoga](#), take a less formal approach. While the basic practice in these traditions is also to sit still quietly in a traditional posture, they emphasize the possibility of [kriyas](#) - spontaneous yogic postures, or perhaps repetitive physical movements such as swaying etc., which may naturally arise as the practitioner sits in meditation, and which should not be resisted but rather allowed to express themselves in order to enhance the natural flow of energy through the body, which is said to help purify the [nadis](#) and ultimately deepen one's meditative practice.

[\[edit\]](#) Mudra/Hand



Bas-relief in [Sukhothai, Thailand](#) depicting monks during walking meditation.

Various hand-gestures or [mudras](#) may be prescribed. These can carry theological meaning or according to Yogic philosophy can actually affect consciousness. For example, a common Buddhist hand-position is with the right hand resting atop the left (like the Buddha's begging bowl), with the thumbs touching.

[\[edit\]](#) Eyes

In most meditative traditions, the eyes are closed. In some such as some Zen sects, the eyes are half-closed, half open and looking upwards. In others such as Brahma Kumaris, the eyes are kept fully open.

Quiet is often held to be desirable, and some people use repetitive activities such as deep breathing, humming or chanting to help induce a meditative state. Practitioners of the [Soto Zen](#) tradition meditate with their eyes open, facing a wall, but most schools of meditation assume that the eyes will be closed or only half-open.

In Sufism meditation(*muraqaba*) with eyes closed is called [Varood](#) while with open eyes is known as [Shahood](#) or [Fa'tha](#).

[\[edit\]](#) Focus and Gaze

Often such details are shared by more than one religion, even in cases where mutual influence seems unlikely. One example would be "navel-gazing," which is apparently attested within Eastern Orthodoxy as well as Chinese [qigong](#) practice. Another would be the practice of focusing on the

breath, which is found in Orthodox Christianity, [Sufism](#), and numerous Indic traditions.

[\[edit\]](#) Cross-legged Sitting

Sitting cross-legged (or upon one's knees) for extended periods when one is not sufficiently limber, can result in a range of [ergonomic](#) complaints called "meditator's knee". Many meditative traditions do not require sitting cross legged.

[\[edit\]](#) Health applications and clinical studies of meditation

Main article: [Health applications and clinical studies of meditation](#)



Scenes of Inner Taksang, temple hall, built just above the cave where [Padmasambhava](#) meditated

In their review of scientific studies of meditation, published in the *International Journal of Psychotherapy*, Perez-De-Albeniz and Holmes[\[7\]](#) identified the following behavioral components of meditation:

1. relaxation,
2. concentration,
3. altered state of awareness,
4. suspension of logical thought processes, and
5. maintenance of self-observing attitude.

The [medical](#) community has studied the [physiological](#) effects of meditation[\[29\]\[30\]\[31\]\[32\]](#) Many concepts of meditation have been applied to clinical settings in order to measure its effect on [somatic motor function](#) as well as [cardiovascular](#) and [respiratory](#) function. Also the [hermeneutic](#) and [phenomenological](#) aspects of meditation are areas of growing interest. Meditation has entered the mainstream of health care as a method of [stress](#) and [pain](#) reduction. For example, in an early study in 1972, [Transcendental Meditation](#) was shown to affect the human [metabolism](#) by lowering the biochemical byproducts of stress, such as [lactate](#), decreasing [heart rate](#) and [blood pressure](#) and inducing favorable [brain waves](#).[\[33\]](#) In 1976, the Australian psychiatrist [Ainslie Meares](#), reported in the *Medical Journal of Australia*, the regression of cancer following intensive meditation. Meares wrote a number of books on the subject, including his best-seller *Relief without Drugs*.

As a method of stress reduction, meditation is often used in hospitals in cases of chronic or terminal illness to reduce complications associated with increased stress including a depressed [immune system](#). There is growing agreement in the medical community that mental factors such as stress significantly contribute to a lack of physical health, and there is a growing movement in mainstream science to fund research in this area (e.g. the establishment by the [NIH](#) in the U.S. of 5 research centers to research the mind-body aspects of disease.)

[Dr. James Austin](#), a neurophysiologist at the [University of Colorado](#), reported that [Zen](#) meditation rewires the circuitry of the brain in his landmark book *Zen and the Brain* (Austin, 1999). This has

been confirmed using [functional MRI](#) imaging which examines the activity of the brain.[\[34\]](#)

Dr. [Herbert Benson](#) of the [Mind-Body Medical Institute](#), which is affiliated with [Harvard](#) and several [Boston](#) hospitals, reports that meditation induces a host of biochemical and physical changes in the body collectively referred to as the "[relaxation response](#)."[\[31\]](#) The relaxation response includes changes in metabolism, heart rate, respiration, blood pressure and brain chemistry. Benson and his team have also done clinical studies at Buddhist monasteries in the Himalayan Mountains.

Other studies within this field include the research of [Jon Kabat-Zinn](#) and his colleagues at the University of Massachusetts who have studied the effects of [mindfulness](#) meditation on stress.[\[35\]](#)[\[36\]](#)

Transcendental Meditation at a Glance

A Harvard graduate student asked his instructor, Ronald David, M.D., about meditation. What was it? What did it do? Dr. David, Lecturer in Public Policy at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, offered to find out. He called the Transcendental Meditation Center in Cambridge, and the next week a speaker addressed Dr. David's class. Fascinated, six students, along with Dr. David, started the technique.

It's now 18 months later, 8:00 a.m. on a Tuesday -- one of the busiest days of the week for Dr. David. He sits in his office, notes for today's lectures piled on his desk. But before he starts to review them -- and before his office turns busy -- he turns off the ringer on his telephone, closes his eyes, and begins his morning practice of Transcendental Meditation.

"I finish meditating and I start the day feeling alert, creative, energized, and much more organized," Dr. David says.

Later that morning, after going over his notes with a colleague, Dr. David, a noted pediatrician-turned-policy analyst, will lecture to 42 graduate students on "Risk and Resilience in Childhood: Implications for Public Policy." After lunch, he will make final preparations for, and then teach, a 3-hour afternoon seminar.

"At the end of what has normally been a hectic pace and before I get on the train to go home, I close the door to my office, again turn off the ringer on the telephone, and meditate. I wind down from the tension of the day; it leaves me completely refreshed and alert for the train ride back, so I can do something I enjoy, such as read a book, rather than just fall asleep."

As a health policy analyst, Dr. David sees significant applications for Transcendental Meditation.

"We have focused too long and too exclusively on the medical model of management," Dr. David says. "I am impressed with the emerging data on the role of Transcendental Meditation in the treatment of intractable hypertension, reduction of recidivism in prison inmates, and recovery from drug addiction -- particularly among African Americans.

"For me Transcendental Meditation is much more profound than simply a physiological way of relaxing. It's a way of becoming whole, of experiencing our own deep inner connectedness as human beings. That experience gives a far greater capacity for health and healing."

What exactly is Transcendental Meditation?

And what is it not?

What are the benefits? How does it work?

The first thing to know about the Transcendental Meditation program of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi is that it's easy to learn and enjoyable to practice.

Second, scientific research shows that the benefits of Transcendental Meditation can be seen immediately and accumulate over time.

Third, it's simple to understand.

What Transcendental Meditation Is

Transcendental Meditation is a simple, natural, effortless, easily-learned mental technique practiced for 15 to 20 minutes twice daily, sitting comfortably with the eyes closed.

To elaborate:

- **Simple** -- Transcendental Meditation is not difficult or complicated; it is a simple procedure.
- **Natural** -- there is no manipulation or suggestion, such as in hypnosis.
- **Effortless** -- Transcendental Meditation is easy to practice and requires no ability to concentrate or control the mind.
- **Easily learned** -- anyone beginning from age 10 can learn Transcendental Meditation easily.
- **Mental technique** -- it requires no physical exercises, special postures, or procedures.
- **Practiced for 15 to 20 minutes twice daily** -- Transcendental Meditation is practiced for 15 to 20 minutes: once in the morning before breakfast, to start the day with alertness and energy, and once again in the afternoon before dinner, to eliminate the accumulated stress of the day and as a basis for an enjoyable evening and a good night's sleep.
- **Sitting comfortably** -- no awkward or cramped positions are necessary to practice Transcendental Meditation. You can practice the technique anywhere -- in your office after work, riding the subway, sitting in a plane, or even in your car parked at a highway rest stop. But it is usually practiced in the comfort of your own home.

What Happens During Transcendental Meditation

During Transcendental Meditation the mind settles down to a silent, yet fully awake, state of awareness -- pure consciousness. At the same time the body gains a unique and profound state of rest and relaxation.

To understand the experience of the mind and body settling down during Transcendental Meditation, we'll take two common occurrences.

Excited mind: It's Friday, 2:00 p.m. It's been a busy day and a long week. You're late for an appointment. You race to your car only to realize that you've forgotten your keys. You find your keys, and then you have to battle traffic and road construction before finally making it to your appointment -- only to discover that you've left behind some important papers. Your mind is speeding, and your heart is pounding.

Settled mind: It's Sunday afternoon and you're heading home from a long weekend vacation, rested and refreshed. You feel contented, relaxed, happy. Your mind is alert, calm, clear. You begin to think of new ways to make things better at work and at home -- good, practical ideas.

Both of these experiences -- of greater and of lesser excitation of mind and body -- are already very familiar to us.

Now what does Transcendental Meditation do?

Transcendental Meditation is a systematic technique that allows mental activity to settle down to a silent state of awareness where the mind is calm, collected, yet fully expanded, fully awake.

This state is the simplest form of human awareness. It is pure consciousness, a state of "self-referral" awareness open only to itself -- open to its own full potential. And as we'll see in the next chapter, it is the unified field of natural law, which modern physics describes as the source of the infinite creativity and intelligence of nature.

This settled state is completely natural to the mind. It has always been there. It was there 10 years ago, it's there right now, and it'll be there tomorrow. Only it has been lost from experience, lost from use, because of the constant noise and pressures and excitations of daily life.

Transcendental Meditation allows the mind to experience pure consciousness easily, effortlessly, and enjoyably. At the same time, extensive scientific research has shown that while the mind settles down during Transcendental Meditation, the body gains a state of profound rest and relaxation that is far deeper than any other technique of meditation or relaxation produces.

Benefits of Transcendental Meditation

What are the benefits of this experience?

Pure consciousness is the source of the unlimited creativity and intelligence of the mind. Research has shown that the twice daily experience of pure consciousness during Transcendental Meditation makes the mind more alert, creative, and intelligent throughout the day.

And the deep rest provided by Transcendental Meditation eliminates the build-up of stress and tension; improves health; and provides the basis for more dynamic, productive, and satisfying activity. ([more...](#))

Not All Rest Is Equal

Rest eliminates stress. The deeper the rest, the better. The rest gained during a night's sleep is sufficient to eliminate some of the stress and fatigue that comes from a full day of activity. But obviously a night's sleep, no matter how deep, isn't enough. We may feel better the next morning, but all too often we don't feel completely refreshed, completely free from the fatigue of the day -- and days -- before.

So we may exercise to help cope with stress -- play tennis, work out at the gym, take an evening walk -- or listen to music, read a book, knit a sweater, or go on a fishing trip.

But something is missing. Despite our best efforts, stress clings to the nervous system and builds up day after day, year after year. Butterflies in the stomach from pre-exam nerves at age 16 can turn into stomach ulcers, high blood pressure, or premature aging, at age 40 -- all from too many years of too much worry.

What is missing? Very, very deep rest.

Recreation or a vacation may be relaxing, but they don't provide the depth of rest necessary to eliminate accumulated stress. Because of this, the benefits are short-lived. (Recall your first day back at work after a week-long vacation. Within a few hours it feels like you never left.)

What is the solution?

Deep Rest Eliminates Deep Stress

Transcendental Meditation. It provides very deep rest -- which is exactly what the body needs to eliminate the very deeply-rooted stress that sleep or a vacation never touch.

In one stroke of Transcendental Meditation, the mind and body are rejuvenated. Then you can play tennis, work in the garden, read a book, or go fishing, because you enjoy it, and not because you are trying to cope with an ever-increasing amount of stress in life.

All Techniques Are Not the Same

Are all meditation and relaxation techniques the same? Are all their benefits equal?

No. Four major "meta-analyses" have been published that compare findings of hundreds of scientific studies on Transcendental Meditation and all other forms of meditation and relaxation. The studies show clearly that Transcendental Meditation is far more effective in reducing anxiety; improving psychological health; increasing self-actualization; and reducing cigarette, drug, and alcohol misuse.

Practical Technique for Health, Happiness, and Success

For a long, long time meditation has been considered the domain of recluses. For people with families and jobs, meditation, at its best, was seen as a momentary refuge from the demands of living; at its worst, an escape from life.

Transcendental Meditation is neither. It is a practical, proven technique for developing more energy, creativity, and intelligence -- for awakening the unlimited potential of mind and body and enjoying greater health, happiness, and success in life.

What Transcendental Meditation Is Not

Transcendental Meditation is not a religion, a philosophy, or a lifestyle. Nor does it involve any codes of conduct or moral training, a value system, belief, or worship. To elaborate:

- **Transcendental Meditation is not a religion** -- it's a technique. Millions of people of all religions, including clergy, practice Transcendental Meditation. It supports all religions because it releases stress and purifies the mind, body, and emotions of the person who practices it.
 - **Transcendental Meditation is not a philosophy** -- it's a simple, mechanical technique. Turning on a light switch is a technique; it involves no philosophy. Using a lever to move a large rock is a technique; it involves no philosophy. And Transcendental Meditation is a scientific technique because it is universally applicable, repeatable, and verifiable by anyone, anywhere.
 - **Transcendental Meditation is not a lifestyle** -- it's a technique. You don't have to change your lifestyle in order to start Transcendental Meditation. Just learn it, practice it, and enjoy the benefits.
-

"The first thing I do every morning, before I exercise and eat breakfast, is Transcendental Meditation. When I get home after a long day at the office, the first thing I do, before dinner, is Transcendental Meditation. The technique is extremely relaxing. It provides me with a practical, efficient, powerful respite from my very high level of activity. I absolutely count on it to keep me clear-headed, rested, and healthy."

-- John Zamara, M.D., a specialist in cardiology and internal medicine, Orange County, California. Dr. Zamara has been practicing Transcendental Meditation for 21 years.

"I have long, complex days with many demands and many continuing pressures that spill over from day to day and week to week. I direct a clinical unit, take care of patients, teach medical students and residents, and carry out my research into neuro-imaging. What I find is that Transcendental Meditation gives me a clearer mind, and I am able to focus my attention on areas that require the greatest amount of work. Stress doesn't accumulate; I return to each day with a freshness. Transcendental Meditation has enhanced my career and my life."

-- Kelvin O. Lim, M.D., Assistant Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University School of Medicine, Palo Alto, California. Dr. Lim has been practicing Transcendental Meditation for 13 years.

"Transcendental Meditation is like a daily vacation. It's a renewal for my body and calms my mind. I do a lot of writing and speaking, and it has given me a flood of creativity."

"I've always felt that Transcendental Meditation was an aid to my Christian growth. It never replaced my Christian growth, but it was an aid to it. In fact, I decided to commit my life to Christ after I'd been practicing Transcendental Meditation for 3 months.

"I would say to any Christian -- to anyone of any religion - that Transcendental Meditation would benefit your life. It's a technique, a simple process that requires no belief. It is not a religion. There are so many thoughts that clutter the mind, and Transcendental Meditation is like taking a bath -- it's very cleansing and very refreshing."

-- Rev. Dr. Craig Overmyer, a pastoral counselor in Indianapolis, Indiana. Dr. Overmyer received his Master of Divinity in 1982 and his Doctorate of Ministry in 1985 from the Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis. He has been practicing Transcendental Meditation for 22 years.

"I wouldn't be able to fulfill my responsibilities as a rabbi to the level I expect of myself without Transcendental Meditation. I am better able to deal with the stresses of being with the sick and the dying, and the pressures of funerals, weddings, and bar mitzvahs because I have within me a considerable reservoir of calm. I am able to walk into a tense situation and naturally settle people down. They appreciate the ease and calm I bring to situations. But even more important, Transcendental Meditation has made me a better rabbi because it has given me an experience and insight into the profound depths of life. As a result, I am able to express a true depth of knowledge about my own tradition."

-- Rabbi Alan Green of Beth Israel Synagogue in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Rabbi Green has been practicing Transcendental Meditation for 20 years.

"Transcendental Meditation is a tremendous stress buster. It's the most potent form of relaxation that I know of. After meditating just a few days, I noticed mental sharpness, less worry, and increased tolerance and ability to get along with people. It's one magnificent stroke that benefits my life in so many different ways."

-- Glenn Pilling, actor, Los Angeles. Mr. Pilling has been practicing Transcendental Meditation for 14 months.

"I really appreciate the portability of Transcendental Meditation. I travel a lot, and I'm able to gain the benefits of meditating no matter what is happening around me. I recently was on a plane with very rambunctious children racing up and down the aisles. I just sat there enjoying my meditation. Afterwards, one of the parents came over and sat down next to me and said, 'What are you doing? You seem so peaceful!' Transcendental Meditation gives you equanimity. You can move through all kinds of situations during the day, coming from a place of peace, and then impart some of that peacefulness to others."

-- Merrily Manthey, M.S., Director of the Institute for Executive Stress Management in Kent (greater Seattle area), Washington. She has been meditating for 22 years.

"I was out shopping recently with my husband -- buying bikes for our kids at a mall. It was late, the mall was chaotic, and I was starting to get tired. On top of that, our son was coming home from college that night with three friends for dinner. Then I realized, I have nothing to worry about. I can go home and do my Transcendental Meditation, and I won't be tired anymore. I did -- and I felt great, really refreshed afterward. I just wish I started when my friend first told me about it more than 20 years ago."

-- Denise Droese, mother of four children, ages 4, 10, 12, and 20, Carmel, Indiana. Ms. Droese has been practicing Transcendental Meditation for one month.

Unfolding Full Potential -- and Using it

It's 8:30 a.m. and the phones are ringing off the hook on the seventh floor of the World Financial Center in Manhattan. *What do you think? What do you think? What do you think? What do you think?*

"That's what I hear all day long," says Walter Zimmermann, first Vice President at Lehmann Bros. "Customers want to know what you think. There's a lot at stake. If you're wrong, they can lose a lot of money. And if you're right, they love you for it."

Mr. Zimmermann works in Lehmann's Global Energy Department. For him each work day actually starts the night before when he develops an "outlook" for the next day. Where does he think any rally will fail? Where does he think any decline will stop? Does he think it will be an uptrend or a downtrend, or does he expect a "congestion" day? On that basis he decides: "How bullish am I? What's the best way of taking advantage of that up move? Should I stay with what I have? Should I add on? Should I reverse my position?"

Mr. Zimmermann must develop an outlook for each hour, each day, each week, each month, and each quarter. Most of the people he deals with are short-term traders. They rarely hold anything for more than a week. They need to know from Mr. Zimmermann at each moment during the day, "Is this still your outlook? What do you think?"

Mr. Zimmermann has been practicing Transcendental Meditation for 23 years.

"My kind of work requires a unique combination of analytical skills and intuitive clarity. My tool is not the price charts or the news wires. My tool is the clarity of my awareness, with which I can pick up on things sooner than other people. I'm competing with some of the best minds out there. Everybody has the same information; everybody can look at the same price charts; everybody reads the same newspapers. But success comes to the person whose awareness can penetrate more deeply and, at the same time, be more sensitive to the onset of trend changes. If you haven't developed that kind of awareness, you're going to get crushed by the oil markets.

"Unfolding your mental potential is not simply time well spent; it's absolutely necessary if you're going to succeed. Transcendental Meditation gives me the clarity of mind and inner calm that does not get overshadowed or shaken by the high level of emotions and tension and anxiety that characterize this kind of work place."

Mr. Zimmermann started out with E.F. Hutton in Manhattan in 1984. The company was bought out by Shearson and has gone through several name changes to its current name, Lehmann Bros. Mr. Zimmermann has been highly successful through it all.

"This is a very stressful work environment. The petroleum market is the most volatile market out there, by a wide margin, and that volatility takes its toll. Normally you just don't last as long as I have. The people I started off with have burned out and gone on to other things. I attribute my endurance to Transcendental Meditation. Endurance has its advantages. If you endure, you remember things that other people weren't there to experience. You gather wisdom. If you've 'seen it all,' you basically know how to deal with it all.

"If someone asks me about Transcendental Meditation, I ask them, 'How valuable is mental clarity to you? How valuable are insight and innovation to you? How valuable is it for you to be able to see what other people don't see? If that's of value to you, then Transcendental Meditation is something you can do to get as much clarity and insight as you require.' "

Maharishi's Transcendental Meditation is not just a technique to reduce stress. It is much more than that. It is a practical, effective procedure for developing

consciousness -- for unfolding your full mental potential and using it in daily life.

Is There Time?

We have to be practical when it comes to time. Every day there are pressures, deadlines, and responsibilities to meet. There's a business deal to close, children to send off to school, a term paper to write. And tomorrow will probably be even busier.

So is it practical to take time to consider developing mental potential-- much less do something about it -- when there's so much to accomplish with so little time?

Perhaps intuitively we've always known that we weren't using our full potential in life, but due to the pressing demands on our time and energy today, we've had to put these considerations off until tomorrow -- or to a distant future.

Is this being practical? Hardly.

If There's a Choice

Psychologists and psychiatrists estimate that we use between 5% and 10% of our mental potential. And there are days when even that figure may seem generous.

If you had a choice, wouldn't you prefer being able to draw upon more of your creativity and intelligence to resolve a problem at work, or organize your household, or take a test at school?

What could be more practical than having a clear, organized mind; or the ability to learn quickly and remember things accurately; or the capacity for broad comprehension along with the ability to focus sharply, for long periods of time?

Nothing could be more practical, and therefore nothing is more important than developing full mental potential -- and using it.

How do you unfold mental potential through Transcendental Meditation?

Quite naturally. You simply gain access to the unlimited reservoir of energy, creativity, and intelligence that is located at the most settled, silent, fully awake level of your mind -- the source of thought.

To understand how this is possible and to see how simple and natural it is, first we'll start with a few common experiences in daily life.

Excited Mind/Settled Mind

Two business professionals are reviewing the draft of a transaction over lunch at a crowded restaurant.

A high school student is working on a calculus problem with the television on.

Neither the business professionals nor the student are finding much success. Why? There is too much noise. Where there is more noise, there is more confusion. Where there is more silence, there is more order, more intelligence.

So the business professionals meet later in a quiet conference room to complete the details of the transaction, and the student goes to his room to study.

Whenever we have something important to do, like study for a class or work out a business deal, or whenever we have something important to say, like a heart-to-heart talk with a family member or a close friend, we try to find a quiet place. Because when the mind is allowed to settle down, it naturally gains in clarity, comprehension, and decisiveness.

The Purpose of Transcendental Meditation

What is the purpose of Transcendental Meditation? Just this: Because of the constant demands on

your time and energy, it's not often that you can get away to a quiet place for a long period of time. And even if you're able to get away, then because of the build-up of stress and tension, it can take a long while before your mind really begins to settle down.

What you need is a way to develop the ability for your mind to always remain clear and settled, a way to use the full potential of your mind at all times -- even in the midst of the most hectic activity.

That's the purpose of Transcendental Meditation. It's a simple technique that allows the active mind to settle down -- and continue settling down-- until it reaches its own perfectly calm, collected state, where the body is deeply rested and the mind is silent, unbounded, and fully awake.

Transcendental Meditation is also very practical. It can be practiced anywhere at any time. Whether it's been an intense day at work or school, or a lazy Sunday, whether you're just home from an all-day downtown business meeting or a weekend boating trip, you can practice Transcendental Meditation and benefit from this settled state of awareness.

And exactly what is this most settled state?

It's the full potential of consciousness -- a silent reservoir of unlimited creativity and intelligence found deep within your mind. And this reservoir, as we'll see later, is the same as the source of unlimited creativity and intelligence found deep within nature itself.

Dr. Christopher Hegarty is a management consultant, who speaks at more than 100 business conferences a year, on developing the fundamentals of competence. His client list includes chief executives at IBM, AT&T, Blue Cross, Xerox, and the United Airlines Pilots Association. He has been practicing Transcendental Meditation for over 20 years.

"The world is changing so fast, with so much new information to process, that to survive in business today -- much less succeed -- demands an optimal level of mental competence," says Dr. Hegarty.

"I consider Transcendental Meditation to be the single most effective technique available for developing this inner potential. Transcendental Meditation removes the stress and 'debris' from your mind and nervous system. It gives you access to your own deepest resources -- what I have experienced to be a limitless source of energy and intelligence."

Thought Is the Basis of Activity

What is this reservoir of energy and intelligence that Dr. Hegarty and millions of other people experience twice a day during Transcendental Meditation? And where is it located?

Let's analyze it step by step, starting with thought.

Thought is the basis of activity: The design of a building begins with the thoughts of an architect; a legal brief begins with the thoughts of an attorney; a smooth-running household is based on the thoughts of a homemaker.

The clearer, more creative, more intelligent the thought, the more successful is the architectural design, the legal brief, the family's day.

What can make thought more intelligent and more powerful?

The way to make thought more powerful, according to Maharishi, is through contact with the reservoir of energy and intelligence deep within the mind, contact with the source of thought.

Thought: Energy and Intelligence

What is the source of thought? All day, every day we think innumerable thoughts. From the moment we wake up in the morning to the time we sleep at night, the mind is constantly thinking thoughts:

"Ten minutes to get the kids to school."

"I wonder who won the game last night?"

"Michael needs the computer file."

Is there anything common to these thoughts -- and all the different thoughts that we think?

Yes -- energy and intelligence.

- Energy -- because all thoughts move; one thought follows another. This movement implies energy.
- Intelligence -- because the energy takes a particular direction.

This means that all thoughts express some degree of energy and intelligence. And all day, every day, you are constantly thinking thoughts. That means you are constantly generating impulses of energy and intelligence.

What is the source of all this energy and intelligence? From where do thoughts arise?

While it is true that the stimulus for a particular thought may be a book or a conversation or a movie, the fact is, thoughts -- impulses of energy and intelligence -- arise from somewhere within us, from somewhere deep within the mind.

Where?

The Source of Thought

As we discussed earlier the mind can be

- Very noisy and excited
- Quiet and settled
- Perfectly settled and silent

As the mind settles down it naturally grows in creativity, intelligence, and energy. The deepest level of the mind is the field of maximum energy and intelligence.

It's here that we locate an unbounded reservoir of pure energy and creative intelligence. It is from here that all thoughts arise. This is the source of thought.

The source of thought, Maharishi says, is the field of pure consciousness, a "self-referral" level of awareness where consciousness is open only to itself -- awake to its own full potential. It is silent, yet ready to function with maximum dynamism, clarity, and orderliness.

Transcendental Meditation is a simple, natural procedure -- requiring neither concentration nor control -- for refining mental activity and directly experiencing the source of thought.

Transcendental Meditation and Science

What does science tell us about this experience? From research in physiology and biochemistry, we learn that Transcendental Meditation reduces stress and anxiety and promotes a longer, healthier life. From psychology we learn that intelligence grows, memory improves, and learning ability increases.

And from the integration of modern physics and Transcendental Meditation, we learn something else: We learn of the deep connection between human beings and nature.

We learn that the source of intelligence within each of us is the same as the source of the intelligence within nature, and that we have access to the unlimited creativity and intelligence of

nature within our own consciousness. We learn what it means to unfold full mental potential -- and use it.

To understand this connection between ourselves and nature, we first need a little background in physics.

Modern Physics Discovers the Unified Field -- And What It Means to You

Physics investigates nature. We are a part of nature. So what can physics tell us about nature that can help us understand our own potential?

To consider this, first we'll review recent developments in physics and then relate them to ourselves.

Observe nature -- a maple tree, a galaxy of stars, or an atom -- and you observe the display of nature's intelligence. Everywhere in nature there is perfect orderliness, unfathomable energy, unlimited creativity, and infinite organizing power.

What is its source? Physics tells us that nature is structured in layers, that within the molecules are atoms, and that within atoms are subatomic particles. The deeper the layer, the greater the energy and organizing power.

The quest of science has always been to uncover deeper levels of nature's functioning and ultimately to discover the common source of the tree, the galaxy, the atom -- the very source of the universe.

The Four Fundamental Forces of Nature

Forty years ago the basis of the universe was seen to be the four fundamental forces in nature and the so-called "matter fields." (The four forces are electromagnetism, which accounts for such things as electricity and chemical reactions; the weak force, which is responsible for such phenomena as radioactive decay; the strong force, which holds the nucleus of an atom together; and gravity, which keeps objects earthbound and planets in orbit.)

These force and matter fields constituted everything in the universe. Recently, physicists have uncovered even more powerful, more unified levels of nature. For example, at the level of "electroweak unification," the electromagnetic force and the weak force become one. ([See Unified Field Charts](#))

Discovery of the Source: the Unified Field

Now, the source of all the force and matter fields in the universe has been glimpsed by modern science in the supersymmetric unified quantum field theories of physics. It is called the unified field of natural law. It is a field of pure energy and intelligence, which underlies everything in creation and which is responsible for all forms and phenomena in the universe.

According to physics, the entire universe emerges from the "self-interacting dynamics" of the unified field. And it is the unified field that gives rise to all the laws of nature that govern the entire universe.

Difficult to picture? Here's an analogy: The unified field is like the sap within a tree. The sap, while colorless and formless itself, is nonetheless the source of the fragrant, red flower; the shiny, green leaf; the leathery, brown stem. The sap permeates the entire tree, manifesting itself as flower, leaf, and stem. In the same way, the unified field underlies and pervades the universe. It is the basis of the infinite energy, creativity, and intelligence displayed in nature. It is the basis of everything in the universe, including ourselves. Now, what does that mean to you?

Displaying the Creativity and Intelligence of Nature in Your Life

The unified field deep within nature is a field of unlimited energy, creativity, and intelligence. The source of thought deep within every individual is also a field of unlimited energy, creativity, and

intelligence.

Is there a connection between them? Yes.

Maharishi states: "Modern physics has recently glimpsed the unified field of all the laws of nature. Since ancient times the unified field has been described by Vedic science -- a complete science of consciousness -- as the field of pure consciousness, the field of infinite energy, creativity, and intelligence underlying man and nature. Through Transcendental Meditation, pure consciousness -- the unified field -- can be enlivened at the source of thought deep within the mind of every human being.

"This means that we can display the infinite creativity, intelligence, and dynamism of nature in our own life. This is our natural birthright."

John S. Hagelin, Ph.D., a member of an elite group of scientists who are at the forefront of research in unified field theories, agrees.

Dr. Hagelin is an expert on supersymmetric unified quantum field theories and has published over 90 papers on the subject in leading physics journals. Dr. Hagelin received his doctorate in physics from Harvard and has conducted research at two of the top laboratories in the world for advanced particle physics -- the European Laboratory for Particle Physics (CERN) in Geneva, Switzerland, and the Stanford Linear Accelerator Center (SLAC) in Palo Alto, California.

Since 1976 Dr. Hagelin has studied Maharishi's descriptions of pure consciousness in the light of modern physics. Recent advances in quantum physics, Dr. Hagelin says, provide "substantial evidence that the unified field and pure consciousness are not two separate fields, but one and the same."

As Chairman of the Department of Physics and Director of the Institute of Science, Technology and Public Policy at Maharishi International University in Fairfield, Iowa, Dr. Hagelin is a recognized world authority on unified field theories and a pre-eminent scholar in the dynamics of human consciousness.

"It is clear that the unified field is ultimately the origin of all attributes in the universe," Dr. Hagelin says. "Any property of existence -- electric charge or color charge -- must have its dynamical origin in the structure of the unified field itself.

"The properties of intelligence, dynamism, and self-interaction can also be located in the structure of the unified field, suggesting a link between the unified field and the 'ground state,' or most fundamental state, of consciousness.

"When one examines the properties of the unified field in detail, one discovers all the properties of pure consciousness."

What Does All of This Mean?

It means that the full potential of your mind is the same as the total potential of nature's intelligence. It means that you have the innate capacity to use and display the unlimited energy, creativity, and intelligence of nature in your own life.

And for this you only need to restore the natural connection -- through Transcendental Meditation --

between the thinking mind and the source of thought, between the active mind and the unified field. When you make this connection, you grow in creativity and intelligence, reduce stress and fatigue, and enjoy greater happiness and more progress and accomplishments in your life. You gain the support of nature for everything you do.

"Being able to go to that silent place within me and experience the unified field every day has unlocked an incredible storehouse of creativity," says Chris Boas, a third-year law student at the University of San Francisco Law School. "Since I've been meditating, good ideas just seem to come easily. I feel that there's no end to what I can accomplish."

Chris is studying intellectual property and technology licensing -- "high technology law." He's been practicing Transcendental Meditation for 12 years.

"The main requirement for success in law school is to be able to think clearly under pressure. People who do well here are those who handle that pressure, especially during final exam time. Since I've been meditating, my mind is relaxed and alert, and I can think through things clearly and logically, even under pressure. I retain information more easily, and I can access it more quickly whenever I need it."

To a student entering law school, Chris says, "Transcendental Meditation makes education enjoyable. Many people find the first year of law school to be a painful experience or, at least, a chaotic one. Transcendental Meditation allows you to enjoy the process. It expands the potential of your mind to take in new information and improves your ability to use it. It also increases your self-confidence. Instead of feeling like you have to compete with everybody else, you'll feel like you have a lot to give to everybody else."

Experiencing Self-Referral Awareness through Transcendental Meditation

Maharishi explains: "In Transcendental Meditation the conscious mind comes to a state of self-referral awareness, which is the simplest form of human awareness where consciousness is open only to itself. This self-referral state of consciousness is the unified field of natural law.

"The supersymmetric unified field theories of physics have glimpsed this state of unity, which, through its own self-interacting dynamics, expresses itself as diversified forms and phenomena in creation.

"When the conscious mind identifies itself with the unified field through the process of Transcendental Meditation, then human awareness is open to its full potential, which is the total potential of nature's intelligence.

"As a result, thinking and action spontaneously become more and more in accord with the evolutionary power of natural law. By enlivening this most basic level, Transcendental Meditation is that one simple procedure which can raise the life of every individual to its full dignity in which perfect health, happiness, and success are the natural features of daily life."

The Mind-Body Connection: Science Studies Transcendental Meditation

When scientists first decided to study the effects of Transcendental Meditation, they looked to the body.

Why? Because there is an intimate connection between the mind and the body. Researchers knew that for every state of consciousness there is a corresponding style of functioning of the physiology. For example, when you sleep at night your brain waves slow down, as do your heart rate, breathrate, and other physiological functions.

So scientists predicted that if the mind does, in fact, quiet down and become more expanded, more awake during Transcendental Meditation, then due to the close coordination between mind and body, the entire physiology must change as well -- and it must be measurable.

The First Research on Transcendental Meditation

The first scientist to study the physiological effects of Transcendental Meditation was Dr. Robert Keith Wallace at UCLA in 1968. Dr. Wallace found that during Transcendental Meditation, the entire system gained a unique and profound state of rest and relaxation -- far deeper than ordinary eyes-closed rest. He also observed biochemical changes indicative of reduced stress, and changes in EEG, or brain wave patterns, that indicated a state of "heightened inner wakefulness" or restful alertness.

The State of Restful Alertness: A Fourth Major State of Consciousness

Analyzing his findings and comparing them to research on the three major states of consciousness, Dr. Wallace arrived at a remarkable conclusion. Transcendental Meditation produced a fourth major state of consciousness-- a unique state of "restful alertness" -- different from waking, dreaming, and sleeping states of consciousness, but also essential to the health and well-being of an individual.

Dr. Wallace's findings were published in the March 1970 issue of *Science*.

Since that initial study there have been more than 500 scientific studies on Transcendental Meditation, conducted at 210 independent universities and research institutions in 33 countries, including Harvard Medical School, University of Chicago, Stanford, and UCLA.

Much of the research has been published in leading scientific journals, including *The American Journal of Physiology*, *International Journal of Neuroscience*, *Psychosomatic Medicine*, *American Psychologist*, and the *Journal of Conflict Resolution*.

The research has documented the effects of the Transcendental Meditation program in every area of life, including mind, body, behavior, and society.

Brain Wave Coherence

One of the most significant findings shows that Transcendental Meditation produces a unique ordering, or coherence, in brain wave patterns among the different parts of the brain. And the longer a person practices Transcendental Meditation, the higher the EEG coherence.

Dr. Wallace, who now is Chairman of the Physiology Department at Maharishi International University and one of the world's leading experts on the research on Transcendental Meditation, explains the meaning of this finding:

"Higher EEG coherence produced during Transcendental Meditation indicates that the technique 'optimizes brain functioning.' This means that the brain functions in a more coherent, integrated style during Transcendental Meditation than during the usual waking, dreaming, and sleeping states of consciousness.

"Many psychological studies have shown that the higher EEG coherence gained during Transcendental Meditation is associated with increased intelligence and creativity and higher moral reasoning."

What is the cause of EEG coherence? "The increased orderliness and integration between the different parts of the brain corresponds to the direct experience of the self-referral state of pure consciousness -- the unified field -- gained during Transcendental Meditation," Dr. Wallace says.

Unfolding Full Mental Potential

What does "optimizing brain functioning" mean in daily life? It means unfolding the full creative potential of the mind -- and using it. And using this full potential means enjoying the state of enlightenment in every aspect of daily life.

"Every day I experience a higher level of mental 'peak performance' from Transcendental Meditation than I experienced by chance during those 7 games of the World Series," says Buddy Biancalana, former shortstop for the Kansas City Royals and a star of the 1985 World Series.

Sportswriters called the World Series one of the most exciting in recent memory, and it turned Buddy Biancalana into a national hero. Kansas City faced off against the St. Louis Cardinals. The Royals fell behind three games to one and then stormed back to win it in seven games. Buddy's sparkling, acrobatic defense and unexpected clutch hitting helped propel Kansas City to the world championship. It was the best 7 games of baseball in Buddy's professional career, and it came when hundreds of millions of people all over the world were watching on television.

"I was deep in the 'zone' during the whole World Series," Buddy recalls. "I had a tremendously deep level of focus, to the point where I felt I couldn't do anything wrong. I felt like every play was going to go my way -- and it did. It was a level of clarity I had never experienced playing baseball prior to that time -- or in any other aspect of my life -- and I never reached it again until I learned Transcendental Meditation."

Today, Buddy is a players' agent, scouting and signing professional baseball players and negotiating their contracts. He has been meditating for 8 months.

"Now, when I get up in the morning, I know it's going to be a great day. There may be obstacles, I may have things to work out in my business, but the core of me is always feeling fabulous, no matter what is going on around me. Every day is a great day."

"The most powerful benefit that I've experienced from Transcendental Meditation is that it makes my mind much sharper. It allows the haziness in my mind to be cleared away so that everything makes sense to me and connects to my own ideas. From that level it's much easier to study, and every subject that I study has a much more penetrating effect. I can't imagine being a student without it. I've also found that once I have that clarity, all good things in life are drawn to me. When I'm feeling clear and the stress is gone, everything just naturally supports me and comes my way."

-- Jennie Rothenberg is a 1993 National Merit Scholar and a first-year literature major at Maharishi International University in Fairfield, Iowa. (Maharishi International University integrates the arts, sciences, and professions with the study and development of consciousness through the practice of Transcendental Meditation. Maharishi International University is accredited to the Ph.D. level by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.)

"For me the experience of settled inner wakefulness and expanded awareness during Transcendental Meditation is the real foundation for successful decision-making. After meditating I have the mental clarity and alertness for laser-like focus on the details and, at the same time, for broad comprehension so I don't get lost in the details. I find myself continuously growing in insight and intuition, as well as in the ability to focus and

analyze. In my experience, if you can have those qualities together at the same time, you're going to make the right decisions -- not only for your own success, but for the progress and well-being of others. Over my years in business, Transcendental Meditation has been a real competitive advantage."

-- Steve Rubin, Chairman and CEO, United Fuels International, Inc., one of the world's largest international energy brokerage firms.

The following research charts represent a few of the many studies conducted on the effects of Transcendental Meditation for developing mental potential. The charts represent the average benefits of the group studied.

- [Greater Orderliness of Brain Functioning](#)
- [Broader Comprehension and Improved Ability to Focus](#)
- [Increased Creativity](#)
- [Improved Perception and Memory](#)
- [Development of Intelligence](#)

C H A P T E R 3

Healthy Mind / Healthy Body

"I believe that your mind controls your body, and I'm convinced that Transcendental Meditation has kept me not just mentally healthy, but also physically healthy and in very good shape," says Mike Fitzgerald, Director of the Washington State Department of Community Trade and Economic Development. "I have a lot to do, and I would never have the high energy level that I have without Transcendental Meditation."

Mr. Fitzgerald directs a newly formed department with a \$700 million annual budget, 420 employees, and a broad and diverse range of responsibilities.

On a typical day Mr. Fitzgerald will help the governor and the state legislature formulate their policies on GATT and NAFTA. He'll make decisions on what kind of taxation package his department will put to the legislature to give incentives for small businesses. He'll meet with a group of community leaders to try to determine how to restructure a local economic development grant that will allow them to take new initiatives in their community. He'll also meet with local government representatives to determine how to improve and expand access to the state's early childhood education programs.

Mr. Fitzgerald learned Transcendental Meditation at a friend's recommendation.

"I notice, almost instantly after meditating, a relief from the pressures of the day, and a new clarity, a new freshness, and a new energy," says Mr. Fitzgerald, whose day starts at 5:30 a.m. and ends at 7:30 p.m. when he gets home to his family in Issaquah, a city 10 miles east of Seattle.

"I'm in very good physical shape, and Transcendental Meditation has helped me a lot with that because it keeps stress at a minimum. I don't overeat. Meditating also helps to keep me calm and thoughtful and restful and reflective. It's my lifeline in a very chaotic world."

Mr. Fitzgerald says Transcendental Meditation can play a key role in solving social ills.

"The tendency of our society is to deal with events and symptoms, not causes," he says. "We deal with the symptoms of too much violence, not the causes of it. We deal with the symptoms of disease, not the causes of it. The basic cause is that people are full of stress. Transcendental Meditation goes to the heart of the problem. It releases stress and makes individuals healthier and more self-reliant, and puts them in a position where they can start to solve their own problems."

"It is fortunate for the field of health today that one technique exists to take care of the very basis of an individual's life -- pure consciousness -- and thereby to restore and maintain perfect health on all levels of mind, body, and surroundings." -- Maharishi

What Are the Trillion Dollars Used for?

The United States has one of the most technologically sophisticated and advanced health care systems in the world. Each year we spend over one trillion dollars on health care -- more than 12% of the entire gross national product (GNP). By the year 2000 that amount could spiral to as much as 18%.

What are the trillion dollars used for? Preventing illness? Securing the health and well-being of every American?

No. As just about everyone knows, that huge sum of money is used mainly for treating disease. And according to many health experts, up to 90% of those diseases could have been prevented.

How? By effectively reducing stress, which is a prime causal factor in a majority of disorders -- from headaches and the common cold to serious illnesses such as heart disease and many forms of cancer.

What Is Stress?

To understand how you can reduce stress and therefore prevent disease, first we should define it. Stress is not a deadline to meet at work, a term paper, or even a traffic tie-up during rush hour. Stress is how we react, physically and mentally, to these experiences.

Some days we're better at it; some days we're not. If we've slept well at night and wake up fresh and rested, we're apt to handle any demand during the day far better than if we run into it, headlong, on a Friday afternoon at the end of a long week.

Stress, then, can be understood to be any structural or material abnormality in the body (tight neck muscles, high blood pressure, tension headaches, etc.) that is caused by overloading the machinery of experience, the senses.

Any overload can cause it. The sudden flash of a bulb from a camera can create stress in the eyes. Too much exertion or excitement can cause stress -- or not enough rest. Any experience, positive or negative, can create stress if the system is unable to handle it.

Is Stress the Spice of Life?

Some say that stress is the spice of life. People who thrive on the continual stimulation of new challenges, new responsibilities, new pressures would hate to live without stress.

It's true that new opportunities and new challenges are essential for a fulfilling life. Eliminating stress from your life does not mean eliminating these challenges. Rather, it means eliminating their negative side-effects -- chronic fatigue, anxiety, headaches, indigestion, insomnia, etc. -- which severely restrict your capacity to be healthy, successful, and enjoy what you do.

How to Manage Stress?

How, then, can you live your life fully and not be victimized by stress?

There are many "stress management techniques" available today that try to minimize stress by training people how to better organize their time, their responsibilities, and their work and home environments.

These techniques often give advice on how to avoid high-pressure situations, recommend mental imagery exercises, and advocate changes in lifestyle to reduce stress. Some suggest de-escalating career goals.

Are these the basics of stress management?

No. They may be helpful in their own right, but they are not the "bottom line" on stress management.

What is the bottom line?

Rest. The very deep rest gained during 20 minutes of Maharishi's Transcendental Meditation allows the body to rejuvenate itself and throw off the accumulated stress and fatigue that has built up over years.

It helps to normalize high blood pressure, reduce high cholesterol levels, improve bronchial asthma, provide relief from insomnia -- even improve reaction time and athletic performance.

Without this rest, you can only hope to "manage" stress and struggle to organize your schedule to cope with growing stress in life, not eliminate it.

Don't Manage Stress, Prevent and Eliminate It

With this rest you don't just manage stress, you prevent new stress from accumulating today and you eliminate stress built up from the past. Research shows that you'll improve your health, increase your energy, and promote the clarity of your mind and the creativity and orderliness of your thinking. Then you'll be better prepared to meet all of the responsibilities in your life without creating more stress and strain and without reducing or shying away from any new commitment or challenge. At the same time you'll grow in the capacity to enjoy life to its fullest.

"I have been using Transcendental Meditation in my practice as a stress-reduction modality for the past 20 years," says Steele Belok, M.D., clinical instructor of medicine at Harvard Medical School. "I have found that it is not only an effective tool to use in anxiety-related disorders, but it also has significant physiological effects. I have seen positive effects on hypertension, cholesterol, asthma, and insomnia. In addition, for patients who are healthy and who are interested in prevention and health promotion, I have found Transcendental Meditation to be highly effective in enhancing their physical and mental well-being. These effects have been corroborated by a growing body of scientific literature showing the effectiveness of Transcendental Meditation in these and other areas."

Healthy Mind / Healthy Body

Reducing the Effects of Traumatic Stress

There are the normal stresses and strains of daily life -- and then there is the devastating impact of traumatic stress. Transcendental Meditation has also been found to be a potent antidote to the effects of extreme stress -- what doctors have termed "post-traumatic stress syndrome." For example, a 3-month study of Vietnam veterans found that veterans who learned Transcendental Meditation improved significantly compared to veterans who were participating in a counseling program. The veterans practicing Transcendental Meditation were found to be less emotionally numb and had reduced alcohol abuse, insomnia, depression, and anxiety. They also showed a decreased severity of "delayed stress syndrome" (*Journal of Counseling and Development* 64: 212-214, 1985).

Transcendental Meditation also helps those who are recovering from the trauma of a serious illness, and those who have suffered through the stress of other major traumas, such as a serious auto accident.

Martha Gray, 48, is a data architect who develops computing systems for the Boeing Company in Seattle. In March 1992 Martha was diagnosed as having breast cancer. She had surgery -- a lumpectomy -- and afterwards underwent six months of chemotherapy and then radiation treatments. Doctors told Martha that her prognosis was good. But by the end of her treatments, Martha was in a deep depression.

"I went to a breast cancer support group, and I discovered that depression was almost an accepted way of life," Martha recalls. "The majority of the women -- and I mean the majority of the women -- who were in that group were on some sort of anti-depressants. After all that I had been through, I realized that I just did not want to live my life in anxiety and fear."

Martha had been doing a lot of reading and had heard about Transcendental Meditation. She learned the technique at the Transcendental Meditation Center in Seattle on June 19, 1993.

"It has absolutely changed everything for me," Martha says. "My outlook is completely different. I'm positive; I'm happy. Transcendental Meditation

releases the stress. That's been the key. Before I would try to laugh off the anxiety, or disregard it, or stuff it back down, or try to ignore it, or try to be brave -- all the things you try to do to manipulate the fear and try to keep going. With Transcendental Meditation the stress is released and it's gone. It's been tremendously freeing.

"When people talk about all the problems that a cancer patient faces, they forget to realize that the family and spouse also go through a tremendous amount of anxiety and anguish and fear. Because my husband, Fred, started Transcendental Meditation also, it's been a wonderful thing for him, too."

Fred Gray, 48, is a final-assembly flight-line inspector for Boeing. He gives each Boeing 747 a final review before the \$160 million aircraft is delivered to an airline. Fred says that Transcendental Meditation keeps him relaxed on the job -- "I have a very stressful occupation" -- and happier within himself. He also sees a big change in Martha and in their relationship together.

"Transcendental Meditation has calmed Martha a great deal," Fred says. "She doesn't dwell on the fear of the possible recurrence of her illness. Her health has skyrocketed. Chemotherapy had really disrupted her body. Now she's vivacious and healthy and alert. Since we started meditating, we also have a much better relationship. We look at each other and nod in agreement. We don't have to express so many things verbally anymore; we just understand what's going on."

Martha encourages others facing recovery from a major illness to practice the technique.

"Transcendental Meditation is the key to regaining a sense of well-being and purpose in your life. After having what some people would consider a catastrophic illness, it's a must. It's something that restores a sense of balance and enthusiasm for life. You won't be afraid, and you'll be able to make plans for the future without some dread. I honestly wish I would have discovered this a long time ago, because in my own mind, my life would have been different."

Martha has just had a 2-year check-up and her doctors say that everything is fine.

"It helps so much to be able to sit down twice a day and just quiet ourselves," Martha says. "Transcendental Meditation has created a stress-free, happy way of life for both of us."

"I had so much physical and emotional stress from the accident," says Gail Tomura, an artist living in West Los Angeles. "Transcendental Meditation is the first thing that helped because it gives me such profound rest. It's finally allowing that deep stress to be released. In the 3 months I've been meditating, I've made more progress with all of my treatments than I have in the past 8 years."

Gail was a bright 28-year-old graduate student working towards a masters' degree in fine arts at Claremont College in southern California. On July 18, 1986, she was driving at dusk along a narrow winding road near Fullerton when she was hit head-on by car speeding at 60 miles an hour.

Gail was lucky to be alive. She broke a leg, an arm, and two ribs, fractured her skull, and suffered what her doctors called a "mild-to-moderate" head injury. She began an intensive program of physical therapy and cognitive therapy. She said that she felt like she was walking with a thick fog around her head. She had to relearn to read, concentrate, follow directions, and find things on a map. She had been an avid reader, devouring three to four books a month. Now, if she was lucky, she could read three to four books in a year.

Determined to recover, she made slow but steady progress for 6 years. She wasn't back to 100% yet, but she was getting close, when on June 24, 1992, Gail was in another car accident. It was minor-no broken bones-but it somehow brought back her old symptoms. Her headaches returned and so did her backaches and neckaches. Gail's doctor put her on an intensive program of 4-days-a-week physical therapy and recommended counseling. It didn't help. She tried some alternative therapies. She didn't get any better. She said that she lost hope and began to sink into a depression.

Gail had read something about Transcendental Meditation and decided to give it a try. On December 4, 1993, she learned the technique at the Transcendental Meditation Center in Pacific Palisades.

"The fog is gone," Gail says now. "My mind is clearer than it has been since the accident. I am able to read more, and my comprehension is excellent.

"Before I started meditating I used to have tremendous fatigue doing anything. If I had one day of activity, I had to have a full day of rest in bed. If I cooked a meal or went to the grocery store, I was exhausted. Now, for the first time in 8 years, I don't have a fatigue problem. I have much more energy, and I rarely get tired. I feel healthier -- mentally, emotionally, physically -- than I have since my accident."

Gail's art career is taking off. She does painting and drawing, and for the first time she is finding that she doesn't have to solicit shows; curators are starting to call her, and collectors are buying more of her work.

"Transcendental Meditation has helped me in so many ways. It has given me hope of being able to get beyond anything in my life-beyond chronic pain, beyond my own insecurities, beyond anything."

Healthy Mind / Healthy Body

Transcendental Meditation over Time -- Slowing Down the Aging Process

We know that stress-normal daily stress and severe traumatic stress -- is at the basis of almost all diseases and disorders. We also know that stress greatly accelerates the aging process. Nearly 15 years ago, researchers began to study the effects of Transcendental

Meditation on aging. Not surprisingly, considering the role of stress in aging, researchers found that long-term practice of Transcendental Meditation can promote a significantly younger biological age.

Chronological Age/Biological Age

To understand how this could happen, first it helps to understand a little about the aging process.

People age at different rates. According to most theories, the causes of aging are complex. They include heredity, the stress of daily living, and prior illnesses. But it all adds up to wear and tear on the system. For example, Charles is 48 years old according to his birth certificate, but his doctor knows otherwise. His doctor knows that because of intense job stress, Charles has the physiology of an average 60-year-old. The doctor recommends that Charles cut back on his workload and stop smoking, and he prescribes special medication for his high blood pressure.

Paul, on the other hand, is 49 years old and in good shape. Paul's doctor says that he has the physiology of a man 5 years younger. He gets a clean bill of health.

There is a difference between chronological age and biological age. Chronological age is fixed; it's your age based on your birth certificate-the number of years you have lived. Biological age isn't fixed; it is an indication of your overall state of health compared to the norm in the general population.

Scientists can use several tests, such as measurements of systolic blood pressure, auditory threshold, and near-point vision, to distinguish an individual's biological age from his actual chronological age.

Research on Transcendental Meditation and Aging

The first scientist to study the effects of Transcendental Meditation on aging was Dr. Robert Keith Wallace, the same physiologist who pioneered Transcendental Meditation research as a graduate student at UCLA in 1968. Twelve years after his first Transcendental Meditation study was published in *Science*, Dr. Wallace published his research on Transcendental Meditation and aging in the *International Journal of Neuroscience* (16: 5358, 1982).

12 Years Younger

Dr. Wallace found that subjects with an average chronological age of 50 years, who had been practicing Transcendental Meditation for over 5 years, had a biological age 12 years younger than their chronological age. That means a 55-year-old meditator had the physiology of a 43-year-old.

Several of the subjects in the study were found to have a biological age 27 years younger than their chronological age. This study has since been replicated several times. Other studies have also shown the beneficial effects of Transcendental Meditation on the aging process.

- A higher level of plasma dehydroepiandrosterone sulfate (DHEAS) is a hormonal marker of younger biological age. A study found DHEAS to be

significantly higher for 326 adult Transcendental Meditation technique practitioners than for 972 age- and sex-matched controls. These differences were largest for the oldest age categories. (*Journal of Behavioral Medicine*, 15(4): 327-341, 1992.)

- A study randomly assigned residents of 8 homes for the elderly (average age 81 years) to one of the following programs: Transcendental Meditation; an active thinking (mindfulness) program; a relaxation program; or a control group with no treatment. The Transcendental Meditation group improved most on a wide range of physical and mental health measures. In addition to reporting that they felt younger, the Transcendental Meditation group actually lived longer. After 3 years, all members were still living, in contrast to lower survival rates for the other experimental groups, and a 63% survival rate for the 478 other residents who did not participate in the study. (*Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 57(6): 950-964, 1989.)

Are these findings surprising? "No, not when you consider that all the major factors associated with longevity, such as hypertension and cholesterol, have been shown to improve with the regular practice of the Transcendental Meditation technique," Dr. Wallace says.

"Transcendental Meditation has been shown to significantly improve cardiovascular health, work satisfaction, positive health habits, physical function, happiness rating, self-health rating, intelligence, and mental health. The result is a younger biological age."

"I'm never tired since I started meditating," says Ann Hurley, 75. "I've got a lot of energy. I work at my son's law office, and I run circles around the two women in the office. It's two stories, and I run up and down the stairs all day. One of the women said to me, 'Don't you ever get tired?' I stopped and thought, and I realized that this hasn't happened to me since Transcendental Meditation. I'm not tired anymore."

Ann worked for DuPont for 33 years before taking an early retirement in 1983. Then, in 1987, she went to work for her son in Wilmington, Delaware. She started by filling in as a temporary receptionist over the lunch hour, and now she works from nine o'clock in the morning until five or six o'clock at night, doing filing, legal work, and accounting. She brings extra work home and does accounting on her computer. She started meditating in 1988.

"Transcendental Meditation has made my mind clearer. Now I've got this desire to study; I want to know more. Before I just goofed off like everybody else. Now people ask me, 'Why do you read all the time?' I say, 'Transcendental Meditation has woken up my mind. I want to know more about everything.'

"I'm enjoying life, really enjoying life. That's what I do now. I go to work and I go on trips and I look forward to the next day and how beautiful it's going to be, which I never did before. Transcendental Meditation has changed my whole outlook on life-that life is really worth living."

An Effective Solution to Spiraling Health Costs

What are the combined benefits of reduced stress, better health, and a younger biological age? Among the many advantages is a dramatic reduction in health care use -- and with it, an effective answer to the crisis of spiraling health care costs.

A 5-year nationwide study of more than 2,000 Transcendental Meditation practitioners found that the Transcendental Meditation group made 55% fewer health insurance claims than did the population norms. The group had less than half of the hospital

admissions and outpatient visits of other professional groups. They also had lower sickness rates in all categories, including 87% less hospitalization for heart disease and 55% less for cancer. In addition, people practicing Transcendental Meditation who were over 40 years of age had an even higher percentage reduction in insurance utilization compared to the norm for their age group (*Psychosomatic Medicine* 4: 493-507, 1987).

On the basis of this insurance study, and hundreds of other findings on the technique, physicians and other health care professionals now see Transcendental Meditation as a practical, cost-effective solution to the health care crisis.

"We are trying to solve the health care crisis by rearranging who pays for the sickness," says Hari Sharma, M.D., F.R.C.P.C. "What we need to do is keep people from falling sick in the first place. That is true health care reform; then we'll save money in the best possible way by keeping people healthy."

Dr. Sharma is Professor of Pathology and Director of Cancer Prevention and Natural Products Research at The Ohio State University College of Medicine. He is a consultant to the National Institutes of Health, Alternative Medicine Section, and has lectured on preventive medicine to medical audiences around the world, including the World Health Organization.

"In truth, the health care crisis is a crisis of stress. There's an epidemic of stress, both in individuals and in society as a whole. Stress breaks down physical and mental health in the individual and creates biochemicals that are destructive to the physical body.

"In multiple published research studies, Transcendental Meditation has been shown to be the most effective technique for reducing stress and rebalancing the biochemicals in the body to produce improved physical and mental health. This has been corroborated by research showing that Transcendental Meditation reduces health care utilization by 50%."

Dr. Sharma is the author of *Freedom from Disease-How to Control Free Radicals, a Major Cause of Aging and Disease*. He practices Transcendental Meditation and says that the technique should be widely applied as part of reforming America's health care system.

"Transcendental Meditation is a major preventive technology. Like everything else in prevention, Transcendental Meditation should be covered

by health care providers. That way we can prevent forthcoming disorders that are extremely costly-not only financially, but also in terms of human pain and suffering. Transcendental Meditation would help the individual, society, and the federal government. It would help everyone."

"I used to get real stressed in college. I knew that medical school would be even more stressful. Transcendental Meditation has been perfect for me. It's so relaxing. It's a very efficient way for me to get re-charged, be able to spend more time studying, and get more out of my day."

-- Sarah Church, first-year medical student, Emory University School of Medicine, Atlanta. Ms. Church has been practicing Transcendental Meditation for 6 months.

"More bounce in my step. Good health. Good humor. Good relations. I enjoy my church more. I haven't been to a doctor -- except to take life insurance exams -- since I started meditating 22 years ago."

-- Sam Marasco, Sr., 67, Advertising Sales Manager at the San Diego Sports Arena, San Diego. Thirty-three members of Mr. Marasco's extended family have learned Transcendental Meditation, including his 95-year-old mother-in-law, Grandma Macri.

The following charts represent just a few of the numerous research studies conducted on the physiological effects of Transcendental Meditation, and their benefits to health.

- [Natural Change in Breathing](#)
- [Physiological Indications of Deep Rest](#)
- [Decreased Stress Hormone](#)
- [Lower Blood Pressure](#)
- [Reversal of the Aging Process](#)
- [Reduced Need for Medical Care-1](#)
- [Reduced Need for Medical Care-2](#)

C H A P T E R 4

Ideal Relationships

Bruce Brooks is a versatile and prolific award-winning author who has written 11 books -- 5 novels and 6 non-fiction -- in 10 years. He has won the national Newbery Honor for two of his children's books, and he recently completed a sports biography and a collection of essays on fatherhood. Bruce travels throughout the country, giving several hundred presentations a year, to children, teachers, librarians, and parents, on reading and writing -- how to use literature in education and for personal enrichment.

Bruce's wife, Penelope, is an accomplished artist, housewife, and mother of their 10-

year-old son, Alex, and their 16-month-old son, Spencer. Penelope does three-dimensional art work in sculpture and lighting, and for several years she taught art and was assistant art director at the Jewish Community Center in the Greater Washington, D.C. area.

Bruce and Penelope have been married 16 years. They live in Silver Spring, Maryland.

Bruce: "I remember the introductory lecture that I attended on Transcendental Meditation. The teacher said, 'When two people come together and both expect to get, then neither receives. When two people come together and both are ready to give, then both receive.'

"Transcendental Meditation allows you to discover just how vast an amount you have to give. You become more secure in yourself by discovering how big you really are; that, in fact, you are infinite. You can give and give and give and you will never exhaust yourself. In my experience that is the secret of relationships, and that has been the secret to raising our children -- the capacity for complete giving. And just as you practice Transcendental Meditation as the basis for action, for bringing more of yourself into your work, so, too, in a relationship, you meditate as the basis for bringing more of yourself into the relationship. Only by giving more will you receive more."

Penelope: "Transcendental Meditation has allowed me to experience the depth of love that's within me. It has allowed me to become more aware of my own feelings, desires, and needs, so that I am able to relate more clearly to the feelings, desires, and needs of others. You can only relate to other people -- your husband, your children, your friends -- based on how you relate to yourself. If you have love in your heart, but your love is buried under stress, it's lost. Since I've been practicing Transcendental Meditation, I've found that love has become a continuum in my life -- and not just on certain days, like holidays or birthdays. The love within me comes up and supports me and my activities all the time."

Bruce: "Marriage and raising children have gotten easier and easier because we are meditating and growing toward enlightenment."

"A strong mind is tolerant; a weak mind is easily overcome by the surroundings." -- Maharishi

The World Is as You Are

It's a common experience: One morning you wake up as tired as when you went to sleep. The day moves slowly; complications arise; problems seem to be overwhelming. You feel worried; relationships suffer.

But the next morning, after a deep sleep, you feel fresh and alert. The circumstances of the previous day may remain the same, but your evaluation of them differs dramatically. You are more relaxed, yet more energetic, more productive. Relationships are smoother, more harmonious.

Why the difference? Basically, it's because the world is as you are. Put on green glasses and everything appears green. Put on yellow glasses and everything is yellow. Look

through tired eyes with an anxious mind and your vision is clouded with problems, many of which, in reality, may not exist.

Look through fresh eyes with an alert, creative mind and you are better able to see solutions to the problems that do exist. When you are rested and fresh, you have the stability, adaptability, energy and intelligence to solve problems and make improvements in all areas of your life.

What's needed? A fully developed consciousness.

Good Social Behavior

In his book *Science of Being and Art of Living*, Maharishi writes, "Really good social behavior between people will only be possible when their awareness is broadened, when they are able to see the whole situation, to understand each other more thoroughly, to be aware of each other's need and attempt to fulfill that need. This naturally necessitates a fully developed consciousness, a right sense of judgement, and all the qualities that only a strong and clear mind possesses."

And without this developed consciousness?

"Small minds always fail to perceive the whole situation and in their narrow vision create imaginary obstacles that are neither useful to themselves nor to anyone else," Maharishi writes. "Then their behavior towards others only results in misunderstanding and increase of tension."

Relationships Thrive on Giving

It's also a common experience that relationships thrive on giving. At home it's the father giving time and attention to his children. At work it's the manager giving enough supervision and support to the sales staff.

But we can only give from what we have. The father who returns home from work exhausted can hardly give his children the love and help they need. Likewise, the manager who is anxious and short-tempered can hardly give the necessary patience and insight to properly train his staff.

What is the solution?

Transcendental Meditation and Relationships

It's a matter of common sense to understand how Maharishi's Transcendental Meditation can improve relationships.

If you're able to think more clearly, you'll be better able to properly evaluate situations and circumstances as they arise. With broader vision you'll be naturally more understanding and patient.

Because you have an effective way to eliminate stress and develop your own unlimited potential, you'll be more fulfilled within yourself, and you won't suffer from the build-up of tension and fatigue. The result? More happiness, less worry, more energy, and a fuller heart. Relationships spontaneously improve, and life naturally becomes much

more enjoyable, much more satisfying.

Ralph and Dian Gumpf have been married for 38 years. Ralph and Dian and their two grown daughters, Sara and Julie, learned Transcendental Meditation in Madison, Wisconsin. Ralph is a learning coordinator at Black Hawk Middle School in Madison; Dian is a homemaker; Sara is married and has gone back to college; and Julie is a senior at the University of Wisconsin, majoring in wildlife ecology. The Gumpfs have been meditating for one year.

Dian: "Right after learning Transcendental Meditation, I noticed that we were able to communicate better with each other -- the edges of things were softer. We've always had a good time together as a family, but now we're more open with each other; we're able to say more things to each other."

Julie: "I used to be so negative, especially coming out of my teenage years. Interacting with friends, we didn't have anything to talk about unless it was, 'Life is terrible.' I am a lot more positive now -- less judgemental and more patient with people. Studying goes more quickly now, too. I absorb more information a lot faster. And when I go into a test and don't know the information right away, I don't freeze up as I used to. I can sit back and think it through. That's something new for me. It's been very easy to find time to meditate at school. There have been many times when I've postponed studying for 20 minutes -- even though I had a test the next day -- so I could meditate. I would never miss it, because it helps me so much."

Ralph: "I think the interactions with my wife and daughters are much better, much easier, since we've been meditating. We always had a good relationship, but now we are able to tell each other things that are accepted in a more positive way. In addition, my physical check-up was better. My blood pressure always used to run a little high, but this year it was down, and I hadn't taken any medication for it."

Dian: "I was always the anxious type. I had this free-floating anxiety, butterflies in my stomach. The first thing I noticed after learning Transcendental Meditation was that the anxiety left. I am much calmer now. I've also seen definite changes in my husband. He has a very stressful job. There's quite a bit of difference in him now when he comes home from work. He's more relaxed; he's a lot easier around the house. And I also think he has a lot easier time at work."

"We look forward to life more each day. We see fewer things as problems. We have a growing sense of 'We can handle this, whatever comes along.'"

"I am comfortable and secure within myself, no matter what is happening around me, and because of that my effectiveness has multiplied many times. There is no amount of money for which I would give up all I have gained from this remarkably simple practice. It is a priceless treasure."

-- Jonathon D. Levy, Assistant Dean, School of Industrial and Labor Relations, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York.

"Substance abuse disorders are no longer a black or Hispanic or poor problem. They are now everyone's problem. You can go to the best university campuses in this country, and you will find a large percentage of kids strung out on alcohol and drugs. That's a fact. It's a nationwide disaster. The very fabric of what constitutes the future of any society, which is the integrated mental and physical health of all its members -- especially its youth -- it is actually being torn to pieces right now from coast to coast.

"As someone who has treated thousands of people who have suffered from the disease of substance abuse, I cannot make a stronger recommendation than this: The government should research Transcendental Meditation, understand it, and put it into practice

immediately as part of a relapse prevention program. Society cannot afford to overlook the power that Transcendental Meditation can bring for healing the horrible disease that now plagues us -- violence and drug abuse. Transcendental Meditation is easy to learn, effective, and cost effective, and the time has come for it to be used and understood."

-- Marcelino Cruces, LICSW, has supervised substance-abuse treatment programs for over 15 years in Washington, D.C. and Los Angeles. He has served as a consultant for the development of protocols for the treatment of alcohol, drug abuse, and mental health disorders for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. State Department. He is a member of the District of Columbia Mayor's Advisory Committee on Drug Abuse and is chief administrator for the Coalition of Latino Community-Based Organizations and clinical director of the Salud Health Center in the District of Columbia.

The following charts are just a few of the research studies on the effects of Transcendental Meditation for reducing anxiety, increasing self-esteem and self-actualization, as well as for reducing substance abuse.

- [Reduced Anxiety](#)
- [Increased Self-Actualization](#)
- [Increased Strength of Self-Concept](#)
- [Decreased Cigarette, Alcohol, and Drug Abuse](#)

CHAPTER 5

Promoting Corporate Development

R.W. "Buck" Montgomery, Jr., wanted to turn around his Detroit-based chemical manufacturing company, the H.A. Montgomery Company.

"The company had been in business for over 40 years," Buck recalls. "It had gotten into a routine, a rut of old-time management, and it was difficult to get the people to see new thinking. That was in 1983, and at the time the U.S. automotive industry was in a great slump, stalled by imports from Japan and Germany.

"We needed a new approach to everything -- a new attitude, new thinking, new energy to revitalize the company and get it to take off again."

Buck and his staff attended numerous seminars and courses.

"We would go to weekend or week-long seminars, and we'd return with these huge books, and we'd still be plagued with the same problems. We'd forget what we learned, or we didn't have time to restudy what we'd learned, due to the demands of the job, and so we just went back to our old routine.

"I was looking for a tool that my employees could utilize every day, that would allow them to change their thinking, allow them to have more energy, be more creative on their own, and use more of their potential on the job. I found Transcendental Meditation to be the tool that would work."

Buck sat down with his senior staff and came up with a plan. First, Transcendental Meditation would be offered at company expense to anyone interested among the managers. They would meditate twice a day for 6 months. They would be asked, on a monthly basis, to write progress reports, pro or con, on what they thought of the program and how it was affecting them in their daily life -- both at the office and at home. Then they would decide if the program would go company-wide.

"After 6 months there was 100% agreement among that management group to offer the program throughout the company," Buck says. "Transcendental Meditation was then introduced into research, manufacturing, sales, marketing, and administration."

Buck encouraged his managers and employees to meditate at least once a day -- in the morning or in the late afternoon -- on company time at the plant.

"Productivity improved dramatically," Buck says. "Absenteeism decreased drastically, as did sick days and injuries. The creativity of our research department went up, sales increased 120% in 2 years, and profitability went up 520%."

In 1987 Buck sold the company and retired. He now spends his time with his family and consults with companies that are looking for new avenues for success. He is often asked to speak on the success of the Transcendental Meditation program at the former H.A. Montgomery Company to executives who are interested in repeating that success in their own firms.

"The individual is the most important resource a business has," Buck says. "You've got to improve the capacity and capabilities of the individual. If you take a tired individual, or one who is not motivated or who doesn't feel he has any creativity, no matter what tools you put in his hands, it's a waste of time. First you have to improve the individual, increase his potential; then you can give him other tools to work with. The only program that I know that will do that is Transcendental Meditation. The small amount of money it costs today will be of immeasurable benefit to the company on the profitability line and on a morale line -- and everything else you can imagine. This is

success."

U.S. business is being crippled by stress. Up to \$200 billion is lost -- wasted, actually -- each year due to stress in the work place, according to a 1993 report by the United Nations International Labor Organization.

Worse yet, research indicates that none of the programs for stress reduction/personal development widely in use in business and industry today provide a solution to the problem. Despite intensive efforts to curb the impact of stress in the work place, medical care utilization costs continue to escalate, and job performance, productivity, and employee turnover rates continue to suffer.

"In this era of increased competition and downsizing, businesses have asked people to do more and more work in less and less time," says Gerald Swanson, Ph.D., Professor of Management at Maharishi International University, who has introduced Transcendental Meditation in several U.S. corporations and has written a book, *Enlightened Management*, on the use of the technique in business. "This puts more stress on the employees and leaves them burned out and unable to have a good time with their families.

"Today most people in business are looking for some way to re-establish the balance between home and work. They are torn between the need to maintain their financial stability and security and the need to come home and nurture their family. This is especially true now that there is such a large number of two-career marriages and single-parent families. Both the mom and the dad are being called upon to be bread winners and still provide that nurturing value to their family.

"How can you do that unless you have some way of not being overwhelmed by the stress of working? The only way to do that is to have a stronger, more resilient physiology.

"We know from research and experiences in business that that's precisely how people feel when they practice Transcendental Meditation," Dr. Swanson says.

A Cost-Effective Solution to Job Stress

In the past 36 years, Maharishi's Transcendental Meditation has been learned by tens of thousands of business professionals. The technique has also been offered company-wide to executives, managers, and employees in hundreds of large corporations and small businesses throughout the world.

Scientific research in several of these business settings has found that Transcendental Meditation offers a cost-effective solution to problems caused by job stress. The research shows that sickness, absenteeism, and health care utilization decrease; productivity and job satisfaction improve; and relationships between co-workers and supervisors improve.

Transcendental Meditation in a Fortune 100 Company

For example, a study published in the scientific journal *Anxiety, Stress and Coping* in December 1993 found significant benefits of Transcendental Meditation in stress reduction, health, and employee development, in two companies.

Managers and employees in a large manufacturing plant of a Midwest Fortune 100 company and in a smaller Pennsylvania sales distribution company learned the technique.

After 3 months employees who learned Transcendental Meditation were compared to a control group of non-meditating employees who worked at similar job sites, held similar job positions, and had similar demographics (age, education, etc.) and similar personality characteristics, before the study began.

Researchers found that compared to controls, the Transcendental Meditation group had significantly

- Less anxiety, job tension, insomnia, and fatigue
- Reduced cigarette and hard liquor use
- Improved health and fewer health complaints
- Enhanced effectiveness, job satisfaction, and work/personal relationships

The research showed that the effects of Transcendental Meditation on anxiety, alcohol and cigarette use, and in enhancing personal development, were much larger than for other forms of meditation and relaxation found in previous studies.

Worry over the negative impact of rising job stress led employees at the Puritan-Bennett Corporation, the world's leading maker of respiratory care products, to ask the company to address the problem.

"We researched the best stress-reduction/personal development programs," says Mary Martha Stevens, Ph.D., Manager of Health and Wellness at Puritan-Bennett. "We decided on Transcendental Meditation for three reasons: The technique had the most research supporting it; the best follow-up of any program of its type; and clearly from what I had discovered, it was the easiest, most practical, and most effective technique for busy individuals to use."

Puritan-Bennett offered the Transcendental Meditation Corporate Development Program at its corporate headquarters in Kansas City in August 1993. Sixty-six managers and employees and ten spouses learned the technique during the program's first phase. Instruction was held on company time, as was a complete 4-month follow-up program. For those with work schedule problems, instruction was also held after hours.

The benefits were immediate, according to Dr. Stevens. After just a few days, managers reported that they felt more relaxed and less anxious, were thinking more clearly, and were able to organize themselves better and accomplish much more.

Diana Trompeter is payroll supervisor for the Puritan Group at Puritan-Bennett. She has been with the company for 13 years. Diana learned Transcendental Meditation because she had been under extreme stress from the death of her mother and increasing

pressures at work. After 4 weeks of practicing the technique, Diana wrote a letter to Dr. Stevens, assessing her progress:

"In the beginning I wasn't sure what TM would do for me, and when I shared the idea with my staff, they had doubts, too. I decided to try it, and it is one of my best decisions.

"TM immediately changed things for me. I became calm and clear-minded after my first session, and it works as well for me now, 4 weeks later, as it did that first day. TM is one of the few things that is truly effortless and yet you can see the benefit.

"My employees have commented on the difference in me and in other meditators they often work with. Of all the good benefits the company has offered us through the years, this is by far the most beneficial for me. I feel better, more confident about my decisions, and most important, I feel a peace and calm that seems to get me through the most difficult times.

"Thank you for introducing TM to us, and I would like to see it offered to all our employees."

Ten months after learning the technique, Diana reported that the benefits were continuing to grow.

"Transcendental Meditation has produced a calmness and serenity in me that allows me to deal with my job and the people around me in a much more pleasant and efficient manner. Nothing outside of me has changed. The job pressures are still there; the problems are still there. Transcendental Meditation is simply a way of letting me handle my own life better so that I am better at dealing with those outside pressures. It is the best thing I have ever done."

In the project design a research component was included to evaluate objectively the effects of the program on 38 meditating executives compared with 38 matched controls. The findings: Over a 3-month period, the meditators reduced psychological and physical symptoms of stress, reduced total blood cholesterol, gained vitality, and enhanced mental health and well-being.

Dr. Stevens said that Puritan-Bennett was very satisfied with the results and that she strongly recommends Transcendental Meditation to other companies. "If you want your employees to eliminate stress and not just cope with it -- which is what companies spend a great deal of time doing today -- then having them learn Transcendental Meditation is the best way to do it."

The following charts are just a few of the research studies on the effects of Transcendental Meditation for improving productivity and relationships, reducing stress, and promoting health, on the job.

- [Increased Productivity](#)
- [Improved Relations at Work](#)
- [Increased Relaxation and Decreased Stress](#)
- [Improved Health and More Positive Health Habits](#)

Life Supported by Natural Law

The more years that I meditate, the smoother my life goes, and the more good luck, the more support I get in my activity from the environment and from people around me," says Fred Gratzon, chairman of Telegroup, Inc., a long distance international discount carrier. Founded in 1989, Telegroup is now one of the fastest growing companies in America. The firm has clients in 114 countries.

"Transcendental Meditation refines my thinking and feelings so that I am more in tune with the subtle creative impulses deep within me -- and to the source of those creative impulses. When I am in tune with that, I have very good luck. It's as simple as that. It's an abstract thing to describe, but it's a very real experience. When I have it I feel confident. It's like an athlete who is in the 'zone.' I want the ball. I know I'll hit the shot. I can't miss. That's a metaphor for everything in my life. I feel that I've got the rhythm, I'm hot. I have come to expect support of nature, even insist upon it. And I know what I have to do to keep it. I meditate. Everyone in business should have this experience. No, *everyone* should have it."

"If you favor natural law, natural law will favor you." -- Maharishi

Support of Natural Law for Success in Life

One day everything is a strain. You feel worried and tense and out of-step with the day. You just miss an important phone call, hit all the red lights when you're rushing for an appointment, and can't find a parking place anywhere.

Another day you feel quite good. Everything seems to go right and click into place. You find the perfect parking place, reach the right person on the phone, and come up with a workable solution to a problem at the office. The day seems to go effortlessly and you wonder why every day can't go at least as smoothly.

It can -- through "support of natural law."

Here's how.

What Is a Law of Nature?

Throw a tennis ball up in the air and it falls to the earth: gravity, a law of nature.

Heat water to 212°F and it boils: a law of nature.

Water a plant, give it proper food and sunlight and it grows: laws of nature.

The entire world, the entire universe is governed by laws of nature. Everywhere we look -- at DNA through an electron microscope or at the galactic life through a high-powered telescope -- everything in the universe is permeated by intelligence; all activity is governed by natural law.

What Is the Purpose of Natural Law?

Like a strong current in a river, natural law propels life in an evolutionary direction. It is the invincible force in nature from the level of the unified field that continually creates, maintains, and evolves life.

Natural Law and You

What does natural law have to do with you? Everything -- because not only are electrons and galaxies subject to the laws of nature, but so are you.

There are, for example, countless laws of nature that govern the functioning of your body. If you align yourself with those laws -- eat the right foods, exercise properly, get enough rest, etc. -- your body maintains its health.

Violate those laws and you fall sick and suffer.

Therefore, the key to better health -- actually the key to perfect health -- is to attune yourself with all the laws of nature that naturally promote growth and evolution. It's also the key to skill in action in life.

How can that be accomplished?

You Can't *Try* to Live in Accord with Natural Law

Living in accord with natural law is simple through Transcendental Meditation, and we'll see how in a moment. But first, let's analyze the ways that you can't gain this alliance:

- By trying intellectually to understand or remember all of the different laws of nature that govern life;
- By trying strictly to adhere to specific laws of nature.

Why? Because there are far too many laws of nature to understand, much less remember. And, even if you were able to gain some knowledge about specific laws of nature, it's no guarantee you'll be able to abide by them.

For example, there's the medical doctor, a noted authority on the causes of stress-related diseases, who nevertheless gets sick from overwork and worry. He's fully aware of the causes and consequences of stress, yet he is unable to follow his own professional advice. He works too long and too hard.

Or the factory supervisor with a heart condition who's placed on a strict diet and exercise program by his physician. How long does it take before he begins to compromise on his regimen even though it's in his own best interest to maintain it?

What is the difficulty?

To act in a way that is completely life supporting is next to impossible, unless it is natural. It can never be accomplished by trying to remember what's right, or by forcing oneself to behave in a certain way.

Alliance with Natural Law Must Be Spontaneous

Alliance with natural law must be spontaneous. And it can be lived only on the basis of a fully developed consciousness.

Maharishi's Transcendental Meditation places life in the center stream of the evolutionary power of natural law.

How? By allowing the conscious mind to settle down to its most silent, wakeful, and fully expanded state, Transcendental Meditation opens the awareness to pure consciousness, which is the unified field of all the laws of nature.

As we discussed earlier, it is the unified field, through its "self-interacting dynamics," which expresses itself as all the diversified forms and phenomena in creation. This means that all matter, all energy, and all the laws of nature that govern all the activity in the universe spring from the unified field.

Concrete, Natural, and Practical

When you open your awareness to the unified field during Transcendental Meditation, you draw upon the unlimited potential of nature at its source. Your mind naturally becomes clearer and more creative. Your body becomes healthier and more energetic. Your thoughts, feelings, and actions are *spontaneously* more in tune with the evolutionary power of natural law. And then you enjoy more success and satisfaction in everything you do.

Does it sound abstract?

It's actually concrete, natural, and very practical.

"I believe that you get back what you give," says Michael Reed, Ph.D., manager in business development for Glaxo Inc., a pharmaceutical company in Research Triangle Park, near Raleigh, in North Carolina. "Transcendental Meditation has allowed me to give more, do more, and live and enjoy my life more fully. At the same time, because I meditate I feel that I am having a positive influence on the people I live with, the people I work with, and society in general.

"Some people just call it good luck, but since I've been meditating I've found that spontaneously good things happen, often without any directed thought or effort on my part. Nature spontaneously delivers opportunities and situations to enhance my job, my family, and my social life.

"I have a wonderful life. I have a beautiful wife, a new baby, a job that is very satisfying, and I live very comfortably. I feel that I'm living the fruits of support of nature every day in many, many ways."

"Everyone has had this happen: You want something and suddenly 5 minutes later, or a day later, it's there and you didn't seem to do anything," says Channler Drawdy, chairman and part-owner of Atherton Technology, a computer-aided software engineering company in Fremont, California. "Most people think this kind of good luck is coincidental, but it doesn't have to be that way. Since I've been practicing

Transcendental Meditation these things are occurring with more and more frequency in my business and in my personal life. The amount of support I seem to be spontaneously receiving has reached the point where I can no longer say it's a coincidence. I am able to do less and accomplish more. Life has become simpler and much more enjoyable."

Before acquiring controlling interest in Atherton Technology in 1993, Mr. Drawdy was a software engineering director for Sun Microsystems. Atherton Technology had not been successful since its founding in 1986, but the company turned a profit the first year after Mr. Drawdy and his associates came in. Now we're into an explosive growth period," he says. "We're really taking off fast."

"In my experience, success comes from support of nature. There are laws of nature, like the laws of physics, and you can either violate those laws or you can live in harmony with them. If you live in harmony with those laws, then every aspect of your life is fuller, richer, more successful. If you violate them, then you experience a lot of pain and failure and discomfort. The easiest, fastest way to cultivate harmony with the laws of nature is through Transcendental Meditation."

Solution to Problems Is Alliance with Natural Law

Why do people violate the laws of nature?

"Education is responsible," Maharishi has said. "No educational system in the world is capable of training an individual to function spontaneously in accord with natural law. This lack in education is the cause of all problems in every area of life."

The solution to all problems then, as Maharishi has said, is spontaneous alliance with natural law. Why? Because when you closely examine them, all problems in life originate from the violation of natural law. It is violation of natural law that causes stress. Stress in an individual's life is the cause of sickness and suffering, and the build-up of stress among all the individuals in society is the cause of crime, violence, conflict, and war.

On the other hand, life spontaneously lived in harmony with natural law is the basis for a healthy, prosperous, and fulfilling life for the individual, and the foundation for lasting peace and progress for the whole world.

C H A P T E R 7

Reducing Crime in Society and Creating World Peace

We are in a highly stressed area, an area that has a lot of drugs and a lot of violence," says Dr. George Rutherford, Principal of the Fletcher-Johnson School in southeast Washington, D.C. There are 840 students in grades pre-K through 9, and 125 staff at the school. Dr. Rutherford has been practicing Transcendental Meditation for 2 years.

"Some of my students and former students have been shot; some of my former students have been killed. That brings about tremendous stress in me because I know these kids, and I have to worry that my school is safe for my students and staff. I have to make sure that I don't have the outside forces coming in. In order to do that I've got to be able to think clearly enough to run my building and still try to assure youngsters that this is a safe haven.

"Transcendental Meditation is the best thing I have ever done to help myself. I have more energy.

I am less stressful. I can think clearer, and I believe I have become a better principal. My tolerance level is higher, so I am able to talk clearer to youngsters and understand the things that are affecting them.

"My health is outstanding. If I had not started Transcendental Meditation, I'd have left the school system or I'd be dead because of all the pressure. It has made me much stronger physically and much stronger mentally.

"I truly feel that Transcendental Meditation is a vehicle that we can use to reduce or eliminate the violence in our community. It will help to remove all the baggage that young people bring to school with them that makes them ready to jump and fight at the first moment anyone touches them. If they can meditate at home, it will help them remove the stresses that they have each and every day -- and that is from hearing gunshots at night and seeing people get killed -- family members and friends. Transcendental Meditation is going to eventually remove that kind of behavior.

"I would whole-heartedly support large groups of Transcendental Meditation meditators in Washington to reduce crime and create peace in the community. Nothing else has worked. I feel, based on my experience with Transcendental Meditation, that this is the means, the vehicle that is going to get us to a peaceful society. The government should support these large groups, if, in fact, it is serious about reducing or eliminating crime."

"Only a new seed can yield a new crop. Only new knowledge, new principles, and new programs can put an end to conflict, sickness, and suffering, and prevent such problems from arising in the future. Only new knowledge can create a healthy, prosperous, harmonious society and a peaceful world." -- Maharishi

The Problems of Violence

Crime spreads at an alarming rate through our cities. Regional conflicts rage in many parts of the globe.

Billions of dollars urgently needed for education, health care, etc., are allocated to build more prisons and hire more police, but no one is safe from the threat of rising violent crime.

Peacekeeping forces are sent, at considerable risk and expense, to far-off lands to quell conflicts. Experienced diplomats hammer out peace accords between opposing factions. Yet order is not maintained, and lasting peace is not delivered.

Nothing is working. What's wrong?

The Cause of Crime and War

What's wrong, according to Maharishi, is that the root cause of violence -- both in crime and war -- has not been addressed. Both are the outburst of built-up stress in society.

And stress in society is created by all the people in society continually violating the laws of nature.

"As long as individuals continue to violate the laws of nature, they will continue to create stress in their own lives and create stress in the collective consciousness of the whole nation," Maharishi says. "As a result, governmental efforts to promote peace will prove ineffective, and the world will face violence and conflict everywhere. Peace will only remain an abstract, unattainable ideal."

Old Approaches Fail to Reduce Stress in Society

Like smokestacks pouring pollution into the atmosphere, individuals suffering from stress pour stress into the environment, creating the ground for crime, violence, and conflict in society.

The approaches that have been tried repeatedly -- more police, longer prison terms, military force, peace agreements -- have ultimately failed because they fail to solve the problem of high levels of stress in society.

A New Seed for a New Crop

Only a new seed can yield a new crop. A completely new approach is needed that can reduce the dangerous rise of stress and crime in our cities and, at the same time, reduce the dangerous rise of stress and conflict in the world's trouble spots.

Fortunately, such an approach exists. It has been developed during the past 36 years, and it has been found to work. What follows is a brief explanation of this approach, including a history of its development, a discussion of its mechanics, and the research that shows that it works.

Individual Is the Basic Unit of World Peace

When Maharishi first started teaching Transcendental Meditation in 1958, he said that the technique was a way for the individual to grow in health and happiness, and for the world to rise in peace.

"For the forest to be green, every tree must be green," Maharishi said. "The individual is the basic unit of world peace. For the world to be at peace, every individual has to be at peace."

Maharishi said that Transcendental Meditation was the key to producing a peaceful individual, and therefore was the basis for creating world peace.

One Percent for World Peace

A few years later Maharishi made a prediction: If as little as 1% of the world's population practiced Transcendental Meditation, there would be no more wars. The peaceful influence created by people practicing Transcendental Meditation, he said, radiates throughout the environment, like the light from a bulb radiates throughout a darkened room.

At that time, in the early 1960s, there were too few meditators in the world to test

Maharishi's prediction, even on a small scale. But by the end of 1974, more than 250,000 people were meditating in the United States, and many small cities in the country had 1% of their population practicing the technique.

The first study to test Maharishi's prediction occurred in December 1974, when scientists measured quality-of-life indicators in 4 cities where 1% of the population was practicing Transcendental Meditation. They examined such standard and publicly accessible indices as crime statistics, accident rates, and hospital admissions.

Decreased Crime in 1% Cities

When these findings were compared with similar research from four control cities matched for population density, geography, economic conditions, etc., a remarkable discovery was made.

The cities with 1% of their populations practicing the Transcendental Meditation program showed a decrease in crime rate while the matched control cities showed an increase in crime rate -- as did the U.S. as a whole.

The researchers then expanded their study to include eleven 1% cities and eleven control cities. They found a 16.6 percent reduction in crime rates among the 1% cities compared to the non-one-percent cities.

What did it mean? It was the first scientific validation of Maharishi's prediction that the quality of life could be improved through a small percentage of a population practicing Transcendental Meditation.

On January 12, 1975, in the presence of leading scientists, doctors, educators, business leaders, and the world press, Maharishi hailed the significance of this discovery by inaugurating "the dawn of the Age of Enlightenment" for the world.

Maharishi said, "With 1% of a city's population practicing Transcendental Meditation, crime rates decrease. One percent of the world's population practicing the Transcendental Meditation program will neutralize stress and negativity, and promote positivity and peace, throughout the world. With just this first scientific research on the sociological effects of Transcendental Meditation we can see the onset of a new age of progress and harmony for all mankind."

Transcendental Meditation Is the Causal Factor

The research continued. The 11-city study was expanded to include 48 cities, with similar results. The study, entitled "The Transcendental Meditation Program and Crime Rate Change in a Sample of Forty-Eight Cities," was published in the *Journal of Crime and Justice* (Vol. IV, 1981).

Since 1974 Transcendental Meditation crime-rate studies have been conducted in hundreds of cities in the United States, using some of the most sophisticated, computerized, statistical procedures to control for a broad spectrum of variables.

The conclusion: Transcendental Meditation program participation was found to be the causal factor in crime rate reductions in cities and metropolitan areas throughout the nation. Scientists named the effect the "Maharishi Effect."

How is this possible?

We'll see in a moment.

The Transcendental Meditation-Sidhi Program

Concurrent with all of this, a new development was taking place that was to have a profound impact on the direction of Transcendental Meditation research.

In 1976 Maharishi introduced the Transcendental Meditation-Sidhi program, which he described as advanced procedures or natural extensions of Transcendental Meditation "to train consciousness to function from the unified field of natural law, the self-referral state of pure consciousness."

Maharishi explained that the Transcendental Meditation-Sidhi program trained the awareness to function in the same self-interacting style as the intelligence of nature. In this way, Maharishi said, individuals would gain the support of the total potential of nature's creativity and intelligence for the fulfillment of their desires in daily life.

Scientific research showed that Maharishi's Transcendental Meditation-Sidhi program significantly enhanced the benefits of Transcendental Meditation. It increased EEG coherence, increased creativity and intelligence, and promoted longevity.

Most dramatically, sociological research showed that the practice of the Transcendental Meditation-Sidhi program by a small number of people together in one place had a very powerful effect on society as a whole -- even more powerful than the 1% Transcendental Meditation effect.

Research showed that only the square root of 1% of a population practicing the Transcendental Meditation-Sidhi program together in one place was required to create an influence of order and coherence in the entire population.

How is all of this possible? How can people meditating alone in their homes or offices, or together in a group, influence other people across town -- or across the country -- who aren't even meditating?

The Super Radiance Effect: Action at a Distance

- Two corks are floating in a sink of water 8 inches apart. Push down one cork, release it, and the other cork bobs up and down.
- Turn on the radio as you drive to the supermarket. A disc jockey is playing a song 50 miles away. The music fills your car.

These are two examples where one object can influence another object at a distance. In physics this phenomenon is called "action at a distance."

How does it happen? Through the influence of waves traveling through an underlying field. Water links the two corks, and the electromagnetic field links the radio station and the car radio.

Connecting all matter in the universe are unseen, fundamental fields -- the electromagnetic field, the gravitational field, and the fields of the weak and strong forces binding the center of the atom.

At their basis, according to supersymmetric unified quantum field theories, is the unified field, which creates and connects everything together in the universe -- all fields, all matter, everything, everybody.

The Behavior of Fields

One interesting characteristic about the behavior of fields is the manner in which waves travel through them.

For example, consider the ordinary light radiating from your reading lamp. It is the product of innumerable light waves that are random and incoherent in their pattern. Take any 100 of these

incoherent light waves and they produce the light of 100 separate waves. Because of this the light from your lamp is bright enough for you to read the book in your lap, but not nearly bright enough, say, to reach the moon.

On the other hand, if those random light waves are made coherent so that the peaks and valleys of each wave are in step with each other, then the intensity of the light waves becomes far greater than when they function separately. Their intensity is proportional to the square of the actual number of waves. Take those 100 light waves again, make them function coherently together, and they will produce a light as bright as 10,000 incoherent light waves.

Coherent light is called laser light. It can be bounced off the moon, applied to conduct surgery, or used to play a laser disc recording. This phenomenon has been called the "superradiance effect."

The Field Effects of Consciousness

How, then, can the coherence created by a small number of people practicing Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi program together in one place affect a large population?

Scientists said it could happen only if consciousness, experienced in its self-referral state during Transcendental Meditation, is a field and only if it is the same unified field that underlies all of nature.

They said that only a field can produce the influence of "action-at-a-distance," and only the unified field would be able to account for the wide-ranging effects on society observed with the collective practice of Maharishi's Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi program. This is because on the level of the unified field, everything in nature is connected.

Researchers predicted that if a group of experts in the Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi program could, in fact, produce an influence of coherence on the level of the unified field, then according to the behavior of fields, that coherence would spread throughout the environment.

That's the hypothesis. Now does it actually happen? What is the evidence? And how can it be measured?

Measuring the Trends of Time

In the past two decades, social scientists have developed sophisticated statistical procedures to analyze changing trends in society. These methods are helpful to researchers attempting to determine why these changes occur.

For example, sickness rates might be found to be suddenly decreasing in a particular city. Why? Is it due to a public health program recently introduced into the school system, or is it simply a seasonal change?

Through these advanced statistical procedures, scientists are better able to identify the reason, or reasons, for the decrease in sickness rates in the city, eliminate alternative explanations, and hopefully use the technology or program to produce the same effect again, perhaps on a wider scale.

Studying the Effects of Transcendental Meditation on Quality of Life

Extensive research, employing many of these statistical procedures, have been conducted throughout the world to gauge the effects of the Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi program on the quality of life in society.

The research has demonstrated repeatedly that when the square root of 1% of a population practices the Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi program together in one place there are marked decreases in negative tendencies such as crime, sickness, and accident rates, as well as instances of turbulence and violence in society. The research has also shown significant increases in positive trends, such as improvements in economic conditions.

7,000 Assembly at Maharishi International University

The largest experiment studying the impact of group practice of the Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi program occurred from December 17, 1983, to January 6, 1984, at Maharishi International University in Fairfield, Iowa.

Seven thousand experts in the Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi program from over 50 nations gathered at the university to create "an upsurge of coherence" for the whole world. Seven thousand is approximately the square root of 1% of the world's population.

The findings confirmed predictions made by scientists in advance. Research showed an immediate increase in positivity in situations of international conflict. Available data from major countries on several continents also showed that traffic fatalities per miles driven and the incidence of infectious diseases dropped during the assembly, while patent applications and other signs of creativity and positivity rose.

And after the assembly? All the positive trends returned to the usual patterns that had characterized them prior to the assembly.

A New Formula for Peace

Based on these findings, as well as on similar results from several other large assemblies throughout the world, Maharishi declared 1987 to be the Year of World Peace. He presented a program to reduce crime and violence in society and create peace in the world. Maharishi's plan called for the establishment in every country of a permanent group of 7,000 experts practicing the Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi program together in one place.

Maharishi said that this group would immediately reduce the dangerous build-up of stress in collective consciousness and create "an indomitable influence of coherence and positivity in national and world consciousness to ensure that all political, social, and economic trends will always remain positive and enriching."

For There to Be Peace in Society

Maharishi also laid out a plan whereby every individual can contribute his or her share to promote peace. "For there to be peace in society, there must be peace in the individuals in society," Maharishi said. "Transcendental Meditation is a technique for gaining peace. If you have peace then you should engage in creating world peace by bringing your friends and family to start this practice. Unless you create peace in your family and friends, your own peace will be fragile and world peace will have no meaning for you. With peace in every home in our precious family of nations, Heaven will be created on Earth."

Scientific Research Expands

Research on group practice of the Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi program continued to expand. By 1990 there were over 40 sociological studies, including research showing positive effects on reducing urban crime, decreasing conflict in the Middle East, and reducing violent death. The studies were published in some of America's leading peer-reviewed scientific journals, including *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, *Social Indicators Research*, and *Journal of Mind and Behavior*.

The Urgent Need for a New Solution to Crime

By this time the alarming rise of violent crime in U.S. cities had also made it very clear that a new solution to the crisis was urgently needed. Despite the expenditure of tens of billions of dollars on crime-fighting programs, violent crime continued to soar. Experts admitted that conventional approaches had failed. In fact, there was no evidence to suggest that building more prisons, hiring more police, or handing out stiffer sentences to offenders were making even the slightest dent in reducing crime.

Two-Month Crime Reduction Demonstration Project in Washington, D.C.

There was, however, considerable evidence to show that group practice of the Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi program did reduce violent crime. To demonstrate this fact publicly, a \$5 million sociological experiment was held in Washington, D.C., during the summer of 1993.

From June 7 through July 30, 4,000 experts in the Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi program from 50 countries assembled, at their own expense, in Washington, D.C. Twice a day they participated in large group meditations to reduce social stress and violent crime.

Researchers lodged predictions for the experiment in advance with a 27-member, independent "project review board" comprising leading research scientists from universities throughout the U.S., including the University of Maryland, the University of the District of Columbia, and the University of Denver School of Law; policy analysts; and local government and community leaders. Based on previous findings, researchers predicted that violent crime in Washington, D.C., would decrease significantly by the end of the project. In addition, because of reduced levels of stress in the nation's capital, researchers also predicted an increase in the level of cooperation and effectiveness of the government and, on that basis, an improvement in President Clinton's standing in the opinion polls.

Violent Crime in Washington Decreases Significantly during Demonstration

The results exceeded predictions. After months of rapid increase, HRA violent crime (homicide, rape, and assault) suddenly declined in Washington, D.C., during the demonstration, according to time series analysis. (Violent crime usually increases in June and July.) For the final 2 weeks of the demonstration, HRA crime dropped 18%. In addition, other quality-of-life indicators moved in the positive direction, and an analysis of opinion polls on President Clinton showed a highly statistically significant change from a declining trend to a trend of increasing public support during the demonstration. Once the Transcendental Meditation assembly dispersed and social stress began to rise again, HRA crime rose as well. (The results of this study will be expanded and finalized after the District of Columbia Metropolitan Police Department releases its complete crime report for 1993 to the FBI in October 1994 -- following the publication of this book. For a copy of the final results of the Washington study, contact the Institute of Science, Technology and Public Policy at Maharishi International University, Fairfield, Iowa 52557.)

"This demonstration has confirmed the theory that large assemblies of people practicing the Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi program reduce social stress and tension, as measured by decreased violent crime, increased governmental cooperation and efficiency, and improvements in other sociological indicators," says Dr. John Hagelin, Director of the Institute of Science, Technology and Public Policy at Maharishi International University. "It shows definitively that any government can reduce crime and other social problems, and prevent new problems from arising, by establishing 'A Group for a Government' -- a large group of experts practicing the Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi program. Governments now have a practical means to prevent costly problems and dramatically improve the quality of life for the whole population."

"I think the claim can be plausibly made that the potential impact of this research exceeds that of any other on-going social or psychological research program," says David Edwards, Ph.D., Professor of Government at the University of Texas at Austin, referring to the many studies conducted on effects of the Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi program on society. "The research has survived a broader array of statistical tests than has most research in the field of conflict resolution. I think this work, and the theory that informs it, deserve the most serious consideration by academics and policy makers alike." Dr. Edwards does not practice Transcendental Meditation.

"There is growing recognition that we have been thinking too narrowly about the causes, dynamics, and means of resolving conflicts," says John Davies, Ph.D., Research Coordinator for the Center of International Development and Conflict Management at the University of Maryland. "This thinking hasn't given us sufficiently effective options to be able to manage and minimize conflict in the world."

Dr. Davies is an expert on the prevention, analysis, and resolution of conflict. He is currently developing the most advanced and sophisticated global event data system for tracking daily international and intra-national events worldwide. International peace-keeping organizations will use the data system for developing early warning systems and evaluating the success of attempts to prevent or resolve conflicts.

Dr. Davies, who practices Transcendental Meditation, has conducted his own study to test the effect of group practice of the Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi program on conflict resolution. His findings replicated several earlier studies showing a positive correlation between the number of people collectively practicing this technology in a society and the reduction of conflict throughout the entire population. His research also indicated a significant increase in the level of cooperation between opposing parties who were involved in conflict during the experimental period.

"The advantage of this approach to conflict resolution is that it doesn't require any intrusive intervention to resolve the conflict," Dr. Davies says. "It appears to make use of a fundamental level of interconnectedness among all members of the community to reduce stress and create coherence in the conflict area. The evidence is there that this approach warrants inclusion in any government's multilevel repertoire of concurrent approaches to promote the development and quality of life at every level -- city, national, and international. It expands the range of tools for federal government. Leaders should be aware of it. They should be trying it."

The following charts represent a few of the more than 40 studies on the effects of the Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi program on society.

- [Increased Positivity, Decreased Crime](#)
- [Improved Quality of Life](#)
- [Decreased Violent Fatalities](#)
- [Improved Quality of Life and Reduced Crime](#)

C H A P T E R 8

The Next Step: How to Start

My wife, Jane, started Transcendental Meditation before me, and I saw changes in her right away," recalls Barry Pitt, president of a large retail business in Redford, a suburb of Detroit. "She was happier and much more outgoing. So I decided to learn, too."

That was 24 years ago -- a year before Barry and Jane got married. At the time, Barry was a special education teacher in Detroit, teaching emotionally disturbed boys, 12 to 16 years old.

"It was a real stressful environment. My class was the last stop for those kids in the public school system. After that they went to Wayne County Juvenile Hall. Every morning when I would go to school, I would grab my keys, my wallet, and two aspirin. By noon I would have a splitting headache, and I would have to take the aspirin.

"The day I started meditating was the last time I ever took the aspirin. I never got headaches again."

Today, Barry runs a 25,000-square-foot hardware and automotive store with 120 employees. "A real pressure cooker," he says. All day Barry is talking with vendors about merchandise, attending meetings to set advertising and marketing programs, dealing with employees over personnel issues, and spending a lot of time on the floor working with customers.

Barry practices Transcendental Meditation twice a day. He says that it's part of his routine, like brushing his teeth or taking a shower. "It's essential. Physically, it keeps me strong, and mentally, it keeps me clear and alert. Because I meditate, I enjoy my life a lot."

In 1970 Jane Roman Pitt was a junior at the University of Michigan, studying education. She had heard about Transcendental Meditation from a friend, and when she saw a poster announcing an introductory lecture, she decided to attend. After the lecture she decided to start.

"At the time, I had been drinking about six cups of coffee a day just to keep going. I was in school and working full-time as a waitress. I learned Transcendental Meditation, and a few days later I didn't need the coffee anymore. And after I would meditate in the afternoon, I could study at night without falling asleep. It really made a difference. I felt much happier and more settled inside."

Today Jane is the mother of two teenagers: Jesse, 17, and Joanna, 14. She is also a composer whose works are performed by choirs and chamber groups around the country. Jane says the benefits of Transcendental Meditation are the same today as when she started 24 years ago -- "only much more so. The only way I could handle all the roles and responsibilities that I have as a working mother -- let alone enjoy them -- is through the deep rest, energy, and mental clarity that I get from meditating twice a day."

People start Maharishi's Transcendental Meditation for a wide variety of reasons.

Some may learn the technique at the recommendation of their doctor, to help treat a specific stress-related problem, such as high blood pressure. Others may be quite healthy but decide to start because they want to use more of their mental potential. Others may start Transcendental Meditation because they want to improve their relationships or help create a more peaceful society.

Regardless of the reasons one has to learn Transcendental Meditation, with the regular practice of the technique, all of the overall positive benefits to the mind, body, and behavior naturally develop. Transcendental Meditation is one procedure that simultaneously strengthens all aspects of life. It's like watering the root of a plant to nourish the entire plant in one simple stroke.

How Do You Learn It?

The Transcendental Meditation program is taught through a seven-step course of instruction offered through hundreds of Maharishi Vedic Universities and Schools throughout the United States and the world. ([Please see MVU Locations.](#))

The course includes two lectures that provide the necessary intellectual understanding to start the technique, and four consecutive days of actual instruction -- about 2 hours each day.

The course structure is as follows:

Step 1 -- An Introductory Lecture

The first step is a public lecture that provides an introduction to the Transcendental Meditation program and presents a vision of possibilities from practicing the technique. The lecture is about 90 minutes and includes:

- Description -- what Transcendental Meditation is and what it is not.
- Benefits -- the scientifically validated effects the technique has on improving mental potential, health, and social behavior, and on promoting world peace.
- How to start the technique -- an outline of the seven-step course of instruction to learn Transcendental Meditation.

Step 2 -- Preparatory Lecture

The second step is also a public lecture, which provides an explanation of the mechanics of the Transcendental Meditation technique. It lasts about 90 minutes and includes a discussion of:

- How Transcendental Meditation works.
- Why Transcendental Meditation is easy to learn and effortless to practice.
- How Transcendental Meditation is unique and different from all other techniques of meditation or self-development.
- The origin of Transcendental Meditation.

Step 3 -- A Personal Interview

The third step, a personal interview with a trained teacher of the Transcendental Meditation technique, provides an opportunity to ask any additional questions you might still have and to make an appointment for personal instruction. The interview takes about 15 minutes.

Step 4 -- Personal Instruction in Transcendental Meditation

The fourth step is the actual instruction in the Transcendental Meditation technique, which is held on a one-to-one basis with a qualified Transcendental Meditation teacher. In this step you'll actually learn to practice the technique. Personal instruction takes about 2 hours.

Step 5 -- First Day of Checking Seminar

The fifth step begins a 3-day series of 2-hour checking seminars following your personal instruction in Transcendental Meditation. This fifth step is held the day after personal instruction. It is to review the mechanics of the technique and to verify and validate the correctness of your practice. This seminar is attended by all the other people who received personal instruction the previous day.

Step 6 -- Second Day of Checking Seminar

The sixth step is held on the second day after your personal instruction. In this session you get the answer to any new questions you might have, verify the correctness of your Transcendental Meditation practice, and discuss the mechanics of stabilizing the benefits of Transcendental Meditation.

Step 7 -- Third Day of Checking Seminar

The seventh step is held on the third day after your personal instruction. Its purpose is to answer any new questions you might have, verify the correctness of your practice, and gain a vision of the goal of the Transcendental Meditation program -- the development of full human potential in higher states of consciousness. The complete follow-up program is also outlined.

A Complete Follow-Up Program

Following these seven steps of Transcendental Meditation instruction, there is a complete, optional lifetime follow-up program that is available for every meditator. The program includes regular personal checking, advanced lectures and special seminars to ensure your complete understanding of the benefits. The seven steps, plus the follow-up program, are offered through Maharishi Vedic Universities and Schools located throughout the United States.

The Requirements to Learn

There are a few practical requirements to start the technique, including the time needed to learn the technique -- 2 hours a day over 4 consecutive days -- and a course fee. For details on both, please attend a free introductory lecture on Transcendental Meditation in your area.

"This is a large university, and there are a lot of very competent people here, so you can easily feel that your work doesn't matter," says Joelle Tamraz, 21, a third-year social studies major at Harvard. "It takes a lot of belief in yourself, a lot of self-confidence. Some students fall by the wayside when they're not given positive reinforcement. It also takes an open and flexible mind and discipline and commitment to your work to be successful."

Joelle is an A student. She is considering an academic career or public service, after graduation. Joelle started Transcendental Meditation, along with her mother and sister, in New York City after she graduated from high school. She has been practicing the technique for the 3 years she has been at Harvard.

"After I meditate in the morning, I go to my classes and out into the world, and I feel confident and calm. I feel more prepared for the tasks at hand, which are often difficult and many.

"And although my studies are extremely important to me, since I have been meditating I feel that my life has a deeper sense of purpose. The experience of my inner self has allowed me to put what I do every day into a larger, more meaningful whole. As a

result, my relationships with people have dramatically improved. I've developed much more loving and profound friendships, which I trace to the growing balance and peacefulness I have from Transcendental Meditation. And because I meditate regularly, I don't feel a lot of stress even when I have a lot of work. I am able to put things in perspective."

To other students facing the challenges of high school or college, Joelle strongly recommends Transcendental Meditation.

"It will give you a greater sense of stability and happiness and make you feel that you can easily tackle your day-to-day challenges."

Jack E. "Woody" Barnes, 47, an insurance salesman in Birmingham, Alabama, had always wanted to develop the potential of his mind. He had read a lot of books, heard a lot of tapes, and had a lot of different ideas.

"Then I decided to learn Transcendental Meditation, and finally I had a direct experience of what I had been looking for all these years -- real expansion of consciousness. It's like driving down a road and suddenly the fog begins to clear. My mind is clearer now. I have experiences of unity in my life, whereas before unity was just a concept I had read about."

Woody started Transcendental Meditation along with his wife, Bobbie, an interior decorator, and his 17-year-old daughter, Frannie, a junior at Mountain Brook High School. The family has been practicing the technique for 6 months.

Bobbie: "I had bad hip pain. Whenever I drove for more than an hour, I had to stop and walk around. It had bothered me a lot for 2 years. My physical therapist said that a lot of the pain was due to stress. I remember one day after practicing Transcendental Meditation for a few weeks, I suddenly realized that the stress and the pain had completely gone away! And 6 months later it hasn't returned. My mind is a lot clearer and calmer now, too. And for me that's saying a lot. I am calm even when things around me are hectic. And because Frannie, who is my step-daughter, and I sometimes practice the technique together, I think it has brought us a lot closer."

Frannie: "I love meditating. It's really relaxing. It's like taking a nap, except that your mind is awake, and you don't feel groggy or heavy afterward. It's very refreshing and gives me peace of mind. It has also helped me in school. I am able to cope with things better and I am able to remember more and concentrate better in my classes. Before I learned Transcendental Meditation, I used to get mostly B's, but now I get B-pluses and A's. Transcendental Meditation has also made it more peaceful around the house. There was always a lot of love in my family, but now there is a nicer, quieter atmosphere."

Woody: "Learning the technique has been wonderful. The teachers of Transcendental Meditation are great people, and the follow-up program has been absolutely outstanding."

After This Book -- The Next Step

What do you do now, after reading this book, if you want more information about the

technique? The next step is to attend an introductory lecture.

And if you have some questions about material covered in this book? Contact your local Maharishi Vedic University or School and speak to a Transcendental Meditation teacher. Or ask your questions at the introductory lecture. All Transcendental Meditation teachers have received extensive training -- up to a year of study -- to teach this very simple, yet very precise technique. They will be happy to answer all of your questions.

And just remember, Transcendental Meditation is easy for everyone to learn.

CHAPTER 9

Questions and Answers on the Technique

What does Transcendental Meditation do?

Maharishi's Transcendental Meditation provides the mind and body with a unique and profound state of restful alertness. The body gains an extraordinarily deep state of rest while the mind settles down to a state of inner calm and wakefulness. This process dissolves deeply rooted stress and tension, rejuvenates the entire system, infuses the mind with creativity and intelligence, and provides the basis for dynamic, successful activity.

I play tennis to relax. A friend of mine listens to music. Doesn't exercise or simple relaxation do the same thing as Transcendental Meditation?

Tennis, jogging, fishing, golf, gardening, reading a book, listening to soothing music, bowling, etc. are all relaxing, enjoyable activities. They provide a welcome change of pace, a break in the routine.

But the important question is: While they may seem relaxing, do these activities actually release deeply rooted stress and tension? No.

This is because even though they may feel relaxing, nonetheless, they keep the mind and body engaged in some activity.

What is nature's antidote to stress? Deep rest -- and the deeper the better. Transcendental Meditation is unique. It is not just another form of activity or recreation. Transcendental Meditation is a scientifically validated technique for providing the entire system with very deep rest -- far deeper than ordinary eyes-closed rest or relaxation.

This deep rest has been shown to release accumulated stress and tension that nothing else comes close to eliminating -- not a good night's sleep, a restful vacation, relaxation exercises, a great tennis match, or a stroll in the park.

Is Transcendental Meditation like hypnosis or other types of meditation techniques?

Transcendental Meditation is unique.

Hypnosis involves suggestion. Transcendental Meditation is natural and involves no suggestion.

All other forms of meditation or self development involve either concentration or contemplation. Transcendental Meditation is easy to learn, effortless to practice, and involves neither concentration nor contemplation.

Research comparing Transcendental Meditation with other meditation and relaxation techniques has found Transcendental Meditation to be far more effective for reducing anxiety, increasing self-actualization, improving psychological health, and reducing use of cigarettes, alcohol, and drugs.

Will Transcendental Meditation make me so relaxed that I won't be motivated for success?

Just the opposite. By eliminating stress and tension, and increasing energy and intelligence, Transcendental Meditation provides an effective basis for dynamism and success in life.

Transcendental Meditation is like pulling an arrow back on a bow. Draw the arrow back 2 feet, and the arrow flies forward 50 yards. Transcendental Meditation naturally draws the mind back to its own source, a reservoir of energy, creativity, and intelligence. After 20 minutes of the technique, you can plunge into activity refreshed and rested, with more creativity and intelligence.

The result: Do less and accomplish more with greater energy, success, and satisfaction in everything you do.

Can I learn Transcendental Meditation from a book or a tape?

No. Each person is unique; each person has a different nervous system and therefore a different pace of learning. Ensuring that you learn the technique properly requires personal instruction from a qualified Transcendental Meditation teacher. Reading a book or listening to a tape cannot provide the experience of pure consciousness and the corresponding profound state of restful alertness; nor can a book anticipate or answer all of the questions, at the right time, that every person might have while learning the practice. With proper personal instruction, you can enjoy the technique for the rest of your life -- as well as all of the benefits it naturally unfolds.

Is Transcendental Meditation difficult to learn?

Transcendental Meditation is easy to learn and effortless to practice. Over one million Americans -- and four million people worldwide -- of every age (10 years and up), profession, education, and religion have learned Transcendental Meditation and enjoy its benefits.

When I start Transcendental Meditation do I have to join an organization?

No. Once you've learned Transcendental Meditation, you practice the technique on your own. There is, however, a complete, optional, lifetime follow-up program, available to all meditators, to ensure that they continue to practice Transcendental Meditation correctly and gain maximum benefits. You can take advantage of this program at your convenience.

Will my practice of Transcendental Meditation conflict with my religion?

No, it will enhance your religion. Millions of people of all religions -- including clergy of all religions -- practice Transcendental Meditation. They report that the technique, by increasing energy and intelligence and eliminating stress and fatigue, allows them to better follow the tenets of their religion. Transcendental Meditation is a technique, pure and simple. It involves no religion, belief, philosophy, or change in lifestyle.

Where do you meditate?

Transcendental Meditation is practiced sitting comfortably with the eyes closed for 20 minutes twice a day. It can be done anywhere -- at home, in your office, on an airplane, on a camping trip. Anywhere.

How long does it take before I will notice some benefits?

It varies from individual to individual. All those who practice Transcendental Meditation do notice positive growth and development in their life; however, it's not really possible to predict what particular benefits you might receive from the practice or even how long it will take before you would experience a specific benefit.

Extensive scientific research and the experience of teaching the technique to more than four million people around the world do show that correct practice of Transcendental Meditation on a regular, twice-daily basis is very important for gaining the most from the technique.

And *everyone* can do it?

Yes. Anyone of any age, profession, education, religion, or culture. It doesn't matter if you believe in Transcendental Meditation or not. You can be 100 percent skeptical about the technique, and it will still work perfectly.

Transcendental Meditation is natural. It's just like gravity. If you don't believe in gravity, and you drop a tennis ball, the ball still falls. In the same way, Transcendental Meditation is automatic. It does not require any belief. It works for everyone.

And for those who think, "I could never sit still for 20 minutes," or "I'm too high strung, I could never relax," or "I'll probably be the first person in the world who won't be able to learn it," don't worry. Everyone can learn to meditate. See for yourself.

A P P E N D I X A

Questions and Answers on the Scientific Research

Many people have questions about specific benefits of Transcendental Meditation. The following topics provide a more detailed discussion of the scientific research conducted on Transcendental Meditation. It gives you a concise reference guide to the benefits of the technique in the areas of mental potential, health, relationships, business, and society.

- [Levels of rest](#)
- [Compared to other techniques](#)
- [Blood pressure](#)
- [Cholesterol](#)
- [Health care use](#)

- [Aging](#)
- [Mental health](#)
- [Education](#)
- [Business](#)
- [Traumatic stress](#)
- [Substance abuse](#)
- [Criminal rehabilitation](#)
- [Quality of life](#)

TRANSCENDENTAL MEDITATION AND EYES-CLOSED RESTING

Is there scientific evidence to show that Transcendental Meditation is different from just resting with your eyes closed?

Yes. Research shows that Transcendental Meditation is unique; it is much different from eyes-closed rest.

A comprehensive statistical "meta-analysis" was conducted that compared the findings of 31 physiological studies on Transcendental Meditation and on resting with eyes closed. (A meta-analysis is the preferred scientific procedure for drawing definitive conclusions from large bodies of research.) The study evaluated three key indicators of relaxation and found that Transcendental Meditation provides a far deeper state of relaxation than does simple eyes-closed rest. The research showed that breath rate and plasma lactate decrease, and basal skin resistance increases, significantly more during Transcendental Meditation than during eyes-closed rest. Interestingly, immediately prior to the Transcendental Meditation sessions, meditating subjects had lower levels of breath rate, plasma lactate, spontaneous skin conductance, and heart rate than did controls. This deeper level of relaxation before starting the practice suggests that reduced physiological stress through Transcendental Meditation is cumulative. (*American Psychologist* 42: 879-881, 1987.)

COMPARISON OF ALL TECHNIQUES

Are all meditation and relaxation techniques equally as effective as Transcendental Meditation?

No. All meditation and relaxation techniques are not the same. Four studies were conducted that compared findings of research on different meditation and relaxation techniques. These meta-analyses found that Transcendental Meditation is the most effective technique for reducing anxiety; increasing self-actualization; reducing alcohol, cigarette, and drug abuse; and improving psychological health.

- **Reduced anxiety** -- A statistical meta-analysis of 146 previously conducted studies indicated that compared with every other meditation and relaxation technique tested to date, Transcendental Meditation is much more effective at reducing anxiety, the most common sign of psychological stress. (*Journal of Clinical Psychology* 45: 957-974, 1989.)
- **Increased self-actualization** -- A second meta-analysis of 42 studies found that Transcendental Meditation was significantly more effective in increasing self-actualization than other meditation and relaxation techniques. (*Journal of Social Behavior and Personality* 6: 189-247, 1991.)
- **Reduced substance abuse** -- A third meta-analysis of 198 studies found that Transcendental Meditation was significantly more effective in reducing drug, alcohol, and cigarette abuse than were standard treatment and prevention

programs, including relaxation. (*Alcoholism Treatment Quarterly* 11: 13-87, 1994.)

- **Improved psychological health** -- A fourth meta-analysis of all relevant, previously conducted research -- 51 studies in all -- showed that compared with every other meditation and relaxation technique tested to date, Transcendental Meditation is far more effective at enhancing psychological health and maturity. The studies showed that Transcendental Meditation promotes greater overall self-actualization, as indicated by increased self-regard, spontaneity, inner directedness, and capacity for warm interpersonal relations. (*Dissertation Abstracts International* 42(4): 1547, 1980.)

HYPERTENSION

Does Transcendental Meditation lower high blood pressure?

Yes. More than 30 million Americans suffer from high blood pressure, one of the most serious risk factors for heart disease. Sixteen studies have clearly demonstrated the positive effects of Transcendental Meditation on hypertension.

For example, a recent study was conducted on 128 inner-city, elderly African-Americans with hypertension. They were randomly assigned to either the Transcendental Meditation technique, progressive muscle relaxation, or a usual-care control group. All subjects followed the same diet and exercise regimen. After 3 months Transcendental Meditation produced an 11-point decrease in systolic blood pressure and a 6-point decrease in diastolic blood pressure, compared to untreated controls, and more than twice the reduction in blood pressure produced by progressive muscle relaxation. (*Personality, Elevated Blood Pressure, and Essential Hypertension*, Johnson, Gentry, and Julius (eds.). Hemisphere, Washington, D.C., 291-312, 1992.)

CHOLESTEROL

Does Transcendental Meditation reduce cholesterol levels?

Yes. Cholesterol is also a major risk factor in heart disease. A longitudinal study showed that cholesterol levels significantly decreased through Transcendental Meditation in hypercholesterolemic patients, compared to matched controls, over an 11-month period. (*Journal of Human Stress* 5 (4): 24-27, 1979.)

REDUCED HEALTH CARE COSTS

Is there any evidence to show that Transcendental Meditation can lower health care costs?

Yes. Spiraling health care costs in the U.S. pose a dangerous threat to the health and financial well-being of individuals, institutions, and the government. The only permanent solution to the health care crisis is to make people healthier. Transcendental Meditation has been shown to be most effective in promoting health and reducing health care utilization and medical fees, compared to other wellness and health promotion programs.

- **Reduced health care utilization** -- A large study of the insurance statistics of 2,000 Transcendental Meditation participants over a 5-year period gives an indication of what could happen if Transcendental Meditation were incorporated into existing health care programs. The study found that the Transcendental Meditation group had 50% less of the medical care utilization, both in-patient

and out-patient, compared to controls matched for age, gender, and occupation. The Transcendental Meditation group had lower sickness rates in all categories of disease, including 87% less hospitalization for heart disease and 55% less for cancer. The difference between the Transcendental Meditation and non-Transcendental Meditation groups was greatest for individuals over 40 years of age. (*Psychosomatic Medicine* 4:, 493-507, 1987.)

- **Reduced health care expenses** -- A study of 599 Transcendental Meditation participants in Quebec, Canada, found an average 12% reduction in medical expenses each year over a 3-year period. In the 3 years before starting the technique, the group's medical expenses had been equivalent to the norms for the same age and sex. Medical fees for "high-cost" individuals and older people decreased by 19% annually. (*Dissertation Abstracts International* 53(12:) 4219-A, 1993.)

AGING

What effect does Transcendental Meditation have on aging?

Successful aging is the best indication of how effectively an individual handles the stresses of life. Transcendental Meditation has proven highly effective in promoting successful aging.

- **Younger biological age (1)** -- A study comparing people practicing Transcendental Meditation who were an average age of 50-years-old to matched controls on the Adult Growth Examination (a test measuring indicators of biological age: systolic blood pressure, auditory threshold, and near-point vision) found that the biological age of long-term participants in the Transcendental Meditation program was, on average, 12 years less than their actual chronological age. This means that a 50-year-old who has been practicing Transcendental Meditation for 5 years would, on average, have the biological age of a 38-year-old. (*International Journal of Neuroscience* 16: 53-58, 1982.)
- **Younger biological age (2)** -- Higher levels of plasma dehydroepiandrosterone sulfate (DHEAS) is a hormonal marker of younger biological age. This hormone was found to be significantly higher for 326 adult Transcendental Meditation technique practitioners than for 972 age- and sex-matched controls. These differences were largest for the oldest age categories. (*Journal of Behavioral Medicine* 15(4): 327-341, 1992.)
- **Longer life** -- Seventy-three residents of homes for the elderly (mean age 81 years) were randomly assigned to one of three treatments which were highly similar in external structure and expectation-fostering features: Transcendental Meditation, mindfulness training in active distinction making, and a relaxation program; while a fourth group received usual care. The Transcendental Meditation group improved significantly more than did all other groups on all the measures tested: systolic blood pressure, mental health, paired-associates learning, two measures of cognitive flexibility, self-ratings of behavioral flexibility and aging, and multiple indicators of treatment efficacy. Moreover, after 3 years the survival rate for Transcendental Meditation was 100%, compared to 65%, 77%, or 88% survival rates for the other treatment groups, respectively, and 63% for the untreated elderly. These results indicate that Transcendental Meditation promotes a longer life and a higher quality of life. (*Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 57(6): 950-964, 1989.)

MENTAL HEALTH

Has there been research on the effects of Transcendental Meditation on mental health?

Yes. Transcendental Meditation has been found to improve mental health by reducing biochemical indicators of stress, decreasing anxiety, and enhancing psychological development.

- **Increased field independence** -- A study of perception found that after 3 months those who learned Transcendental Meditation increased significantly more than did controls in their ability to perceive the world more accurately under potentially confusing conditions. Psychologists call this ability "field independence" because it indicates the growth of a stable internal frame of reference that makes the individual more self-sufficient and independent of the "field" of the physical and social environment. These individuals have broader comprehension and improved ability to focus and are better able to see another person's perspective, while remaining unswayed by social pressure to do something that they judge to be wrong. (*Perceptual and Motor Skills* 39: 1031-1034, 1974.)
- **Most effective technique to reduce anxiety** -- As previously cited on page 159, a meta-analysis of 146 previously conducted studies on the effects on trait anxiety of Transcendental Meditation, other meditation techniques, and progressive relaxation and other relaxation techniques, found that Transcendental Meditation had a significantly greater effect on reducing anxiety than did all other treatments. This study controlled for a number of possible variables, including population, age, sex, experimental design, etc. (*Journal of Clinical Psychology* 45: 957-974, 1989.)
- **Most effective technique for enhancing psychological maturity** -- As previously cited on page 160, a meta-analysis of 51 studies of different meditation techniques found a significantly larger effect from Transcendental Meditation, compared to other forms of meditation, on a wide range of psychological measures, including anxiety, depression, anger, self-esteem, and internal locus of control. The result was maintained in the studies of highest validity and strongest experimental design. (*Dissertation Abstracts International* 42(4): 1547, 1980.)
- **Less hospital admissions for psychiatric care** -- The Swedish government's National Health Board conducted a nationwide epidemiological study that found that hospital admissions for psychiatric care were 150-200 times less common among the 35,000 people practicing Transcendental Meditation in Sweden, than for the population as a whole. (Suurkula, University of Gothenburg, Vasa Hospital, Gothenburg, Sweden, 1977.)

EDUCATION

Is there research on the effects of Transcendental Meditation in the schools?

Yes. Over 30 years of experience in schools, colleges, and universities in the U.S. and around the world, and extensive scientific research, have shown that Transcendental Meditation improves basic learning skills, increases intelligence, improves grades, and improves moral reasoning in students.

- **Improved basic learning skills** -- A study of elementary school children found that students who practiced Transcendental Meditation over the course of an academic year significantly improved in mathematics, reading, language, and

study skills. (*Education* 107: 49-54, 1986.)

- **Improved intellectual performance and self-concept in inner-city children --** A study of inner-city children found that through regular practice of the Transcendental Meditation technique, students increased in analytic intelligence, self-concept, and general intellectual ability. (Presented at the 98th annual meeting of the American Psychological Association, Washington, D.C., August 1990.)
- **Increased intelligence --** A study of college students who practiced Transcendental Meditation at Maharishi International University in Fairfield, Iowa, found that they improved significantly on a "culture-fair" (nonverbal) measure of IQ over a 2-year period, while no change in IQ was found in non-meditating college students from another Iowa university over the same period. Subjects' age, education level, level of interest in meditation, father's education level, and father's annual income were statistically controlled for in the study. No other procedure has consistently been found to increase general intelligence in college-age students. (Maharishi International University integrates the arts, sciences, and professions with the study and development of consciousness through the practice of Transcendental Meditation. The University is accredited to the Ph.D. level by the North Central Association of Schools and Colleges.) (*Personality and Individual Differences* 12: 1105-1116, 1991.)

BUSINESS

What effect does Transcendental Meditation have in a business?

Transcendental Meditation has been used in hundreds of businesses in the U.S. and around the world. Research in several business settings has found Transcendental Meditation to be a highly effective corporate development program.

- **Improved health and increased job performance --** Transcendental Meditation proved highly effective in reducing on-the-job stress and promoting employee health and development, when the technique was offered in the manufacturing plant of a large Fortune 100 company and in a smaller distribution sales company. The study found that managers and employees practicing Transcendental Meditation displayed less anxiety, job tension, insomnia, and fatigue, and reduced cigarette and hard liquor use, compared to non-meditating employees. The study also found the Transcendental Meditation group showed improved health and fewer health complaints, and enhanced effectiveness, job satisfaction, and work/personal relationships. (*Anxiety, Stress and Coping: International Journal* 6: 245-262, 1993.)
- **Increased job performance --** A second study found that Transcendental Meditation increased job productivity and satisfaction. In addition, relationships with both supervisors and co-workers improved. (*Academy of Management Journal* 17: 362-368, 1974.)
- **Case history of business success --** A 7-year case study of a chemical manufacturing company found dramatic increases in productivity and net income, and decreases in sick days, correlated with increases in the number of employees in the company practicing Transcendental Meditation. (*Enlightened Management: Building High Performance People*. Maharishi International University Press, Fairfield, Iowa, 1989.)
- **Improved health in Japanese industry --** The Japanese government's National Institute of Industrial Health, in a controlled longitudinal study with nearly 800 subjects in one of Japan's largest companies, found significant improvements in

physiological and mental health in industrial workers who practiced Transcendental Meditation compared to controls. The meditators showed decreases in physical complaints, anxiety, depression, smoking, insomnia, digestive problems, neurotic tendencies, and psychosomatic problems. (*Japanese Journal of Public Health* 37(10): 729, 1990; *Japanese Journal of Industrial Health* 32(7): 177, 1990.)

TRAUMATIC STRESS

Has research been done on the effects of Transcendental Meditation on traumatic stress?

Yes. In a Vietnam veterans center, 18 men suffering from severe and apparently intractable post-traumatic stress syndrome were randomly assigned to either the Transcendental Meditation technique or psychotherapy (multiple modalities). After 3 months of treatment, the counseling had no significant impact, but Transcendental Meditation reduced emotional numbness, alcohol abuse, insomnia, depression, anxiety, and severity of delayed stress syndrome. Veterans practicing Transcendental Meditation also showed significant improvement, compared to controls, in employment status. (*Journal of Counseling and Development* 64: 212-214, 1985.)

SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Has Transcendental Meditation been used to prevent and treat cigarette, drug, and alcohol abuse?

Yes. Cigarette smoking is the largest, non-genetic cause of death in the U.S. (400,000 people per year), and alcohol is the third largest cause of death (100,000 per year). Experts estimate that nearly 80% of crime is drug or alcohol related. Research has found Transcendental Meditation to be highly effective in both the treatment and prevention of substance abuse.

- **More effective than other programs** -- As previously cited on page 159, a statistical meta-analysis of 198 studies, which compared all standard treatment and prevention programs for substance abuse (including Alcoholics Anonymous, individual counseling, educational programs, anti-smoking courses, anti-drug programs, and self-esteem training), found that Transcendental Meditation was far more effective than all these other approaches. (*Alcoholism Treatment Quarterly* 11: 13-87, 1994.)
- **81% quit or decreased cigarette smoking** -- In a prospective study of 324 smoking adults -- 110 who started Transcendental Meditation and 224 matched controls who did not start -- significantly more (51%) of the Transcendental Meditation participants quit smoking, compared to 21% for non-meditating controls. When reduction of smoking (at least five cigarettes less per day -- a 25% average decrease) was considered along with cessation, 81% of the regular Transcendental Meditation participants quit or decreased smoking, compared to 33% for the non-meditating controls. (*Alcoholism Treatment Quarterly* 11: 219-236, 1994.)
- **65% abstinence rate in alcoholism treatment** -- In a study funded by the National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, 108 transient, chronic alcoholic patients were randomly assigned to learn Transcendental Meditation, standard drug counseling, or two other programs. Transcendental Meditation was significantly more effective than all other treatment programs. For example, after 18 months, 65% of the Transcendental Meditation group were abstinent,

compared to 25% for standard drug counseling. (*Alcoholism Treatment Quarterly* 11: 185-218, 1994.)

- **89% reduction in use of illicit drugs** -- An 18-month study of 115 high school- and college-age drug users in an out-patient drug rehabilitation center in Germany showed that the Transcendental Meditation group had significantly greater reductions in drug usage and improvements in psychological health, compared to matched controls of comparable age, gender, and severity and type of drug consumption who received only standard out-patient drug counseling. After 4 months of Transcendental Meditation, drug use dropped 50%; after 18 months, 89%. (*Zeitschrift fur Klinische Psychologie* 7: 235-255, 1978.)

CRIMINAL REHABILITATION

Has Transcendental Meditation been used in prisons?

Yes, very successfully.

Currently, about 1.4 million Americans are behind bars, and experts agree that conventional approaches to rehabilitating prisoners have failed. In fact, nearly two-thirds of all inmates who are paroled return to prison within 3 years -- often after committing further violent crimes. In the past 20 years, Transcendental Meditation has been taught to thousands of adult inmates in 18 U.S. correctional institutions and to hundreds of incarcerated juveniles in 8 U.S. facilities. It has also been used in prisons in 12 other countries. Research has found Transcendental Meditation to be very effective in rehabilitating offenders and reducing recidivism (the rate at which offenders return to prison).

- **33-38% reduction in recidivism** -- In a study conducted by Harvard researchers of 133 maximum- security inmates, those who learned Transcendental Meditation decreased significantly in aggression and mental disorders, and increased markedly in psychological maturity, compared to matched controls and matched participants in four other treatment programs. Inmates practicing Transcendental Meditation also had recidivism rates 33-38% less than those of the four other treatment groups and the control group, over a 3 1/2 year period. (*Dissertation Abstracts International* 43(2): 539-B, 1982.)
- **35-40% reduction in recidivism** -- In a 5-year study of 259 male felons in California who had been paroled from such prisons as Folsom and San Quentin, the Transcendental Meditation group had 35-40% less recidivism than did matched controls. Other programs, including vocational training, psychotherapy, and prison education, did not consistently reduce recidivism. (*Journal of Criminal Justice* 15: 211-230, 1987.)
- **Large-scale study in Senegal** -- In Senegal, West Africa, in 1987, President Abdou Diouf introduced the Transcendental Meditation program into 31 prisons nationwide. More than 11,000 prisoners and 900 correctional officers learned the technique. Violence in the prisons decreased markedly and recidivism rates dropped from 90% to about 8%. The Director of Penitentiary Administration in Senegal Colonel Mamadou Diop credited the Transcendental Meditation program for the dramatic reduction in recidivism. (*Total Rehabilitation*. Maharishi Vedic University Press, in press.)
- **Comprehensive research review** -- A narrative and quantitative review of research projects on Transcendental Meditation in eight correctional settings indicated that regular practice of Transcendental Meditation consistently leads to positive changes in health, personality development, and behavior, as well as

lower recidivism, among inmates. (*International Journal of Comparative and Applied Criminal Justice* 11: 111-112, 1987.)

QUALITY OF LIFE

Is there evidence that people practicing Transcendental Meditation have a positive effect on society as a whole?

Yes. More than 40 studies have shown that group practice of Transcendental Meditation and the more advanced TM-Sidhi program reduces social stress, as indicated violence, crime, and international conflict in society and improves economic vitality and governmental efficiency. (For a discussion of the mechanics of this effect, please see [Chapter 7](#), "Reducing Crime in Society and Creating World Peace.")

How did scientists measure this? To evaluate the potential impact of the Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi program on society, researchers assessed many variables, including crime rate, violent fatalities (homicides, suicides, and motor vehicle fatalities), armed conflict, economic indicators, and broad quality-of-life indices, which include the above variables as well as rates of notifiable diseases, hospital admissions, infant mortality, divorce, cigarette and alcohol consumption, and GNP.

The results indicated that the effects for each of these variables, or for overall indices, consistently changed in the direction of improved quality of life when a sufficiently large group of people were practicing the Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi program in society.

The following are summaries of four studies published in peer-reviewed scientific journals.

- **Decreased crime rate in 24 U.S. cities:** Twenty-four cities that reached 1% of their populations practicing the Transcendental Meditation program in 1972 were found to have significant reductions in crime trend during the 6-year experimental period from 1972-1977, compared to 24 control cities matched for total population, college population, and geographic region. Even when statistically controlling for specific demographic factors known to affect crime, such as median years of education, stability of residence, and pre-intervention crime rate, the crime trends in the 1% cities were still significantly lower. (*Crime and Justice* IV: 26-45, 1981.)
- **Decreased crime rate in 160 U.S. cities:** A study of a random sample of 160 U.S. cities found that increasing the numbers of Transcendental Meditation participants in the 160 cities over a 7-year period (1972-1978) was followed by reductions in crime rate. The study used data from the FBI Uniform Crime Index total and controlled for other variables known to affect crime. Causal analysis supported the hypothesis that Transcendental Meditation caused the reduction in crime. (*Journal of Mind and Behavior* 9: 457-486, 1989.)
- **Decreased crime rate in Washington, D.C.:** A study of weekly data from October 1981 through October 1983 found that increases in the size of a large group practicing the Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi program in Washington, D.C., were followed by significant reductions in violent crime. Weekly violent crime totals in Washington decreased 11.8% during the 2-year period. Time series analysis verified that this decrease in crime could not have been due to changes in the percentage of the population who were of young-adult age, nor Neighborhood Watch programs nor changes in police policies or

procedures. (*Journal of Mind and Behavior* 9: 457-486, 1989.)

- **Reduced armed conflict and improved quality of life in the Middle East:** This study found that increases in the size of a group of individuals in Jerusalem practicing the Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi program had a statistically significant effect on improving the quality of life in Jerusalem (automobile accidents, fires, and crime) and the quality of life in Israel (crime, stock market, and national mood measured through news content analysis) and on reducing the war in Lebanon (war deaths of all factions and war intensity measured through news content analysis). The effects of holidays, temperature, weekends, and other forms of seasonality were explicitly controlled for and could not account for these results. As in many other studies, the pattern of results supported the hypothesis that the Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi program group caused the reduction in armed conflict and the improvement in the quality of life. (*Journal of Conflict Resolution* 32: 776-812, 1988; *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 34: 756-768, 1990.)

The accuracy of the results of these and other studies was strengthened through the use of sophisticated methods, including:

- statistically controlling for a broad range of demographic variables, such as population density, median years of education, age, etc.;
- applying causal "cross-lagged analysis" methods, which indicated that increasing numbers of people practicing Transcendental Meditation is followed by corresponding improvements in society;
- employing "time-series analyses" to control for seasons, trends, drifts, and rival hypotheses, and to demonstrate temporal relationships among variables, supporting the hypothesis that Transcendental Meditation caused these beneficial changes;
- creating large groups of Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi program participants in various populations to demonstrate positive changes on specific social indicators, such as crime, and predicting that these changes would occur.

Moreover, the results of the studies assessing the effect of group practice of the Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi program on society are highly statistically significant. The probabilities that these positive effects could have been due to chance are very small.

A P P E N D I X B

Selected References on the Scientific Research on Transcendental Meditation

More than 500 research studies have been conducted on Transcendental Meditation by over 300 research scientists in 210 independent universities and research institutions in 33 countries during the past 25 years. The following are references for 82 selected research studies, all published in leading, peer-reviewed scientific journals.

These and other research papers have been compiled in *Scientific Research on Maharishi's Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi Program, Collected Papers, Vols. 1-6* (4,400 pages). Reprints of individual research papers, as well as volumes of the Collected Papers, are available from the Institute of Science, Technology, and

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