

MEDITATION AS MEDICATION:

A powerful therapy that can help you heal from health problems and deal with stressful life circumstances.

You know how it is:

- The days of summer are here and life starts to feel a bit more o.k. again.
- And suddenly you receive a newsletter from your naturopath that says you now have to pay 8% more tax on her services than you currently pay because the law says so and there is nothing you can do about it.

And then it starts. Your mind begins to play a familiar tune. Something like:

- What the \$%&! That's not fair! I can't afford that! What happens if?.. Grrr taxes! Grr government. I work so hard and give it all away to a good for nothing #%*! I feel totally helpless. The world is going to the dogs. I hate when I can't control things. I should just not even try anymore. What do I need my naturopath for anyway? Those chirping birds are driving me nuts! Turn that T.V. down already! Grrr...

This song plays and makes the chords of your body sing. Perhaps you notice:

- *How tense your neck feels. Maybe your jaw is clenched. Are your temples pulsing yet? What does your blood pressure or blood sugar monitor say? Is acid burning your esophagus by now? Hot flashes anyone?*

“Mind and body are inextricably linked, and their second-by-second interaction exerts a profound influence upon health and illness, life and death. Attitudes, beliefs and emotional states ranging from love and compassion to fear and anger can trigger chain reactions that affect blood chemistry, heart rate and the activity of every cell and organ system in the body from the stomach and gastrointestinal tract to the immune system.”

Kenneth Pelletier, PhD, senior clinical fellow at the Stanford Center for Research in Disease Prevention at the Stanford University School of Medicine, and author of the book “Mind as Healer, Mind as Slayer.”



**HEALING
FOUNDATIONS**
Naturopathic Clinic

IF YOU BELIEVE YOUR THOUGHTS, IF YOU ARE YOUR THOUGHTS, THEN YOU MIGHT BE IN TROUBLE HEALTH WISE.

However, meditation can help.

- Meditation practice allows you to develop the skill of gently witnessing your thoughts while keeping your focus on your breath.
- As a result, you learn to respond to life instead of being caught in the traps of your conditioned knee-jerk reactions, which can wreak havoc on your health and relationships.
- Cultivating an understanding of your mind through meditation practice can result in you having more choice over your reactions and allows you to face all of life's situations with greater clarity.
- Meditation helps you to activate, mobilize and utilize your inner healing resources and capabilities as evidence and research shows in all the mind-body studies.

MEDITATION IS FOR EVERYONE, INCLUDING YOU.

You do not need any prior knowledge or experience to begin a meditation practice.

OUTLINE: An Effective Meditation Practice.

- Choose a relatively quiet place in your home, yard, park, car (a parked one), church, library, yoga studio etc.
- Note: you will not be able to completely avoid noise. That is ok. Accept it. During your meditation, when you hear noise, just name it -"noise" and then go back to focusing on your breathing... follow me.
- Sit on the floor with a pillow under your bum and legs crossed in front of you, palms resting on your knees.
- Alternatively, you can sit in a chair with your back well supported and your feet easily in flat contact with the ground, palms on your lap, folded or not.
- Close your eyes.
- Breathe normally.
- Say "hello" to your body.

- Notice if you have any tension in your body, anywhere.
- Breathe normally and let your body be as it is, even if it is tense.
- Keep sitting quietly and allow yourself to "inhabit" your body.
- Breathe normally.
- Once you feel relatively settled and relaxed, take one full breath in through your nose right down to your belly (expand abdomen down and out).
- Release the breath slowly or forcefully – whatever feels good.
- Bring all of your attention to your breath – the air moving in and the air moving out.
- Bring your attention to what the breath feels like going in and going out.
- Notice the sensations associated with breathing in... and ...out.
- Continue to keep focusing on the in-breath and the out-breath.
- That's all you need to do. ONE THING. Focus on the breath.

Simple, right? Not so! But try anyway. It's worth it.

- **During meditation, even within your first breath, your mind will wander to "other things":** *The laundry, the dishes, the garden, HST (oo Who said that!), work, kids, your aging parents, plans for the weekend etc. You will also think things like: "this is stupid and a waste of time!"*
- **That's ok.** It's normal for your brain to think these things. That's what the brain does. It thinks.
- **Let it be.** Stay put and go back to focusing on your breath.

TRAINING YOUR MIND TO STAY FOCUSED ON YOUR BREATH IS MUCH LIKE TRAINING A PUPPY DOG.

- You say, "sit". Puppy sits.
- You say, "stay". Puppy stays.
- Puppy gets a whiff of something and wanders off after it.

- You gently pick up the puppy and put it back in its spot and say, “sit-stay”.
- Puppy then sits and stays for about two seconds and wanders off again.
- You gently pick up the puppy and put it back in its spot and repeat, “sit-stay”.
- *You are calm and gentle.*
- After all, it is only a puppy and puppies wander, chasing things that interest them.

This is the nature of the mind. It is like a puppy, always going off in places.

The mind likes to go off and be somewhere other than where it is. But, like a puppy it can be trained. However, no amount of punishment or brute force will work. Each time your mind wanders, with great gentleness bring your mind back to the breath over and over again, 20, 50, 100, 1000 times.

This is meditation. No more, no less.

GREAT EXPECTATIONS.

- There is no such thing as being “good” or “not good” at meditation.
- Just doing it is all that counts.
- Sit everyday for at least 10 minutes. That’s it! 10 minutes is all it takes to bring the gift of presence, balance, peace and clarity to your inner life. Well...kind of....
- After your daily meditation you will return to your real life and you will be reactive in old ways and it will affect your health in bad ways. **It’s true. Don’t expect yourself to be an enlightened Buddha after your first few meditations.** It could take centuries of daily meditation for us to act as peaceful, enlightened beings all of the time.
- You’re human and conditioned to react according to your old thought patterns.
- **HOWEVER, eventually your meditation practice will catch up with you and you will start to notice your mind more and more. Each time you get stressed, you will react less and respond more often with clarity, patience and reason.**

- *As you continue to practice meditation it becomes more rewarding and feels easier over time.*

Notes:

- **Set a timer:** Whatever length of time you choose to sit for meditation, be sure to set a timer, so that you are not tempted to keep opening your eyes, checking the time. (*Your mind, craving distraction, would love that!*)
- **Daily vs. Weekly Meditation:** Although daily meditation is recommended, even a once weekly meditation will go a long way in benefiting your health mentally, emotionally and physically.

“Meditation has been shown to be effective in controlled scientific studies for depression, anxiety, high blood pressure, skin diseases, cardiac pain, insomnia, diabetes, ulcers, colds, fever, asthma, arthritis and alcoholism.” - Dr. Anne Harrington, a Historian of Science at Harvard University.

When meditation is combined with conventional or naturopathic medicine it aids as an excellent complement to the holistic treatment of a wide range of medical diagnosis.

AND, THERE IS NO HST ADDED TO MEDITATION!

BREATHE....



Heidi McGill is a registered doctor of naturopathic medicine. She has helped dozens of families discover their best balance for overall wellness in body and mind, using the principles and practices of naturopathic medicine. She offers seminars and writes articles on topics that matter to you. Heidi is focused on educating you about how your body functions in combination with the natural and cultural environment. She is genuinely passionate about guiding you towards optimal health, vitality and more joy in your life.

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