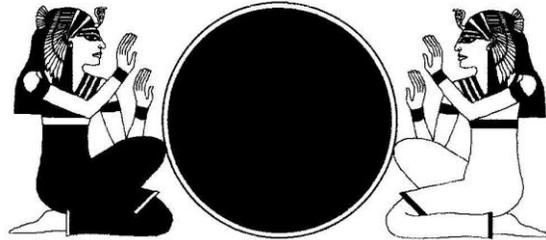


Temple of the Dark Moon



The Benefits of Meditation

By Frances Billinghamurst © 2013

Meditation is a conscious activity in which you still the mind by stopping the flow of images and thoughts. It is a way of cleansing the mind of all fears and releasing new reservoirs of creativity and energy. In meditation you connect the personal self with the Universal self. You bring your breath in harmony with the great breath. Each time you relax and become more centred, you move beyond the apparent duality of the Cosmos.

Affirmations, mantras, breath control and awareness are all useful in meditation. Affirmations are positive statements, affirming your health, strength and wisdom, which are repeated over and over while in an alternate state of consciousness. Mantras are words or syllables whose rhythm and sound produce an altered state of consciousness. You begin by vocalising the sound (chanting) and gradually the vocalisation becomes mental, and is repeated over and over in the mind. Breath control is achieved through specific breathing exercises as explained in the last lecture.

Regular meditation can assist in improving our lives on so many levels. Some of the physiological and psychological benefits that meditation can bring when practiced on a regular basis over a period of time includes:

- Lowering oxygen consumption, decreasing respiratory rate, increasing blood flow and slowing down the heart rate.
- Can provides a deeper level of physical relaxation within the body, decreasing muscle tension, and reduces anxiety attacks through the lowering of the levels of blood lactate.
- Assists in post-operative healing, reduces PMS symptoms, enhances the immune system, and can also assist in reducing the activity of viruses and emotional distress.
- Improves the flow of air to the lungs resulting in easier breathing, relaxes the nervous system and harmonizes the endocrine system.

- Builds self confidence, improve personal will power, increase emotional stability and improve relationships.
- Can assist in resolving phobias and fears, helps to control thoughts, reducing restless thinking as well as improving focus and concentration.
- Can help to quit smoking to overcome alcohol addiction, reduces the need and dependency on drugs.

Meditation also assists us on a spiritual level but providing us with peace of mind and inner happiness. Through regular practice, our levels of compassion increases as we gain a deeper understanding of not only our own self but also our relationship to other people as well as the part we all play in the greater scheme of things. Through the practice of meditation we gain the awareness that “we” are not just our physical bodies – that there are many aspects that make up our self, and when we are able to bring these aspects (body, mind and spirit) into harmony, we can experience the ultimate bliss of “oneness”.

In order to meditate, you must first develop your powers of concentration. Relax and deepen yourself by following the ebb and flow of your breath. Now focus all your attention on a single image such as a flickering candle. After several minutes focusing, close your eyes and create that candle in your mind's eye. Imagine that the energy of the flame is flickering in you. Become aware of your own energy, burning brightly like the candle, an eternal flame. If any other thoughts arise, turn away from them and bring your attention back to the candle.

When practicing meditation, sit in a comfortable position with your back as straight as possible. You may sit in a chair with your feet firmly on the floor, or sit on the floor. It is not necessary to sit in the lotus position, unless you are used to sitting in this position for long periods of time. Once you are in a comfortable position with your back supported, relax yourself and take a few deep breaths. Choose an image, a mantra or an affirmation and repeat it over and over in your mind. Focus only on that and nothing else. After about five to fifteen minutes return to your usual awareness. Give yourself time to return slowly.

About the Author:

Frances has been a student of metaphysics and the occult for most of her life, with her formal training having commenced in 1993. She has been initiated into the Alexandrian Wicca tradition, with interests also in ceremonial magick, the Qabalah and traditional Wytchcraft.

After founding the Temple of the Dark Moon in 1999, Frances spent some six years as secretary for the Pagan Alliance Inc (SA) where she worked closely with both the Police and Attorney General with respect to changes in legislation. She has led rituals with Chief Druid, Philip Carr-Gomm, and occult philosophy Ramsay Dukes, as well as presented lectures at various national and international events.

Frances regularly writes for *Insight*, Australia's number one spiritual lifestyle magazine, with her articles also appearing in over 20 separate publications, including *Spellcraft*, *The Cauldron*, *Circle* and the Llewellyn's *Witch's Calendar*. She has further essays in a number of anthologies including *Witchy Magic* (edited by Serene Conneeley and Lucy Cavendish), *Unto Herself: A Devotional Anthology for Independent Goddesses* (edited by Ashley Horne) and *The Faerie Queens* (edited by Sorita d'Este).

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