

## 56. Meditation and Quiet Time

Many people get uncomfortable talking about meditation. Meditation is not generally well-known and not widely practiced in our culture. When we think of meditation, we envision some fakir lying on a bed of nails, or some sadhu standing on one leg for decades, or some hermit in a cold mountaintop cave, removed from all. They only wear thin orange cloths wrapped around their middles, like saggy, dirty underpants, because that's all they can afford, and they have to beg for food, which seems demeaning.

Those visions are scary or uncomfortable for many, because they are so distanced from how we live. Screw that; I'm eating steak and potatoes, sleeping on silk, sitting on suede sofas and driving new cars; I'm not giving that up. We reject meditation and remove ourselves from it and those who do it, because we're unfamiliar with it or its benefits, and because it makes us feel uncomfortable. It's just too weird.

It feels different if we just talk about quiet time, though. Every parent knows what a blessing it is when we can get our kids to be still and observe a little quiet time. Everything slows and cools way down. Things stop flying through the air and breaking. Demands cease. Chaos and cacophonous noises fade. We quit annoying each other. We stop feeling overwhelmed and irritated. The dust settles, and peace settles in with it. Our bodies relax, and our minds let go of all of the racing thoughts, to just enjoy the rare and beautiful moment. Aaah, thank you! We enjoy the feelings. We appreciate it. It feels good.

Meditation is just quiet time. It's when we turn it all off, relax, let go, open, stop thinking, be quiet, outside and inside, just be in the moment, and appreciate feelings that go with that. We all meditate. Most of us just don't call it that. It's personal. For some, it's when we settle into a hot bath at the end of a long day, lie on the sofa between appointments, sit in the garden, or stay in bed a little longer before we get up to start the day. Maybe it's when we wash dishes, mow the lawn, drive the car, run, sail, paint, fish, garden or get a massage. We all space out from time to time during the day, staring out of the window, and then we come to and wonder where the time went, and where we went.

That's it. Nothing scary. It's natural, normal and important. We do it, whether we want to or not. Meditation is quiet time, when we don't do anything that requires our active attention, relax, release, just let whatever happen for the moment, stop thinking and just feel. No biggie, right?

Well, good stuff happens when we do that. In that period, we integrate what we've been up to. We recharge. We loosen and unravel the knots we tangle up in our busy-ness. We let our bodies recover. We rest. And when our brains, egos and dramas are not monopolizing our attention, we become aware of other feelings in our bodies. We can pay attention to our feelings, not by thinking about them, but by just letting ourselves be and feeling. We allow ourselves to be present. We let it all go and settle. Aaah.

It's important to do that. We need it. We perform better at work when we do it. We solve problems better when we allow it. We have more energy, love and patience for others. We have more to give. We're healthier and happier. We feel better. We are better. We think more clearly and efficiently.

If we choose to get into it more deeply, there are many different meditation exercises we can try. People in India have been working with meditation techniques without pause for more than 5,000 years. There are all kinds of methods we can use to relax deeper, quiet our minds, connect with the sensations in our bodies, feel more intensely, become aware of subtle energies at play in and around us.

That well goes deep. It's actually a secret passage leading to vast expanses of universal consciousness. If we can go through that, it can be like when the caterpillar drops out, builds itself into a chrysalis, zones out, metamorphoses, and emerges as a beautiful butterfly, newly capable of free flight. Meditation can be a vehicle for profound transformation, into higher states that change everything.

Our bodies know things we're not aware of with our brains. We can learn from them during meditation. We can connect with others in ways we haven't before. We have senses that we haven't sensed before. We can experience new things, grow and develop wisdom in new ways through meditation.

Meditation is nothing to freak out about. It's just beautiful quiet time that does us good. It's important to take and make time for that. Try it! Do it! Go deep with it if possible! We're all better off for it. Meditation is a way to higher consciousness. We need more of us resonating those higher frequencies. Meditation leads to higher states of being, from which it is easier to solve and transcend our problems. Let quiet time change you!