



Meditation

Meditation is the act of creating a peaceful space inside oneself. It requires to allow oneself to turn off, just for a few moments, our inner computer, that is to say our brain, and to agree to spend that time with oneself in peace and silence, with no judgement whatsoever, far from the tumult of life, a joyful embodiment of present time without interfering emotions, a blind date with famous "here and now".

I started regularly practicing meditation at a time when my life was in chaos: My employee had just left her job suddenly and very violently, my mother-in-law, whom I adore and who is my daughter's nanny, had just broken her femoral neck and I had been in a big argument with my father, banishing him from my life for several years, all in less than a month.

Somewhat, unsurprisingly, a few weeks later, I sprained my ankle badly while stepping down a sidewalk... I was very angry and nothing seemed to be able to extinguish that anger.

I had practiced meditation sporadically in the previous years and it seemed clear to me that this was the right time to get back to it more thoroughly. After a few guided sessions with free Insight Timer app - which I now use daily - I made meditation an incorporated to my daily routine exercise even though sometimes I get caught up in the movement of life.

Meditation is cutting off our brain's infinite information feed for a few moments. Our brain is a problem-solving tool which, if we leave it on constantly, which is usually the case, spends its days envisioning issues that don't exist and offering them to us as an information feed indefinitely scrolling on a mobile phone screen. Meditating is accepting to turn our brain on standby mode or to turn it off completely for a few minutes and bypass it to access our inner self, the one we're disconnected from because of our thoughts incessant flow. This momentary silence or rest brings peace to our body and mind, the thoughts generated by our brain often being anxiety-related, and, above all, connects us directly to ourselves. It allows us to communicate with ideas rather than thoughts, the first ones being indicating a goal to achieve, the second the means to attain it.



As the sessions progress, this state of peacefulness is generally accompanied by well-being and benevolence feelings. The body calms down, gets rid of stress and re-harmonizes its vibrations. Moreover, when we meditate, we often become aware of pains we knew nothing of until then. My first meditation sessions allowed me to discover a muscular contracture in the middle of my belly, blocking my solar plexus. It took me several sessions to get over it and I felt the pain for over 10 days after clearing it. This muscle knot, that tends to re-form itself each time I am upset or stressed, prevented the air I breathed, and the related energy, from flowing between my upper and lower body; It had been therefore a triggering factor in my fall and my sprained ankle.

When I meditate, I feel like I'm inside the eye of a storm: the world keeps spinning in all directions around me, the storm roars taking everything in its path, while I'm in a quiet, peaceful, silent place. After several months of practice, I was able to extend this state of calm and well-being for several hours, even several days. Great masters achieve it permanently but I'm still very far from them! Nevertheless, I can now regularly put my train of thoughts on hold and settle myself in the heart of the small village nestled in the eye of the storm; from there, I look at the cyclone with benevolence, without judgment, in a serene state and without fear. I still very regularly get caught inside the storm but I now know how to find my way back to the village, even though sometimes the path remains tortuous.

Meditation, thanks to its breathing exercises, allows me to better stay focus during the day without clinging to my emotions and thoughts. Indeed, each everyday moment that we live triggers thoughts and emotions and makes it sometimes very hard to concentrate with their overwhelming presence. However, not clinging to these emotions and lowering the intensity of our thoughts, makes it easier to focus on a task while spending less energy. For the same reasons, meditation can also help a great deal with sleep: it is easier to fall asleep if we can turn off our thoughts and let go of the emotions experienced during the day. Indeed, if we observe our emotional state when we wake up each morning, it is generally rid of any interfering emotion from the day before, as if our body and mind had sorted all out overnight so that we could start the day afresh, with a clean slate.

In the same way, meditation can also help to better manage pain. Indeed, when we are experiencing pain somewhere in our body, all our muscles around the aching place get contracted under the effect of that pain. Controlling our breathing and allowing each muscle to relax when exhaling helps reduce the intensity of pain and helps reduce pain related stress. This practice specifically helped me to manage the pain and to increase my pushing precision during my childbirth.

Meditation, even though, at the beginning, it is easier to practice it in a quiet place accompanied by a human or virtual guide, can be done anywhere, even for short periods of time. I practice it rather in the morning, after my breakfast and before starting my day, for a period of 10 to 20 minutes depending on the intensity of the day that awaits me, but I also regularly practice it a few minutes in the shower or in my car when I'm stuck in traffic.

Meditation is a great tool to work on peacefulness, stress management and concentration. One of my dreams is that, one day, we will all meet in the eye of the storm village because, on that day, it will mean that everyone will have managed to connect to their inner self and the storm no longer exists.