Yoga, Meditation and Relaxation: A guided practice towards inner peace

Presenter: Niki Corcoran

“The mind can go in a thousand directions, but on this beautiful path, I walk in peace. With each step, the wind blows. With each step, a flower blooms.”

— Thích Nhất Hạnh

Types of Meditation:

Conscious Breathing: Focus on only the breath as it enters and leaves your nostrils. When the mind wanders, just notice it and bring your attention back to the sensations of the breath.

Mantra Recitation: Used by many spiritual traditions. Mantras can be one word, syllable or a phrase. Examples:
- Om
- Om mani padme hum (meaning “the jewel is in the lotus”).
- Love
- Amen

Visualization: Developing your inner vision by first gazing at a simple geometric shape (such as a circle or a triangle) and then closing your eyes, attempting to hold the image in your mind’s eye.

Loving-kindness Meditation (matta bhavana): Strengthens concentration while also cultivating insight and transforming how we relate to ourselves and others. Matta means love and bhavana means cultivation. Direct loving and kindness first to yourself, then to loved ones, neutral people, difficult people, and all beings throughout the world.

Vispassanav: This meditation asks you to turn your attention to your bodily sensations, then emotions, perceptions, and thoughts. Many practitioners label any thoughts, emotions, or sensations that come up. For example, “having a fearful thought.” This practice is sometimes referred to as choiceless awareness, as you do not pre-choose an awareness and inner peace. Meditation does not just change you; it can transform your life.

Vadantic Meditation: Described as using the mind to go beyond the mind, through the constantly repeated practice of self-examination and self-remembrance. Practitioners of this meditation trace their thoughts back to their source, keeping the questions “who am I?” alive at all times – not merely repeating it to themselves like a mantra but always keeping a probing, questioning attitude.

Moving Meditation: There are many forms. This can be an appealing way to engage in meditation practice if you are not eager to sit still for a long period of time (yoga).

*Many people are turned off by meditation because they start with a practice that is either too difficult or does not suit their temperament. Whichever technique you choose, remember that sustained effort is necessary; the mind is wily and resists settling down. Start out with 5 or 10 minutes each day and commit to practicing it consistently.

Popular Resources:

Yogajournal.com
Yoganomics.net
Life.gaiam.com