

The Antidote to Stress

No Prescription Required



By Kristine Hedlund

When you think about meditation techniques, do you get crazy images in your head of hooded monks chanting? Do you think of the 60s throwbacks with beads and flower power who are perhaps a little high?

I have attempted the home-school version of meditation on several occasions, to no avail. The end result of my numerous attempts would find me in a deep slumber. Recently, a friend encouraged me to meditate. He was convinced that I was stressed and sleep deprived. To get him to back off the topic, I said, "Sure, I'll try it sometime."

Perhaps by no coincidence, in the past month, a PW reader began contacting me about meditation and how it changed her life.

"You really need to meet Sarah McLean," stated Jeanna Zelin in an email. "Because of her, meditation has changed my life." And then came another email insisting, "So many people resist what's going on in their lives. They want this or that, a better job, better marriage or a better relationship with their kids. Meditation just seems to calm people in such a way that they really take a look at their current situations and realize that everything is unfolding quite perfectly."

...Meditation restores the body to a state of calmness.

I fought back for about 6 weeks until I caved. I had not finished getting the words “Ok, I will meet her” out of my mouth, and Jeanna was on the phone setting up a one-on-one meditation session in Sarah’s beautiful Sedona home.

Sarah McLean has spent much of her life traveling the globe exploring world spirituality. She lived in a Zen Buddhist monastery for two years and in an ashram in India exploring spiritual practices and cultures. She traveled throughout Europe and bicycled through the heart of Turkey, the silk route of Pakistan, and the golden triangle in Asia. On her quest for meaning and purpose, she discovered her true calling through meditation.

Sarah began our session finding out more about me and introducing me to the principals of meditation through Primordial Sound Meditation. Primordial Sounds are the unique sounds or vibrations of the natural universe. In meditation, the Primordial Sounds used are called mantras. These mantras are chosen for personal meditation based on the specific sound or vibration of the universe at the time and place a person was born. The mantra, when silently repeated during Primordial Sound Meditation, frees the mind of external distractions, enabling us to find peace and tranquility within. Quieting the mind in a gentle manner brings out subtle feelings to conscious awareness, and the effect soothes our mind, body and soul.

“Throughout the day, when we experience stress, our bodies automatically react in ways that prepare us to fight or flight,” explained Sarah. “Although it may be necessary to respond to a fight or flight situation, a continued state of stress can cause physical damage to every part of the body.” She went on to educate me by explaining that meditation affects the body in the opposite way that stress does. Meditation restores the body to a state of calmness, helping the body to repair and prevent new damage.

As I ventured into my first attempt of meditation, several fears raced through my head. What if I fail? What if I do something crazy, like laugh or cry? What if it just doesn’t work?

Sarah gave me 20 minutes to myself to meditate with my new mantra. I didn’t laugh or cry and I didn’t experience a feeling of euphoria. It was what it was supposed to be. A state of relaxation. A method to release the built up stress from my body. I felt the heaviness in my breathing dissipate. My shoulders shed the 50 pounds of tension that they carry around day after day.

My prescription at the end of my session was to meditate twice a day for 20-30 minutes each session. I was to do this in a quiet location in my home with minimal distraction.

Since meeting Sarah, I have been committed to meditating twice a day. And the answer to the big question is yes, I have noticed results. At moments when I typically “fly off the handle” or when my attention span doesn’t allow me to concentrate longer than 2.3 seconds, I have discovered patience and calmness. I am excited about the long-term benefits of meditation, and I look forward to learning more through Sarah McLean. ■

Sarah McLean, director of Sedona Meditation Training Co., is known for her inspirational and dynamic style of teaching. Sarah formed Sedona Meditation Training Co. as a result of her passion and training in personal transformation.

Over the last 20 years, Sarah has worked closely with best-selling authors and internationally renowned leaders in the arena of personal growth. As a founding director of the Chopra Center for Wellbeing, Sarah worked with Dr. Deepak Chopra, where he certified her to teach mind-body health programs. Sarah speaks to corporate organizations and teaches meditation in Sedona and Scottsdale and can be reached at www.SedonaMeditation.com or 928.204.0067.

The Benefits of Meditation

- ☀ Deep rest and restful alertness
- ☀ Relaxation
- ☀ Increased energy and vitality
- ☀ Reduced anxiety and expanded capacity for happiness
- ☀ Reduced stress and fatigue
- ☀ Enrichment of all aspects of life – body, mind and spirit
- ☀ Connection to source
- ☀ Improved concentration and focus
- ☀ Improved eating and sleeping habits
- ☀ Normalized blood pressure
- ☀ Improved mental clarity
- ☀ Improved performance, efficiency and productivity
- ☀ Reduced incidence of illness
- ☀ Decreased need for addictive substances
- ☀ Increased self-awareness
- ☀ Increased self-confidence