Meditation

Chapter 9

The purpose of meditation is to gain control over your attention so that you can choose what to focus upon rather than being subject to the ebb and flow of environmental circumstances.

Types of Meditation Vary According to What is Focused Upon

- common external objects (flowers, landscape)
- geometric figures (mandala)
- imagined sounds (nadam)
- silently repeated words (mantra)
- unanswerable riddles (koans)
- breathing (pranayama)
- counting breathing (anapanasati)

Two Basic Approaches to Meditation

- Opening up of attention
  - nonjudgmental attitude
  - allow all stimuli to enter your awareness
- Focusing of attention
  - repetitive objects (words)
  - unchanging objects (spot on a wall)

Physiological Benefits of Meditation

- decreased heart rate
- decreased breathing rate
- lowered galvanic skin response
- decreased alpha-brain wave emissions
- decreased carbon dioxide production
- increased peripheral blood flow to arms and legs

Psychological Benefits of Meditation

- decreased anxiety, reduced fears
- improved internal locus of control
- greater self-actualization
- improved sleep behavior
- decreased cigarette smoking
- decreased drug abuse
- headache relief
- general state of positive mental health
A Meditation Lesson

- Find a relatively quiet place.
- Sit in a chair, upright.
- Let your muscles relax.
- Assume a passive attitude.
- Focus on your breathing.
- Close your eyes.
- To yourself, say “one” when you inhale, “two” when you exhale.
- Continue this for about 20 minutes.
- Open your eyes and return to normal gradually.

Make Time for Meditation

- Learning to meditate takes practice
  – try two sessions per day
  – 20 minutes per session

- Use your time management skills to
  – make relaxation a priority
  – schedule your meditation time daily