

The Focus

Meditation, a simple guide to unlocking your potential

CONTRIBUTED STORY  
FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

All spiritual traditions from the East and West advocate meditation as the means of merging with one's truest essence—the soul. The enlightened sages say that the greatest obstacle preventing our union with this blissful, all-powerful Self is the thinking mind. Though the mind is a powerful tool that we use to manage our worldly affairs, in its untrained state, it also limits our unique potential to achieve what we are here to accomplish in this lifetime. The busy mind traps us by identifying too closely with passing emotions, physical sensations, and by becoming fascinated, distracted by worldly objects. Amidst all the commotion in our minds, we lose track of "the big picture"; we become confused, disillusioned, forgetting who we really are and what we are here to do. Swami Muktananda says the human mind is forever restless, leaping from one thought to another, from one desire to the next. What we are all seeking is eternal happiness and gratification, but a mind untrained in meditation looks outwardly for guidance and gratification. It will never find it out there because the only place where the mind truly comes to rest is within—at the house

of the inner-God, the house of the soul where pure consciousness resides. In this inner place of stillness and quietude, we experience bliss regardless of external conditions. Through meditation, the mind dives inward, transcends all thought and anxiety, and it loses itself in a larger Self who is all-knowing, unconditionally happy, and liberated from all limitation and anxiety. My students have misconceptions about meditation—meditation is not a Hindu religion nor is it any other organized religion. Meditational practice does not interfere with one's culture or present religion; in fact, meditation helps one understand religion, the scriptures, and God better. Meditation is simply a private and peaceful rendezvous with one's inner-self; in that quiet inner-space, you have full access to the power of self-referral and you will receive all the guidance and knowledge you will need to lead your daily life. Meditation is a joyful homecoming that stills the mind. When I mention that meditation stills the mind, students worry about losing their practical intelligence or becoming dull. Some are concerned that they will leave their jobs, families, and society to become a recluse. In fact, all of the enlightened masters encourage meditators to go within,

receive inner-guidance, then come out and function better within society. In a deep meditative state, your mind will become very still, yet sharply focused and aware of reality within your environment. Meditation will increase your concentration and creativity by removing undue anxiety and distractions. Because meditation eliminates stress that has collected in your body, after a few sessions you will notice energy and optimism that you have never experienced before. Meditation makes doctors better doctors, businessmen more astute, and poets more creative. Here are some simple instructions for your daily meditation: to begin with, you will need to sit with your head, neck, and spine aligned in a straight line. This is because during meditation, a powerful bodily life-force called Kundalini travels up your spine. Think of Kundalini energy as electricity traveling up a cable. A bent or slumped posture will interfere with the movement of Kundalini energy. Make sure your sitting position is comfortable. Pain or discomfort will bring you out of

meditation. Choose a quiet place in your home and always meditate in the same spot. Rituals such as burning incense are not a necessity, but if are drawn to the smell of incense go ahead and use it. Remember, though, that nothing external is relevant to the practice of meditation. When meditating, we concentrate the mind on the object of meditation. All of us already know how to concentrate. We do it when reading, driving, or studying. All you have to do now is redirect your concentration from incessant thought to the object of your meditation. The object of meditation can either be an image, your breath, or a mantra. Some Western meditative practices focus the mind on relaxing images.

This we call visualization-meditation. Meditators are taught to visualize themselves at the bottom of a still lake or the top of a mighty mountain. While these visualizations may trigger pleasant emotions, visualization does not allow the meditator to transcend the mind and the senses. All of the ancient sages say that it is impossible for the mind and body to grasp or experience the bigger Self unless both mind and body are transcended. To go beyond our mind and body, we must bring the mind to a state of total stillness, by either following the breath or "riding" a special sound called a mantra. Long ago, spiritual masters discovered the power of sound.

(Please see 'Meditation' page 12)

Find what you are  
looking for in  
The Portland Observer

106.7 K-Jazz brings you ...

**JAZZFEST** Presented by **INFINITI**  
**BEAVERTON INFINITI**  
July 8th, 2000

Portland's Premier Smooth Jazz Event of the Summer!



**The Temptations**  
**Dave Koz Boney James**  
**Rick Braun**



**The Tom Grant Band**

**Brian Culbertson & Lori Perry**

**Joyce Cooling**



At The Showplace at Portland Meadows

**Tickets Now On Sale!**



Tickets available at all Fred Meyer FASTEXX outlets or charge by phone at 224-TIXX. Cash, Check, Visa, MC, Discover. No outside food, alcoholic or non-alcoholic beverages, containers, bottles, coolers, pets, cameras, audio or visual recording devices, lawn chair or beach type chairs, umbrellas, weapons, or illegal substances. Smoking permitted in designated areas only.

Since 1905

**White Eagle**

Live Music Nightly  
Hearty Pub Fare  
Spirits Available in Many Forms

856 North Russell Street, Portland, Oregon  
(503) 282-6810  
www.mcmenamins.com