
DON' T JUST DO SOMETHING - -SIT THERE

by

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Meditations are an essential part of my coping methods and my growth at personality level - and beyond. I think we strengthen ourselves by making a conscious effort to go into in-action and sharpened awareness.

My action is heightened by my in-action. We cannot have one polarity without the other anymore than an in breath without an out breath. The whole cultural message is to *do*. I would like to look at the opposite and some of its methods and results.

Meditations mean increased awareness. This can grade through relaxation exercises: riveting our attention on to any external object, moving or still, with as many senses as possible, to the total exclusion of my "mind chatter" and emotions. Walking beside the sea and "drowning" in the sense effects. Complete emersion in a piece of music - a candle flame; watching the drip from a tap has worked wonders for me when resting after Tai Chi, which is partly a moving meditation. Just watching the breath either at the nostrils or in our belly movements.

What suits the individual at this stage of her/his development and circumstances seems to me the operative question. For most western people I would choose a slow walking medita-

tion as being probably the most effective single method. We learn this method (and there are four or five variants) in twenty minutes and spend the rest of our lives practising it. Above all it challenges our body-mind relationship to gravity and the "great mother", and strongly challenges any over centredness in the head/intellect as we encounter fine movements requiring balance.

If we can take time out to go on meditation retreats, these seem to set new patterns in ourselves which we can then more easily re-activate in daily life. We seem to set up some kind of deep new rhythms in ourselves.

Integration of our repressed conditioning material is released, I believe, by the meditation process. By allowing more inner space, by learning to "let go" progressively and slowly: by accepting, again by degrees, the Voidness - surrendering intellect and will (temporarily only) - we experience the deeper realities of integration. This speeds up personality growth - things "happen" faster - synchronicity is facilitated. Insights are gained. Our therapists will encourage us to come to decisions from a clear sense of "myself in the world". Beyond

this my meditations allow a far deeper or longer view of my process and contents.

Do I just "allow" my soul force in the "Roaring Silence" - do I contact the Transpersonal Self? Am I letting do my delusion of separateness from a universal life force? The Tao - the

Bramham? Does this *work* - or this special method work - for me - now? If it does not - given some reasonable effort, over a reasonable period of time - then change direction or mode, is my choice. A quotation from Alan Watts seems to me a fitting tailpiece.

The practice of meditation is not what is ordinarily meant by practice, in the sense of repetitious preparation for some future performance. It may seem odd and illogical to say that meditation in the form of Yoga, Dhyana, or Za-Zen, as used by Hindus and Buddhists, is a practice without purpose - in some future time - because it is the art of being completely centered in the here and now. "I'm not sleepy, and there is no place I'm going to."

We are living in a culture entirely hypnotized by the illusion of time, in which the so-called present moment is felt as nothing but an infinitesimal hairline between an all-powerfully causative past and an absorbingly important future. We have no present. Our consciousness is almost completely preoccupied with memory and expectation. We do not realize that there never was, is, or will be any other experience than present experience.

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PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO PHYSICAL PROBLEMS

We are envisaging an issue dealing with non-medical treatment of illness and bodily malfunctions, from the common cold to cancer. The philosophy would indicate that using the NHS and the medical profession generally should be a matter of last resort, not a routine response for all ills.

We will hope to be covering ways in which people can learn to take responsibility for their own bodies. Inevitably this will put an emphasis on prevention and healthy living, rather than patching up things that go wrong. Most of our issues have to do with the healthy mind: this issue makes a small move to the holistic position and concentrates on the healthy body (which may turn out to be the same thing).

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