

Ascension Notes



So Then What?

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Have you ever meditated on meditation? What's the point? What happens next? Aha! Now we're getting to the heart of the matter. You might call it the crux. Systems of meditation are taught for relaxation. They are taught as paths to enlightenment. Those seem to be the two biggies. "But wait, there's more!"*

One of the results of all meditation techniques is to relax the tension residing in the emotions. That is the precursor to a quiet mind. Emotional and mental tranquility in tandem are the foundation upon which an open heart rests. Should you achieve this state, even momentarily, it will definitely be enlightening.

None of us or, to hedge my bets, almost none of us ever achieve an open heart for more than brief moments. The internal balance necessary for such an experience requires a degree of enlightenment seemingly so far beyond the contemporary norm that one might uncharitably consider this world to be spiritually retarded. The bodies have evolved; the minds are churning a mile a minute; but the spirits ... well lets just say they are lagging behind.

An open heart is the gold ring on the merry-go-round of life. While it may elude our grasp temporarily, there are still less illustrious possibilities in the practice of meditation; very practical ones too. Physical relaxation is one. Think focus of attention. The ability to sharpen and intensify the focus to increase the length of the attention span is a goal that a different variety of contemplation can foster. Redirecting your attention outside of your ego, away from self-absorption, provides internal relief and develops a key skill for the creative process.

Make up a meditation for yourself. One of my favorites was to build a nice fire, toss on a stick and consciously watch the process of it burning, without active thought, until ash did us part. When I happened upon the idea I could only watch a small twig burn, paying conscious attention from beginning to end. A year later I'd graduated to a piece of oak a couple of inches in diameter. It required a long attention span. I had to quiet my mind and emotions to hold my attention open and focused for that length of time. Little bursts of illuminated comprehension about the transformation of matter into energy would sparkle in my mind during those sessions.

Moments of inner quiet build up, almost like an internal space account. When you have reached a sort of spiritual 'critical space,' the opposite of critical mass, it becomes filled from without, coming down through the top of the head and filling up the space within. Your ideas are rearranged in a new and more evolved form. Inspiration also gladdens the heart and eases the emotions, providing more than enough motivation for continuing the process of spiritual growth. These are the incremental successes of our reaching for spiritual enlightenment. They might be thought of as a pat on the head, a universal atta-boy.

* With apologies to Russell Brown