



HOW TO MEDITATE

There are three questions you need to ask yourself first

1. Do I need to meditate, if so what are the benefits?

Meditation can help our stress levels. It can change us. It turns our focus inward and gives us the chance to see our beliefs and thought patterns. It shows us our own perceptions are not necessarily the truth. It calms and helps eliminate fears and anxiety.

2. How often should I meditate?

The best times to meditate are sunrise and sunset. These are special times when the world becomes still. Due to the fact that we have busy lives these times may not be appropriate but it is advisable to at least meditate for 10 – 20 minutes once a day, preferably in the morning before the mind gets too active.

3. Will I be able to meditate?

The answer to that question is 'Yes' but in the same way the answer to the question 'Can everyone sing' would be yes, but you cannot expect to sing like an opera singer after one lesson. It takes practice and awareness. I suggest a practice of awareness everyday for three weeks to begin with before embarking on meditating.

An exercise of awareness – The Three Minute Exercise.

This is the most incredibly simple exercise yet it brings with it remarkable results in increasing one's awareness.

Things to do first.

1. Find a quiet place in your home.
2. Have a small table and chair. On the table you might like to put a picture of Our Lady or an angel together with a candle and a clock.
3. Light the candle.

Now you are ready to begin.

Sit on the chair, feel your feet on the floor, feel your body on the chair, listen to all the sounds inside the house and outside. Having connected to your senses turn your sight to the candle and let the eyes rest there. Watch the flame. Watch it flicker. Notice what thoughts are going through your mind as you

watch the flame. Notice if your mind has taken you onto another subject, maybe it has taken you back to work or cooking the dinner, as you become aware of your mind taking over, taking you away from what you are doing, bring your mind back to watching the flame. Notice the time; have you been watching the flame for 3 minutes or have you been 'absent' and it is longer.

If you are able to practice this exercise 3 times a day, your awareness levels will rise and you will see thoughts in your mind controlling your actions and you will be able to choose whether to react to what is in front of you or respond.

You can choose. You have taken back control of your life.

After practicing this for 3 weeks you are ready to learn meditation practices.

Rosemary Butterworth

rosemary@aol.org.au