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THE HEALING POWER OF AWARENESS

Most of us have heard the question, “What are the three biggest issues in real estate?” Of course, the answer is **Location! Location! Location!** In mental health, the answer is **Awareness! Awareness! Awareness!** But how do we acquire *The Healing Power of Awareness*? We acquire it by practicing mindfulness. What is the practice of mindfulness? It is meditation.

All types of meditation are essentially the same in that they all bring us to the quieting or calming of the mind so that we experience deep inner peace, calm and greater awareness. Without self-awareness we’re not able to identify and then resolve the emotional issues that limit our ability to maximize ourselves.

The experience of meditation is about the same regardless of what type of meditation is practiced. We place different meaning on meditation based upon our ideological preference. We might prefer a spiritual approach such as Buddhist, Hindu, Christian, Muslim or Jewish meditation. Some may prefer a secular orientation such as transcendental that doesn’t involve a God-focus.

I am writing this clinical handout because I believe daily meditation is equally valuable and important both from a psychological and a spiritual perspective. I want you to meditate daily to strengthen and deepen your self-awareness so that your psychological issues/emotional baggage come to the surface for healing/resolution.

I am a Christian and as such, I believe that Love, Peace and Joy are already inside of each of us. To connect with what is already inside of us we have to stop daily and practice meditation/contemplative prayer/centering prayer. This is a difficult challenge because we all seem to have a desire to run away from ourselves. Meditating is taking the time to be okay with ourselves, okay with God present within us, and then, in the rest of our day, okay with other people.

Here are the five steps I urge you to follow in doing Centering Prayer meditation. Please feel free to tailor these guidelines to the uniqueness of you.

1. Focus on your breathing. Stay with your breathing throughout all five parts or steps of your Centering Prayer.
 - a. Relax deeply. Release tension.
 - b. Use your breath to connect your head with your heart.
2. Add a prayer word or phrase to your breathing, repeating it over and over, always in conjunction with your breathing.
 - a. Focus on God the Father, Son or Holy Spirit.
 - b. Fill up your mind so needless anxiety or negative thinking are unable to enter your mind.
 - c. Repeating your prayer word or phrase will eventually result in the taming or quieting of the mind.

3. Optional step. Develop one or several visualizations that go along with your prayer word or phrase. For example, if you are saying the word “Jesus” over and over, visualize Jesus in your mind to help you to stay rooted or grounded in your prayer word.
4. When your prayer word or phrase ends by itself, stay with your breathing and practice being observational of your mind, body and spirit. I call this “Holding Awareness”. This is the ultimate goal of quieting your mind so you can observe without judging, experience without thinking. Relax your body until it almost disappears. You then experience yourself as “Pure Spirit and Pure Love”. This is your True Self. Anything, any belief or negative self-talk that contradicts your True self is your False Self.

When mind chatter/intrusive thoughts creep in, return to your prayer word or phrase. Go back and forth as frequently or infrequently as is right for you.

5. The closing or return to a normal, waking state of awareness. Practice balancing awareness of what’s happening inside of you with what’s happening outside of you. Half open your eyes and practice balancing awareness. The idea is to not lose touch with yourself (what’s happening with your mind, body and spirit) as you connect with the outside world/another person.

Some final thoughts:

1. Do it at least once every day for 20 minutes. Ideally do it twice a day. You may need to do it three or four times a day.
2. Do it at the same time in your schedule, same place and same body posture.
3. Don’t label mind chatter as a failure on your part. Everyone has mind chatter. Do my AUDI-O system to address and resolve the mind chatter.
4. Eventually you will stay “centered” throughout the day. Staying centered gives you a Teflon shield against daily inevitable emotional assaults. You stay connected to yourself as “Pure Spirit and Pure Love.”
5. Love, peace and joy already reside within us. We have to identify, address and resolve our layers of emotional baggage to more easily/smoothly connect with our True Selves.
6. This handout is a brief and incomplete guide to the Healing Power of Awareness.