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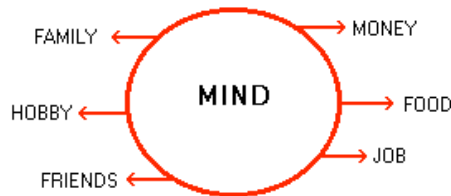
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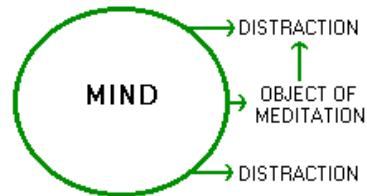
What is Meditation?

If you go to your Doctor for stress related problems, she or he will likely tell you that perhaps the best treatment for stress is Meditation. They will suggest that you start meditating and this leads you to two problems. The first is where to get appropriate direction in how to meditate. By finding Meditation Station, you've already solved that problem. The other is understanding exactly what Meditation is.

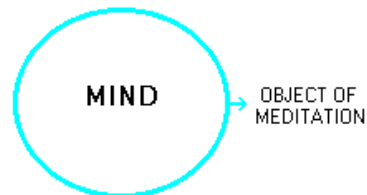
Normal Mind



Concentrating Mind



Meditating Mind



Contemplating Mind



Meditation is a three step process that leads to a state of consciousness that brings serenity, clarity, and bliss. As depicted in the first illustration, our "normal" state of mind is actually quite abnormal. We receive sensory stimuli and react in a completely uncontrolled way (although we tell ourselves we have great control). We bounce from one thought to another and follow with our emotional and physical reactions. The same thought can bring about diametrically opposite reactions at different times. For instance, we may see a dog and then start a thought process that reminisces about a pet dog we once had and loved. Emotionally, we then start feeling all warm and cuddly; physically, we feel very relaxed. Another time, we may see the same dog and fear it may attack us and start thinking paranoid thoughts, get fearful and uptight physically.

The second illustration demonstrates Concentration. This is the first step in Meditation and is the start of gaining control over the mind and thereby life. The procedure is deceptively simple and seems like it would be very easy to do, but there are few tasks more difficult to master. The idea is to pick an object/subject to place your attention on and then to focus exclusively on it without diversion.

An example of this would be if you decided to focus on love. To start, you would relax your body, sit in a comfortable position, calm your emotions and begin repeating the word "love" over and over. The problem is that your mind has been your master your whole life and won't easily relinquish its position. To trick you back into obedient slavery, your mind will divert your attention, often by giving you a tantalizingly interesting distraction. It usually goes something like this: You're sitting there repeating love, love, love when your mind suddenly adds "I love candy. They sell the candy I love at the 7-11 up the road. I can get into my car and drive there and get that candy. I know it will be delicious when I bite into it ..." and so there you are --- instead of concentrating on love, you're eating an imaginary candy bar at a 7-11. What you are supposed to do is to witness your being distracted and return to concentrating on the object of your meditation. Concentration is well worth persevering in and ultimately liberating, spectacular and a blessing.

The third illustration depicts Meditation. Here we have unbroken attention. The classic description of the difference between Concentration and Meditation is given in the example of pouring oil from a bottle into a bowl. At first the oil drips out a drop at a time. This is concentration. Then the oil comes out in a steady stream. This unbroken pouring out is Meditation. If you really examine the process closer, you would notice that when the oil was coming out drop by drop, each drop caused a splash and the droplettes of the splashing can be considered analagous to the distractions that interrupt our concentration. Once the stream starts becoming steady it flows effortlessly. Similarly, when Concentration flows into Meditation, the attention paid to the object of Meditation becomes deeper and deeper effortlessly and spontaneously, true knowledge about the object presents itself.

Using love as the example again, you would concentrate on love, love, love, love. You might then find your mind filling with thoughts of love -- motherly love, fatherly love, love of country, love of money, qualified love, unqualified love, puppy love. Everything in the universe that love is connected to will come to you. Every feeling of love, every sensation, every thought. And since, as Albert Einstein tells us, everything in the universe is relative to everything else, ultimately your meditation on "love" will connect you to everything.

At this point, the unity of the object of your meditation and your mind, as illustrated in the fourth illustration, occurs. This is the state of Contemplation and is the ultimate state of consciousness. Where we usually are only conscious of our body and ego and consider ourselves apart from the rest of the universe, with the experience of Contemplation we become conscious of the cosmos and know ourselves to be a part of it and realize our unity with all of it. This is Realization, Cosmic Consciousness. It is our birthright and destiny to know this exquisite state first hand and enjoy the Truth, Consciousness, and Bliss that is our eternal true nature. Thus the justification in expending whatever energy is necessary to learn to meditate and to begin to make Meditation an important part of our lives.

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