



Introduction

“What you do when you meditate is you learn to control your mind through developing awareness.” “[meditation has] saved me from depression in the worst moments of my life ... It's what enabled me always to hold my head high.” - Aung San Suu Kyi

Meditation can take you further than stress-proofing and preventing ill health on mental and physical levels - it can boost or elevate the function of your body-mind beyond normal levels. This has been widely accepted in the East for a long time; in Japan many companies will send their employees for short courses in meditation training in a Zen temple.

Eminent practitioners worldwide include Aung San Suu Kyi, Clint Eastwood, Richard Gere, Russell Brand, Nick Clegg, [Steve Jobs], Ruby Wax, Oprah Winfrey.

Research shows that meditation improves attention, concentration and clarity of the mind; enhances creativity and problem-solving skills; induces general psychological wellbeing; encourages positive personality growth; increases self-esteem; increases empathy; delays the aging process; heightens perception; and may even boost IQ.

Performance anxiety decreases meaning public speaking or musical performing becomes easier. Another level of elevated functions on the metaphysical level is not 'proved' by scientific methods, but includes powers such as the ability to read others' thoughts and the ability to foresee future events.

In this session

In this session we have introduced the following concepts:

- Role of meditation in training the mind to focus and concentrate - daily practice, with obvious benefits.
- The benefits of meditation and mindfulness practice for mental, physiological and psychological improvement, youthfulness and longevity.
- Research results: Increase in general psychological wellbeing - typically increasing with the length of practice. Meditators are more confident, relaxed, satisfied, conscientious and less anxious than their less experienced colleagues.
- Research results: Meditation brings youthfulness and longevity after regularly practising meditation for 5 years you are physiologically 12 years younger than non-meditators.
- The practice of presence (Moku-sho/Fusho) meditation: “silent reflection”, “mirror-like awareness”.



Commitment

Committing to 20-30 minutes of practice every day for the duration of this course, including still meditation, writing a meditation diary, movement practices, and daily mindfulness exercises.

Homework

Do 'practice of presence' sitting meditation every day and note your experiences in your meditation diary. Take some time for mindful movement/stretching. Continue practising and noting your daily life mindfulness activities.

In addition, make time to do a 3 min mini-version of your practice at some other part of your day.

Moku Sho/Fusho reminder

Come into a comfortable seated position with a stable triangular base. Sway side to side to find that middle position where your spine is as upright and erect as it can be with the neck long. Tilt your head down as if you were holding a rubber ball beneath your chin. Have your eyes lowered and either open or closed, hands in your lap, and your tongue broad and resting on the roof of your mouth.

Moku sho means "silent reflection". In this silent stillness you just allow anything at all to arise and pass and you just remain aware and present in the way that a mirror is just present with all that is reflected in it. Fusho means "unborn", referring to all of these things that arise and pass - thoughts, memories, sights and sounds. By the fact that they arise, they are born, but this mirror-like awareness itself is unborn. Just rest in this open awareness, this quality of presence, reflecting all that arises and passes.

Anytime you feel yourself getting involved in these things that arise and pass then just let go, and come back to the quality of awareness, the quality of presence itself. If you're aware and relaxed, allowing things to arise and pass, and doing your best to let go when you feel yourself attaching or getting involved with things, then you're doing this meditation correctly.