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*** *Meditation* ***

Try Meditating

A mindful attitude promotes peace.

Meditation can create that for you. For anyone who actively participates, meditation is the key to healing the shadow and making the world a better place for us all.

A few tips:

1. Find a quiet place where you will not be disturbed. This may be a room set aside specifically for meditation or a small spot in your bedroom. If you live with other beings, shut the door and put a do not disturb sign on the knob.
2. Make sure the temperature in the room is comfortable. If it's too cold, you will not meditate. You will only be focused on how cold you feel. If the room has a chill, be sure to dress in layers and have blankets nearby.
3. Assume a comfortable position. For some, that may mean sitting cross-legged. For others, a chair may be better. Some prefer to lie down on the floor, a couch, or a bed. Others who may have physical conditions may be happier in a wheelchair or seated with cushions and pillows around the body. Find what works for your needs and then settle in.
4. Choose a focal point. You may want to bring your awareness to the rise and fall of your belly or the breath as it comes in and out through the nostrils.
5. Observe your breath without trying to change it or control it. Just let it come and go and watch. If a thought pops into your mind, label the thought and then let it go. For example, if you find yourself starting to plan your dinner menu, as soon as you catch yourself doing that, label it "planning" and then go back to watching your breath. You may end up doing this over and over, but don't fret — you are getting clued in to how your brain likes to operate!
6. Do not judge your practice as "wrong" or "right". It's right for you, as it is. It's totally personal.

7. Sit for as long as you are comfortable. In the beginning, that may only be three minutes. That's fine! Aim for about five minutes a day, but even if that is too hard, give yourself credit for what you are able to do!
8. A little journaling after meditation is a wonderful way to wrap up your practice. Keep a journal handy and jot down your observations. It's interesting to revisit those notes later on as your practice matures.

Here is a simple meditation practice that you may want to try out.

Loving-Kindness/Metta Meditation

This meditation is ideal when you're feeling sad about the state of the world or dealing with some particularly nasty people. Empathic folk can get easily drained or depleted by a topsy-turvy world or a mean comment. This meditation pulls you back into compassion mode.

Sit comfortably and close your eyes. Begin following your breath. As you inhale silently say to yourself, "May I be free from suffering". On the exhale: "May I be at peace". Repeat this mantra with each breath. Practice for a few minutes.

You can also direct the mantra towards a haters/world event/world leader/negative person in the media, etc., if you find they are pulling you off-center or bringing you down. In this case, you would replace / with the name of the difficult person. For example: "May Bob be free from suffering. May Bob be at peace." By sending good energy to this person, you're breaking the negative connection between you. More importantly, you're sending out much-needed healing and compassion. Negative types and situations need that the most.

~ Remember: Hurt people hurt people. Loving-kindness meditation transforms that.