

## Synchronicity

With one breath, with one flow  
You will know  
Synchronicity  
A sleep trance, a dream dance,  
A shared romance,  
Synchronicity  
A connecting principle,  
Linked to the invisible  
Almost imperceptible  
Something inexpressible.  
Science insusceptible  
Logic so inflexible  
Causally connectible  
Yet nothing is invincible  
If we share this nightmare  
Then we can dream  
Spiritus mundi  
If you act, as you think,  
The missing link,  
Synchronicity  
We know you, they know me  
Extrasensory  
Synchronicity  
A star fall, a phone call,  
It joins all,  
Synchronicity  
It's so deep, it's so wide  
Your inside  
Synchronicity  
Effect without a cause  
Sub-atomic laws, scientific pause  
Synchronicity...

(Words by Sting - lead singer of the contemporary rock group - The Police)

Meditation and Therapy

Awareness from Within

It's so deep, it's so wide  
Your inside  
Synchronicity  
Effect without cause

Realizing happiness is sometimes the most difficult of tasks. We search frantically for solutions when we don't even know what the problem is. We look for formulas and techniques, cures and salvation, that will bring us happiness without developing the awareness necessary to experience what happiness really means. The paradox that so many people live with is one of having the good life in front of us and not being able to experience it. Contemporary society seems to have developed an unspoken attitude that happiness and the good life are beyond us somehow. A great deal of time and energy is spent in the 'pursuit of happiness' when, in fact, happiness is within us.

There is a pervasive feeling of lacking something in our humanness that is certainly magnified in our concern with nuclear annihilation. That pervasive feeling of lacking something is intensified when we expend energy trying to grasp on to the fleeting happiness of the moment. To regain that elusive momentary happiness we seek out others, once again pursuing happiness that seems beyond us.

Therapy is one way people seek to **regain** that elusive happiness. They look to a source 'outside themselves' to reunite them with their own happiness. The simple truth that is often overlooked is that the

source of security, contentment, happiness and freedom lies within each of us.

Meditation is a way to experience that source within us. Meditation is a way of awakening the happiness within us and influencing all aspects of our life, helping us experience the world differently than we have. Meditation is an art that can teach us how to stay centered, focused and aware.

When we are able to stay centered, focused and aware we are most alive and closest to the source and meaning of our humanness. When we can be open to the immediate experience, receptive to what it can teach us and vulnerable to the power to change our being we are truly aware. It is in the moment, when we are sure of nothing that there is the greatest possibility of understanding. Whenever we attend to that moment and become aware of it we are meditating.

This immediate experience is nothing foreign to us. We have all felt it at some time or another. Events of a profound emotional nature such as the death of a loved one or the birth of a child can produce it. Sometimes sexual love, great beauty, pain or an event on a world scale can produce it. Drugs such as LSD and mescaline can give a taste of such an experience, as well as therapy, through approaches such as encounter group experiences and gestalt practices that seek to release the tight grip on emotion.

Meditation can influence the therapeutic relationship by its ability to help us focus on the moment. Practicing meditation teaches us how to stay centered in the moment, focusing on the client

and being aware of the energy flow within ourselves. The capacity for us, as therapists, to focus totally on the client and to accept him/her as they are in that moment creates a feeling of openness and acceptance that develops into a connection with the rest of the world. It is through our own experience of meditation that we can benefit the client. We, as therapists, can provide an environment of acceptance and awareness for the client to explore and make sense of their world. We can provide such an environment only if we aren't expecting the client to fulfill any preconceived expectations for our own means.

A way of avoiding placing expectations upon the client is by developing "an unconditional friendliness towards our self". This is called Maitri in Buddhist tradition, meaning a way of accepting ourselves without conditions and allowing us to be human. It seems a prerequisite to experience accepting ourselves without condition if we are to encourage the client to experience an unconditional acceptance for their self.

One of the basic tasks of therapy is to expand the client's sense of who they are by integrating the parts of self that are alienated (Jung called this integration "making friends with the shadow"). Doing this kind of work in therapy can help the client develop personal stability, self-respect, and an expanded sense of what they believe they can do. Helping the client to do that is possible only if we, as therapists, have struggled with integrating the alienated parts of ourselves also.

Through meditation we can develop an insight into how we try to manufacture and hold onto a fixed identity of ourselves as a defense against the uncertainties surrounding our lives and the alienated shadow within us. Holding onto a fixed identity keeps us at a distance from ourselves and the client rather than sharing in the moment at hand. We identify ourselves as the 'therapist' or 'helper'. Letting go of the role and remaining focused in that moment with the client can release an incredible flow of energy inside us.

Meditation reveals to us a way in which to do that. It can help us to utilize every activity of living as an opportunity to grow in awareness and acceptance. Meditation can provide us with access to a broader frame of reference than our limited identity and help us realize many more creative options for how we view ourselves, our clients, and the world in which we live. Based on the foundations of a relaxed body and concentrated attention, meditation intensifies our awareness and enhances our capacity for gentle strength and genuine caring.

How do we learn to meditate? In some form or another we have all meditated. Children meditate when they become engulfed in a story reading. Audiences meditate while viewing an intriguing film. Watching sunsets and ocean waves is meditation. Jogging, playing tennis, and reading are all levels of meditation. Anytime we are focused on the moment without conception of time and space we are meditating.

The ideal is to experience that focused awareness in each moment thus relinquishing the confines of time and space. "We do not meditate just to relax and experience some peace; we meditate to unfold our inner being," according to Swami Muktananda. Meditation techniques are methods we have of focusing our attention.

Essentially there are two primary modes of attending and most meditations can be classified under one or the other of them.

#### Concentrative

The concentrative mode means to focus attention on a single object, sound or image to the exclusion of all other phenomenon. Such practices as; using a mantra (a sacred word or sound repeated over and over again) or visualization (as in candle-gazing), or through movement (such as Tai Chi or the martial arts) are all ways of focusing attention.

#### Receptive

The receptive mode opens the field of attention to accommodate all arising phenomenon. Letting our thoughts flow through our minds without restriction. Such practices as Zen Buddhism and Mahayana Buddhism encourage mind flow as opposed to restriction of thoughts.

Concentrative techniques are useful for developing focused attention without distraction while receptive techniques develop our capacity to attend to the totality of experience. Concentrative

methods are useful for stabilizing and energizing the mind. Receptive methods develop a deeply penetrating clarity and insight able to apprehend subtle dynamics of the perceived world and the mental process itself. These methods are the simple means by which we can develop awareness and insight into ourselves and others.

What are the benefits to be gained from meditation? Can it really be a source of growth in the therapeutic relationship? The techniques seem inconsequential considering the power supposedly invested in them. What changes actually do take place within the therapist who meditates that can influence a client's potential growth?

There is a sense of inner peace that becomes familiar and secure. Meditation initiates a philosophy of acceptance toward our self and others that won't be mistaken for indifference or withdrawal. Signs of a developing sense of inner peace include:

1. A tendency to think and act spontaneously rather than from fears based on past experiences.
2. An ability to enjoy each moment.
3. A loss of interest in judging other people.
4. A loss of interest in judging ourselves.
5. Loss of interest in interpreting actions of others.
6. Loss of interest in conflict. Instead, an appreciation for confrontation.
7. Less of a tendency to worry.
8. Frequent appreciation for ourselves and others.
9. Feelings of connectedness with others.
10. An ability to smile through the eyes from our heart.
11. An increasing ability to let things happen rather than to make them happen.

12. An increased susceptibility to receiving love from others as well as giving love to others.

The practice of meditation offers us the opportunity to focus on the moment and to listen to our inner-communication with ourselves and others. It can lead us to further examination of our tightly-held world perspective and help develop a sense of inner peace.

Practicing meditation introduces us to an Eastern tradition that values a style of living less dis-stressful than contemporary complex society. The paradox we can begin to realize is that the good life is really within us not in our 'pursuit of happiness' outside ourselves.

The value of meditation in therapy is in the ability of the therapist who meditates to stay focused and aware of the client without any expectations. Accepting the client and letting them experience that acceptance in the therapeutic relationship invites growth. Therein lies the true value of meditation for ourselves and the value it holds for others.

A connecting principle,  
Linked to the invisible  
Almost imperceptible  
Something inexpressible.



