

Syandra Health Centre

a centre for meditation and emotional healing

July 2008



Winter Greetings!

Drop In next Monday.

A reminder that our next Monday Meditation will be on Monday 7th at 7.00pm. We hope you can join us for a special hour of peace and tranquillity. There will be time for quiet mindfulness, followed by a guided meditation. We finish the meditation with a short chant.

The venue is All Souls Anglican Church next to the Chapman shops on Perry Drive. Stay later if you can. Supper is provided after the meditation and the cost for the evening is \$8. No you don't have to book, just come along...

Future dates to make a note of are Mondays **August 4th and October 6th.**



Meditation Made Easy

Our next 6-week course starts on **Wednesday 15th October 2008.**

There can be little doubt that stress and anxiety are major problems in our modern culture.

These states are insidious; they eat away at our physical health, play havoc with our sleep patterns and upset our mental balance, stealing our natural joy de vivre.

Meditation Made Easy teaches you the skills to calm the mind, relax the body and find inner peace, in a friendly, down to earth, atmosphere that is totally in keeping with our western mindset /culture. There is no religion and no 'new age' speak.

The cost is unchanged at \$165.00, which includes 2 CDs of guided meditations.

If you can't make all six sessions, you can catch up missed sessions on a subsequent course with no extra charge. And if you are thinking of retaking the whole course, there is a special price of \$95.00.

Meditation Stage 2

Interested in taking your meditation further? There has been a strong response to our announcement last month about our Meditation 2 course later in the year.

There will be more advanced practices designed to deepen awareness, meditations on healing and meditations to help release us from unhelpful subconscious conditioning. There will be discussion time and a main feature will be the 'Big Mind' process, a fabulous, fun way of experiencing trans-rational, trans personal states of consciousness.

The course is designed for people who have had at least 3 months regular meditation practice. The course will run over six **Monday evenings starting October 13th** (skip Nov 3rd and finish November 24th) and the cost is \$185.00. Interested? Give us a call or send an email.

Relaxation Response Can Influence Expression Of Stress-related Genes

Science Daily (July 3, 2008) — How could a single, non-pharmacological intervention help patients deal with disorders ranging from high blood pressure, to pain syndromes, to infertility, to rheumatoid arthritis? That question may have been answered by a study finding that eliciting the relaxation response -- a physiologic state of deep rest -- influences the activation patterns of genes associated with the body's response to stress.

The collaborative investigation by members of the Benson-Henry Institute for Mind/Body Medicine at Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) and the Genomics Centre at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Centre (BIDMC) appears in the open-access journal PLoS One.

"For hundreds of years Western medicine has looked at mind and body as totally separate entities, to the point where saying something 'is all in your head' implied that it was imaginary," says Herbert Benson, MD, director emeritus of the Benson-Henry Institute and co-senior author of the PLoS One report. "Now we've found how changing the activity of the mind can alter the way basic genetic instructions are implemented."

Towia Libermann, PhD, director of the BIDMC Genomics Centre and the report's co-senior author, adds, "This is the first comprehensive study of how the mind can affect gene expression, linking what has been looked on as a 'soft' science with the 'hard' science of genomics. It is also important because of its focus on gene expression in healthy individuals, rather than in disease states. "More than 35 years ago Benson first described the relaxation response, which can be elicited by practices including meditation, deep breathing and prayer; and his team has pioneered the field of mind/body medicine.

Over the years, studies in many peer-reviewed journals documented how the relaxation response not only alleviates symptoms of psychological disorders such as anxiety but also affects physiologic factors such as heart rate, blood pressure,

oxygen consumption and brain activity. While it became evident that the relaxation response was the opposite of the well documented fight-or-flight response, the mechanism underlying these effects was still unknown."

For the full report, visit:

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2008/07/080701221501.htm>



Stories from the clinic room

(Names are not real, but the stories are...)

Andy had had a breakdown. He was finding the pressures of work very stressful. He was being impatient with his children. He had constant pressure in his chest and had been increasing his level of medication to try to cope. He described his experience of our first PSH therapy session:

"Fantastic. I went down into a cave; it was incredible. Thoughts just floated away. Your voice was like a rope I could keep hold of... The cave was my heart; it was red and warm and comforting. This has always been my centre. Everything I've done, I've done with my heart. I feel relief in my chest."

Four weeks on and Andy reported,

"I feel absolutely fantastic! – Not stressed at all. I think back to this time last year when I was curled up, immobile. I have more energy, more mental energy."

Steve had a marriage break-up about 2 years ago and had difficulty coming to terms with it ever since. He was having sleeping difficulties and had become very anxious.

By the third week he reported his sleep was much improved and he was really happy with the way things were going. However, he was still suffering low motivation for exercise and self care.

Many clients have a physical experience of stress release during a session. These may vary from person to person but they are real experiences, not just imagination. Steve described an experience he had during the third session:

"I felt something lifting off me – like a sheet being drawn off my chest and torso..."

The following week his motivation had improved, he was exercising again and his sleep had continued to improve. At the end of his 4th and final session Steve summed up his experience, *"This stuff works!"*

O yes, this stuff really does work, but how? I have often commented that when clients get very deeply relaxed they don't feel anxiety, or pain, or depression. None of these experiences that we call suffering seem to exist in the deeply relaxed state.

And when we repeat this practice often, the temporary deeply relaxed state becomes a permanent trait. I liken it to changing the channel in the brain; tuning into a different frequency, like changing from Triple J to Classic FM. Both stations are there continuously and it's always our choice what we want to listen to. (We have long known there are distinctive brain wave patterns that characterise when people enter meditation; also dream sleep and deep sleep.)

Sometimes people forget how to change channels and thus stay locked into thought loops, tension states and an inability to let go. This often escalates into anxiety, panic attacks and sleep difficulties.

As Andy and Steve and many others can testify, this stuff works and we're beginning to understand a little more about why it does.

The 11 Best Foods You Aren't Eating

Nutritionist and author Jon Bowden has created several lists of healthful foods people should be eating but aren't. But some of his favourites, like purslane, guava and goji berries, aren't always easily available.

Dr. Bowden, author of "The 150 Healthiest Foods on Earth," was asked to update his list with some favourite foods that are easy to find... here's his advice:

Beetroot: Think of beets as red spinach, Dr. Bowden said, because they are a rich source of folate as well as natural red pigments that may be cancer fighters.

Cabbage: Loaded with nutrients like sulforaphane, a chemical said to boost cancer-fighting enzymes.

Swiss chard: A leafy green vegetable packed with carotenoids that protect aging eyes.

Cinnamon: May help control blood sugar and cholesterol.

Pomegranate juice: Appears to lower blood pressure and loaded with antioxidants.

Dried plums: Okay, so they are really prunes, but they are packed with cancer-fighting antioxidants.

Pumpkin seeds: The most nutritious part of the pumpkin and packed with magnesium; high levels of the mineral are associated with lower risk for early death.

Sardines: Dr. Bowden calls them "health food in a can." They are high in omega-3's, contain virtually no mercury and are loaded with calcium. They also contain iron, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, zinc, copper and manganese as well as a full complement of B vitamins.

Turmeric: The "superstar of spices," it may have anti-inflammatory and anti-cancer properties.

Frozen blueberries: Even though freezing can degrade some of the nutrients - frozen blueberries are available year-round and don't spoil; associated with better memory in animal studies.

Pumpkin: A low-calorie vegetable that is high in fibre and immune-stimulating vitamin A; fills you up on very few calories.



A Victim Treats His Mugger Right

We're not sure whether this is a true story or not. We'd like to think it is...

Morning Edition, March 28, 2008 · Julio Diaz has a daily routine. Every night, the 31-year-old social worker ends his hour-long subway commute to the Bronx one stop early, just so he can eat at his favourite diner.

But one night last month, as Diaz stepped off the No. 6 train and onto a nearly empty platform, his evening took an unexpected turn.

He was walking toward the stairs when a teenage boy approached and pulled out a knife.

"He wants my money, so I just gave him my wallet and told him, 'Here you go,'" Diaz says.

As the teen began to walk away, Diaz told him, "Hey, wait a minute. You forgot something. If you're going to be robbing people for the rest of the night, you might as well take my coat to keep you warm."

The would-be robber looked at his would-be victim, "like what's going on here?" Diaz says. "He asked me, 'Why are you doing this?'"

Diaz replied: "If you're willing to risk your freedom for a few dollars, then I guess you must really need the money. I mean, all I wanted to do was get dinner and if you really want to join me ... hey, you're more than welcome.

"You know, I just felt maybe he really needs help," Diaz says.

Diaz says he and the teen went into the diner and sat in a booth.

"The manager comes by, the dishwashers come by, the waiters come by to say hi," Diaz says. "The kid was like, 'You know everybody here. Do you own this place?'"

"No, I just eat here a lot," Diaz says he told the teen. "He says, 'But you're even nice to the dishwasher.'"

Diaz replied, "Well, haven't you been taught you should be nice to everybody?"

"Yeah, but I didn't think people actually behaved that way," the teen said.

Diaz asked him what he wanted out of life. "He just had almost a sad face," Diaz says.

The teen couldn't answer Diaz — or he didn't want to.

When the bill arrived, Diaz told the teen, "Look, I guess you're going to have to pay for this bill 'cause you have my money and I can't pay for this. So if you give me my wallet back, I'll gladly treat you."

The teen "didn't even think about it" and returned the wallet, Diaz says. "I gave him \$20 ... I figure maybe it'll help him. I don't know."

Diaz says he asked for something in return — the teen's knife — "and he gave it to me."

Afterward, when Diaz told his mother what happened, she said, "You're the type of kid that if someone asked you for the time, you'd give them your watch."

"I figure, you know, if you treat people right, you can only hope that they treat you right. It's as simple as it gets in this complicated world."

Produced for Morning Edition by Michael Garofalo.



Michael's Clinic

I run a full time clinic offering the following services:

PSH (Private Subconscious-mind Healing) one on one therapy for anxiety, depression, grief, stress, sleep difficulties, etc.

Hypnotherapy for quitting smoking and other addictions.

Meditation individual tuition.

For more details give me a call, send me an email, or see our website

www.syandra.com.au