

A technique used by mystics and laymen alike is meditation.

Meditation is not just sitting with closed eyes observing your breathing as a detached witness. (Although this is a wonderfully effective and relaxing way to center and open oneself to the superintelligence buried deep within us.) It has been defined as "any activity that keeps your attention pleasantly anchored in the present moment."

With this in mind, you have probably "meditated" more often than you realize! Have you ever been occupied with a favorite hobby or craft or been gardening outdoors or sat before a fire hypnotized by the flames when passage of time seems irrelevant? When you were totally immersed in the "now" and all distractions ceased? Such moments qualify for the description of "ecstatic." That feeling or state of consciousness is meditative, profoundly enjoyable.

There are, of course, structured systems of meditation. The element basic to them all is the act of quieting oneself in a ritualized manner. This may be through rhythmic breathing, physical movement as in yoga or tai chi, or concentration upon an image or a sound pattern. Once you achieve this "altered state of consciousness" you can learn a great deal by asking yourself for guidance. Many religions and cultures use these altered states as a means to achieve unity with God or the universe.

EMMY - OPTIONS FILE #163

Travels from Chicago to get healthy . . .

The commute is the hardest part of Emmy's journey toward health. She travels from suburban Chicago to Options Center in Peoria Heights to work on her body/mind/spirit integration.

For over five years she has been working with Options Director Helen Cox using guided imagery, energy field work, herbology and nutrition. "I'm still working on it," says Emmy. She is patient and is allowing the journey toward wholeness to be a natural and long lasting one.

"I know there can always be little setbacks," she notes. "I know it's a long process; it's a change of lifestyle; it's a commitment."

Emmy and Helen met through a seminar hosted by Options. Emmy had a swollen ankle which had been diagnosed as rheumatoid arthritis by conventional medical professionals. The conventional treatments hadn't helped, she says, but it was "taken care of right away," after she began seeing Helen.

Emmy then concentrated on her mother's health, but soon learned she should focus on her own issues. "The biggest lesson Helen ever taught me was you can only live your own life," says Emmy.

Emmy is now also being assisted in her health by a chiropractor who uses kinesthesiology and neuro-emotional techniques. With Helen, she continues to work mostly on the spiritual aspects. Through spiritual growth, she says, she is dealing with day-to-day crises in a whole new way.

"It has made my life a whole, big, different story. Developing that spirituality has been incredible."

Variety is one aspect of the Options program which appeals to Emmy, who has tried a number of the alternatives made available by Helen and her staff. "If you're interested and ask, you can pick from the menu (of services)."

Emmy's healing has affected others in her life, including her mother and her friends. Her mother, she says, believed in the rational and scientific methods she had always known. However, in illness she "finally realized there was a better place for her to be," says Emmy.

Her friends, who have noticed a difference in her manner and have heard Emmy speak of the work she is doing with Helen, are beginning to ask questions and show interest in what Emmy is doing to make such a positive difference in her life. Some are considering making the long commute to Options, as well.

"If they're ready for alternative care and wellness," says Emmy, "Options is the place to go. If they choose to make the commitment, fantastic things can happen to them."