

The Healing Power of the Mind

Meditation heals! Yes it heals, soothes and promises so much that we get boggled down with all of the prescriptive thinking on how it will help us lead a better life. Even so, when we think of meditation we think of Buddhist monks sitting cross legged on a mat, cut off from society in their temples worshipping in much the same way they have done for hundreds of years. The contemplative meditation practices of religions offer much and require much in terms of practice and commitment.

Another part of me, my higher self said, “You know it doesn’t have to be this way. There are other ways to get the same and more from the practice of meditating.” I began to use some of these practices with my clients and myself and eventually put it into a book to share. Using guided visualization combined with art, metaphor, questioning and archetypes I have found a way to magnify the action of the journey into your inner self...a journey that helps healing take place, reduce stress, and open up to a larger vision of possibilities. So how does it all work? The combination helps you to focus in a different way.

The use of art helps us see what we’re missing. Sometimes, we will see another person’s point of view; sometimes we will see how limited our own point of view is, and sometimes we will see that we aren’t alone. Seeing more or seeing better always improves the quality of our decisions and how effectively we work with other people.

We unconsciously play out ideas through art that we would never attempt to work on within the confines of words. Words are left brained activities, and want to be based in reality. Emotions can be better addressed with the right brained activity of art. When we use color, imagination and symbols, we can reach another part of ourselves that escapes us in daily life. It completely side steps the mundane use of logic and reason to quickly access a healing response.

The use of metaphor draws inner maps for us. Metaphor uses short anecdotes to offer new ways to look at things, tap experiences, beliefs, and ideas that lay quietly in the meditators mind waiting to be unearthed. This communication creates a soft healing bubble that let’s you choose how and what we work on next. The experience can then be reframed to the meditator to make the healing transition.

The use of questioning delves deeper into the self. Asking the right question at the right time allows us to go deeper into ourselves. We all know that this is the basis of a therapeutic alliance, to maneuver with questions into areas that we have never gone before. Using this gentle questioning enhances the guided visualization process, taking

the meditator deeper into areas of self awareness. Whether we are looking for healing, reducing stress, reaching for a higher level of consciousness or spirituality, gentle questioning guides the process.

The use of symbols' illuminates an invisible reality. A symbolic experience is real and affects us as much as the actual event. Symbols are intuitively understood regardless of the culture we live in. They have universal "meaning" because we are the same souls in all times and in all cultures, just as all people have the five senses of taste, touch, smell, hearing, and sight.

The use of archetypes helps us to see patterns of the unconscious to better understand our own conscious existence. What is an archetype? The dictionary defines an archetype is a, "symbolic expression of the inner unconscious drama universal to all of us." We see this projected in events played out in nature and our life. We can understand the universal meaning of archetype in this string of examples: father, mother, crone, divine child, spiritual teacher, mandala, seasons, sky father/earth mother, journey, garden, death/rebirth, hero, outcast, shadow.

So there you have it. Some of our favorite fairytales and cultural myth's use various elements of metaphor, symbol and archetypes. Throughout the centuries we have escaped into myths and fairy tales, allowing the child in us to play out these stories and heal. Today our current day movies are inundated with symbolic meaning. Have we grown too old to use these symbolic tools to escape to a world of healing, power and self revelation? Not a chance! Take a healing journey of discovery using guided meditation, and have some fun along the way.

Shirley Ryan, PhD, CCHt is a practicing hypnotherapist and spiritual mentor. See more at <http://www.shirleyryan.net>