

Meditation to Save your Soul and your Life

As we study this Lent about our rule of life, one consideration will be to but some form of meditation in your rule daily. For me meditation is quieting my mind, slowing down my mind, opening to silence so I can become a part of a world greater than of my own making, trying to connect to or hear the Holy Spirit in me and others. There are so many ways to do this, centering prayer, which is practiced here at St. Luke's each Wednesday afternoon, walking the labyrinth also here at St. Luke's, using the Anglican Rosary as we will do in our ECW retreat March 12, walking the Stations of the Cross as we do on Fridays in Lent, Lectio Divina or meditating on scripture, movement meditation such as Yoga, working with icons, eastern meditations, meditating with music, breath meditations, writing as meditation, praying meditations, reading meditations, active imagination exercises. I could fill a page or more. I would love to hear from each of you what you do. There are also many meditation apps for your

I-phone or computer. The one I am presently using is called Calm. I want to stimulate you to consider what meditation can do for your health. These are reports that may convince you this is not only good for your soul and mind but for your body, your health.

Harvard MRI Study Shows That Meditation Literally Rebuilds Your Brain's Gray Matter In 8 Weeks

A study conducted by a Harvard affiliated team out of Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) came across surprising conclusions regarding the tangible effects of meditation on human brain structure. An 8 -week program of mindfulness meditation produced MRI scans for the first time showing clear evidence that meditation produces “massive changes” in brain gray matter.

This most recent study found that an average of **27 minutes of a daily practice of mindfulness exercises** stimulated a significant **boost in gray matter density, specifically in the hippocampus; the area of the brain in which self-awareness, compassion, and introspection are associated.**

Furthermore, this boost of gray matter density in the hippocampus was also directly correlational to a **decreased gray matter density in the amygdala; an area of the brain known to be instrumental in regulating anxiety and stress responses.** In stark contrast, the control group did not have any changes in either region of the brain thus ruling out merely the passage of time as a factor of influence regarding the drastic change in gray matter density fluctuations.

MGH fellow out of Glessen University in Germany, Britta Hölzel, states that neuroscientists are finding far more plasticity in brain structure than anticipated and that most importantly we are now aware from a scientific point of view that we can play a very active role in altering our brain structure to improve our overall well-being and quality of life.

Feelguide November 19, 2014. Harvard Unveils MRI Study Proving Meditation Literally Rebuilds the Brain's Gray Matter in 8 Weeks. Health, Spirituality, the Human Brain. Retrieved from:

<http://www.feelguide.com/2014/11/19/harvard-unveils-mri-study-proving-meditation-literally-rebuilds-the-brains-gray-matter-in-8-weeks/>

McGreevey, S. January 21, 2011. Eight weeks to a better brain; Meditation study shows changes associated with awareness, stress. Harvard gazette.

Retrieved from: <http://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2011/01/eight-weeks-to-a-better-brain/>

Original author: Christopher on Timewheel

Joanna